

CROSS OF VALOUR

MR ALLAN JOHN SPARKES, Coffs Harbour

About mid morning on 3 May 1996, Mr Sparkes rescued a boy trapped in a flooded underground storm water drain following record rainfalls at Coffs Harbour.

Mr Sparkes and a police colleague responded to an urgent call for assistance to rescue a boy trapped in a flooded storm water drain. From the entrance of the drain, an object, believed to be the missing child, could be seen about 80-100 metres along. Tied to a rope, Mr Sparkes entered the drain and was rapidly washed 20 metres along the pipe by the ferocity of the current before realising the rope was inadequate. With a more substantial line, he re-entered the drain even though breathing space in the pipe had reduced due to rising flood waters and his own bulk displacement. Floodwaters washed him some 80 metres downstream before he could establish that the object was only debris. The drain was now almost totally engulfed in floodwater leaving only a small air space and Mr Sparkes was in danger of drowning as frantic attempts were made by his colleague and others to haul him against the flow to the surface. Although believing the child had little or no chance of survival, screams were heard further downstream in a pipe under a section of the Pacific Highway at the junction of six drains. Believing that the child was drowning and had to be rescued by the fastest means possible, Mr Sparkes and his colleague entered the flooded pipe in total darkness without a life line, torch or emergency air supply. As it was impossible to call to the child above the roar of the floodwater, the rescuers separately searched the maze of water pipes. After progressing deeper into the drainage system Mr Sparkes could hear the desperate screams more clearly and believed he had located the boy's position. It was agreed that his colleague would search at ground level for a manhole closer to the child to facilitate a faster rescue. An ambulance officer then descended into the drains and remained in the flooded junction area to assist Mr Sparkes. Mr Sparkes secured a rope to himself and with the aid of a torch crawled back up the flooded drain. Exhausted from his ordeal Mr Sparkes dragged himself against the flow, finally making contact with the child and managing to calm him. By this stage Mr Sparkes was 30 metres from the pipe opening and 3 metres underground. Mr Sparkes managed to coax the boy into letting go of debris, and allow himself to be washed down the drain to where Mr Sparkes could grab and secure him. Mr Sparkes then placed the boy in front of himself and they were both washed down the pipe to the waiting ambulance officer. Mr Sparkes suffered lacerations and abrasions to his back and shoulder and cuts to his fingers and feet from forcing his way against the flow. Throughout the rescue Mr Sparkes was aware that he was in grave danger of losing his life as he believed that the whole of the storm water system was only minutes away from again being totally engulfed with floodwater.

By his actions, Mr Sparkes displayed the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme peril.

STAR OF COURAGE

DETECTIVE SENIOR CONSTABLE GAVIN DENGATE, New South Wales
Police Service

About mid morning on 3 May 1996, Detective Dengate assisted in the rescue of a boy trapped in a flooded underground storm water drain after record rainfalls at Coffs Harbour.

Detective Dengate and a colleague responded to an urgent call for assistance to rescue a boy missing in a flooded storm water drain. From the entrance of the drain, an object, believed to be the missing child, could be seen about 80-100 metres along. At this point, Detective Dengate entered the flooded drain on two separate occasions and remained in position to assist and monitor his colleague's progress underground. After some-time it was established that the object was debris and Detective Dengate, as the link between the rescuer underground and support personnel, made frantic attempts to retract his partner's life line before he was drowned by rising floodwaters. Although believing the child had little or no chance of survival, desperate screams were heard further downstream in a pipe under a section of the Pacific Highway at the junction of six drains. Believing that the child was drowning and had to be rescued by the fastest means possible, Detective Dengate and his colleague entered the flooded pipe in total darkness without a life line, torch or emergency air supply. Detective Dengate took this action in the knowledge that any further rain would almost certainly close off his means of escape. As it was impossible to call to the child above the roar of the floodwater, the rescuers separately searched the maze of water pipes. After being told by his colleague that he believed he had located the boy's position, it was decided that Detective Dengate would search at ground level for a manhole closer to the child to facilitate a faster rescue. As Detective Dengate prepared to enter a junction point to attempt a rescue from another direction, he was advised that the boy had been brought to safety.

By his actions, Dengate displayed conspicuous courage.

STAR OF COURAGE

MR ALEXANDER JAMES MAR, 340 Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Thirroul
NSW 2515

In the late afternoon on 7 September 1997, Mr Mar apprehended an armed robber at Thirroul.

Whilst driving with his wife and children Mr Mar noticed a suspicious looking man running along the footpath, away from a group of elderly people. From his car Mr Mar watched the man run toward the Thirroul Leagues Club. Mr Mar drove into the Club's car park just as the man came around the corner of a building. On seeing Mr Mar, the man hid behind a shed. Mr Mar drove closer, alighted from his car and ran towards the building. The man produced a gun and fired at Mr Mar's feet with the ricochet hitting him in the ankle. The man demanded the car keys and walked towards the vehicle as he held the gun on Mr Mar. Mr Mar kept moving towards the man who again fired a shot. A violent struggle ensued and another round of gunfire was heard as Mr Mar tried to disarm the man. The man kept hold of the gun and continued to kick and struggle against Mr Mar until subdued with the assistance of others.

By his actions, Mr Mar displayed conspicuous courage.

BRAVERY MEDAL

MR NATHAN DAVID BRIAN, 35 Ware Drive, Currumbin Waters Qld 4223

On the night of 12 December 1995, Mr Brian pursued an armed robber and, despite being fired upon, continued to pursue him and assisted in his apprehension by police.

Mr Brian and three companions witnessed an armed robbery at a video store and, despite being threatened with a gun, Mr Brian ran through the shopping mall to keep the offender in sight. He continued to pursue the offender on a bicycle until he was within 15 to 20 metres of the robber who then fired upon Mr Brian with what he thought might have been a cap gun. The offender grabbed a bicycle hidden in bushes and turned into a nearby street. Mr Brian knocked him from the bicycle, demanded the return of the money and then damaged the offender's bicycle so it could not be ridden. The offender hit Mr Brian about the shoulder and head with the gun and ran away. Mr Brian flagged down a passing car, followed the offender and confronted him demanding the return of the money. By this time, one of Mr Brian's friends had joined him and they both pursued the offender. Seeing the lights of a nearby house, Mr Brian asked the householder to ring the police. He then saw a car being backed out of a driveway. Mr Brian, his friend and the car driver confronted the offender, demanding the return of the money despite the gun still held by the offender. Mr Brian and his friend, using an aluminium tent pole and wheel brace from the car, caused the offender to fall over in a driveway, dropping the gun, money, jacket and a pillowcase he had been wearing as a balaclava. The offender then ran into his own house and Mr Brian pursued him. When confronted by the offender, Mr Brian left the house by which time the police had arrived.

