

# Critical Incident Support Program Policy



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

NSW SES is committed to developing a responsive and flexible work environment that supports a safe and secure workplace thus ensuring the safety, well-being and productivity of volunteers and employees. NSW SES has a duty of care as legislated by the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 No 10*, “to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces.”

The prevention and successful management of all types of injuries including psychological injury improves the health and morale of NSW SES members. Central to the effective prevention and management of workplace illness and injury is the successful application of critical incident and counselling services and early interventions.

The NSW SES Critical Incident Support Program (CISP) provides a comprehensive and integrated, systematic and multi-component crisis intervention system, and exists within a team of volunteer Peers and Chaplains who form the program’s Peer Support Team. They are trained to provide a range of support services and interventions, and can be contacted 24/7 on 1800 626 800. Information about the issues discussed with any member of the CISP team will be strictly confidential between the individual and the member of the CISP team involved. Information about the CISP will be provided to Units every 2 years by way of Pre-Incident Education and Awareness Training sessions and build on resilience factors and existing coping skills of NSW SES members.

### **1.1. POLICY PRINCIPLES**

NSW SES recognises that the psychological and physical health and safety of all members has a direct impact on effectiveness in their roles, and in the performance of the NSW SES as a whole. There is strong evidence to support the fact that preventative measures are significantly more effective than post-incident measures, which often may take a considerable amount of effort, cost and commitment to resolve, with less certainty of success.

NSW SES is committed to the application of critical incident stress management and the principles of the ICISF (International Critical Incident Stress Foundation) and CIMA (Crisis Intervention and Management Australasia).

NSW SES acknowledges that exposure to traumatic events and critical incidents may impact individuals and groups. Members of NSW SES are likely to be confronted with a critical

incident at some time throughout their service with the organisation. A critical incident is any situation faced in an operational context by emergency services personnel that may cause them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions, which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function at the scene or later. The support and interventions provided by members of the CISP mitigate the impact of critical incidents and accelerate the normal recovery process. All SES members and their families can request support from the program, and are encouraged to do so when an incident is considered to meet the definition of a critical incident or is impacting negatively in any way on teams or individuals.

Anyone can request assistance from the CISP, it does not need to be someone in the “chain of command” who determines the need for support. NSW SES Controllers are supportive of their members looking after themselves and in addition they have a duty of care to provide the necessary assistance and support in looking after their members. Members may need to discuss with their Controller if they think that he or she may also benefit from the support provided through the Program and if the whole team needs some sort of assistance or contact at any time directly to the CISP 24/7 contact number. No one needs to ask permission to call directly to ask or seek assistance or advice.

## **2. KNOWN CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN NSW SES**

Everyone reacts differently to incidents and events and no one can predict how something will impact on any particular individual. Some incidents or events may have a heightened impact and in an NSW SES context these have been defined below as a guide for NSW SES members. The following list is not exhaustive, but such incidents include:

- Death or serious injury of a NSW SES member – ALSO SEE IMPORTANT NOTE BELOW
- Civilian death resulting from operational error/accident/equipment malfunction
- The victim has suicided
- The incident is horrific – e.g. incineration/body parts
- Death or serious injury to children
- When the victim/s are known to members of the team
- The incident is prolonged or difficult
- Mass disasters
- Fatalities and multiple casualties/fatalities
- Excessive media interest
- When there has been a series of major incidents involving the Unit over a short period of time
- When it is someone in the Unit's first fatality
- When it is felt that one or more members could be emotionally affected
- Any other event that is considered serious enough for NSW SES members involved

**IMPORTANT** – Incidents resulting in serious injury or death of a NSW SES member are understandably extremely traumatic for all involved. In these circumstances contact with the Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services (MCICS) is automatic and State Operations will contact the MCICS.

## **2.1. REACTIONS TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

While we cannot predict who will be affected, we do know that the impact is likely to be felt in one of five ways:

### **BEHAVIOUR**

Sometimes our usual behaviour changes. For example, we might really want to be by ourselves and withdraw from our normal routine. We might lose interest in things we used to enjoy or things we have to do. We may not want to eat right or our sleep may be disturbed. Or we may have an increase in the amount of alcohol we normally consume or undertake risk-taking activities or angry outbursts.

### **FEELINGS**

The way we feel might be different. We might not even know it; rather, it might be someone close to us who notices or a family member who tells us we are 'losing' it or are too serious, or that we seem sad. We may feel anxious or irritable or have a heightened sense of fear, grief or helplessness.

### **THOUGHTS**

The way we think we can be disturbed by an incident or event. We may feel fixated on an event or avoid things, people or places. We might find our thoughts returning to it without even knowing why or we might have trouble concentrating or remembering things. We may even have a distorted memory of the event and it might be someone in NSW SES who notices. If this happens, listen to them, they may be right.

### **PHYSICAL CHANGES**

Our bodies keep score of stress in interesting ways and sometimes this can cause real problems. Stress can cause all sorts of aches and pains like; headaches, sweating, trembling, rapid breathing, nausea and muscle tightness. You may need to seek medical assistance also with these pains.

### **SPIRITUALITY**

We may feel anger at God or withdraw from our usual places of worship. There may be a feeling of loss of meaning and purpose or a sense of isolation from God or your spirituality and faith practices and other rituals may seem empty.

