



from the Presidents desk...



SESVA

Gordon Hall
SES Volunteers Association

May 2016

Overview

This month has been operationally quiet, however there have been a few searches and plenty of training.

This newsletter will outline a number of matters, including the increase in training issues, round table discussions with Local Managers and their leadership teams and a brief overview of the new Roof Safety Training Facility at Bayswater.

Training issues have increased further over the past month and are taking most of the time of Committee members in discussions and negotiations with DFES.

The links below are to DFES videos on SES in WA
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIH02XKLS88>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUmi2Yu17vQ>

WoW Day 2016

The event at Murdoch University on 11 May was a media event and went very well. There were demonstrations utilising SES Volunteers from a number of Units as well as the Mounted section.

The Minister for Emergency Services, the FES Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner attended the function and spoke to the Volunteers about the great work they do in their community.

The Association, along with DFES, will continue to support this annual event being reflective of SES Volunteers and their role in the community.

Waroona Bushfire Special Inquiry

The Special Inquirer, Euan Ferguson AFSM, delivered his report to Government at the end of April, so we would expect an announcement by the Premier on the outcomes later this month or in June.

This Association forwarded a written submission to the inquiry covering a number of issues that the SES Volunteers encountered in their support of the fire response. This was accompanied by supporting evidence.

There has been a lot of enthusiastic media on this matter so the final outcome will be read by many with great interest.

It is hoped that DFES will work with this Association after the recommendations are delivered with a view to improving future involvement in these roles.

2016 DFES Volunteers Conference

The planning for the conference (9-11 Sept) is well under way by the Media section of DFES.

The planning of the program is starting to take shape and some subjects that have been finalised include a session on the new Associations Incorporation act and how it affects SES Units, DFES Launch of the SES Administration Guide, and demonstration of a number of the IT systems SES Volunteers are starting to use in their units.

The SESVA are negotiating the use of an extra booth.

Part of this booth is for a DFES training person to be available to answer questions and demonstrate access to the various training packages via the portal.

2016 SES Awards Night

DFES advises that we will have a similar awards night function as last year and this is on 10 September.

We were struggling to get enough nominations for the awards this year however, with the assistance of DFES media and a ring around by the Association we now have sufficient nominations.

The SESVA have worked hard to retain this special night as the premier event celebrating the SES Volunteers hard work, however to retain this, we must ensure plenty of awards submissions each year.

Round Table Discussions with SES Leaders

Many SES Local Managers have been requesting that the SESVA meet with them to discuss issues that are affecting the delivery of service to their community.

As a result of this, Secretary Lin Booth and I, are conducting a number of round table discussions with Local Managers, Deputies and Training Managers.



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So far we have met with Volunteers in the North Coastal, South Coastal, Great Southern and Lower South West Regions.

There are other regions scheduled for May, June and July.

I am pleased to report that the above meetings have been going very well.

The issues that take more than 95% of the time are about training, with access to the portal taking the rest of the time.

This lines up with the Volunteer Opinion Surveys over the past years, where the confusion level about training is running at about 75% and not decreasing over the past 2/3 years.

The other issue that is spoken about is that new systems are being rolled out without a robust process being followed with a trial, review and then sign off before rolling out.

This has seen a lot of frustration and confusion with a number of systems.

I am pleased to report that the feedback about the support and assistance by the SES DOs at these meetings is very positive.

Training

The number of issues has been mounting up and includes emails that indicate at least one course will only be trained by Academy staff.

We have worked closely with Operations Command on the training issues, as well as the Chief Superintendent for Training. Progress has slowed down and agreements reached appear to have changed.

As a result of this, Secretary Lin Booth has written many letters to the DFES Academy on these matters and we are waiting for resolutions to be advised.

There has been no consultation by the Academy with the Prescribed Association for the SES (SESVA) on a large range of training matters and the frustration by SES Volunteers is increasing.

There are many examples, with the latest being the Leadership Fundamentals Course, where the Trainers Guide has day three having sessions on the role of the CFRS Station Officer. There is no mention in the Leadership Fundamentals Resource kit, of the role of the SES leaders, nor is there any exercises to practice them in this.

The Association has met with the Deputy Commissioner and is working closely with him and the FES Commissioner with a view to the best way forward for the SES Volunteers.

The SESVA National Board

Members of the SESVAs in NSW and WA met three years ago to discuss forming a National Association with a view to discussing matters of mutual interest, in particular strategic matters affecting all or a number of states or territories.

The NSESVA came formally into being in 2015 and meets quarterly.

The NSESVA is a Company, with a Board of Directors made up of one member from each state, plus a Chair. Further to this there is a Council which also has a member from each state.

The Chair is Charlie Moir ESM (NSW), Deputy Chair is Gordon Hall (WA), and the Company Secretary is Doreen McEnroe (ACT) (all SES Volunteers).

At the recent meeting in Melbourne (29/30 April) there were a number of matters discussed, including common training, across border acceptance of qualifications during deployment, Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum, a Volunteer Respect Act, and the Fit for Task Project.

We also had the opportunity to meet with Dr. John Bates and be updated on the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience, their direction and future scholarships that are expected to be available for SES Volunteers.



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Scholarships for EM Volunteers

Emergency Management (EM) Volunteers will soon be able to access support through scholarships administered by the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR).

The \$1 million scholarship fund will be available to help boost education and development opportunities for Volunteers such as vocational training or higher education in emergency management fields.

Further information will be available from DFES later this year.

Overalls and Two Piece PPC

This Association has received some reports over the past year where some people only have a one piece overall. There is anecdotal evidence from some Volunteers, that they reduce their intake of liquids on field work because of issues with one piece overalls in the field.

All SES Volunteers are eligible for two piece PPC. The two piece PPC are more convenient for females during field work.

DFES advises that overalls or two piece PPC, may be worn for all operations, whether these be in the field or at a unit and that it is not mandatory to wear one piece overalls for field operations.

If there are any issues regarding supply of two piece PPC, please have the SES Local Manager call Secretary Lin Booth or myself and we will endeavour to assist on this matter.

Fuel Cards for all SES Units

All SES Units should now have their fuel cards.

Bayswater SES Roof Safety Training Facility

This new facility at the Bayswater SES is used for learning how to raise, lower and safely tie off ladders and learn how to walk safely on different types and pitches of roof.

It can also be used for building sandbag walls for flood diversion.

Volunteers can also pull up tiles and replace them with options based on the size of the damage and available materials, and learn how to secure colour bond sheets, in-fill windows, and demonstrate different types of anchors.

Most importantly of all, Bayswater SES uses it to practice building a roof safety system.

This new facility is a credit to Bayswater SES, and I am sure if you want further information on this facility, SES Local Manager, Nicola Wilkinson, will answer any questions.

BHPB/SESVA Buses

There was feedback from a number of users of the buses during the 2015/16 bush fire season.

The Volunteers believed that a name on each of the buses would assist the bush fire fighters and SES Volunteers to recognise which bus is intended for them during deployments.

As a result of this, all BHPB/SESVA buses have now had the unit name installed on them.

The metropolitan based buses have the unit name across the rear as well as down each side.

SES Specific Information Brochure

The SESVA has been working with DFES Media and the Commissioner to have the above developed.

It is expected that these brochures will be printed and ready for distribution by the SESVA in July.

Cheers

Gordon Hall

SESVA President

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