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from THE PRESIDENT

Honouring Exceptional Service – Emergency Services Medal

We can all be extremely proud that Mark Geary, Brett O'Leary, and I, Greg Cook, have been awarded the prestigious Emergency Services Medal in the 2026 Australia Day Honours, recognising our collective dedication and longstanding service to the SES and to communities across Australia.

Across many years, Mark, Brett, and I have worked alongside countless SES volunteers, responding to a wide range of emergencies. Together, our efforts have spanned severe storms, extensive search operations, major flooding events, life-saving rescues, and critical fire support activities.

What is often less visible—but equally important—are the hours devoted to our local units: conducting training, offering guidance and direction, mentoring new members, contributing to unit committees, and preparing for the many operational and community activities that define the SES.

I share this acknowledgement with humility. Receiving this award myself is deeply meaningful, and I accept it with sincere gratitude and pride.

February marks the return of weekly training for most SES Units across Western Australia. With the breadth of skills required in our work, training remains essential—it strengthens our knowledge, reinforces teamwork, and ensures we can operate safely and effectively in challenging emergency environments.

It is worth remembering that, in times of danger, most community members move away from harm to protect themselves and their families. The SES, as an emergency service, does the opposite. We move *toward* danger—safely and with purpose—to help our communities survive and recover.

The SES Volunteers Association wishes everyone a safe and fulfilling 2026. May many more colleagues be recognised in the years ahead for their outstanding service to the community.

Kind Regards,

Greg Cook *ESM* , President



Nominate an Outstanding SES Volunteer for the **WA Volunteer of the Year Awards**

Every SES unit is powered by volunteers who give their time, skills, and dedication to keep West Australians safe.

The WA Volunteer of the Year Awards are now accepting nominations, offering an opportunity to recognise those exceptional individuals who consistently go above and beyond.

Volunteers may be nominated across a range of award categories celebrating leadership, commitment, inclusivity, youth contributions, and long-term service.

Units are encouraged to reflect on their standout members and share their stories.

**Nominations close at 5:00pm on
Friday, 20 February 2026.**



The SES Volunteers Association of WA Inc.

acknowledges the funding from the

Department of Fire and Emergency Services of WA



Australia Day Honours 2026



Three outstanding State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers with a combined service of more than 95 years were amongst those awarded the coveted Emergency Services Medal (ESM). ESM medals honour the exceptional service and leadership of emergency services volunteers and staff in the protection of WA communities.

Sincere congratulations to each of the recipients for this well-deserved recognition.



Mr Greg Cook ESM: Joining the SES in 1996, Greg has been at the coalface of major events including Cyclone Yasi in 2011, the South Australian floods of 2016, Tropical Cyclone Seroja and the Fitzroy Crossing floods. As president of the SES Volunteers Association of WA, he has led significant organisational and governance reforms that strengthen volunteering across the State.



Mr Mark Geary ESM: With an impressive 28 years of serving with the Gosnells SES, Mark has earned widespread acclaim for his ingenuity and level-headedness during highly distressing situations. He has served in a range of support and leadership roles and been deployed across Western Australia and interstate.



Mr Donald (Brett) O'Leary ESM: During an outstanding 37 years of service with the SES, Brett has helped thousands of people in distress and provided steadfast leadership to his colleagues. He has responded to flood and vertical rescues, disaster recovery operations and high-risk missing person searches.

Full citations for each recipient can be found on the [Governor-General's website](#).

Premier's Citation Proposal – Tropical Cyclone Seroja

A proposal was submitted in October 2025 requesting a Premier's Citation to formally recognise all personnel who contributed to the 2021 Tropical Cyclone Seroja response. The idea followed unsuccessful attempts to secure the National Emergency Medal, and was inspired by the NSW Premier's Flood Emergency Citation, which demonstrated that state-based recognition is possible.

The proposed citation would have included a Premier signed appreciation letter, commemorative pin, and certificate of recognition, administered through DFES.

