



from the Presidents desk...



SESVA

Gordon Hall
SES Volunteers Association

March 2016

Overview

The month of February and into March has been very busy for SES Volunteers in their fire support and search roles.

Likewise the SES Volunteers Association (SESVA) has been very busy attending many meetings on a weekly basis with DFES to ensure we can get the best results for the SES Volunteers in a number of areas, including training and operational matters.

This newsletter brings you an update on a number of matters including the Wear Orange Wednesday (WoW) for 2016, the Goldfields Challenge, the Volunteer Fuel cards and the Waroona Fire Inquiry.

WOW day 2016 - May 11

The National Wear Orange Wednesday (WOW) day is fast approaching, with the celebrations due to take place on 11 May 2016.

Starting from this year, WOW Day will take place in May to coincide with National Volunteer Week. This will give even more opportunities to spread the word about the fantastic work of our dedicated SES Volunteers.

WOW Day is also an opportunity for the community to show their appreciation for the tireless efforts of SES Volunteers who provide vital assistance during a number of emergencies.

This year's WOW Day event will be held at Murdoch University. The campus will host an exciting search and rescue demonstration that will highlight the wide range of SES skills and competencies, giving the public an insight into what it takes to be an SES Volunteer.

Watch these newsletters to keep up to date with plans for WOW Day 2016!

Training Pathways

The SESVA has been advised by a number of SES Volunteers that they are being told by DFES staff that they must do all core subjects of a pathway before they can do any of the optional courses, such as chainsaw operating, unless the District Officer has given approval for that Volunteer to do that course – based on the unit profile and TNA.

This is not how the pathways was intended to work. The Pathways were intended to provide a map so SES Volunteers could once again see their training profiles.

Based on the feedback by a number of SES Units and their Volunteers, Secretary Lin Booth and myself called an urgent meeting with DFES training academy where we put our case which is;

In order to reflect this, in any DFES documentation, we have suggested the wording be something like the following for the SES;

It is desirable that the required courses in a Pathway are completed before the optional courses are attended for that Pathway.

Further to this and to satisfy the needs of the Unit Profile, the Unit TNA and the service delivery to the local community, a Local Manager can approve a Volunteer attending and completing an Optional Course before the completion of the core subjects for that Pathway.

We await an answer from DFES on this.

Permission to do SES Training Courses within a Unit

Secretary Lin Booth and I also met with DFES on the matter that DFES want the District Officer to approve all training courses for all SES Volunteers for locally run courses by a unit. In other words the Local manager is not the approver for his unit Volunteers to attend a course at his unit.

We have put the following as our position and await the answer from DFES;

All internal unit level training, which is conducted within the Unit, requires the approval of the Local Manager and should comply with the current Unit Profile and Unit TNA.

Advice should be forwarded to the District Officer of the courses being conducted.

All Volunteers attending courses conducted external to the Unit, including at other Units, must be approved by the Local Manager prior to advice being forwarded to the District Officer



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Train the Trainer/Assessor Courses

We have been advised by DFES that the course to become a trainer of trainer/assessors is of two days duration, provided you have completed the new workplace trainer assessor course since 1 January 2016.

If you are a trainer/assessor under the “old” system, prior to 1st January 2016, then the course is a five day course. This includes completing in full, the new three day trainer/assessor course.

We have also been advised there is no gap document, and the five day course must be completed in full by all trainers, who were trainer/assessors prior to 1 January 2016.

We feel this is neither suitable nor right, and the SESVA are in the process of having further discussions with DFES to have some form of gap document available.

We feel a trainer/assessor under the “old” system has many skills, and no matter what new material is contained in the new course, it should not take the whole course time to upgrade the member’s skills.

Keep watching this newsletter for further updates.

Trainer Assessor Spreadsheet on the Portal

Be aware that the Trainer/Assessor spreadsheet on the DFES Volunteer Portal has a number issue whereby some Volunteers may have a “-” (minus sign) in front of their number. This means that if your Volunteer number doesn’t come up then check it with a “-“ in front of the number. Please note that you need to check it both ways, ie with a “-“ sign and without to ensure all information is accessed.