### **3. CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS**

CISP provides a range of interventions defined as follows:

#### **3.1. PRE INCIDENT EDUCATION AND AWARENESS TRAINING**

Peer Support Team members conduct information sessions at Units about CISP in the format of pre-incident education and awareness training. These sessions cover:

- What is the NSW SES critical incident support program?
- What is critical incident stress?
- Known critical incidents in SES.
- Incidents that may require activation.
- What can be done to manage the effects of critical incident stress and build on existing coping skills?
- How the program can be accessed for assistance via the Duty Officers and members of the Peer Support Team.

Pre-incident education and awareness sessions will be provided to NSW SES members explaining how to access the program and on information on critical incident stress and its management. These sessions are provided by Peers and Chaplains and can be provided in their own Unit and Regions. This session can be incorporated into Induction, Region Conferences or training nights set aside for that purpose. The MCICS also provides information to new members at inductions and may visit Units from time to time to provide input into these sessions with Peers and Chaplains. The Pre-incident Education and Awareness training sessions may be co-ordinated by the Peers through liaison with the Region and Local/Unit Controllers and reported to the MCICS through a CISP Activity report.

#### **3.2. REST, INFORMATION AND TRANSITION SERVICES (RITS) or DEMOBILISATION**

This intervention is normally carried out for a large-scale disaster or incident and is aimed at larger groups after the shift stand-down or after the first exposure to the incident in staging areas and also a part of pre-deployment briefings. This is held to provide information and is also where food and rest may be provided.



### **3.3. CRISIS MANAGEMENT BRIEFING (CMB)**

This intervention is usually held for any event that impacts on a large group at any time before exposure, during or after the event and may be repeated if necessary or requested. This is useful for small or large groups where information is needed about the event and may also be used in small group situations where information is necessary after an incident.

### **3.4. SAFER-R or PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID/ON SCENE SUPPORT**

A NSW SES CISP Peer, Chaplain or other team member can be present at the scene of an incident to provide immediate crisis support and practical assistance for any event large or small-scale incident and when necessary provide support to stabilise individuals during the incident when operations are ongoing.

### **3.5. IMMEDIATE SMALL GROUP SUPPORT (ISGS) or DEFUSING**

This intervention is an informal information session and is conducted as a briefing session. It is provided immediately after the incident usually within 12-24 hours. It is usually held on-scene or back at the Unit Headquarters allowing for the initial ventilation of thoughts and feelings. CISP Peers and Chaplains provide basic information on how to cope with the effects of the incident and about how to get further assistance if needed. It is a discussion about the event, not a critique and also provides information about self-care following an incident. As mentioned above this process should always occur within 24 hours of the incident and is usually sufficient to ensure there are no future problems.

### **3.6. POWERFUL EVENT GROUP SUPPORT (PEGS) or CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS**

#### **DEBRIEFING**

This is a more structured intervention often known as a “debrief” usually held 72 hours after the incident and up to 2 weeks after an incident. It is a chance to talk about what happened and understand reactions to the critical incident and is not an operational debriefing. In NSW SES these are facilitated by the MCICS, representative and/or experienced Peer Support Team member/s, and may at times include a supporting mental health professional along with other Peers and/or Chaplains. This is determined based on the needs of the team. It is often provided when it has not been possible to conduct a ISGS or CMB within an

earlier timeframe. A PEGS is often provided if the incident has been of a very serious nature or if there is more support or help required after a ISGS.

### **3.7. INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT – ONE ON ONE**

Anyone can request to speak confidentially with a Peer Support Team Member, the MCICS, the Senior Chaplain or by referral to a psychologist or mental health professional by contacting the CISP number 1800 626 800.

### **3.8. PASTORAL CRISIS INTERVENTION**

This is provided by NSW SES Chaplains in as part of CISP and can be accessed to mitigate a “crisis of faith” and to provide spiritual guidance to assist in the recovery process.

### **3.9. FOLLOW UP AND REFERRAL**

This can be carried out by any member of the Peer Support team when they believe there is a need and when they are aware that someone has asked for assistance from the CISP.

#### **4. EVALUATION**

The MCICS who manages the CISP may send out evaluation sheets from time to time to Units who have accessed the program and who have been supported by members of the Peer Support Team. Feedback is important to the effectiveness of the NSW SES as a whole, and the cooperation of all members is encouraged and appreciated.

#### **5. ACCESS TO THE CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM**

Access to the CISP is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week on 1800 626 800.

NSW SES members and their families may have access to assistance by:

- Self-referral – Where a NSW SES member or a member of their family chooses to contact the program for one-on-one support or advice
- Suggested referral – Where someone else from the Unit (eg a Controller or member of the Unit) is aware of an issue impacting on a member and makes contact with the program, or suggests to the member that they contact the program. If you access the program on behalf of someone, the CISP Duty Officer will ask if you have the individual's permission to talk on their behalf or if they have agreed to a return phone call from a member of the CISP Peer Support team.

Peer Support Team members do not self-activate; the CISP is centrally coordinated through the MCICS who works out of NSW SES State Headquarters. A Peer Support Team member will never be involved in providing support or interventions to individuals or groups from their own Region or Unit. Peer Support Team members are available to provide general information about the program (as defined in the Pre-incident Education and Awareness sessions), and will suggest you contact the program directly on 1800 626 800 for more specific requirements.