DFES reviewed the proposal and acknowledged the strong intent to honour Seroja responders. However, Commissioner Klemm advised on 30 January that DFES will not introduce a Premier's Citation at this time, noting that no other Australian state (apart from NSW) operates a similar scheme. The Commissioner also pointed out that existing honours and awards systems already provide recognition pathways.

DFES has expressed appreciation for the efforts of all who served during Tropical Cyclone Seroja and encourages the use of current awards, including:

- DFES Meritorious Service Awards
- WAFES Awards
- Australian Honours, including the National Emergency Medal, AFSM, and ESM

While the Premier's Citation will not proceed, the proposal has reinforced the value volunteers place on meaningful recognition. The SESVA will again be raising the matter of the awarding of the National Emergency Medal to responders which had previously been unsuccessful.





SESVA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY—18 DECEMBER 2025



SES Floodboat Crew Uniform

The need for appropriate floodboat uniforms, including fit-for-purpose flood rescue PFDs and safety helmets, will be raised with the Deputy Commissioner Operations.

Proposed ERAP Circular – Non-Approved Nail Guns

The proposed Equipment Recall & Prohibition circular regarding units using nail gun brands other than Makita was discussed. There was uncertainty about whether DFES will replace them, especially as training materials reference multiple brands. DFES to be asked to provide clarity on the approval rationale, replacement plans, and document updates. SES units to be canvassed for feedback about impacts or major concerns.

Review of the LGGS

The SESVA attended a meeting in relation to a pending review of the Local Government Grant Scheme (the prime source of funding in WA for SES units and Bush Fire Brigades). The SESVA will advise DFES that the SESVA cannot approve changes without adequate information. It is also intended to consult with the Bush Fires Association during the process.

New DFES Training Director Attendance

The Director of DFES Training Development, Support & Compliance (Ms Lydia de Mamiel) is to be invited to the first 2026 meeting of the Management Committee to better understand departmental support requirements and expectations for SES volunteer training.

Vice Presidents – trial changes to regions covered

A trial change to the SESVA management structure with the addition of a Vice President has resulted in the redistribution of regions for the three SESVA Vice Presidents (VP North, VP South and the new VP Metro) with each having responsibilities for 4 regions. The new structure will be on trial for six months.

New Admin Officer – Linda Daniels

Linda has made a very positive contribution to the SESVA since filling the role three and half months ago. The committee gave a unanimous vote of thanks for Linda’s efforts and refreshing approach to the role.



WELLBEING ACTIVITIES

Our wellbeing activities support first responders and their families to make connections and build resilience. Participants are supported to trust in their own abilities and to adapt and cope with new situations while reducing stress.

All activities are all underpinned by the 5 Ways to Wellbeing framework – a set of practical lifestyle habits to help us be mentally fit. These are connect, move, learn, be, and give.



From art activities and learning to surf to watching the Wildcats or visiting the Titanic exhibition — there are a range of free activities on offer.

Scan for more info and to register...





The constitution of SESVA was amended to include a third Vice President position following the AGM held 13 September 2025.

Following a review of the responsibilities of the three SESVA Vice Presidents, some regions have been redistributed with some email address changes.

- The new Vice President position is to be known as VP Metro with Leonie Briggs now supporting Metro region units and SESVA representatives.
- Ross Jones will now support the North region units and SESVA representatives.
- Alan Hawke will continue to support the South region units and SESVA representatives.

See the regions breakdown and VP contact details on the right —and please update your contact lists.

