



from the Presidents desk...

SESVA

Gordon Hall
SES Volunteers Association



1 March 2015

Overview

Christmas is traditionally the time when SES Volunteers have their annual break focusing on maintenance and being prepared for any requests for assistance. Then towards the end of January they start to return to structured training and planned maintenance.

In many cases it didn't quite work that way this summer as we all worked hard with local governments, DPAW and DFES in assisting them in the protection of a number of Western Australian communities.

I often hear how much your communities appreciate you and your family's sacrifices in delivering these support services.

Well done everyone.

SES Volunteers Social Gathering

Don't forget the SES Volunteers Shindig (sundowner) on Friday night 27 March (1800 – 2200) at the Belmont SES Unit, Kew St near Abernethy Road – entry fee \$5 and BYOG. See poster sent to all units.

Fire Support

The phenomenal support the SES Volunteers have given the fires during the recent fires including Mandogalup, Northcliffe, Waroona, Bullsbrook and Boddington, has been excellent. The VA is compiling a list of issues/recommendations that are being sent to us from Volunteers and Units. These will be tabled with DFES senior staff to assist in improving the support by SES in the future, so please keep them coming (sesva.office@gmail.com).

Some ESL Numbers

Volunteers and members of the community continually ask for ESL figures so they can get an understanding of where the community dollars are being spent.

The figures we have been given for 2014/15 indicate that distribution of the Emergency Services Levy was; \$263,880,000 to DFES and \$25,330,000 to the SES and BFS Volunteers.

For every \$10.42 distributed to DFES the SES/BFB Volunteers receive \$1.

Training

The design and rollout of the training pathways has been an interesting exercise for the SESVA and DFES. In the early days the SESVA were consulted and gave assistance. However in the past 12 months this has turned to briefings with little interest in discussing and making changes.

The feedback and emails that the Association receives is showing a number of gaps in the pathway. There has also been feedback about the rollout and delivery of the message.

Further to this, SES Volunteers are reporting to the SESVA that it appears FRS fires are being trained in Storm Damage and it doesn't appear in their pathways. As a result of this they are confused about the direction of pathways.



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Please keep the information coming to the Association as we will need to deliver this feedback somewhere where it will be listened to.

Vehicle Weights

The SES vehicle weight issue regarding GVM upgrades is still ongoing. The SESVA has requested that a sticker outlining the weights and the number of passengers each vehicle can carry, be quickly designed and affixed to the windscreen in front of the driver. The circular issued by DFES which put a ban on carrying more than 5/7 persons, including the driver (depending on Landcruiser type), needs to be withdrawn and the drivers' responsibility be as per the Road Traffic Act in relation to that vehicle.

ATUs

ATUs were delivered in January and some SES Units are now using their ATUs. Other Units have been told not to use the ATU until the TRK is completed and delivered (DFES said it could be up to 12 months).

Office of the Auditor General

The Office of the Auditor General is conducting an audit where the objective is to examine whether DFES is effectively recruiting, preparing and supporting fire and emergency services Volunteers. This is a golden opportunity for all SES Volunteers to go on line, write or email the Office of the Auditor General on any SES matters. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FESVolunteersSurvey> (you will need your service number) or email to; consultation@audit.wa.gov.au

It is your SES so please consider providing feedback to the OAG – closing 6 March.

Legislation Briefings

To assist the State Emergency Service Volunteers to be well informed on the update of the progress of development of the new consolidated Emergency Services Act/Legislation, following submissions on the Concept Paper, Local Managers, Deputies and others have been invited to a special briefing by the SESVA on the progress of a Single Emergency Services Act.

This is an extremely important matter and it is imperative to have representation from each SES unit, preferably the Local Manager, and at least two other senior members.

DATE: 12 March 2015 TIME: 6.00pm – Registration & Refreshments 7.00pm - Presentation

LOCATION: Metro Inn, 61 Canning Highway, South Perth

RSVP TO: sesva.office@gmail.com by 10 March 2015

There are teleconferences with the SESVA for country regions being arranged by Lin Booth and the regional representatives.

Details will be emailed to country units as soon as dates and times are finalised.