Vehicle Weights

The Chief Superintendents have agreed to review unit needs in relation to the Vehicle Suspension upgrades and funding through the Local Government Grants Scheme. A number of units have now contacted their regional Office and are working through this matter.

First Aid Training Update

DFES are still working through this process and are providing special information sessions to the

individual service Associations to get their feedback before proceeding to the final recommendation.

Once the final path is resolved then DFES intend going to tender.

Fuel Cards Update

The DFES Fuel Card Team have advised that the Emergency Services Volunteer Fuel Cards are currently in production and are due to be distributed within a week. The cards will be included in an Information Pack to be mailed to the postal addresses of Brigades, Groups and Units from which a valid application was received.

The Information Pack will also contain some useful resources related to the Scheme including a Fact Sheet, a copy of the Terms and Conditions and a Tally Sheet to help keep track of purchases made using the card.

The fuel card is accepted at all major suppliers which covers over 90% of WA

All SES Units who applied for the fuel card should have already received this email.

The SESVA acknowledges the hard work and perseverance by the DFES fuel card team for what was a complex process to bring this project to fruition.

Bunnings Australia Day BBQ Funds

All funds from the Bunnings Great Aussie BBQ have now been distributed, with the exception of two units.

The SESVA is waiting for the Bank Details of those units to be forwarded.

Incident Reporting System

The IRS system had a trial period and it is now at the point that metro units can apply to go onto this system. This system has taken over from the EM 2000 which has now become obsolete.

Although there are some short comings with IRS, the amount of incident and other data that is now being logged and included in IRS reports, is doubling using this system.

This shows a more realistic picture of the SES Volunteers and their time and effort put in to their SES activities.



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The Waroona Fire Inquiry

The SESVA has provided a submission to the Waroona Fire Inquiry based on the fire support role of the SES Volunteers to the Waroona and other bushfires.

The submission was not about any firefighting or strategies in relation to the fire, it was about the operational support, in a number of areas that SES Volunteers gave to the government departments involved in these operations.

The SESVA made a written submission and were then invited to a hearing by the Inquiry panel.

The conduct of the panel was very professional and well managed.

The SESVA received a very fair hearing.

It is hoped that this input, will assist in the betterment of future operations for the WA State Emergency Service Volunteers as they continue their support of local communities.

The writing team consisted of SESVA committee members John Capes, Lin Booth, Phillip Petersen, Dave Beard and Gordon Hall.

Goldfields Challenge 2016

The Goldfields Challenge will be on the 4 - 6 June this year.

The planning is well underway and the organising committee is now calling for Assessors.

All submissions are required by 30 April and can be emailed to;

goldfieldschallenge@bigpond.com

For further information please contact;

Deidre Marchese on 0417 982 916

eAcademy for Training

The SESVA, along with other Associations, was given a preview of the new eAcademy for training of Volunteers and Staff in support of the Pathways training system.

The eAcademy will be launched soon.

The system looks reasonably easy and all SES Volunteers, after the official launch, will have access via the DFES Volunteer portal.

This will give the SES Volunteers access to information on their progress through the training pathways.

SES Volunteers already registered with the Volunteer Portal will be prompted to check their contact details when logging in for the first time.

Volunteer endorsed trainers and DFES staff involved in training, will be provided with the required eAcademy training.

The SESVA is working with DFES about having a presentation to the SES Volunteers about the eAcademy at the 2016 Volunteers Conference in September.

SES Volunteer Advisory Committee

The SES Volunteers Advisory Committee (SESVAC) is responsible for advising the FES Commissioner on a number of matters that may impact SES Volunteers, operationally, administratively or otherwise.

There are a number of appointees on the SESVAC from around the state, including DFES staff and SES Volunteers.

The terms of office for four of the members have either expired or will expire in April 2016.

There is a notice on its way to all SES units advising of this and calling for expressions of interest to fill these vacancies.

The closing date for EOIs is 28 March 2016.

Please see the notice sent to all SES units for further details.

Gordon Hall
SESVA President
11 March 2016