SESVA Committee contact details are also available at [Committee Members – SES Volunteers Association of Western Australia Incorporated](#)

If you have any questions about the changes contact Allen Gale on sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au

VICE PRESIDENT CONTACT DETAILS

North regions -

Kimberley, Pilbara, Midwest-Gascoyne, Goldfields-Midlands

Vice President - North

Ross Jones

sesva.vpnorth@ses-wa.asn.au

+61 499 941 724

Metro regions -

North Coastal, North East, South Coastal, South East

Vice President - Metro

Leonie Briggs

sesva.vpmetro@ses-wa.asn.au

+61448 876 423

South regions -

South West, Lower South West, Upper Great Southern, Great Southern

Vice President - South

Alan Hawke

sesva.vpsouth@ses-wa.asn.au

+61 408 252 610

SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc.) Treasurer Role — invitation for EOIs extended

The SESVA is seeking Expressions of Interest for the
voluntary Executive Committee position

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the financial stewardship of the Association.

ESTIMATED TIME COMMITMENT

6–10 hours per month (some seasonal variation).

Key responsibilities include:

- Managing financial records, reports, and statements;
- Handling receipts and authorised payments;
- Ensuring compliance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2015 (financial aspects);
- Supporting audit/review processes;
- Following financial practices as outlined in Section 47 of the SESVA Constitution.

HOW TO EXPRESS INTEREST

If you're interested in contributing to the leadership and good governance of the SESVA, please submit the following:

- **Your Name**
- **SES Unit**
- **Current SES Role**
- **Brief Summary** (max. 300 words) outlining your relevant experience and motivation.

Submit via Email to

Greg Cook – sesva.president@ses-wa.com.au

Closing Date: 15 February 2025





Amended SESVA Constitution

The three Special Resolutions that were accepted at the 13 September AGM of the SESVA by more than three quarters of the member delegates are acknowledged in correspondence received from the Commissioner for Consumer Protection WA as taking effect from the 12th of December 2025.

Addition of a Vice President position

The constitution now includes the role of a Third Vice President. Refer clause 20.4 and clause 21.1 of the amended Constitution.

Elected regional representatives to be members of a unit affiliated with the region they are elected to represent

The constitution now requires that Committee members who are Regional Representatives shall be SES Volunteers who are members of an affiliated unit located within the region they are elected to represent.

In the event that no nomination is made for a region, then the management committee may appoint a person to the role, to be formalised upon endorsement by the member units of the relevant region.

Refer clause 20.5.1 and clause 20.5.2 of the amended Constitution

Apostrophe removed from the name of the Association

The name of the Association recorded on the replacement *Certificate of Incorporation* reads: *SES Volunteers Association of Western Australia Incorporated*

Use the link below to view the amended Constitution and the Certificate of Incorporation:

[SESVA Constitution – SES Volunteers Association of Western Australia Incorporated](#)

Feedback on the Proposed Equipment Recall and Prohibition (ERAP) Circular – Nail Guns

Feedback was sought in mid-December 2025 from SES units following a request from DFES, regarding a proposed Equipment Recall and Prohibition (ERAP) Circular (D40842) relating to nail gun use during SES operations.

SESVA acknowledges that the request to respond was short notice at what is known to be not the best time of year for meaningful consultation. However, the requests was too important to wait until units returned from summer break.

While there is strong, consistent support for initiatives that genuinely improve safety outcomes, there is equally strong concern that the ERAP as presented was misaligned with training and operational practice, technically flawed in its equipment recommendations, and unreasonable in its financial and organisational impacts.

Collectively, these issues present risks not only to operational safety, but also to volunteer confidence and morale.

After compiling responses from five SES units, the SESVA based its response to DFES on the following summary:

- SES units **support the intent** of improving safety.
- Units do **not support** the removal of Paslode nail guns that operate exclusively in sequential-fire mode and are embedded in approved training and field guides.
- Units do **not support** the introduction of Makita finishing nailers, which are not fit for purpose and are non-compliant with Australian Standards.



Furthermore, there is a strong expectation that SESVA advocate for meaningful consultation, transparency in risk assessment, alignment with training frameworks, and evidence-based solutions that improve safety without undermining operational effectiveness or volunteer sustainability.





Announcement



Bernie McNamara

SES Young Emerging Leaders Program

SES volunteers to join Young Emerging Leaders Program in Canberra

Corey Wozencroft, Mandurah SES, has been selected to join Josh Yates, Margaret River SES, in Canberra for the National Memorial Service in May 2026.

