



SESVA

from the Presidents desk...

Gordon Hall
SES Volunteers Association



April 2016

Overview

Last month I wrote about WOW day 2016, training issues and a number of other matters including the progress of the Volunteer Fuel Card.

This month I will be outlining a number of matters including the current situation with training for SES Volunteers, the cancelling of the Goldfields Challenge and the coming Volunteers conference.

2016 DFES Volunteers Conference

The SES Volunteers Association has endorsed a number of subjects to be negotiated with DFES and hopefully presented, at the SES Stream of the Volunteers Conference in September 2016.

Provided we can get the buy in by some areas of DFES, these will include the Launch of the SES Administration Guide, a session on the new Associations and Incorporation Act, an update on training with a Q&A session, demonstration of the incident Recording System, WebEOC, the Incident Browser and the eAcademy. It is also hoped to have a session on Drones and the effects of responding to emergencies on the health of Emergency Service Volunteers. These are being negotiated with DFES.

The SES Administration Guide

This guide is being jointly developed between DFES and the SESVA and has many references to DFES doctrine. The writer is laying this out in an easy to understand manner and in the context of the SES.

Chief Superintendent Gary Kennedy is very keen for this to happen so the SES Units can have an easy guide to meet their requirements. It is expected that this will be launched at the Volunteers Conference in September.

2016 Goldfields Challenge

This is a well organised and attended annual event that gave the SES Volunteers and their supporting staff an opportunity to practice and exercise their skills and training. In most regions DFES offered no other form of

practice for SES Units and Volunteers to assimilate their training into the field.

The last newsletter gave an update on the progress of the Goldfields Challenge, however the organisers have advised that they have had to cancel the 2016 event.

The organisers, like many SES Volunteers around the state, are very disappointed.

DFES have advised this Association that there will be an annual exercise in each region and it is hoped that this will give the opportunity, like the Goldfields Challenge did, of allowing SES Volunteers and their supporting staff to practice and exercise their skills in the field.

WOW Day

Don't forget to plan for WOW day at your unit. It is Wednesday May 11 and the media event will be held at Murdoch University in the morning.

Further details will be published on the SESVA website and notified via the SESVA App.

Work Place Trainer/Assessor Training (WTA)

The WTA Trainer training course put together by the FES Academy in 2015 did not give the participants sufficient instructional techniques or actual experience in delivery, or an assessment of delivering a full period of instruction.

The SESVA represented this a number of times to the FES Academy, but to no avail.

It was only after intervention by the Commissioner (he has an excellent understanding of the requirements in this area) did we see the course content change so it actually taught the participants how to train and assessed them on delivery of a full period of instruction.

It is our belief that this course is now better than any previous course.



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Train the Trainer for WTA

In the last newsletter I wrote about the lack of a gap document for SES Senior Assessors to be upgraded to the new Trainer for Workplace Trainer Assessor - WTA.

What the SESVA have verbally put to the Academy is that current workplace trainer/assessors, pre January 2016, with three years who have conducted courses in that period, will do a one day conversion course to achieve the new WTA category.

This means that if a Volunteer wants to become a trainer of WTAs, then they will have to do the conversion course and a two day course, not the current five day course required by the Academy.

We are await the feedback from the Academy.

Pathways Training

This matter is taking a large amount of the Committee's time each week in answering questions and trying to resolve the matters with DFES. Secretary Lin Booth and I have each put in over 30 hours a week over the past months on these issues.

The SESVA Committee discussed the Pathways at great length at their full committee meeting in March.

A number of Committee members advised at that meeting that the training of SES Volunteers at present is a total mess. There is some very powerful wording being used in emails to the Association and the Representatives on these training issues.

I need to make it very clear that the support of SES Volunteers by many District Officers and Operations Command Superintendents on this matter has been excellent in what they do and the feedback we are receiving is, in no way a reflection on them.

The support and understanding by a number of staff at the Academy is also excellent, however we are unable to get some senior management at the Academy to understand the SES culture and their requirements and methodologies used in their delivery of service to the community.

The SESVA has had many very robust discussions over the past years with senior management at the Academy regarding the new Pathways training program.

The SESVA supports the Pathways Program in concept, however the rules keep changing and there appears to be a total lack of understanding of the context in which the SES Volunteers train, respond and why.

Our strong view is that BGR should be optional, and core subjects can be done in any order, not as per the fixed list.

Some subjects may require prerequisites, however the current list of prerequisites is not accurate and needs an urgent review and correction.

Optional subjects should be considered for SES Volunteers, taking into account the Unit TNA, the Unit Profile and local community requirements. Where there is a need for a member to do an optional subject, and the Unit Manager agrees, the Unit Manager should approve the course and then advise the relevant DO, The DO will ensure the eAcademy is updated as required. All is then good to go.