## **6. ACCOUNTABILITIES**

### **6.1. COMMISSIONER**

The Commissioner is accountable for providing leadership support in maintaining the principles of the CISP, and ensuring these principles are applied consistently in NSW SES. The Commissioner is also accountable for providing leadership support around the role of NSW SES Controllers and the duty of care they have for the psychological health and wellbeing of SES members, and in ensuring preventative strategies and pre-incident education and awareness sessions are provided to NSW SES members and their families.

### **6.2. MANAGER, CRITICAL INCIDENT AND COUNSELLING SERVICES**

The Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services is accountable for:

- Providing leadership advice related to organisational crisis and critical incidents.
- Leading and managing the Critical Incident Support Program policies/procedures and co-ordinating the Peer Support Team in response to critical incidents in the NSW SES.
- Recruitment of and day-to-day management of the members of the Peer Support Team who are recruited from across NSW SES Units and Regions in their roles as Peers or Chaplains in response to critical incidents.
- Managing the after-hours CISP Duty Officer system and rosters of specially trained Peers to take calls and arrange necessary interventions and support for volunteers and staff in NSW SES.
- Facilitating and training members of the Peer Support team twice a year in the application of Critical Incident Stress Management in NSW SES and offering them feedback and practice in these skills and other training opportunities.
- Managing the service level agreement of psychologist/s and other mental health and crisis intervention professionals in their role in the Program for operational, clinical support, interventions and supervision, training and trauma management as necessary or by referral.
- Monitoring and evaluating the Program.
- Maintaining confidentiality and privacy of individuals who access the Program.
- Reporting on the effectiveness of the Program.

- Advising the Director, Human Services and Commissioner of any changes that may be needed to the Program over time including enhancement of effort proposals, lessons learned and after action reviews.

### **6.3. REGION/LOCAL/UNIT CONTROLLERS**

NSW SES Region/Local/Unit controllers have a duty of care to:

- Apply the policy and procedures for the CISP to minimise the risk to NSW SES members involved in critical incidents or the exposure to traumatic events by activating the Peer Support Team.
- Ensure safe systems of work are in place to minimise the likelihood of NSW SES members experiencing critical incident stress and refer to the Manager, CICS for advice.
- Apply the recommended after hours contact procedures for contact to the Critical Incident Support Programs, Duty Officer by contacting the team directly on 1800 626 800.
- Ensure that the members in their Units have knowledge of critical incident stress and the CISP by having members of the CISP Peer Support team present a Pre-incident education and awareness session for members of their Unit every 2 years and for all new members of their Units at induction.
- Monitor NSW SES members and observe for critical incident stress reactions.
- Access the CISP to provide immediate assistance and regular follow-up for those who may be experiencing critical incident stress or been involved in a critical incident.
- Access the CISP for advice and assistance in critical incident stress management and support for all members of SES.
- Schedule Pre-Incident Education and Awareness training on the Critical Incident Support Program, conducted by Peer Support Team members and Chaplains for all members every 2 years and at induction training or at other training or Region activities. State and local field days and competitions are also opportunities for Units to request the presence of the Region Chaplain and members of the Peer Support Team.

- Notifying the CISP number 1800 626 800 for assistance or guidance when looking after an individual who may need assistance or follow up. Controllers will be asked if they have the individuals permission before further contact will be made with the individual.
- Advising NSW SES members and their families of the availability of the CISP for further support or advice with matters when it may be related to a recent or previous critical incident/s.
- Maintain the confidentiality of matters that may arise with respect to a NSW SES member who you know who may have accessed the program.
- Notify the MCICS in State Headquarters with any questions or queries regarding the Critical Incident Support Program or issues they wish to discuss.
- The MCICS will contact Units/Regions from time to time regarding incidents that may require necessary follow up or support if raised or notified by the Daily Operations brief.
- Notify the CISP number, 1800 626 800 to activate the Peer Support team to request assistance when the incident is considered serious and/or meets the automatic activation criteria.
- Respect the role of the NSW SES member who is a Peer in your Unit and maintain the confidentiality of matters of the Program. Do not expect the Peer to report to the Controller in relation to CISP interventions that have provided or that may arise.
- In addition to above, Controllers who have a member of the Peer Support Team as members of their Units are responsible for the:
  - Endorsement of the NSW SES member in their Unit and with the Region Controllers agreement that these members should continue as a Peer Support Team member and that they are a credible member of the SES and an active operational SES member if being considered for recruitment into the CISP. NB - Peers are educated around remaining operational members of SES as their first priority and Peer Support should not impact on their roles as operational members of their Units.

- Discuss matters with the MCICS as necessary, support and release members of the Peer Support Team member to attend training and interventions when activated.
- Discuss with MCICS if any member of their Unit/Region should no longer be supported in their ongoing membership in the Peer Support Team and advise the MCICS of any conduct, performance or discipline matters that may seriously impact on the members credibility in remaining a member of the Peer Support Team.

#### **6.4. ALL NSW SES MEMBERS**

All NSW SES members have a duty of care to:

- Look after themselves and request support for any matter that the NSW SES CISP may be able to provide support on.
- Be aware of critical incident stress, the effects of a critical incident and the reactions which personnel may experience following exposure to a critical incident for both themselves and others in their team or Unit, and attend Pre-Incident Education and Awareness training that is provided throughout their membership and appointment in NSW SES.
- Refer members directly to the Program for advice referral and management of same.