Corey is the successful applicant for the 2026 Bernie McNamara SES Young Emerging Leaders (YEL) Program and Josh automatically qualifies for the Program as the 2025 winner of the SES Young Person of the Year Award.

Both Corey and Josh can now participate in the National Memorial Service in Canberra in May 2026 with all expenses being covered by the National SES Volunteers Association (National SESVA).

The Bernie McNamara SES Young Emerging Leaders Program was established in 2024 to support the development of young SES volunteers in WA and is aligned with the National SESVA YEL Program, in which young SES volunteers from all Australian jurisdictions come together at the Memorial Service each year.

While in Canberra, the young volunteers will get the chance to meet the Governor-General and the Commissioners of emergency services from other jurisdictions, among other interesting activities organised by the National SESVA.

Congratulations to both Corey and Josh on being selected for the Bernie McNamara SES Young Emerging Leaders Program.

SESVA CONTENT CREATION TEAM — KICKS OFF THIS MONTH

Are you passionate about storytelling, design, or sharing impactful content?

The 1st meeting of SESVA Content Creation Team is in late February — we want YOU to come on board.

We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help bring SES stories, news, and educational materials to life across:

- Social Media
- Newsletters
- Our Website



WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

Volunteers with experience using tools like:

- Canva CapCut Adobe Express
- Or similar creative apps

If you enjoy creating engaging visuals, short videos, or informative posts - we'd love to hear from you!

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Collaborate online with other volunteers to produce monthly content featuring:

- SES news and updates
- Educational materials and training tips
- Volunteer stories and community impact

FLEXIBLE & REMOTE

You can be based anywhere in WA and work remotely with the team. This is a great opportunity to contribute creatively, build your portfolio, and connect with like-minded volunteers.

INTERESTED? Its not too late to join!

Contact Allen Gale:

sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au 0419 935 497





When the Storm Hit Tom Price

by Barry Harrison, SESVA Pilbara Regional Representative.

“The evening of Monday, 12 January 2026, began like any other in Tom Price. As the sun dipped below the ranges, there was little indication of what was to come. Then, around 1900 hours, the weather turned.

Without warning, the wind strengthened rapidly. Thunder rolled across the town, lightning lit the sky, and rain followed in heavy bursts. At that time, no Bureau of Meteorology warnings had yet been issued, catching many residents by surprise as conditions deteriorated quickly.

As the storm intensified, requests for assistance (RFA’s) began to come in from across the community. Once conditions were safe enough for volunteers to travel, the Tom Price SES unit was activated. Despite the sudden and challenging conditions, ten members responded promptly, turning out to the unit and preparing for operations.



Throughout the evening, the team received seven RFA’s, each reflecting the impact the storm had already taken on the town. Reports included trees down onto house roofs, trees crushing vehicles, and water ingress into homes, with residents seeking help to protect property and restore safety.

Conditions on the ground were difficult. Data from the unit’s weather station recorded unconfirmed wind gusts exceeding 90 km/h, highlighting the severity of the



storm and the risks faced by both residents and responding crews. The severity of the storm contributing to fallen trees and debris scattered across affected areas. The swift response and professionalism of the Tom Price SES volunteers ensured that hazards were made safe and that community members received timely assistance during a stressful and unpredictable event.

Local Manager Kylie Kite praised the efforts of the team, noting the commitment shown by members who responded at short notice and worked through difficult weather conditions to support the town.

Once again, the incident served as a reminder of the vital role SES volunteers play in regional communities — standing ready to respond, no matter the conditions.”



Hikers rescued in Kalbarri National Park

Kalbarri SES responded to an afternoon call-out in the National Park after a group of hikers encountered difficulties on the Loop Trail.

The group was underprepared for the prevailing conditions and, for a number of reasons, did not fully understand the Loop Trail closure signage that was in place at the time.