By his actions, Mr Brian displayed considerable bravery.

SENIOR CONSTABLE PAUL DANIEL CIBULKA, New South Wales Police Service

On the afternoon of 18 December 1994, Constable Cibulka pursued two armed robbers after a hold up at Maroubra.

Constable Cibulka was off duty and driving along Boyce Road in his private vehicle when he saw two males in a red sedan veer in front of another car causing a collision. The sedan sped off and Constable Cibulka followed it signalling the driver to pull over. The driver eventually lost control and collided with a fence. As Constable Cibulka approached the car, the driver ran towards him kicking out aggressively. Constable Cibulka identified himself as a police officer and the man retreated. The passenger then alighted holding a firearm which he pointed at Constable Cibulka's head. All the while Constable Cibulka's car door was open with the engine running. Constable Cibulka tried to calm the man holding the gun but his accomplice kept saying, "Shoot him, shoot him". The gun barrel touched Constable Cibulka's temple and he was ordered to lie face down but stood his ground and did not obey the gunman's instructions. The offenders got into Constable Cibulka's car, revved the engine, but as the car was a manual transmission and in neutral it did not move. The gunman got out of the car and moving towards Constable Cibulka pointed the gun at his stomach and told him to lie down. Constable Cibulka grabbed the gun turning it away from himself as they struggled. The other offender ran at them and karate kicked at Constable Cibulka. Constable Cibulka fell to the ground injuring his hip on a fence. As he stood up he came face to face with the man who had kicked him. The other offender with the gun held it to the back of Constable Cibulka's neck and ordered him to lie down. Constable Cibulka stepped back, jumped a fence and stayed low for two to three seconds. He then looked up and saw the offenders running away. Constable Cibulka chased the man with the gun, who pointed it at him and yelled, "I'm going to kill you", before disappearing under the security door of an underground parking area. Constable Cibulka then returned to his car and waited for the police to arrive.

By his actions, Senior Constable Cibulka displayed considerable bravery.

MR ELISEO GARCIA, Late of 15 Hughes Road, Blairgowrie Vic 3942

On the morning of 22 April 1997, Mr Garcia lost his life while assisting in the rescue of a woman at Koonya Ocean Beach, Blairgowrie.

Mr Garcia was fishing with a friend when he noticed some people in the surf who appeared to be in difficulty and went to investigate. When Mr Garcia arrived at the scene he entered the water fully clothed to help in the rescue of a woman. Mr Garcia was washed off his feet by the strong undertow and the force of the two metre high waves. He regained his feet and with another rescuer grabbed the lady's hand and started pulling her to shore. Close to shore a wave broke over them and Mr Garcia lost his grip and was again washed off his feet. He managed to get to shore, coming out of the water gasping for breath. On regaining his breath he returned to the water to continue to assist in the rescue of those in difficulty but was washed out to sea by the force of the current. As a result, Mr Garcia lost his life.

By his actions, Mr Garcia displayed considerable bravery.

MR JONATHON GILBERT, Peppimenarti Community, PMB 56, Winnellie NT 0822

On the morning of 18 December 1997, Mr Gilbert rescued a boy being attacked by a crocodile at Peppimenarti, NT.

Mr Gilbert and some friends were at the local river swimming. It was a very hot day and Mr Gilbert was sitting watching his friends climb a tree and swing out from a rope from which they then jumped into the water and swam back to the bank. The last boy to jump in landed about 10 metres from the bank and as he started to swim to shore Mr Gilbert noticed splashing coming from the water and then saw a crocodile rolling the boy around. The crocodile released its grip and Mr Gilbert jumped in and swam to his friend knowing that the crocodile would still be nearby. After pulling his friend onto the bank, Mr Gilbert saw that the boy was bleeding heavily from deep wounds to the lower back and right leg. Mr Gilbert packed the wounds with his tee-shirt to restrict the bleeding and carried his injured friend to a nearby health clinic.

By his actions, Mr Gilbert displayed considerable bravery.

MR CHRISTIAN HOPE, 3 Powell Street, Yagoona NSW 2199

On the morning of 14 June 1997, Mr Hope rescued a woman being attacked with an axe by her husband at Yagoona.

Mr Hope was called by a neighbour to assist an elderly woman who had been attacked with an axe by her husband. When Mr Hope arrived, the offender who had blood on his hands, was standing behind the victim at the rear of the house. As Mr Hope attempted to move the lady away from her attacker the offender lifted a plastic chair as if to strike the lady. Mr Hope let go of the lady and grabbing the man's wrist, forced him to drop the chair. The man moved to the backyard and Mr Hope threw the axe onto the driveway out of reach. The offender returned with a crowbar, and a struggle ensued. Eventually the offender released the crowbar and it fell to the ground. Mr Hope then held the man until the police arrived.

By his actions, Mr Hope displayed considerable bravery.

MRS BERYL JEAN HOUSE, 43 Gannet Crescent, Old Bar NSW 2430

On the morning of 14 June 1997, Mrs House attempted to subdue an axe wielding man who was attacking his wife at Yagoona.

Mrs House heard her name being called in a panicky voice by her neighbour. She ran outside, looked over the fence and saw two people wrestling on the ground. When she arrived in the neighbour's backyard she saw a man swinging an axe at his wife's head. The woman had scratches all over her face and was bleeding profusely from a large cut on the side of her face as well as from the mouth and nose. The victim was holding up her arms trying to protect herself from the blows. Mrs House took hold of the axe handle and tried to pull it away from the man. She then grabbed his cardigan and pleaded with him to stop as she tried to drag him away from his wife. The offender started to punch his wife in the face and tried to pull open the large wound. The wife continued to plead for help and Mrs House ran to a neighbour for assistance.

By her actions, Mrs House displayed considerable bravery.