#### **6.5. MEMBERS OF THE PEER SUPPORT TEAM**

Members of the NSW SES CISP Peer Support Team have a duty of care to:

- Be an active and operational member of their Unit before taking on Peer responsibilities. All Peers must remain active in their Unit.
- Advise only their Controller of the time that may be required for attendance at CISP activities so as to not impact on operational response requirements of the Unit. Seek permission and follow Unit procedures when being activated to extended CISP operational duties.
- Not put CISP activities as a first priority as these should never take priority over other Unit operational requirements (there are many members of the Program who are available to assist and support).

- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding all interventions that may arise with respect to a NSW SES member who is known to you who may have accessed the Program.
- Complete the Peer Induction training including the Crisis Intervention and Management Australasia Group Crisis Intervention course and ongoing annual team training activities as scheduled by the Program.
- Participate in team meetings and other training as scheduled throughout the year.
- Act entirely within the policy and procedures for the Program and the day-to-day supervision of the MCICS.
- Accept the MCICS's decisions regarding the operation of the Program and decisions about Peer membership.
- Agree to voluntarily resign from the team or request leave of absence at such time/s when personal or work circumstances lead them to believe that they are unable to participate fully in the Program.
- Abide by the CISP Position Description and CISP Charter and Code of Conduct for the position of Peer Support Team Member in the NSW SES CISP, as well as the social media policy.

#### **Home Phone Numbers and Email Contact**

- To protect the privacy of CISP Peer Support Team members and their families, their private phone numbers and email contacts are not publicised, or circulated outside of the Peer Support Team.
- The 24-hour contact number should be promoted for all contact with the Critical Incident Support Program and members of the Peer Support Team.
- Chaplains may choose to provide their private numbers and will have these printed on their SES business cards.
- Each Peer Support Team member will be issued with business cards, which has the CISP 1800 number listed.

#### **6.6. PROVISION OF CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT IN A PEER'S OWN REGION OR UNIT**

- CISP Peer Support Team members are not permitted to provide CISP interventions in their own Units or in other Units in their Region, unless under certain circumstances as directed by the MCICS.



- Ensuring Peer Support Team members are not active in their own Units and Regions assists in preventing overload and makes it easier to control requests for assistance from friends and associates that may otherwise be difficult to refuse.
- Chaplains will almost always provide support to their own Regions unless the Region Chaplain is not available, in which case another Chaplain will provide relief as directed by the MCICS or the Senior Chaplain.
- This procedure aligns with best practice promoted by the CISM model, in that it is preferable not to provide critical incident support to those persons whom you know too well, or work closely with.
- A close association with those giving and receiving CISP assistance may affect the Peer Support team member's ability to remain emotionally unattached from the people and the incident. It is often easier for members seeking assistance to talk to someone they do not know and who is not associated with their local SES Unit or Region.
- Much discretion is involved in deciding who is too close to you to work with, and consideration must always be given to how effective an intervention is likely to be, particularly if those you are seeking to help would rather be talking with an 'outsider'.
- Any requests for assistance (other than Pre-incident education and awareness sessions) in your own area must be referred to the CISP Duty Officer and/or MCICS. Appropriate assistance/action can then be arranged.
- Only under exceptional circumstances, and then only with the approval of the MCICS will a critical incident support intervention be provided by a Peer Support Team member in their own Unit or Region. However, under no circumstances will a Peer Support Team member provide CISP if they:
  - Have been working with the group involved in the incident on a regular basis, even if they were not with them during the incident.
  - Are related to or close friends with any of the people requiring assistance.
  - Have been operationally involved in an incident.
- Where a Team member has been operationally involved in an incident, they may also have been affected by that incident. Duration of the incident is also a factor as

it is difficult to effectively perform both operational and Peer support roles on a long-term basis.

Peer Support Team members are activated through the CISP Duty Officer or Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services and this is the fundamental underlying principle of the Critical Incident Support Program is that Peer Support Team members can only be activated to respond by CISP Duty Officer or the MCICS.

When a request for critical incident support intervention is received, the CISP Duty Officer will assess the situation and refer the case to the appropriate Peer Support Team member(s), Chaplain and often in consultation with the Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services.

***No member of the team will self-activate.***

If Peer Support Team members are contacted directly to provide an intervention they should contact the Duty Officer on 1800 626 800 or the Manager. This will be assessed relating to the situation and if the Manager discusses this with the Duty Officer they can then agree to send the team member as requested or take alternative action.

Where assistance is requested by an individual not currently involved in an incident the request needs to have the permission of the individual or referral to the Manager to follow up as may be necessary.

## **6.7. CISP PEER SUPPORT – DUTY OFFICERS**

CISP Duty Officers notify the MCICS of critical incidents with details of who they are sending to provide interventions. This process exists to:

- Ensure that the intervention is the correct one for the incident and the member activated is the most appropriate person to do so.
- Ensure that no team member is being given an excessive workload.
- Ensure that the MCICS is aware of the activities of the whole team.
- Ensure that no one member is activating alone to the incident.
- Prevent any duplication of critical incident support interventions.
- Authorise/organise any travel arrangements necessary.

