

# **Safety Officer Report – Lake Macquarie Rogain 2011.**

***Location: - Freemans Waterhole and Watagan National Park***

Map: - Quorrobolong 9132-2-S and Morisset 9131-1-N Topographic Maps

***Date: - 13<sup>th</sup> August***

***(2 events: - 6 hour 12noon till 6pm and 12 hour noon till midnight)***

## **Introduction**

137 registered teams with between 300 and 400 competitors enjoyed a beautiful winter day and night at this year's Lake Macquarie Rogain held on private land and the rugged Watagans National Park and Heaton State Forest. The 6 hour event had 83 teams with over 200 members entered; the 12 hour event had 48 teams with over 100 members entered.

An administration Tent and Hash House were set up on private property belonging to Zache Waldeback on Becks Road Freemans Waterhole. A great location with a large grassed paddock with groves of shade trees.

Participants are encouraged to camp overnight to reduce the dangers of driving while tired. To facilitate this, an area suitable for camping is always found and hot food is provided by the "hash house" from 18:00hs to after midnight. Breakfast is provided on Sunday morning.

A very experienced management committee ran the event. All competitors were provided with an accurate map and checkpoint descriptions. The pre-event briefing covered all likely problems such as very steep terrain with many unmarked cliff lines, very slippery rocks in wet watercourses, vehicular traffic on roads, out of bounds areas, etc. They were advised of regular vehicular safety sweeps of the main road past Heaton Lookout and advised to make their way to the road if they needed assistance.

A Safety Plan was prepared based on past year's safety plans, adapted for the changed location and environment. This was forwarded to Cooranbong SES for comment prior to the event. NSW Police Hunter Regional Command and NSW ambulance were notified prior to the event and provided with a copy of the Safety Plan.

As in past years, the Cooranbong SES provided an experienced safety response team with a Hilux4wd vehicle and all necessary equipment: - mobile phones, portable GRN radios for infield communications, ready packs with maps and compasses for team member to operate in the field as necessary, base tent for protection from the weather, generator and lighting equipment.

The Safety Officers had: - incident reporting forms, a soft 4wd vehicle, ready pack, vertical access equipment, all topographic maps as well as the event map, compasses and an Etrex Vista gps.

## **Event**

I am pleased to say that there were no major incidents, again this year.

The minor incidents were: -

- 3 of the 6 hour team contacted by text or phoned to say they would be up to 1 hours late back;
- all other 6 hour teams returned before the 18:30 cut off time;
- we had word that from a competitor 1 of the 12 hour teams were going to be late back due to a knee injury slowing them, the SES vehicle was able to drive further out Becks Road and pick them up;
- during road sweep by the SES, 2 team was transported back to the hash house;
- first aid assistance was provided by Cooranbong SES for one competitor with a small scratch;
- the competitor with the injured knee did not request first aid.

Five safety sweeps of the course roads were carried out by the Cooranbong SES, plus a trip to erect a, "walkers on road" warning sign.

The weather was good warm winter day and cooler night, there was overcast but the threat of the forecast rain failed to eventuate.

## **Conclusion**

A very well run event and only very minor incidents reported to the Safety Officers and SES.

The SES radios, on simplex, provided adequate coverage back to base, during the road sweeps. Mobile phone coverage to the event organizers was generally good. It is clear that mobile phone coverage is improving to such an extent, that it has become the main means of communicating during events such as this, relatively close to urban areas.

**A particular thanks to the Cooranbong SES for their, professional approach, skills and friendliness, that contributed to a very successful event.**

The Safety Officers collected the signage set on the road and assisted with the collection of some flags on Sunday, with the aim of maintaining bush fitness and navigational skills.

Dug Floyd  
(Safety Officer Lake Macquarie Rogain)