MR DESMOND LAURENCE LACEY, 25 Jensen Road, Yandina Qld 4561

Early in the afternoon on 24 November 1995, following a robbery at the ANZ Bank at Yandina, Mr Lacey pursued an offender and apprehended him, in spite of being threatened with a gun.

As an armed offender left the bank following a robbery, Mr Lacey pursued him for approximately 200 metres. Mr Lacey tackled the offender and both fell to the ground. The armed offender regained his feet first and pointed the gun at Mr Lacey's face. On hearing a click from the gun, Mr Lacey jumped at the gunman and grabbed the arm holding the gun, forcing it sideways. At the same time, he hit the offender in the throat with his right forearm, the force of which caused the offender to fall to the ground. Mr Lacey straddled the offender, pinned him to the ground and held the offender's arm so he could not discharge the gun. Although frightened for his life, Mr Lacey held the offender, who was struggling violently, on the ground until other citizens came to assist him. Mr Lacey was then able to remove the gun from the offender and kept it until police arrived.

By his actions, Mr Lacey displayed considerable bravery.

MR MICHAEL MARR, 40 Caba Close, Boambee NSW 2450

About mid morning on 3 May 1996, Mr Marr, an ambulance officer, was involved in the rescue of a boy trapped in a flooded underground storm water drain after record rainfalls at Coffs Harbour.

Mr Marr descended a ladder and entered a heavily flooded storm water drainage system at the junction of six pipes. He was assisting police in the rescue of a trapped child, desperately screaming for help, and believed to be in imminent danger of drowning from rising flood waters. Mr Marr provided one of the rescuers with a torch and a rope and volunteered to remain in the junction area to assist the rescuer despite the possibility of further rain closing off his means of escape. After some time the boy was successfully coaxed from driftwood to which he was clinging and, with the police rescuer was washed down stream to Mr Marr who applied emergency first aid before the boy was removed to hospital.

By his actions, Mr Marr displayed considerable bravery.

MR CLINT RICHARD MIDDLETON, 340 Bridge Street, Toowoomba Qld 4350

In the early afternoon on 27 November 1996, Mr Middleton attempted to resuscitate a man who had been electrocuted after overhead power lines came into contact with an irrigator being pulled by a tractor.

While Mr Middleton was driving a tractor pulling an irrigator, the machine passed under some overhead power lines. On hearing a noise like electricity arcing, he realised that the tractor had become electrified, then saw that the right front wheel had caught fire. He turned the tractor's ignition off and ran clear but then saw his companion walk towards the tractor to put out a fire that had started under the tractor from the burning tyre. His companion asked several times for a bag to put out the fire. Although Mr Middleton implored him not to approach the tractor because of the risk of electrocution, his companion again asked for a bag and Mr Middleton fetched a towel from a nearby motorbike. When he looked back, Mr Middleton saw his companion at the back of the tractor on his knees, falling over, curling into a ball surrounded by smoke. Although realising that he too could be electrocuted, Mr Middleton ran to the injured man, grabbed his left hand, dragged him about 15 metres clear of the fire and attempted unsuccessfully to resuscitate him.

By his actions, Mr Middleton displayed considerable bravery.

MR RICKY ALLAN PHILLIPS, Whyalla SA 5608-

On the night of 25 August 1995, Mr Phillips rescued a person who had fallen onto the railway line near Kelmscott Station.

As a train approached, Mr Phillips went to the rescue of a man who had fallen onto the tracks near a pedestrian crossing. Taking hold of the struggling man, Mr Phillips dragged him off the line removing him from the path of the oncoming train. Mr Phillips was struck on his left shoulder and left leg by the train and as it passed by fell onto the tracks.

By his actions, Mr Phillips displayed considerable bravery.

MRS CAROLYN MAY PILLING, 16 Koorungal Avenue, Thornleigh NSW 2120

At about midday on 11 August 1996 Mrs Carolyn Pilling went to the assistance of a woman being attacked by an offender armed with a knife at Glenhaven.

Mrs Pilling heard screams and a woman's cry for help from the direction of a nearby toilet block. She went to the amenities' entrance, banged on the door and tried to open it but found someone was pushing it closed from the inside. Forcing the door open, she wedged her foot against the doorjamb and saw several children and, a woman bleeding from a hand wound. The woman who was frightened and crying pleaded for help and said "She's got a knife.". Mrs Pilling then saw another woman, armed with a knife, about to attack the injured woman. Mrs Pilling took hold of the offender's wrists, forced her against a wall and brought her arms down by her sides. Mrs Pilling then tried to calm the armed woman who continued to struggle and move her hands behind her back. At this stage Mrs Pilling noticed the offender no longer had hold of the knife. Mrs Pilling called for help and a young man came to her assistance taking hold of the offender's arm. The offender continued to struggle, kicking the man causing him to double up in pain and lose his grip. Fearing that the offender may produce the knife again, Mrs Pilling wrestled the woman to the ground, held her down and again tried to calm her. The offender broke away when one of her children ran at Mrs Pilling. Injured from the struggle, Mrs Pilling called to others who detained the offender until police arrived.

By her actions, Mrs Pilling displayed considerable bravery.

MR RUSSELL JAMES POLLARD, Late of Brunswick Heads NSW 2483

On 28 April 1996, 35 people were murdered and 21 injured in a shooting incident at and near the historic penal settlement of Port Arthur in Tasmania.

Mr Pollard was with friends travelling in a vehicle down Jetty Road when they were warned of a shooting incident unfolding in the car park. They returned to the Toll Booth, parking on the opposite side of the road facing the oncoming traffic, thereby blocking the entry of other vehicles into the historic site. From this position the occupants of the car continually gestured and signalled to the passengers of approaching vehicles to stop and go back. The gunman arrived at the Toll Booth and stopped his car adjacent to the vehicle belonging to Mr Pollard's party. After this, one of Mr Pollard's friends was shot and killed by the gunman. Ignoring the danger to his own safety, Mr Pollard left the car and headed in the direction of his wounded companion and the gunman. Mr Pollard was seen to approach the gunman and in doing so was also fatally wounded.

By his actions, Mr Pollard displayed considerable bravery.

MR ROBERT SALZMANN, Late of 20 Wirree Drive, Ocean Shores NSW
2483

On 28 April 1996, 35 people were murdered and 21 injured in a shooting incident at and near the historic penal settlement of Port Arthur in Tasmania.

