**VIDEO: Search and Rescue at La Trobe**

**Narrator**

Scott Hall at La Trobe University’s Osborne Street campus was the scene of billowing smoke and flashing lights recently as fire fighters, and ambulance personnel joined forces with La Trobe University Para medicine students and the critical incident response team to take part in a simulated emergency.

The simulation was designed to prepare staff, students and community volunteer organisations for major emergency incidents in Bendigo.

***Dr Carl Gibson***

*This is the biggest live exercise we’ve ever run in Bendigo, we’ve got somewhere in the region of one hundred active participants on site tonight, the Country Fire Authority from the Bendigo, Kangaroo Flat and Golden Square Brigades, we’ve got an ambulance from Ambulance Victoria, about 40 Paramedic students both being casualties and taking the roll of ambulance crews, and then we have our full emergency response team on site.*

**Narrator**

Smoke machines were used during the exercise to simulate conditions that emergency services personnel face when operating in a burning building.

***LFF Chris Moloney***

*Well that was the whole idea of the night to make it as realistic as possible because we don’t get the opportunity to train within these large-scale things like this. La Trobe University was generous enough to offer the building then it was my job to sit down with my shift and work out how we would make the scenario as real as possible, and for that we used the aid of smoke machines, live casualties, we used the actual e-risk evacuation system situated within the building and made the crews drag live hose reels and hose lines through the building and what that does it gives them the idea of what its actually like to be looking and doing rescue in a building that’s heavily smoke logged.*

**Narrator:**

La Trobe’s Emergency Plan was put to the test enabling members of the Emergency Management Team to gain valuable experience in the way large emergencies are run.

***Dr Carl Gibson:***

*We can test plans from the point of view of creating scenario’s in a classroom and getting the individuals in the plans to run through what they do, but its only when its really on the ground, the smoke billowing out of windows, there’s fire-fighters running around, we’re in the dark, we’re operating by torchlight, there is passers by, there’s strangers coming in to see what’s going on. Our crew don’t know who’s a student, who’s a member of the public and whose a part of the exercise. Its creating a real situation for them to manage.*

**Narrator**

While search and rescue crews looked for survivors, students from La Trobe University’s Bachelor of Health Sciences and Master of Paramedic Practice course assisted professional paramedics to treat casualties.

***Jess Murray***

*For the purpose on the exercise tonight I’m working as the shadow incident commander for Ambulance Victoria. So basically that means that I’m coordinating all of the ambulance staff that are here tonight, so taking care of any of their needs, making sure they have all the recourses they need as well as communicating with all the other emergency services, organising chopper evacuation and that sort of thing as well.*

***Susan Furness***

*I think one of the things we really try and do with the La Trobe University course is actually make sure that, yes they have the underpinning theoretical knowledge, so that means coming to lectures and tutorials, but in addition to that they really know how to put that into play in exercises such as this so our course has a strong focus on using scenario work and hands on practical experience such as this to really bring home the messages that they’re hearing in those lectures and tutorials.*

**Narrator**

Paramedic students not only gained first hand experience-treating casualties but also gained valuable experience working with incident control.

***Jess Murray***

*Especially with incident control, we don’t normally do a lot of that in class so it’s a brilliant experience to be exposed to that tonight and put everything clinically based we have learnt into practice.*

***LFF Chris Moloney***

*All La Trobe University students, AV students and La Trobe have been really accommodating, they were all really willing to participate and be involved. They took the briefings extremely well, they acted in a professional manner and made the night exactly what is was tonight. Our guys, they didn’t just come out as willing participants, some of them I believe were quiet difficult and were determined to stay within the confines of the building which is good because in a real life situation that’s what you could be confronted with. All the roll players that were here I thank, them very much, and the AV staff have done a wonderful job.*

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