

Media Release

Blue Mountains Unit

1400hrs 15 October 2014

Snow Impacts Mountains

On Tuesday 14th, the East Coast was affected by a deep low weather system that was expected only to bring rain and some wind to the Blue Mountains, but by 9pm unexpected snow started to settle in the Blackheath 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.

“Some occupants were safe and others we transported back to a safe place of refuge back to Katoomba”

Seventeen passengers and crew from a train that was stranded at Blackheath were taken to safety at the SES Headquarters in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

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

“We were called to almost 30 requests of assistance from householders mainly due to the weight of snow breaking trees and damaging roofs”, Mr Hughes continued.

“We were fortunate that the winds only reached about 56km/h in the region otherwise the damage may have been much more severe.”

SES volunteers continued throughout Wednesday helping residents recover from the unexpected 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 with the quick response of all agencies throughout the night to make ensure the safety of the public was maintained”

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 15 October 2014