Fuel Cards for Country Regions

This initiative was part of the National Party's election policies for the 2013 state election. The SESVA was called to Parliament House last week for an update briefing by the Nationals (Hon Martin Aldridge MLC). It looks like it will happen soon.

This is what the Nationals' (Hon Paul Brown MLC), said in parliament last week;



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“I would also like to quickly highlight a Nationals WA election policy that has unanimous support among our volunteer emergency services groups. Madam Deputy President, I have a bit of a show and tell here of the emergency service volunteers fuel card. At the 2013 state election, the Nationals WA announced the policy of a \$2 000 fuel card for our state’s volunteer fire brigades, State Emergency Service groups, marine rescue, and St John Ambulance Service.

More than 700 organisations will be eligible to utilise the \$2 000 annual contribution as an acknowledgment of the work that is done by those volunteers in our community. The eligible groups that receive a fuel card will be able to use it at the discretion of the local management committee, to be distributed between volunteers and the community as a way of recognising the time and resources that they give up for the sake of their community.

Discussions with the Minister for Emergency Services and Commissioner Wayne Gregson from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services are progressing to ensure that this commitment to our regional emergency volunteer groups is delivered. I would encourage Mr Wayne Gregson to support this very valuable contribution to our regional volunteers.”

The SESVA will be discussing the Fuel Cards and expected timeline for the rollout at the next meeting with FES Commissioner (Wayne Gregson).

Buses Delivered

The photo shoot has been conducted and there is media action happening across the state which has included radio interviews and a full story on Perthnow. Keep an eye on your local community newspapers as different media releases are being done for these.

The SESVA buses have all been delivered, although the bus for the Serpentine Jarrahdale unit is waiting for their incorporation to be finalised.

All of the buses have been involved in the fire responses over the past eight weeks and at least three buses have clocked up more than 4000 kms.

The FES Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners have expressed their support and assistance in this project. Their support has been greatly appreciated by the Volunteers and we can only hope that this will eventually be extended by all DFES staff.

Equipment Loaned during Emergency Events

SES Volunteers and this Association always willingly loan equipment during emergencies. They expect the equipment to be returned in the same condition it was loaned to DFES. Unfortunately this is not always the case and DFES staff are expecting the Volunteers to clean filthy vehicles and equipment, arrange quotes for damages and to fill out insurance claims when they do not know who the driver was, what happened or any other details. If you know of any instances of this please advise the Association so we can take the matter up with DFES to ensure all equipment in the future is returned in the condition it was loaned.



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Peer Support

Last year this Association facilitated a meeting between DFES and the Peer Support group with the objective being that DFES would follow the process that was used by, and for the SES Volunteers, for over twenty years.

Over the past three months DFES have veered away from that agreement and in doing so have caused a lot of frustration by the Peer Supporters and a number of SES Volunteers. Please keep the evidence coming so the Association can meet again with DFES to try and resolve this matter.

Challenges and State Rescue Competition

DFES have requested that all grants for the running of Challenges be applied for through the SES Volunteers Association. In turn the Association will apply to DFES for a grant for the purpose of assisting the Challenges and a State Rescue Competition. The total amount required was recently applied for and an offer of less than half that amount has been received by the Association. The Association Committee and the State Rescue Competition Committee is re-considering the funding offered by DFES and where to from here. Once a decision is made all will be advised.

Personal Contents Insurance – Private Vehicles

The SESVA has worked hard to ensure SES Volunteers have insurance to and from the unit and jobs. DFES have now advised that this will also cover personal contents in private vehicles for a number of items, but excludes jewellery and money. Further details can be obtained from your regional office. If they do not have the information please contact the SESVA.

New Media and PA Director

DFES have appointed a new Director for FES Media and Public Affairs. Hannah Tagore has taken up her appointment and we have met and discussed a number of items with her. Although resources are limited we believe the level of service delivery for the SES will improve under Hannah's leadership.

Recruitment and Retention

DFES are doing some work on this. The SESVA is hopeful that DFES will return to at least the standard of five years ago where current pamphlets and promotional materials were provided for use in recruitment and awareness by SES Volunteers.

The SESVA is hopeful that DFES will consult with us and work in partnership with the SESVA for the betterment of all SES Units.

Cheers

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