Mr Salzmänn was with friends travelling in a vehicle down Jetty Road when they were warned of a shooting incident unfolding in the car park. They returned to the Toll Booth, parking on the opposite side of the road facing the oncoming traffic, thereby blocking the entry of other vehicles into the historic site. From this position the occupants of the car continually gestured and signalled to the passengers of approaching vehicles to stop and go back. When the gunman arrived Mr Salzmänn left the safety of the vehicle and approached the man. Mr Salzmänn was observed to engage in a verbal altercation with the gunman who appeared very agitated. The man was seen to kick out at Mr Salzmänn and then return to an adjacent vehicle for a gun which was used to fatally injure Mr Salzmänn.

By his actions, Mr Salzmänn displayed considerable bravery.

MR PAUL JOSEPH TAYLOR, Late of 47 Westbourne Street, Walsall, West
Midlands WS4 2JB UK

In the early hours of the morning on 21 June 1997, Mr Taylor alerted and attempted to assist to safety four occupants of a burning house at Woolloomooloo.

Mr Taylor awakened and alerted three of his flatmates, sleeping upstairs, to a fire engulfing their house. He attempted to lead one of them downstairs but they were driven back by the intensity of the heat and flames. The three upstairs occupants managed to escape to safety through a neighbour's house. Mr Taylor then went in search of the remaining occupant of the house but was overcome by smoke and perished.

By his actions, Mr Taylor displayed considerable bravery.

MR PAUL CHRISTOPHER TURNER, 3 Boronia Road, St Marys NSW 2760

On the morning of 18 November 1997, Mr Turner rescued a child from a burning house at St Clair.

Mr Turner saw smoke coming from the roof of a house and a crowd gathered outside. He ran to the house and was told that a little girl was still inside. He saw through a broken window that the front of the house was filled with flames. He then went to the back door and entered the kitchen with a hose but was forced back by the smoke and heat. Outside he removed his shirt, wet it and placing it over his nose and mouth re-entered the house with the hose to douse the flames as he searched for the child. He searched the lounge room on his hands and knees in vain. Someone called from outside to search the bedroom area and he crawled from room to room until he found the child in the second bedroom. He carried the child out through the front door and commenced cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and first aid until ambulance officers arrived.

By his actions, Mr Turner displayed considerable bravery.

MR GEORGE MERVYN WATHEN, 108 Schofield Parade, Keppel Sands Qld 4702

Late in the afternoon on 29 April 1995, Mr Wathen participated in a search and attempted rescue of the crew of a yacht that had capsized in deteriorating sea conditions.

On hearing of the capsize of the yacht "El Buraq", Mr Wathen and a friend offered to assist in the search for three missing crew. They decided to take a 4.1 metre aluminium dinghy instead of a larger boat as the dinghy would be able to reach the search area quickly and visibility was becoming poor. When they reached the search area, it was after 6.00pm, the seas were 3 to 4 metres high and breaking, the winds were 35 to 40 knots and there were heavy rainsqualls. The dinghy took a lot of water and, in the increasing darkness, the danger of running over someone in the water was very real so Mr Wathen and his companion decided to abandon the search for those in the water and rescue the three other people still on board the stricken yacht. As they could not locate the yacht in the deteriorating weather conditions, they returned to port to transfer to a radar equipped fishing boat and then returned to sea. When the "El Buraq" was located, a tow was affixed and the yacht was taken to a safer anchorage where the three survivors were rescued and brought safely to land.

By his actions, Mr Wathen displayed considerable bravery.

DR CAMPBELL WITT, 225 Preston Road, Picton WA 6157

On the afternoon of 5 October 1997, Dr Witt rescued a young girl stranded in treacherous seas off Lights Beach, Denmark.

On learning that a child had been caught in a rip and carried into rough surf breaking near steep sided rocks, Dr Witt immediately entered the water and swam out to the girl. Dr Witt reassured the child and managed to keep her afloat despite them being sucked under several times. He called to an onlooker to throw him a surfboard but it landed short of them due to the strong winds. Dr Witt was forced to leave the child for a short time to retrieve the board. He then managed to get them both on the board and battled the strong wind and surf, at times being tipped off and pulled under, until eventually arriving safely at the beach.

By his actions, Dr Witt displayed considerable bravery.

COMMENDATION FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

MR MICHAEL ALDERSON, 80 Hastings River Drive, Port Macquarie NSW 2444

On the night of 17 June 1997, Mr Alderson disarmed a robber at the Settlers Inn Hotel, Port Macquarie

Mr Alderson was in the lounge bar of the hotel when he heard the "buzzer" sound coming from the bottle shop. On going to investigate, he saw that two of the bottle shop's roller shutters were closed and the third half closed. Through the half open door, he saw a man with a knife in one hand and a plastic bag in the other. Mr Alderson ran towards the man, high tackling him about the shoulders, and causing them both to fall to the ground. Regaining their feet, the man with the knife started to run away. Mr Alderson again tackled the offender from behind and threw him to the ground. As the armed man tried to escape, Mr Alderson pushed him up against a metal pole. The offender dropped the knife, was forced to the ground and held down by Mr Alderson until the police arrived.

For his actions, Mr Alderson is commended for brave conduct.

MRS DOROTHY BARBER, Caves Valley Cottage, Caves Road, Wee Jasper NSW 2582

On the afternoon of 28 January 1997, Mrs Barber, despite the presence of a disturbed man with a gun, entered a burning house and attempted to extinguish a fire.

Mrs Barber saw smoke billowing from a neighbour's woolshed and, after telephoning for the fire brigade, hurried towards the burning building. As she neared the shed, it exploded into flames and she then noticed that smoke was also coming from the house. As Mrs Barber approached the house, she saw a man carrying a shotgun. He raised it to his shoulder and aimed the gun in her direction. Regardless of this, Mrs Barber entered the house, saw a number of small fires burning in various rooms and tried to extinguish the flames until help arrived.

For her actions, Mrs Barber is commended for brave conduct.

MR CHRISTOPHER COLIN BARNES, 7-9 Mudlo Street, Redland Bay Qld 4165

On the night of 30 March 1996, Mr Barnes assisted in the rescue of two people and in the search for another after a boating accident near Peel Island, Moreton Bay.