We were led to believe that the Pathways were being changed to permit this, however we cannot get, in writing or accurately verbally, any confirmation.

The Academy keeps dodging or delaying any firm answers.

The current new DFES procedure is unworkable, and will result in no new chainsaw operators, RCR members, or VR members for at least 2-3 years.

The old system worked well and the SES Volunteers were able to support their communities in a timely and efficient manner.

The eAcademy should be a recording training system to fit all DFES service training needs, not the training needs changed to fit the system.



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Training for Team Leaders

From information we have received, it appears that the DFES Academy has abolished the Team Leader courses for Vertical Rescue, Road Crash Rescue and Search.

This Association has never agreed to this and had a strong discussion with the Academy late last year on this matter. It was our understanding when we left that meeting that there would be no change to the current methods of Team Leadership training.

We believed all Team Leadership courses would continue to be trained as in past years.

The Academy is now saying that the SESVA supports the cancellation of these courses.

In no way would the SESVA support this radical (and high risk) change to a practice that has been effectively in use for over twenty years.

THE SESVA HAS NEVER SUPPORTED THIS NEW MODEL AND HAVE NO INTENTION OF SUPPORTING AS PRESENTED.

THE RISKS TO THE SES VOLUNTEERS, THE COMMUNITY AND OTHERS IS TOO HIGH.

The new Fundamental Leadership course is generic and will give a foundation for those who want to pursue leadership roles.

Interestingly, over 6 months ago, the Academy abolished Road Crash Rescue Team Leaders.

The SESVA met with the Academy, and after a very robust meeting the team leader model was then reinstated.

We have recently been advised by a number of Volunteers that the Academy has now actively discontinued the Search Team Leader course in some regions, and we are being told by Volunteers in some regions that other courses have also been discontinued.

We will take this up over the coming weeks on behalf of the SES Volunteers and will not stop until we have a satisfactory resolution.

If the new training model has drastic impacts on your unit, and you have not already contacted the SESVA, please contact the Secretary on

0428 612 480

or email sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au

SES Units Coming Up to their 40th year

It is amazing the work that has been done for local communities by all SES Units and their Volunteers over many years.

The SES Units have been under the umbrella of a number of Government Departments since 1959 and have all had various levels of support over those years.

Some milestones are listed below.

The Melville SES Unit will be celebrating their 40th year in May 2016

The Northshore SES Unit will be celebrating their 40th year in June 2016

The Rockingham-Kwinana SES Unit will be celebrating their 40th year in September 2017

SES Work Dress (Khakis)

There are many questions directed to the SESVA about the SES work dress from SES Volunteers from around the state.

The official answer on this matter from DFES is that there is no phasing out of the SES Work Dress, however the supplier (S&H) has, up until just recently, sourced the trousers on the back of a Department of Corrections (DoC) contract and DoC has now moved into navy colours.



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SES Work Dress (cont.)

This means that S&H can no longer use the DoC style khaki trousers for SES orders.

There is a small reserve of that stock left and that is why some sizes are still available and not others.

To resolve this, DFES has agreed for S&H to organise to move SES over to a South Australia Police style khaki trouser for men and women's fits.

Unfortunately the SA Police size range is not as broad as the DoC styles were.

Therefore, in the cases where a size is not listed as standard, a Unit can order made-to-measure instead. This is listed in the same TAM Store page as the standard sizes (enter either the name of a size e.g. R087 or S079 or email S&H a measurement form.

Further to this DFES has advised that they have not made any decision to review the SES Work Dress.

If DFES decided to review the SES uniform it would take at least three years for the consultancy, agreements, designs and financial's to be resolved. It is a long and costly process.

SESVAC

The SES Volunteer Advisory Committee meets four times a year and has representatives of the SES Volunteers from around the state.

These representatives have to be approved by the WA Government Cabinet on recommendation of the Minister, before they can form part of that committee.

Current high level strategic matters that are being researched by this group, for feedback to DFES, include mobile phone allocation, First Aid for SES Volunteers and other emergency vehicle driving matters.

All subjects for the SESVAC come from the Office of the Minister, Office of the Commissioner or Office of the SESVA.

In the last newsletter it was mentioned that expressions of interest for vacancies where some members terms of office were expiring, was been circulated to all SES Units.

The EOI has been circulated and has now closed.

There have been some very good candidates and the SESVA has forwarded the committee recommendations to the Executive Officer of the SESVAC for processing.

When approved, those new members will be advised to all SES units.

James Regan

This month is the 12th Anniversary of James' untimely death during an SES rescue in the Karijini National Park.

The work we all do carries different risks and we must be fully aware of the dangers in doing what we do.

Please remember not to forget James.

Gordon Hall
SESVA President
4 April 2016

