



State Emergency Service Volunteer Advisory Committee

June 2016 Update

Background

The Fire and Emergency Services Authority used a system of Volunteer Consultative Committees to provide feedback and advice on a number of matters. The Chairpersons of these four committees were members of the the Fire and Emergency Services Authority Board.

The origin of the current Volunteer Advisory Committees was identified in the Keelty Report of the Perth Hills Bushfire 2011 Review, which recommended;

“FESA’s volunteers and industry groups be actively engaged through the establishment of an emergency services advisory group.”

In September 2011, the WA Government Cabinet approved the roles of Volunteers who are to be recognised through appropriate advisory structures.

In November 2012, the *Fire and Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Act 2012*, commenced, where FESA as an Authority was re-structured to become a Department (DFES) led by a Commissioner.

This Act enabled the introduction of the current system of Volunteer Advisory Committees.

Section 25 (2) of the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1987* states that the Minister must establish an advisory committee for each of the following services (as per s. 25 (3) of the *act*):

- Bush Fire Brigades (*Bush Fires Act 1954*);
- Volunteer Brigades (*Fire Brigades Act 1942*);
- SES Units;
- VMRS Groups; and
- FES Units.

Composition

Each Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC), is comprised of Volunteers, DFES staff and a Police Officer. Each service based Volunteers Association forwards the details of suitable Volunteers, to be considered by the Minister, for appointment. The Minister appoints the Volunteers he thinks fit to appoint, with the majority of the members to be appointed from people nominated by the relevant prescribed association (as per the *act s. 25 (4)*).

Each VAC member is bound by a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement. This enables them to provide high level and strategic advice to DFES on a range of matters that cannot be disclosed until any embargo or confidentiality is released.

The VACs are responsible for advising the FES Commissioner upon, and making recommendations in relation to, anything that may impact on the represented service, operationally, administratively or otherwise.

The SES VAC conducts quarterly meetings with urgent matters being considered as out-of-session business.



**Members of the
First SES VAC Meeting - 2014**



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Strategic

The SES VAC is a high level strategic committee where all business considered comes via;

1. The Office of the Minister,
2. The Office of the FES Commissioner (usually via Command Heads), and
3. The Office of the SES Volunteers Association.

Items Considered or Evaluated to Date

Items which the SES VAC have considered and provided advice on since inception include;

- Unit level equipment lists (ongoing)
- Review of the LGGS manual (ongoing)
- Workers Compensation Injury and Management Policy (ongoing)
- Emergency Services Legislative Review
- Volunteer Fuel Cards
- Volunteer Sustainability and Retention Strategy (ongoing)
- Volunteer Portal Redevelopment (ongoing)
- SES Unit profiling (ongoing)
- DFES communications to external stakeholders (ongoing)
- Future of First Aid training (ongoing)
- Emergency Response Driver Categories (ongoing)
- LGGS supported mobile phones for SES Units (ongoing)

Membership

The members of the SES VAC are;

SES Volunteers

Gordon Hall, Chair

Phillip Petersen *ESM*, Deputy Chair,

Trevor Patton *ESM*

Matthew Thomas

David Beard

Keith Squibb (Deputy)

David Fyfe (Deputy)

Bernard McNamara *ESM* (Deputy)

Rosemary Yeoh (awaiting Cabinet approval)

Carol Vickerage (awaiting Cabinet approval)

Mac Holt (retired May 2016)

Shelley Staff (retired May 2016)

DFES Staff

Lloyd Bailey *AFSM*

Darren Klemm

Allen Gale

Helen Croke (Support Officer to the VACs)

WA Police

Philip Van Nieuwburg

Nikki Young (Deputy)

***Gordon Hall
SES VAC Chair
June 2016***