## **6.8. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES RELATING TO CISP ACTIVITIES**

There will be times when, as a CISP Peer Support team member, you are required to stay overnight and incur expenses in the performance of your duties. Reimbursement for accommodation and meal costs will be met through the daily allowance as applied by NSW Treasury and claimed by completing the CISP Travel Reimbursement Claim form. This is available as an electronic document on CICS EOS site – Public Documents. Travel rates are updated annually and this form will be updated accordingly in accordance with taxation guidelines and State Treasury. A CISP Activity Report must accompany the claim form. This is also supplied in electronic form.

- Prior approval for the use of a private vehicle must be sought, via email, by the Peer, Chaplain or other CISP team member and must be attached to a claim.
- Claims will be approved by the Manager upon production of tax invoices for accommodation and meal expenses.
- Financial assistance in advance can be provided if necessary and during long term critical incident response will be co-ordinated through the State Operations who will liaise with Logistics.
- All reasonable costs for accommodation and meals will be met when CISP Team members are on bona fide CISP business. However, NSW SES retains the right to not reimburse the full total of excessive accommodation and meal accounts if this applies.

### ***Allowances where no overnight accommodation is necessary***

- Reimbursement for accommodation and meal costs will be met through producing actual expense receipts and as applied by NSW Treasury and claimed by completing the CISP Travel Reimbursement Claim form.

### ***Reimbursement of costs for use of own vehicle***

- If you unable to access an NSW SES Unit or Region vehicle for CISP business you will be reimbursed to use your private vehicles as long it is comprehensively insured and prior approval to incur the expense is obtained. Reimbursement is provided at NSW State Government rates as outlined in the electronic Travel Reimbursement Claim forms.

- Details of distances travelled should be recorded on the claim form and submitted to the Program Support Officer (CICS), for authorisation of payment by the Manager, CICS.
- Comprehensive Vehicle Insurance is required and your updated Policy is required annually or attached to the relevant CISP Activity Report form when a private vehicle is used for CISP activities.

#### ***Motor vehicle accidents***

- If an accident occurs while you are on official CISP business, the Manager must be notified as soon as practicable after an accident so that the appropriate claim forms can be submitted and processed.
- All vehicles will be covered by NSW SES insurance through the Treasury Managed Fund, provided they are comprehensively insured.

#### ***Air travel***

- When air travel is necessary for CISP business, the Manager, CICS will co-ordinate and authorise this through the best avenue available at the time either through State Headquarters or Region staffing resources.

#### ***Reimbursement for telephone calls***

- Reimbursement is available for the cost of telephone calls made for CISP business. Please keep a record of the calls made for CISP team business and attach your phone account to the relevant Activity Report form when making a claim. Only CISP duty officers are provided a phone.

## **7. CONTACT ARRANGEMENTS**

The NSW SES Critical Incident Support Program has a dedicated 24-hour telephone number 7 days a week. This number is 1800 626 800. As a part of the CISP Peer Support Team it is important to promote the use of the 1800 number when conducting Pre-Incident Education and Awareness training sessions, and when representing the program in any capacity.

## **8. REPORTING**

### **8.1. PRE INCIDENT EDUCATION AND AWARENESS TRAINING**

The purpose of the Pre Incident Education and Awareness Training Program is to educate NSW SES members on the potential risks to mental health and well-being that can result from critical incidents experienced while working with the NSW SES. The sessions include information on methods for coping with maladaptive symptoms should they occur, and to provide details about how to seek help through the Critical Incident Support Program.

Peer Support Team members provide these sessions at NSW SES Units in their Regions. Sessions can be incorporated into Induction training, Region conferences or training nights set aside specifically for that purpose. There is a customised package used for the sessions and it is regularly updated and provided to the CISP Team and should not be altered in any way to ensure a consistent message is delivered. Peer Support Team members will go through a training and endorsement assessment process on their ability and skills to provide this training at the appropriate standard for the NSW SES CISP.

The CISP conducts Pre-incident Education and Awareness Sessions at every NSW SES Unit ideally every 2 years. Sessions are usually coordinated with Unit training schedules and delivered as part of regular training nights.

#### **8.1.1. PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING PRE-INCIDENT EDUCATION AND AWARENESS SESSIONS**

Booking a CISP Pre-Incident Education and Awareness Training:

- Request permission to hold a CISP Pre-Incident Education Session from the Unit Controller
- Organise for a Peer and Chaplain to attend the session – discuss with MCICS if the Unit is particularly large or if there are other requirements or issues to be considered
- Arrange for all resources to be available by contacting the Unit and ensuring they have any equipment e.g. laptop, data projector, whiteboards etc.
- Email the CISP PSO with the scheduled date of the session and the names of the Peers and Chaplains who will be attending

Setup

- When you arrive at the Unit, brief the Unit Controller or appropriate person (e.g. RLDO etc.) about the aims and outcomes of a Pre-incident Education Session
- Set up the room prior to the training session starting including any computer/data projector requirements – always test equipment prior to commencement
- Prepare any hand-outs including all CISP Brochures and [Fit4Life Sheets](#)

#### Post-Session Instructions

- Hang around after the session to mingle with participants
- Be available for members to talk if required
- Take details of any members who require follow-up including name and phone numbers – pass these on to a Duty Officer or the MCICS

#### Uniform to be worn for Pre-incident Education and Awareness Sessions:

- Two Piece-PPE showing NO Unit or rank or location etc. Peers and Chaplains should maintain a separate insignia-free set of PPE to be used exclusively for CISP activities.
- T-shirt – Peer/Chaplain
- Epaulettes – Peer/Chaplain
- Cap – Peer/Chaplain
- Name badge – pin for PPE, magnet for T-shirt.
- Black boots or shoes – in operational environments ensure shoes are compliant with health and safety requirements.
- Polar fleece for Peers or Glanda for Chaplains in cold weather

Peers only wear uniform items showing Peer Support Team insignia – **DO NOT** wear identification related to Unit, rank or Unit location.