The incident was successfully managed through strong cooperation between agencies and community members. Sincere thanks are extended to Kalbarri Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service, the local Park Rangers, and St John WA – Kalbarri for their valuable assistance and dedicated work in challenging conditions.

Appreciation is also extended to the SES volunteers who turned out to support the response.

The effectiveness of local emergency responses continues to rely on the extraordinary teamwork between dedicated volunteers across agencies.

A special thank you is also offered to the family who were on scene and provided assistance to the hikers prior to emergency services arriving.

Strong community support and inter-agency cooperation remain essential to achieving positive outcomes in situations like this

We're Looking for YOUR SES Unit's News!



SESVA wants to celebrate the dedication, hard work and achievements of our member SES Units and Volunteers.

The Newsletter has a wide circulation that includes SES volunteers, politicians, interested Local Government Councillors and CEOs, DFES staff, other Emergency Service Associations and various community organisations.

Send your articles and great images to:

sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au

Next deadline 23 February.

RAFFLE #9
DRAWN: 27TH FEBRUARY 2026

FIRST PRIZE
\$1,500*
COLES MYER GIFT CARD*

WA & TAS Raffle Support SES volunteers—buy your tickets [HERE!](#)



Training & Teamwork Around the Regions

Great work continues across the regions, with members giving up time to train, learn, and support one another. Here are a few January highlights.

Canning South Perth - Flood Boat Training with the Canine Unit

“Our crews were out on the water recently for flood boat training, joined by some special guests from the WA SES Canine Unit.

The exercise helped canine teams get familiar with our boats, giving both handlers and dogs confidence deploying by water. Training like this means search teams can access more remote locations and work together safely when it counts.”



Rockingham–Kwinana - Roof Safety System Currency Training



“Some of our RSS builders gave up part of their Sunday to complete currency upgrade training for the new roof safety systems.

New gear, updated training, and a chance to safely test everything out — with plenty of laughs along the way. Thanks to everyone who attended and helped keep our teams safe and ready.”

Busselton – Missing Person Exercise

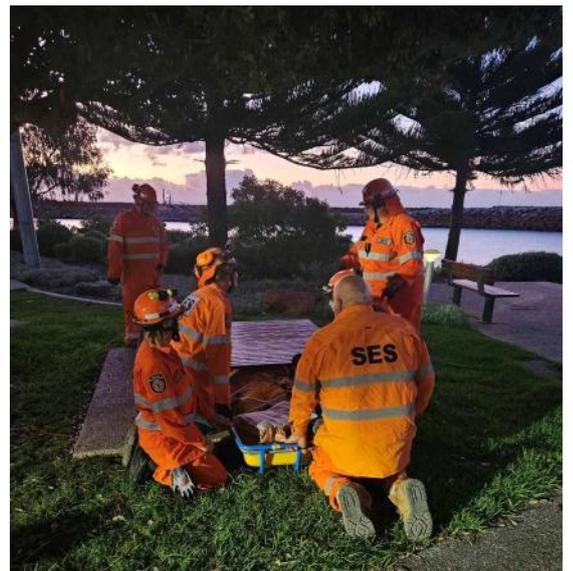
“The unit received an urgent call (from the trainers) to facilitate a search of a missing person at the Geographe Marina.

The person was at a beach party and had not returned home (he lives in a bag on a shelf in our shed). Friends and family were frantic with worry and called the police (no they didn't - he doesn't have any).

Teams were tasked to search and extract the ‘casualty’ upon locating. When he was finally located, he was in and out of consciousness and required an immediate CASEVAC to a waiting ambulance (no he didn't - he is a 45kg plastic doll).

Using their Basic General Rescue skills the team extracted the casualty and provided first aid. The casualty was successfully handed over to our colleagues at St John Ambulance (who were never there) and taken to the Busselton Hospital.

Amazing night of training and if you believe the bunkum huey backstory the casualty is fine, he is back on the shelf, no 45kg plastic dollies were harmed during this exercise. His manufacturers assure us he will make a full recovery.”



