



from the Presidents desk...

SESVA

Gordon Hall
SES Volunteers Association



March 2014

One of the main focuses of the new Committee has been to increase the visibility of the SES Volunteers Association as well as producing outcomes. Secretary Lin Booth and I have been working hard on this and it is good to see the committee members are very supportive and working tirelessly to ensure these things happen.

We are also building a number of excellent working relationships within DFES, however we still have some blockers who do not give the respect and credit that the SES Volunteers deserve. We are working with DFES on this.

SES Social Night

The Association is organising a social get together at the Bayswater SES Unit on 28 March – all units should have seen a poster on this by now. The intention of this night is to allow SES Volunteers and their partners to catchup and mingle in a relaxed non-operational atmosphere. If it is successful then this may happen each year and different units may host the night. I hope to see as many as possible there on that night.

Commissioner Gregson

By increasing the interaction with the FES Commissioner and by using the Commissioners' SES Issues Register, many issues that the Volunteers have are now being resolved by the appropriate DFES areas. To assist the Association we request that all Volunteers and Units keep a paper trail of actions with DFES and their staff. This will ensure our representations to the Commissioner and his Deputies are evidence based.

The SESVA Journal

The next journal is well advanced and will provide a lot of current information which should be of use to all SES Volunteers.

There is still room for articles from Units and Volunteers. The journal is expected to be delivered in April and will have a close off date of 20 March for articles.

Training

Les Hayter and his sub-committee has done a tremendous amount of work in this area and the DFES academy are now working hard to keep up with the Association on training matters. The SES Training Pathways final concept document is expected to be in the Journal. There can still be further feedback from Volunteers. The SES pathways will be a living document and subject to change for the duration of its life.

We are getting continual feedback about the lack of trainer/assessor training. The Association has decided to run a number of workshops this month in the metropolitan area to coach and mentor volunteers through the on-line DFES TAE equivalence package for BSZ and pre January 2011 TAA qualified Volunteers. There has been push back by the DFES Academy, however something needed to be done quickly.

The Association is watching the training closely in this state and working with other Associations nationally to try and get the best deal possible for the SES Volunteers.



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Monthly Newsletter

This Monthly Newsletter, placed on line, twitted and emailed around the state, is intended to update SES Volunteers and others on what is going on and what is new. We are finding record hits when this and other information for the SES Volunteers goes on the web. The feedback comments are encouraging.

Peer Support Team

Phillip, Bernie and I met DFES about their support to this team in recent years. As a result of that meeting, the Director of Human Services, Karen Roberts, has committed to the re-vitalisation and provision of regular training for the Peer Support Team. Karen has since met with the group and is working through a number of matters with them.

Media Coverage

Media coverage for the SES is not as good as it used to be. This is an area that needs to be improved as the public needs to see the support and good work, no matter what the response or assistance is, by the SES Volunteers responding for their HMA roles, or during fire support, road crash rescue, vertical rescue and other emergency events. They need to name the Service and not call them "DFES Personnel"

This matter was recently discussed with the Minister and included lack of coverage for SES Week and no coverage for Emergency Service Volunteers who were honoured in the recent Australia Day Awards.

We are hopeful of a big improvement in this area in the future.

The DFES Volunteers Conference

The Association has put the case to DFES for a rearrangement of how the presentations are conducted for the SES Volunteers. Basically there would be 3 sessions of 2 hours each, containing 3 fifteen minute presentations with a 20 minute Q&A session following each presentation.

The sessions would be; Training; Unit Management and Administration; Vehicles and Equipment.

The purpose of this is to present the required information to the Volunteers with the opportunity to provide feedback immediately after each fifteen minute session. We have also requested providing our own timekeeper/facilitator due to some timing issues last year.

There are other general sessions also available for SES Volunteers to attend.

The SES Awards Night

The 2013 Awards Night was well attended and much enjoyed by all SES attendees. This is a good formula that we are working hard to keep. DFES's Media & Public Affairs section has asked the Association to agree to reduce our awards to one and to combine the awards night with other Associations. The SESVA has **not** agreed to this. What do you think – your feedback is needed?

Legislation review

At the end of March the Legislative Review Options Paper will be released and there will be about four months for the SES Volunteers and other stakeholders to review this and provide an input.



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Some of the key areas put forward by SES Volunteers during the review included the **SES being part of the National Brand** and having someone in charge of the SES – their own department or division.

Feedback from all Volunteers will be necessary to provide your input on how you want the future Emergency Services to look in this state.

National SESVA

An MoU has been signed by four states and a territory to progress the formation of a National SESVA so matters of common interest can be appropriately addressed. Some of the matters discussed so far include the National Training model, the need for retaining the **SES as a National Brand** so it is easily recognizable by all (no matter where they are in Australia) and the collapse of ACSES (the Australian Council for SESs).

Operational Efficiency Payments (OEPs)

This is an initiative by the SESVA based on the OEPs for VFRS and the VES units. Basically if the Units meet certain criteria then they are eligible for special payments that they can decide, within certain guidelines, what those payments are spent on. The FES Commissioner has agreed in principle and we are waiting further advice from DFES.

SES Volunteer Advisory Committee

This has been a long road and State Cabinet recently deferred their decision as there were no females on the proposed VACs. We have now rectified that situation for the SES and it is hoped that State Cabinet will now re-consider the VACs sometime soon.

Association Sub-Committees

As the Association is restructured to have a sub-committee focus on different key areas we see a number of Volunteers join these sub-committees to provide much needed experience and input.

The groups so far include the Training group, the SES State Rescue Competition group, the Vehicle and equipment group, the Uniform and PPE group, Legislation review group, the Ceremonial group, DFES Conference, SES Awards Committee etc.

As the work load can be high on these sub-committee we have decided to share the work around and no one person should be on more than one sub-committee.

Hoping to see you on March 28

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