



FEBRUARY 2014

Firstly I would like to welcome you all back to a new SES year and hope that you had a safe and restful summer break. Of course many of the SES Volunteers were involved in fire support and other operations in the affected communities and at the same time ensuring their preparedness for other natural hazards such as cyclone deployment or mini-tornado response. The feedback that I have received about SES Volunteer involvement has been very positive and much appreciated by the affected communities.

SESVA Strategic Meeting

In January the SESVA Executive Committee and other available members met to discuss a number of issues that are coming up this year. Amongst these are the various sub-committees and we are working through these to see the best way to share the expertise and workload around. There will be more on this next month.

Annual SES Rescue Competition

A special committee, led by Les Hayter, is developing a concept for an annual SES State Rescue Competition which will be considered over the next couple of months.

SESVA Journal

The next SES Journal is due at the end of March and a list of items has been compiled for inclusion. If there are any articles that SES Volunteers or Units would like published please get them to John Capes (sesva.editorwebmaster@gmail.com) before the end of February – or contact him.

SESVA Communication

As discussed in the last newsletter we are increasing our forms of communication to the Volunteers. I would like to see information from the SESVA be sent to the Unit Management Team in each unit, where we have the details, and any other Volunteer who registers with us. It is hoped that this method would increase the knowledge in a timely fashion, as the communication chain through DFES can be very slow at times. Please send email details to (sescomment@gmail.com).

Volunteer Hardship Scheme

The SESVA is involved in setting up the VHS for all Emergency Service Responder Volunteers. The government has guaranteed some initial funding and then the fund would be similar to a benevolent fund and would need to be self-sustaining. There will be more information on this once agreement has been reached on how it will operate and who is eligible.

Trainer Assessors

This is still an issue for the SES Volunteers the SESVA is putting a plan together for the Association to assist the SES Volunteers (and others) through coaching and mentoring up grades where possible.

SES Pathways

The SESVA has been working hard on this one since the 2013 Conference and are now in the final stages of consultation. The final draft will be published in the next SESVA Journal for any further input by SES Volunteers. This document will be a living document and as our business and training requirements alter it can be changed.



2014 DFES Volunteer Conference

Planning for the next Volunteer Conference has commenced with DFES and the SESVA position is for sessions that reflect the needs for Volunteers. This must include training, management, administration, vehicles, PPE and uniforms. We will be working hard on this and we want to include opportunities for feedback during those sessions.

2014 SES Volunteer Awards Night

Planning for this will commence shortly with DFES. The SESVA expect it to be on a Saturday night at the Volunteer Conference. This year the SESVA intend adding one further award to the three current awards. If you have any comments you want considered please forward to sescomment@gmail.com

SESVA Meets with the FES Commissioner

On February 6 the Secretary Lin Booth and I met with the FES Commissioner to discuss a number of issues that we had previously placed on the Commissioner's Issues Register.

We discussed a number of matters including the fact that the SES needs to remain on its own so it can be easily identified (as part of a national brand that the public understand and recognise). The SESVA believes the SES Volunteers should not be called DFES personnel. The Commissioner has a different opinion on these points and we seek any feedback or comment from the SES Volunteers on this. (sescomment@gmail.com).

I am pleased to report that a number of the issues on the Commissioner's SES Register have been completed or have gained some traction. I have listed some of these below.

Training: With the SESVA pushing this along we are getting some traction in the areas of the SES Pathways. DFES conducted the first of many information sessions planned as part of the trainer assessor communications strategy (their words) in late November. The Commissioner will try and get the timeframes for rollout of the TRKs along with the priority list.

Ban on inter Region training: The SESVA had previously represented this issue where some Volunteer units had been advised that they could neither train nor be trained outside of their region. The FES Commissioner advises that this is not the case.

Lack of Knowledge of SES: The FES Commissioner is doing some work to ensure there is a better understanding and acceptance by Chief Superintendents and other staff on the knowledge and requirements of the SES.

Vehicle issues: There are a number of issues with the trucks and these are now being worked on by O'Connor (SESVA have met them twice so far on this).

The Commissioner advises that the District Office need to own these issues and manage them in a timely manner.

The Unit Managers need to advise issues in writing (email is ok) so a paper trail can be kept for the SESVA to take to him for quick resolution.

ISUZU truck starting issue will be circulated by DFES as they advise that this is not a technical issue just a driver familiarisation matter.



All land cruiser vehicle replacements have been put on hold until some fit for purpose issues are resolved.

Truck Driving Licences; In some areas there has been a refusal by DFES to refund cost of DoT fees and cost of assessment for licence upgrades where required by the Unit. DFES advise that there is a maximum of 4 members per Unit for refund.

Delay in Appointment of Local Managers; There have been long delays in the metro area and now Bayswater, Stirling, Northshore and Wanneroo/Joondalup will all have appointments finalised by the end of February. If there are any other SES Local Managers around the state who have not been appointed please let the Association know.

The lack of promotion of SES week; There is an internal report on this matter being written. The early indication is that in the future, preparation for this will commence about three months prior to November.

Albany ATU; The Commissioner said it is definitely on the list and will be delivered.

Payment for Travel to SES Volunteers; The Commissioner is very concerned that a commitment to pay a Volunteer travel costs to attend a training course is over-ridden up the command chain. The SESVA has represented this matter and at this stage the Chief-Superintendent involved has not resolved the matter with the payment being made to the Volunteer. This has also happened where private members vehicles were required urgently during an operation. The OCN should pay for this but the Region refused payment. The Commissioner is also looking into this one.

On Road Driving; The FES Commissioner advised that the Training Group is rewording the Policy and Driver trainer packages to reflect that "On Road Driving" is not a pre-requisite for SES Volunteers in doing the "Off Road Driving" course, and that SES Volunteers only need the appropriate driving licence to drive SES Vehicles when not under emergency operational conditions (red/blue lights and sirens).

Uniform Delivery Time Frames; this is an ongoing issue with delays by the supplier and orders being lost. DFES still working on this.

There are a number of new issues including; DFES circulars, including safety, not reaching the SES Volunteers and SES Units. Placing them on the web for people to try and find and pull down is neither effective nor appropriate. Not only is this compromising the safety of the SES Volunteers but, if there is an enquiry and circulars or safety notices are referred to, the SESVA believe that DFES will be found culpable in not effectively delivering these circular and safety notices to the SES Units and SES Volunteers. I look forward to the March newsletter when I am sure we will have some more updates on other important matters for the SES Emergency Responders (all Volunteers)

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