#### Presentation materials:

- 'I thought I couldn't talk to anyone' DVD
- USB with Power Point Presentation and Trainers Guide
- Printed version of Power Point Presentation in case of equipment failure
- Printed version of Trainers Guide in case of equipment failure
- Cue-cards

Printed materials – approx. 25 copies of each

- Fit4life sheets
- CISP Brochures
- Chaplaincy Brochures
- Evaluation Sheets
- Participant lists – 1 per session
- Expression of interest forms – for members interested in becoming team member

Stationary:

- Whiteboard markers
- Sticky Notes
- Bluetak to hang posters
- Butchers Paper (optional)

Promotional materials:

- Personal Peer Support Business cards
- CISP 1800 number A3 poster

Other:

- Copy of section in Controllers Handbook pertaining to mandatory reporting
- Copy of CISP Policy and Procedures
- Expandable Banner if available

Contact the PSO for restocking of all Pre-incident Education and Awareness materials.

## **8.2. CISP ACTIVITY REPORTS**

The details of all interventions undertaken by team members must be recorded on the CISP Activity Report – Intervention. All Peer Support Team members, Chaplains and contractors and/or other mental health professionals are expected to comply with reporting procedures.

Reporting provides the Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services with valuable statistical data. This data can assist in the targeting of promotional campaigns, further information sessions, assistance in increasing human resources and budgetary requirements along with annual reporting on the service provided to SES members to the Commissioner within the constraints of the confidentiality and privacy provisions of the Program.

Initial verbal reporting provides opportunities, which include:

- Discussing the intervention, which you have been involved with.
- Checking any concerns you may be having about your performance and allows the ventilation of feelings.
- Monitoring of your own welfare.
- Giving credit for work you have been involved with.
- Seeking assistance with referrals and mechanisms for referring.

All CISP Peer Support Team members including Chaplains must contact the CISP duty officer by telephone WITHIN 24 HOURS of conducting any CISP activity. All CISP team members attending an activity must complete an Activity Report form. The forms available allow for 'Interventions', and 'Education'. All team members must forward an Activity Report form to the CISP Manager by the end of each calendar month of any CISP activity. The MCICS will follow up as necessary.



## **9. MANANAGEMENT/SUPERVISION AND REFERRAL FOR PEERS**

Clinical support for the Peer Support Team and for CISP interventions is provided by the MCICS and/or by referral to a psychologist or other mental health practitioner as required. Psychologists and other mental health practitioners are only activated as part of the CISP through the MCICS or CISP Duty Officer after liaison with the MCICS.

### ***Rationale***

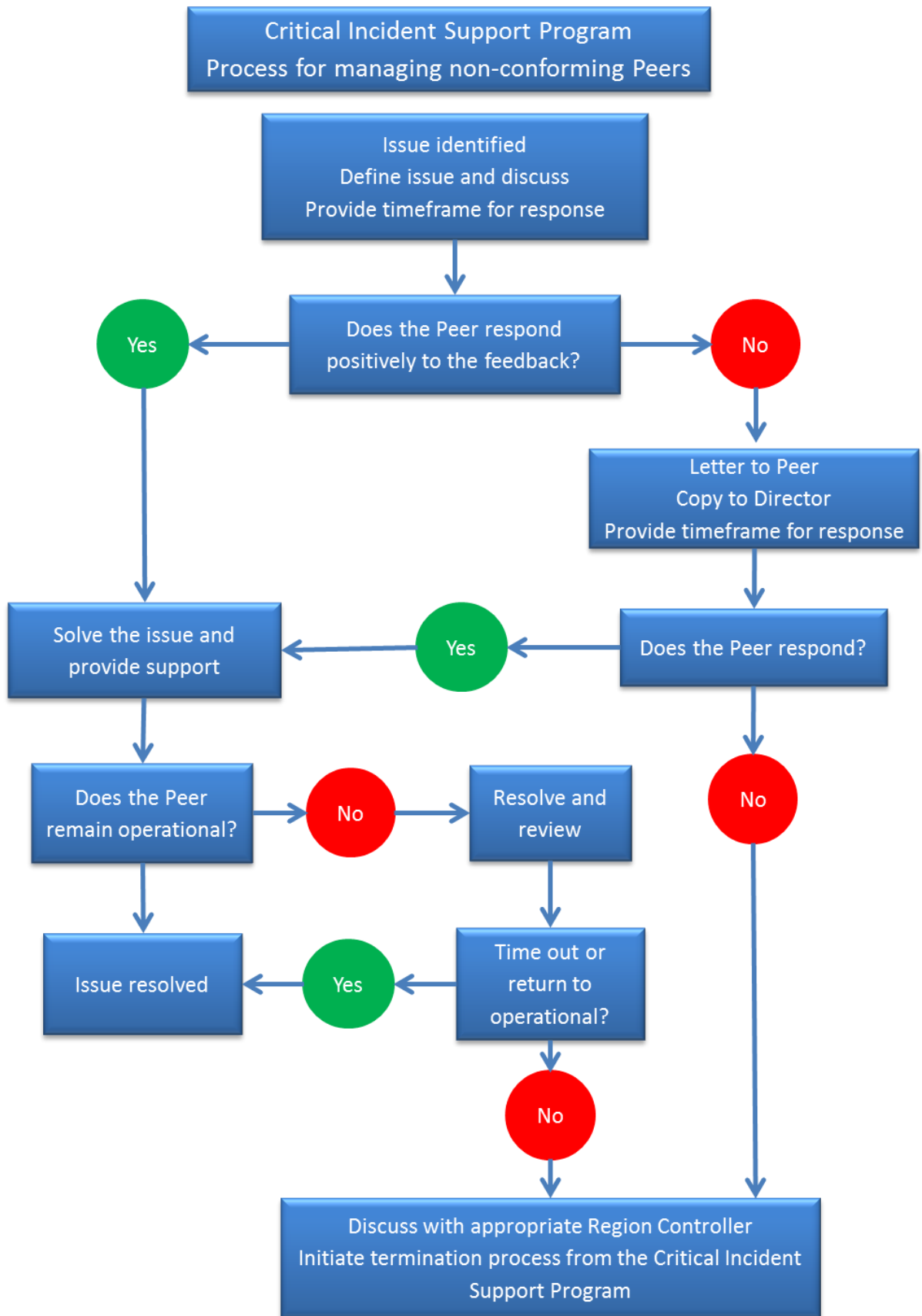
The requirement to notify the MCICS exists to:

- Ensure that no clinical practitioner is being given an excessive workload in accordance with NSW SES CISP service level agreements and managed within allocated budget for program activations.
- Ensure that the MCICS is aware of the activities of all mental health practitioners contracted to NSW SES.
- Prevent any duplication of CISP mental health practitioners service level agreements.
- Authorise/ organise any travel arrangements, payment of fees in relation to interventions.
- Ensure that the appropriate type and level of intervention is provided that will attempt to meet the individual need.

Peer Support Team members will receive clinical supervision/advice and support from the programs Team Psychologist or MCICS or other delegated mental health provider. This type of support occurs as part of regular CISP Team Training Activities using a 'Trauma Screening Questionnaire' and can also occur through activation from the MCICS.

### **9.1. MANAGING NON-CONFORMING PEERS**

Responsibility for managing non-conforming Peers lies with the MCICS who works in consultation with the Unit Controllers responsible for the Peer. The MCICS is responsible for ensuring all conversations, phone calls and correspondence are documented appropriately throughout the management process detailed below.



## 10. CHARTER AND CODE OF CONDUCT

- You will be treated with respect.
- You will receive a clear explanation of the assistance you will receive and any limitations.
- The Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services and contracted psychologist may be consulted about information you provide but this will be with your knowledge.
- Information you provide will be confidential unless it compromises a duty of care to you or others.
- You will be advised of options for dealing with your concerns should either you or the member of the Peer Support Team with whom you are dealing feel it necessary for you to take this course of action.
- You will receive support in a harassment free environment which is respectful of your cultural background and traditions.
- You will treat all individuals with respect at all times recognising and acknowledging their cultural backgrounds and traditions and assuring them that all services will be free from harassment of any kind.
- You will maintain the strictest confidence of information provided by members of NSW SES and others in the course of your work.
- You will not discuss your work either generally or specifically outside the parameters of the supervision process as determined by the Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services of the Program.
- You accept that confidentiality is restricted by judicial and legislative requirements to act at all times within your duty of care to your fellow NSW SES members, and this extends to their families especially where children and young people are concerned.
- You will openly declare any concerns you develop about your own competencies to accept or continue to work with individuals or groups of SES personnel, and accept the judgement of the MCICS that you cease to be involved at any time regardless of who expresses the concern/s, should that be the case.
- As a member of the Peer Support Team you are not to develop personal relationships with individuals for whom you have provided either group or one on one interventions. It is your responsibility to advise the Manager or Duty Officer at the time you are activated to respond to an incident if you believe this may be compromised by a pre-existing relationship. Doing so will preclude you from continued membership of the Team. You will accept regular supervision from the Manager and an independent psychologist from time to time.
- You will not self-activate at any time without prior approval from the Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services.
  - Chaplains will continue to observe your own denominational Code of Conduct.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

**11. CISP MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

I, ..... agree to serve on the SES Critical Incident Support Program’s Peer Support Team in the role of Peer Support Team Member/Chaplain. I understand that serving as a member of this team requires the following commitments and obligations:

1. Complete the initial CISM Group Crisis Intervention Course.
2. Participate in all on-going annual team training activities.
3. Participate in other team activities throughout the year as necessary.
4. Maintain strict confidentiality regarding all interventions divulging information only to other team members as appropriate and to members of the management team as required.
5. Act entirely within the guidelines, protocols and procedures of the Program.
6. Abide by the Code of Conduct of the Program and SES Code of Conduct and Ethics.
7. Assist with the promotion of and conduct Pre Incident Education and Awareness Training presentations about the Program at appropriate Unit training and other forums.
8. Provide on-scene support and individual crisis support or referral when activated and only when activated,
9. When responded by the Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services/Duty Officer provide a first line of contact with members seeking assistance, assess the need for further interventions and liaise and report to the Duty Officer and Manager as necessary
10. When responded by the Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services/Duty Officer help organise and participate in formal Critical Incident Stress Management interventions as necessary
11. Participate in debriefing sessions for team members and attend supervision sessions with the Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services, other mental health professional as required
12. Complete regular statistical and other activity reporting requirements
13. Assist with research and program evaluation as required and;
14. Give feedback and contribute constructive ideas about how to improve the Program

I further understand that any breach of confidentiality and/or undertaking of any intervention without the express direction of the Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services or in direct conflict with the goals, integrity or guidelines of the program will result in removal from the team.