While fishing in the area, Mr Barnes heard the noise of a boat colliding with a navigation beacon. He then heard a woman's screams and with his brother went to investigate. They found two people in the water close to the bow of their almost totally submerged boat. On hearing that someone was missing Mr Barnes dived into the water to search the sunken vessel. Using a torch, he looked for the missing person without success. After surfacing for air, he again dived to the submerged boat to look for the missing person in the rear deck area. He dived into the water several more times but was unable to locate the missing person. Mr Barnes continued to search the area in his boat until the coast guard arrived. He then used his boat as a marker for a helicopter search.

For his actions, Mr Barnes is commended for brave conduct.

MR SHAUN BRADY BARNES, 4 Oakland Avenue, Redland Bay Qld 4165

On the night of 30 March 1996, Mr Barnes assisted in the rescue of two people and the search for another after a boating accident near Peel Island, Moreton Bay.

While fishing in the area with his brother, Mr Barnes heard the noise of a boat colliding with a navigation beacon. He then heard a woman's screams and with his brother went to investigate. They found two people in the water close to the bow of their almost totally submerged boat. On learning that someone was missing, Mr Barnes dived into the water and assisted in the attempt to find the missing person. He then tethered the almost submerged boat to his brother's craft and helped the two survivors out of the water and to safety.

For his actions, Mr Barnes is commended for brave conduct.

MR RAYMOND JOSEPH BELLEVILLE, 78 McClymont Road, M/S 1494,
Nanango Qld 4615

In the middle of the afternoon on 19 October 1995, at Fitzroy Crossing, Mr Belleville rescued an injured man from a crashed and burning vehicle.

On hearing of the theft of one of the Fitzroy Crossing taxis, Mr Belleville gave chase in his own taxi. From radio transmissions, he learned that the taxi had hit a tree. He proceeded to the accident scene where he found the smoking vehicle located approximately 25 metres off the road, surrounded by long grass. Aware of the possible danger of an explosion, Mr Belleville approached the car and saw, through the open passenger door, an injured man much larger framed than himself lying half in and half out of the car. Mr Belleville was able to pull the injured man out of the now burning vehicle through the passenger door. Once out of the burning car, Mr Belleville kept pulling the injured man away, over an embankment, as the surrounding grass was now on fire. With the arrival of police and ambulance, the injured man could be removed to a place of complete safety.

For his actions, Mr Belleville is commended for brave conduct.

MR DENNIS BRAY, 32 Redman Avenue, Thirroul NSW 2515

Late in the afternoon on 7 September 1997, Mr Bray assisted in apprehending an armed robber at Thirroul.

Mr Bray accompanied his son in his car to the Thirroul Leagues Club. As they alighted from the car, they heard three loud bangs and were approached by a distressed woman who informed them that a robbery had taken place and that her husband had followed the offender to the school ground. Mr Bray ran in that direction and saw his son and another man struggling to restrain the robber. Mr Bray went to assist, first by holding down the man's arm and then by increasing force as the offender continued to struggle and kick, until the police arrived.

For his actions, Mr Bray is commended for brave conduct.

MR LUKE BRAY, 32 Redman Avenue, Thirroul NSW 2515

Late in the afternoon on 7 September 1997, Luke Bray assisted in apprehending an armed robber at Thirroul.

Mr Bray, accompanied by his father, parked their car at the Thirroul Leagues Club car park. As they alighted from the car, they heard three loud bangs and were approached by a distressed woman, who was pointing in the direction of the school ground, and informed them that a robbery had taken place. Luke Bray ran 40 metres to the school ground and saw two men struggling. The robber was pinned down but groping for his gun as he struggled violently. Mr Bray jumped on the offender's lower body and, while helping restrain him until police arrived, was kicked in the head.

For his actions, Luke Bray is commended for brave conduct.

Mr ALEXANDER PATRICK BUCK, 7 Broun Avenue, Bedford WA 6052

On the night of 23 May 1996, Mr Buck rescued a semi-conscious man from a house fire at Embleton.

Mr Buck was returning home when he noticed smoke coming from a neighbouring house. He parked his car and hurried up the street to investigate. He saw flames coming out of the windows of the house and spoke to several bystanders but they were unable to tell him if anyone was still in the building. He then went to the back of the house and found a woman screaming that her husband was inside. Mr Buck entered the house through the back door and found a semi-conscious man approximately three metres inside the house. Mr Buck pulled the man towards the back door and was then assisted in the rescue by a woman who helped drag the unconscious man by the ankles to safety. Once outside Mr Buck applied first aid and reassured the man until the ambulance arrived.

For his actions, Mr Buck is commended for brave conduct.

MR BRENDAN JAMES COUPE, 3 Perrin Road, Cambooya Qld 4358

In the afternoon on 3 January 1996, Mr Coupe rescued a woman from her car after it had been swept from a floodway at Westbrook Creek.

Following heavy rain the water level at the floodway had risen and, although the driver still considered it safe to cross, she was unaware that a wall of water was approaching from upstream which would considerably increase the depth over the floodway. When the car was about halfway across the floodway, it stalled and was washed about 10 metres downstream by the force of the water. Mr Coupe called to the driver from the bank to abandon the car, however, she was a non-swimmer and too frightened to leave the vehicle. In his vehicle Mr Coupe found a short piece of rope which he tied to a length of fencing wire and then threw to the stranded driver to secure to her car. Although the water was up to Mr Coupe's shoulders and the danger to himself was obvious, he entered the water using the rope and wire line as a guide, approached the car and extricated the driver from it. The return trip was very dangerous as the rope was now submerged and the water level had risen considerably. He urged the passenger to hold onto him and, after about four minutes, both were able to reach safe ground.

For his actions, Mr Coupe is commended for brave conduct.

MR JAMES ALAN DAY, PO Box 60, Beecroft NSW 2119

On the morning of 24 June 1997, Mr Day pursued an armed man, who had attempted to rob a woman using the automatic teller machine at the National Australia Bank in Pitt Street, Sydney.

Mr Day was sitting in his parked truck in Sussex Street when a man ran past, followed by another man who called out "stop that man". Mr Day followed the man to a building site, where he produced a syringe filled with red fluid and threatened Mr Day before running off. Mr Day continued to pursue the offender until he caught him, grabbed him by the left arm and threw him to the ground. Mr Day struggled with the offender who pointed the syringe at Mr Day's face. Another man then came to assist Mr Day and together they held the armed man down until police arrived.