2026 National Volunteer Week Grants - Applications Open

Applications are now open for the **2026 National Volunteer Week Grants!** **Apply by 13 February.**

Funding of up to \$1500 is available to host an event or activity to thank your volunteers during National Volunteer Week (Monday 18 - Sunday 24 May 2026).

Wear Orange Wednesday (WOW Day!) in on 20 May.

There are many ways you can use this grant to celebrate your volunteers during National Volunteer Week, and we encourage you to be creative! Popular events and activities include:

- Award ceremonies
- Workshops, seminars and talks
- Morning and afternoon tea
- Excursions and day trips
- Self-care sessions such as yoga or massage
- Barbeques and dinners (*note that alcohol is excluded from this grant*)
- Volunteer gifts such as lapel pins, cupcakes and memorabilia

To Apply

- Read the [grant guidelines](#)
- Submit an [online application form](#) by **13 February 2026**.
- Learn more about the NVW Grants at volunteeringwa.org.au/nvw

TRAINING MATTERS

Course Improvement Recommendations

Training courses cannot improve without your input using the **Initiation and Improvement Recommendation (IIR) reports**.

You can find more information about improving training by submitting your suggestions online via the Volunteer Hub [How to recommend training improvements | DFES Department of Fire and Emergency Services](#)

This process is the primary means of communication for changes to training products. We are assured that DFES Training Development Support & Compliance looks at every IIR.

In the past, there was no feedback on IIRs, which is believed to have resulted in a reduction in feedback. The Academy is working on creating a dashboard to remedy the lack of feedback for those who lodge IIRs.

This will be a dynamic dashboard and will include historical IIRs. DFES reports that evaluation of the dashboard is in progress. Access is also planned through the Volunteer Hub.

CYBER SAFETY TIP — email

Be cautious with **unexpected links and attachments** — even if they appear to come from someone you know. Cybercriminals often use *phishing* tactics to trick you into clicking malicious links or downloading harmful files.

Best practice:

1. Hover over links to preview the actual URL before clicking.
2. Verify suspicious emails by contacting the sender through a trusted method (e.g., phone call).
3. Keep your email account protected with **multi-factor authentication (MFA)** and a **strong, unique password**.



UPCOMING EVENTS & IMPORTANT DATES

Thu 05 Feb	Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) meeting	04—05 Sep	WAFES Conference & Awards
Fri 13 Feb	Applications CLOSE—National Vol Week Grants	Sat 05 Dec	International Volunteer Day
Fri 20 Feb	Nominations close WA Vol of the Year Awards		
Wed 04 Mar	SESVA Autumn Newsletter published		
Fri 08 May	AFAC National Memorial Service		
18—24 May	National Volunteer Week		
Wed 20 May	WOW Day		
Wed 10 Jun	Thank a First Responder Day		
18—21 Aug	AFAC2026 in Melbourne		

FREE -

SES Promotional Products and Equipment

Reminder to all Units – if you're hosting a community event, SESVA has **banners, flags and gazebos for loan** – and free promotional products for you to give away.

Email sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au for details.

WOW DAY

Encourage your local school, workplace, Shire or community group to mark the date and show their support for your SES volunteers on

Wear Orange Wednesday!



SES SAR T-Shirts— available now!

Over 250 T-Shirts were ordered and distributed in early January... **we have a few extras remaining!** If you'd like one – please contact Linda with your size to check availability.

E: Sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au

M: 0499 619 287.

\$25 + postage.



The SES Volunteers Association of WA Inc.

acknowledges the funding from the

Department of Fire and Emergency Services of WA

USEFUL LINKS

[Raffle—Buy tickets and support SESVA](#)

[NSESVA Yearbook 2024.pdf](#)

[Home | DFES Department of Fire and Emergency Services](#)

[State Emergency Management Committee](#)

[Home - Volunteering WA](#)