All material relating to this program remains the property of NSW SES and may not be replicated or in any other way re-produced except in the provision of pre-incident educational services within the NSW SES. All materials must be safely/securely stored and must be returned to SES upon resignation or dismissal from the team.

I agree to voluntarily resign from the team or request leave of absence at such time/s when personal or work circumstances lead me to believe I am unable to participate fully in this Program.

I accept that the management team’s decisions regarding the operation of this Program are open to discussion but not contravention.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness name (print)

## 12. DOCUMENT CONTROL

<b>Policy Name</b>	CISP Policy								
<b>Status</b>	Draft								
<b>Document Number</b>	Allocated by TRIM								
<b>File Number</b>	Allocated by TRIM								
<b>Classification</b>	Refer to Information and Classification Handling Policy								
<b>Compliance Detail</b>	<b>Mandatory for:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SES Members <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SES SHQ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SES Regions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SES Units								
<b>Directorate</b>	Human Services Directorate								
<b>Branch/Region/Unit</b>	Critical Incident and Counselling Services Branch								
<b>Publication Date</b>	1 January 2014								
<b>Review Date</b>	31 December 2014								
<b>Author</b>	Gina Mammone								
<b>Policy Custodian</b>	Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services								
<b>Distribution Method</b>	EOS								
<b>Previous Reference</b>	Not applicable								
<b>Archive Notes</b>	Not applicable								
<b>Contact for enquiries</b>	Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services								
<b>Records Retention Statement</b>	State Headquarters								
<b>EOS File Path</b>									
<b>Purpose and Context</b>	To outline the policy for the Critical Incident Support Program at the NSW SES								
<b>Associated Documentation</b>									
<b>Document Approval</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name</th> <th>Position</th> <th>Signature</th> <th>Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gina Mammone</td> <td>Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name	Position	Signature	Date	Gina Mammone	Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services		
Name	Position	Signature	Date						
Gina Mammone	Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services								

### Revision History

Version	Date	Notes	Position
0.1		Initial Draft	
0.2		Consultation	
0.3		Consultation	
1.0		Final	

## APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY

### LIST OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS

- Line of duty death or injuries
- Civilian death resulting from operational error/accident/equipment malfunction
- Mass disasters
- Victim has suicided
- Incident is horrific (e.g. incinerations/body parts)
- Death or serious injury to children
- When the victim is known to the rescue team
- Prolonged rescue attempts
- Fatalities and multiple casualties
- Excessive media interest

### CISP INTERVENTION DEFINITIONS

- **Standby** – Often Called “Heads Up”
- **Pre Incident Education and Awareness** – Pre Incident Education Session
- **Crisis Management Briefing(CMB)** – Usually involves Manager CICS, Senior AAIMS Incident Controller, Chaplain and Peers
- **Defusing (ISGS)** – Immediate Small Group Support - One or Two Peers and a Chaplain
- **Debriefing(PEGS)** – Powerful Event Group Support-Manager CICS – may include one or two Peers and a Chaplain
- **One on one – phone or in person** – Individual seeking assistance
- **Consultation** – Organisation consultation
- **Follow up/Referral** – Referral to any of the team. Includes matters that are not CISP issues eg. HR issues-referred to Manager CICS
- **Ongoing event-Large scale** – Large Scale Incident – Interagency Deployment
- **On Scene/Psychological First Aid** – On Scene Support / Psychological First Aid
- **Update/Report in** – Peers and Chaplains, once activated to provide updates/report in to Duty Officer
- **Pastoral Care/One on one (phone or in person)** – Pastoral Crisis Intervention – provided by one of the SES Chaplains
- **Pastoral care/Ceremonial** – Ceremonies conducted by SES Chaplains
- **Other** – please specify

## **CISM INTERVENTIONS**

### **1. Large Group Crisis Interventions:**

- Rest, Information and Transition Services (RITS) – formerly demobilisation
- Crisis Management Briefings (CMB)

### **2. Small Group Crisis Interventions:**

- Powerful Event Group Support (PEGS) – Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)
- One on one
- SAFER-R
- Immediate Small Group Support (ISGS) – Defusing
- Small group Crisis Management Briefing

## **TERMS AND ACRONYMS**

NSW SES	NSW State Emergency Service
CISP	Critical Incident Support Program
MCICS	Manager, Critical Incident and Counselling Services
PSO	CISP Program Support Officer
CISM	Critical Incident Stress Management or Comprehensive Integrated Systematic and Multi-component
ICISF	International Critical Incident Stress Foundation
CIMA	Crisis Intervention and Management Australasia
PEGS	Powerful Event Group Support
ISGS	Immediate Small Group Support
RITS	Rest, Information, Transition, Support
CMB	Crisis Management Briefing
CISD	Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
SAFER-R	Stabilise, Acknowledge, Facilitate, Encourage, Rest, Refer