For his actions, Mr Day is commended for brave conduct.

Mr PHILLIP JOHN FLETCHER, 2/5 Eleanor Street, Como WA 6152

Late in the afternoon on 17 November 1997, Mr Fletcher was involved in the rescue of two people from a burning car after a traffic accident five kilometres from Narrogin.

Mr Fletcher was driving in the area when he noticed smoke billowing across the road. He was flagged down by a woman who ran from the haze calling out that there were people still in one of the cars. Mr Fletcher ran to the burning car and quickly assessed that the fire was rapidly intensifying in the fuel tank area. With flames licking at his legs he heaved open the driver's door and carried the semi-conscious driver to safety on the far side of the road. He then returned to assist another rescuer who was struggling to help a male passenger across the road. Mr Fletcher then returned to check both vehicles were empty. Concerned that the vehicle might explode, the rescuers then moved the two injured passengers further away from the burning cars and stayed with them until the ambulance arrived.

For his actions, Mr Fletcher is commended for brave conduct.

MRS JUDITH MARGARET GARNER, 35 Whitehead Street, Blairgowrie Vic 3942

On the morning of 22 April 1997, Mrs Garner assisted in a surf rescue at Koonya Ocean Beach, Blairgowrie.

Mrs Garner noticed six children playing near the water's edge and was concerned about them because of the treacherous surf that day. Suddenly one of the children was in the water and out of her depth. Mrs Garner saw two children and a lady run down the beach to help the child. While the older girl managed to pull the child in difficulty to safety, the lady was overpowered by the strong current and dragged under. Mrs Garner hurried along the beach to help the children who were now trying to rescue the lady. After a fisherman came to help, Mrs Garner told the children to leave the water. Mrs Garner grabbed the lady by the hand and started pulling her towards the shore. A huge wave then dragged Mrs Garner out into the breakers and she too got into difficulty. She was eventually washed in by waves and assisted onto the beach by others.

For her actions, Mrs Garner is commended for brave conduct.

MR MOHAMAD HAMAD, 55 Forest Avenue, Earlwood NSW 2206

On the morning of 24 June 1997, Mr Hamad pursued an armed man who had attempted to rob a woman using the automatic teller machine at the National Australia Bank in Pitt Street, Sydney.

Mr Hamad heard a woman scream and call out "he took my purse" and then saw a man running away. Mr Hamad gave chase and, during the pursuit, called to bystanders for assistance. After a time, the offender slowed to a jog and stopped. He pulled out a syringe containing red fluid and lunged with it at Mr Hamad several times. The offender ran off and Mr Hamad again gave chase until he had caught up with the offender. Along with another man, Mr Hamad wrestled the offender to the ground and restrained him until police arrived.

For his actions, Mr Hamad is commended for brave conduct.

MR CHRISTOPHER LEE, 9 Bruce Street, Nedlands WA 6009

In the early morning on 11 April 1996, Mr Lee assisted two people overcome by fumes from a chlorine gas spill near Alberton, Montana, USA.

Mr Lee was travelling with his father, a chemistry teacher, along Interstate Highway 90 when they drove through a chemical cloud, which his father recognised as the smell of chlorine gas fumes. They stopped and rescued a couple who had been overcome by the fumes and driven off the road into a ditch. They then drove the couple to nearby Frenchtown, Missoula. Along the way Mr Lee and his father had to stop the car to be ill as they had also inhaled gas fumes. The couple were admitted to hospital on arrival, with one being in a critical condition. Mr Lee's father was hospitalised for treatment for gas inhalation.

For his actions, Mr Lee is commended for brave conduct.

MR KOK CHOON LEE, 9 Bruce Street, Nedlands WA 6009

In the early morning on 11 April 1996, Mr Lee assisted two people overcome by fumes from a chlorine gas spill near Alberton, Montana, USA.

Mr Lee, a chemistry teacher, was travelling with his son along Interstate Highway 90 when they drove into a chemical cloud, which Mr Lee immediately recognised as the smell of chlorine gas fumes. He stopped the car and rescued a couple who had been overcome by the fumes and driven off the road into a ditch. Mr Lee drove them to nearby Frenchtown, Missoula. On the way Mr Lee and his son had to stop the car to be ill as they had also inhaled the gas fumes. The couple were admitted to hospital on arrival, with one of them being in a critical condition. Mr Lee was hospitalised in a critical condition as a result of his rescue efforts.

For his actions, Mr Lee is commended for brave conduct.

CONSTABLE PHILIP THOMAS McNAMARA, South Australia Police Service

Late in the afternoon on 2 July 1997, Constable McNamara disarmed a man at Henley Beach Police Station

Constable McNamara was on front counter duty at the police station when a man entered carrying a knife. He pointed the knife at Constable McNamara who determined from the man's speech that he was either intoxicated or affected by another substance. Constable McNamara ordered the man to drop the knife. The man then pointed the knife at a person standing at the counter and held it to his neck. Constable McNamara lent over the counter and grabbed the offender's right hand, and pulled him along the counter. The man struggled to break free. Constable McNamara hit the man's hand on the counter to make him release the knife. The man twisted, forcing Constable McNamara's hand over the blade of the knife cutting his right index finger and palm. Although bleeding freely, Constable McNamara managed to regain his hold on the armed man who twisted his body and arm so that he pulled Constable McNamara over the counter. Once on the other side of the counter, Constable McNamara pushed the man onto a bench, and forced the offender to release his grip on the knife and held him face down on the floor until other officers arrived.

For his actions, Constable McNamara is commended for brave conduct.

MISS SARAH McNICOL, 51A Hawthorn Grove, Hawthorn Vic 3122

On the morning of 22 April 1997, Sarah McNicol assisted in the rescue of her sister and aunt from the surf at Koonya Ocean Beach, Blairgowrie.

Sarah and several other children were playing at the water's edge when one of the children called out "Alison is drowning". Sarah and her aunt ran into the water and, after struggling against the strong undertow, Sarah managed to reach her sister and take her safely to the beach. She then returned to the surf to try to rescue her aunt who was now also in difficulty having been knocked off her feet and dragged under by the strong two metre waves. With the help of a man and a boy, Sarah, although dumped three times in a row, pulled her aunt from the surf. Eventually she clambered out of the water and comforted Alison.

