



December 2013

SESVA Welcomes New Committee Members

I am pleased to advise the SES Volunteers that after the AGM on 26 October a number of Volunteers joined the SESVA as new committee members.

The newly appointed Regional Representatives are Chloe Biggs (Great Southern), Aaron Hall (Goldfields), Chris Widmer (Southwest), Trevor Patton (Kimberley), Lloyd Storey (Midwest), David Price (Midlands), Kylie Griffin (South Coastal), and Bernie McNamara (North East).

Also joining the Executive Team are Lin Booth as the Secretary and Les Hayter as a special appointment leading the SESVA Training Group.

On Behalf of the Association I welcome all of these new appointments to the Committee and I believe they bring a wealth of experience and expertise with them.

SESVA Strategic Meeting

As a result of feedback from the DFES conference and various Volunteers, I conducted a special strategic meeting of the Executive Team and other available committee members to set a pathway to follow over the next 2 years.

A number of initiatives came out of this, in particular setting up special subject matter sub-committees for a number of key areas including, training, vehicles, uniforms and legislation. The intention is to have a chair of the sub-committee appointed by the SESVA and the chair will co-opt appropriate Volunteers on to that sub-committee. This way the input can come from more SES Volunteers with experience in the subject matter area.

SESVA Communication

One of the areas we identified at the SESVA Strategic meeting was poor communication in the past to some areas and Volunteers. The Association is now addressing this and the Regional Representatives will be communicating more closely with the SES Units. Further to this a lot of information is put on the VA website (www.ses-wa.asn.au), group emailing and on the SESVA facebook page. The Association now has a twitter account (@SESVA1).

Further to this I intend doing one of these newsletters every month (except January) to update as many of the SES Volunteers as possible on what's happening in the SES.

The Main Issues

The main issues for the SES Volunteers can be categorised under the headings; communication, training, vehicles/equipment, leadership and promotion. As we are working in an environment that is evidence based, I having been gathering evidence all year and in particular the feedback from the Volunteer Opinion Survey of 22 September has provided the VA with a lot of data that can be used.

Some of the issues include;

- SES Week where no notice was given to SES Volunteers of activities for the week;
- SES Volunteers not being allowed to be trained or deliver training out of their region;
- SES Volunteers being approved for travel to train by the district office and after the training is completed the Chief Superintendent refusing payment;



- An SES Unit not being turned out for an SES response in their area – instead Comcen dispatching another service or unit;
- Reports by Volunteers of Trucks breaking down or getting flat batteries;
- Forrestfield training telling Volunteers that they cannot drive any SES Vehicle unless they are qualified in “On-Road” driving;
- Poor/ineffective/inconsistent communication in some areas between DFES and the Volunteers
- Nominal training hours for SES Volunteers to qualify (originally for funding purposes and now applied to SES Volunteers)
- Training/upgrading of trainer/assessors

And the list goes on

The VA can only work on these issues where the Volunteers and units can provide a paper or email trail so please remember to email requests and issues to whomever, so the SESVA can have the evidence when we represent the issue to an organisation such as DFES.

Please forward all issues, with supporting documentation if available, to your local regional representative in the first instance. Please send a cc to Lin Booth, SESVA Secretary (sesva.secretary@gmail.com) who will be collating all forwarded information for presentation to the appropriate area. Please feel free to discuss the matter with your regional representative or Lin Booth and myself if necessary.

Meeting with the FES Commissioner

On 2 December, Secretary Lin Booth, Bernie McNamara and myself met with the Commissioner to discuss a number of issues. We tabled these issues with over forty pages of supporting evidence. There was a lot of discussion about the issues with the Commissioner. Commissioner Gregson, in showing his support for the SES Volunteers, decided he would have a special SES Issues Register developed by DFES. This register has now been put together and ownership lies with the Commissioner. We will meet with him again in mid-January to assess the progress of the issues by his staff.

SES Training Pathways

After the feedback at the SES Open Forum and from the Volunteer Opinion Survey (September 22) I called a meeting with DFES’s Brad Delavale to discuss future training for SES Volunteers. Brad very quickly understood the issue and put a team together to work on an SES Training Pathway. Peter McCarthy is now driving this and is on a steep learning curve about the SES and their requirements. Further to this DFES’s Wade Isard facilitated a training information night which training people from across the metropolitan and country areas were invited. Over 40 Volunteers from the Metropolitan area, 7 SESVA Committee members and 12 staff attended (no country people were sent). This was a very informative night and had some lively moments. The feedback from DFES staff has been very positive and they have a much better grasp of what is required by the SES Volunteers. It is hoped that the next SESVA Journal will have articles and diagrams on where the SES Training Pathways is going.

SESVA Journal



The VA plans to put out the next Journal at the end of March. During our recent strategic meeting it was decided to use the "Information for Volunteers" concept of the old Western Alert. What this means is that different information that Volunteers could use will be included in future SESVA Journals. For example an article and facts on the **vehicle weights** matter, **insurance** and what you are covered for, the **SES Training Pathways** concept and other important matters. Feedback on what SES Volunteers want in this magazine would be appreciated by the VA and can be emailed to sesva.editorwebmaster@gmail.com.

ANZAC Day Parade

The privilege of marching in ANZAC Day parades is granted by the RSL for "Uniformed Services" with SES Volunteers marching in their khaki dress uniform.

ANZAC Day 2013 saw the SES Volunteers use the new SES Flag, for the first time, as part of their march.

The SESVA asks that Local managers promote this within their units for SES volunteers who wish to march in ANZAC Day parades.

SES Units will also need to make sure that khaki dress uniforms for SES Volunteers who want to march in future ANZAC day parades are ordered early to avoid any delays by DFES or S&H.

With the 2015 ANZAC day March being the 100th Anniversary of Gallipoli, it is expected to surpass all other marches and will be a great opportunity for SES Volunteers to be a part of the privilege granted to them by the RSL and march as a uniformed service.

It is important to start getting ready now and use the 2014 March as a forerunner to the 2015 Anniversary March.

National SESVA

Currently there is no National organisation however; I have met with three other states and a Territory to discuss formation of a National body to share information of a common interest and to have a national voice for SES matters. We are working to form a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to get the process going.

Also we are committed to promote SES as a National Brand, recognised by all no matter where in Australia.

I look forward to the February newsletter and providing more updates for the SES Emergency Responders (all Volunteers)

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