

Media Release

Blue Mountains Unit

1400hrs 18 July 2015

Snow Impacts Mountains

On Thursday 16th, the East Coast was affected by a deep low weather system that was expected some slight snow and wind to Blue Mountains, but by 10pm unexpected snow started to settle in the Medlow Bath area. Within an hour of falling, the snow had become so thick that the highway became impassable and there was a concern for trapped motorists on the side of the road.

The Blue Mountains State Emergency Service (SES) immediately coordinated a response of SES volunteers along with the RFS and Police to commence patrols along the highway, the Darling Causeway and Bells Line of Road to check on the welfare of the stranded motorist, and to start clearing the road as soon as possible from fallen trees.

“Throughout the night our teams had checked on over 100 cars stuck in snow” stated John Hughes, Local Controller of the SES.

“We transported some 50 people back to a Place Of Refuge which we had established at Medlow Bath and Blackheath RFS”

The SES also attended to a number of reports of damage to properties across the Upper Mountains throughout the night.

“A number of trees had broken due to the weight of snow, however we were lucky that there was no significant damage caused”, Mr Hughes continued.

“We were fortunate that the winds only reached about 40km/h in the region otherwise the damage may have been much more severe.”

SES volunteers continued throughout Friday and Saturday after unexpected high volume of snow storm. With planning well in place, the entire operation was coordinated from the SES Headquarters in Katoomba with Police, RFS and Council working from their operations centre.

“The working cooperation between the emergency services is excellent” Mr Hughes stated.
“I was very pleased that new Snow Plan worked very well.”

The Blue Mountains Snow Plan was approved by the Local Emergency Management Committee in March this year to respond to this type of operation

If any members of the public require assistance during storms, the SES can be contacted on 132500 at any time.

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Released by John Hughes – Local Controller 1400hrs 18 July 2015