- For her actions, Sarah McNicol is commended for brave conduct.

MR LUKE PETER PARSONS, 10 Narellan Road, Moss Vale NSW 2577

On the morning of 25 February 1996, Mr Parsons assisted a boy, who could not swim, caught in a rip at Windang Beach.

Mr Parsons was surfing with a group from the local church when he noticed a boy in difficulties. The boy who could not swim was caught in a rip, and was being washed out to sea. Mr Parsons swam some 40 metres through powerful waves and choppy water. On reaching the boy Mr Parsons managed to keep him afloat until help arrived, despite the frightened child's clinging grip which threatened to drag them both under water.

For his actions, Mr Parsons is commended for brave conduct

MR MICHAEL JOSEPH RYAN, 24 Criterium Place, Middle Swan WA 6056

On the night of 23 May 1996, Mr Ryan rescued two adults and three children from a house fire at Embleton.

Mr Ryan was in his backyard when he smelt smoke coming from inside the house. He immediately ran into the house and found the lounge room was alight. He tried unsuccessfully to extinguish the flames. Proceeding to the bedroom, he kicked the door open and attempted to stir two sleeping adults. He then picked up two children and carried them outside to safety. He ran back into the house again and this time managed to wake one of the adults and a baby. He shielded them from the flames as he led them outside. Returning to the house a third time, Mr Ryan was able to wake the other adult who ran out of the house. The smoke by this time was very thick and Mr Ryan was overcome by its effect and by the heat to the extent that he passed out while trying to leave the house. He was later dragged from the burning house and taken to hospital with burns to his hands and face.

For his actions, Mr Ryan is commended for brave conduct.

SENIOR CONSTABLE ALLAN TEAGUE, Northern Territory Police

On the night of 8 March 1997, Senior Constable Teague rescued a man stranded in a tree in the flooded Daly River.

Senior Constable Teague was informed that a man was stranded in a tree in the flooded Daly River. Any rescue attempt would be made more difficult by the flood conditions, swift flowing water, lack of light and the possible presence of crocodiles. Constable Teague entered the fast flowing water in a dinghy attached to a rope tied to a front-end loader. He manoeuvred the dinghy past the turbulence and with the aid of a torch light paddled across the flow to the tree where the man was located. Once the stranded man was safely on board the dinghy, the craft was towed to the edge of the turbulence. The boat veered erratically in the water and almost overturned before crossing and reaching the safety of the tow vehicle on the bank.

For his actions, Senior Constable Allan Teague is commended for brave conduct.

MR LINDSAY RICHARD THOMSON, 8 Sundown Court, Sunrise Beach Qld
4567

Early in the afternoon on 24 November 1995, an armed man entered the ANZ Bank at Yandina demanding money and menacing staff members.

When the armed offender entered the bank, he jumped the counter, demanded money and assaulted Mr Thomson and a female employee. Mr Thomson stood in front of the female employee protecting her from further assault and at the same time tried to calm the offender. Mr Thomson was then forced at gunpoint to place money in a bag which was taken by the offender as he escaped from the bank. After checking on the welfare of his staff, Mr Thomson ensured that the police were called and followed the offender from the bank. By this stage, other members of the public had apprehended the offender and Mr Thomson was able to retrieve the stolen money.

For his actions, Mr Thomson is commended for brave conduct.

MR ANTHONY JOHN WALKER, 11 Snape Court, Currumbin Waters Qld.
4223

On the night of 12 December 1995, Mr Walker pursued an armed robber and, despite being menaced with a gun, continued the pursuit and assisted in his apprehension by police.

Mr Walker and his three friends witnessed an armed robbery at a video store. Mr Walker assisted in the pursuit of the offender after he left the shop. When Mr Walker caught up with his friend who had initially started chasing the offender, the offender menaced them with the gun. At the same time, the offender dropped some of the stolen money and Mr Walker stopped to gather up what he could before recommencing the chase. On catching up with the offender, Mr Walker and his friend, threw a broken piece of aluminium tent pole at the offender in an attempt to prevent him escaping. The offender fell to the ground but, before the two young men could prevent it, he was able to run away. Mr Walker advised his friend which house the offender had entered, informed neighbours of the robbery and asked them to call the police. Mr Walker then followed his friend into the offender's house but left when confronted by the offender.

For his actions, Mr Walker is commended for brave conduct

MR SAMUEL CAIRNS WALKER, 11 Snape Court, Currumbin Waters Qld 4223

On the morning of 23 December 1996, Mr Walker rescued two boys from the surf at Portsea Back Beach.

As he put on his wetsuit and prepared to enter the water, Mr Walker heard cries for help coming from two boys stranded beyond the breakers. The conditions were windy and choppy with a strong rip and, although not a strong swimmer, Mr Walker entered the water on his boogie board. With another man, he swam out to the two boys who were in extreme difficulty and weak from exhaustion. He gave the boogie board to one of the boys and the man and then swam to the second boy. Mr Walker put his arm around the boy and, battling the conditions, started to swim towards the shore. Urging the boy to keep swimming, they reached the shallow water only to be sucked back again by the rip. Catching the next wave they were carried to the shore and, as they approached, called to a man on the beach who assisted them from the water. With others, Mr Walker then assisted in dragging the boy and the man on the boogie board from the water.

For his actions, Mr Walker is commended for brave conduct

MS AMANDA WHITE, 5 Gulf Court, Semaphore Park SA 5019

On the morning of 10 November 1997, Ms White apprehended a robber at Glenelg Football Club.

Ms White, an employee of the Glenelg Football Club, returned to the front office to find an unknown man in the room. She asked him what he was doing there, as she knew the doors were locked and had special codes. As the man moved towards the exit, Ms White ran past him to block his escape and at the same time called for help. He pushed Ms White out of the way but she grabbed at him, holding him by the shoulder and the jacket. She then saw that he had the cash tin in his hand. As he was trying to make her release her grip, he pushed Ms White to the ground. Ms White fell but still kept her hold on him. He hit out at her with the cash tin three times, causing the money to spill. Two other employees then arrived to assist.

For her actions, Ms White is commended for brave conduct.

MR GREGORY WHITFORD, Grovedale Vic 3216

On the afternoon of 3 December 1997, Gregory Whitford assisted in the apprehension of an armed robber at the Geelong & District Credit Co-op Society Ltd.

Gregory Whitford was in the Geelong & District Credit Co-op Society with his father and elder brother when an armed man entered and demanded money. His father, believing the gun to be an imitation, tackled the man and with the help of Gregory's elder brother, Lachlan, removed the gun and knife from the robber. Gregory's brother handed him the knife and Gregory then checked if the police had been called and returned to assist his father and brother in restraining the man until the police arrived.

For his actions, Gregory Whitford is commended for brave conduct.

MR LACHLAN WHITFORD, Grovedale Vic 3216

On the afternoon of 31 December 1997, Lachlan Whitford assisted in the apprehension of an armed robber at the Geelong & District Credit Co-op Society Ltd.

Lachlan Whitford was a customer at the Geelong & District Credit Co-op Society with his father and younger brother when an armed man entered demanding money. The staff handed over some money and as the gunman walked towards the door, Lachlan's father, believing the gun to be an imitation, tackled the man, grabbing him by the torso, and struggled with him onto the street. Lachlan put a headlock on the gunman and with his father's help grappled the man to the ground. Lachlan then grabbed the man's left arm, twisting it until he released his grip on a knife. Lachlan handed the weapon to his younger brother, Gregory. Lachlan, with his father and brother, restrained the man until the police arrived.

For his actions, Lachlan Whitford is commended for brave conduct.

MR REGINALD WHITFORD, Grovedale Vic 3216

On the afternoon of 31 December 1997, Mr Whitford assisted in the apprehension of an armed robber at the Geelong & District Credit Co-op Society Ltd.

Mr Whitford and his two sons were in the Geelong & District Credit Co-op Society when a man entered waving a gun and demanding money. After the staff handed over some money he turned to make his escape. As the offender opened the door Mr Whitford, believing the gun to be an imitation, grabbed him around the torso and struggled with the offender out onto the street. Mr Whitford's eldest son, Lachlan grabbed the man in a headlock and together they grappled him to the ground. Mr Whitford grabbed the man's right hand and forced the gun into his stomach in case it discharged. The gunman had a knife in his left hand which Lachlan removed and handed to his brother, Gregory. Mr Whitford and his sons held the man until the police arrived.

For his actions, Mr Whitford is commended for brave conduct.

MR STEPHEN GRANT WILLIAMS, 3 Moore Street, Narrogin WA 6312

Late in the afternoon on 17 November 1997, Mr Williams was involved in the rescue of two people from a burning car after a traffic accident five kilometres from Narrogin.

Mr Williams was cycling in the area when he witnessed a motor vehicle accident. He immediately dialled emergency services on his mobile phone and then went to assist another man who had already arrived at the accident scene. Mr Williams opened the front passenger door of the burning vehicle and pulled a large framed semi-conscious man from the wreck. At this stage, the flames were increasing in intensity and spreading quickly to the fuel tank area. Mr Williams led the passenger across the road to safety, at which time the other rescuer, who had carried a female driver from the burning car, arrived to assist. Concerned that the vehicle might explode the rescuers moved the two injured passengers further away and stayed with them until the ambulance arrived. After this Mr Williams helped prevent the fire spreading.

For his actions, Mr Williams is commended for brave conduct.

GROUP CITATION

Members of the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter service

MR JOHN ALEXANDER BROOM
MR TREVOR GEORGE CRACKNELL
MR ROBERT HENRY LISLE
DR MARTIN THAN

- On the afternoon of 31 August 1996, members of the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter service, winched a surfboard rider to safety in gale force winds at Bate Bay off Cronulla.

The crew were advised that a surfboard rider was in difficulty 1 kilometre north of Shark Island. Weather conditions were extremely hazardous with 5 metre waves whipped up by wind speeds of up to 103 kilometres per hour, rain squalls and low cloud cover. With full knowledge of the dangerous weather conditions the crew elected to attempt a rescue. Rescue boats also headed for the area but were forced back due to the conditions. After the board rider was located, one of the crew, an ambulance paramedic, was winched into the water and swam to the youth who was very distressed and suffering hypothermia. The pilot battled to maintain control of the helicopter as it was buffeted by high winds. He held the aircraft in the nosedown position to steady it over the rescue site, while the winch operator was three quarters outside the aircraft guiding the cable. Normal communications were impossible due to the wind noise and little else could be done except to raise and lower the aircraft with the rise and fall of the sea. Due to the weather conditions it was too risky to attempt to winch the patient and the paramedic into the aircraft. They were carried on the end of the cable to shore and winched onto the beach. The surfer was then transported to hospital for immediate treatment.

For their actions, the rescue team is recognised by the award of the Group Citation for Bravery.

GROUP CITATION

Members of the Lightning Ridge State Emergency Service

MR WILLIAM CHAMBELLANT
MR FREDERICK FERGUSON
MR WOLFGANG JOHANSSON
MR MATTHEW KENT
MR OWEN LANE
MR JOHN McFADDEN

Member of the New South Wales Ambulance Service

MR PETER LANG

Opal Miner

MR CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT

On the night of 15 October 1996, members of the Lightning Ridge State Emergency Service and others were involved in the rescue of one miner and the recovery of the body of another after a mine collapse at the Wyoming Opal Fields, Lightning Ridge.

Members of the Lightning Ridge State Emergency Service were called to attend an opal mine collapse in which two miners were missing, believed trapped underground. After descending 15 metres into the mine it was found that a major collapse had occurred covering an area of 12 metres by 10 metres and consisting of approximately 300 tonnes of mainly sandstone material. Numerous faults were evident in the remaining roof with the rescue team being aware of the very high potential for further collapse. As there was no space to use conventional digging tools the excavation was carried out by the team with their bare hands and helmets. After approximately one and a half hours of continuous digging they located and released one of the miners trapped under two metres of rubble. His condition was immediately assessed and stabilised by the ambulance officer working with the rescue team. The second miner also buried under two metres of dirt was located about 90 minutes later but unfortunately was found to be deceased. The team remained in the mine until the second miner's body was extricated and removed to the surface.

For their actions, the rescue team is recognised by the award of the Group Citation for Bravery.