



FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope all of you, and your friends and family who support each other are continuing to maintain your strength during this COVID 19 community experience. We are blessed to be in Western Australia where isolation is a benefit to us.

I cannot help but mention the Code of Conduct which DFES has sent to SES Volunteers without introduction, warning or the benefits explained.

Whilst the Commissioner has assured me that the intent is only to clarify and focus our attention to the Departments privacy, once again an opportunity has been lost due to poor communication.

Some of the sad responses from units that have contacted the Association have been the number of unit members believing that they had done something wrong, as prior life experience suggests that to be referred to such a document and training, meant that as an individual, you stuffed up and this is a reminder of what you have to do.

Let that be a lesson for us all.

Bad communication creates misunderstanding and confusion.

Many volunteers are simply refusing to complete the Code of Conduct because they believe their favourable relationships at local level with local media and the MP is a valuable asset to maintaining the resilient links through their community.

The Commissioner has spoken to the media about his intent but missed an opportunity to explain this to the SES Volunteers.

Whilst we are adults, I respect our individual right and ability to chose to train or not train, I trust in the future that better leadership is shown to inspire, instead of confuse, SES Volunteers.

Greg Cook
President

From your team at the SESVA UNIT VISITS

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Recently the WA Minister for Emergency Services stated that any WA Elected State Politician that wished to visit a DFES facility to see volunteers needed written permission from his office.

Apparently that is a long standing ethical stance.

The WA SES is reminded that our facilities in the main are supplied, supported and maintained by our Local governments.

Hence if you wish to invite your elected member to experience the great work we do and to meet our outstanding volunteers, that MP does not need the Ministers approval if it is not a DFES owned facility.

This is also a great media opportunity to promote the support our elected members provide to local volunteers and of course this is to better prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters that threaten our communities.

Remember, if we do the prevention, preparation and response correctly with the community, our recovery post emergency is far less complicated and faster for all involved.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The SESVA raised the question of what is happening in the space of Community Engagement for the SES.

We have been informed :

"Community engagement direction and interaction has until January been occurring through the Community Engagement Team on an as required basis, due to the team not having a dedicated resource.

CPD did however meet with the volunteer association to establish relationships and seek their opinion on the development of some new resources.

In the past the community Engagement network has been in operation, however this group requires review to ensure that it is a valuable network which serves the purpose of the group and achieves its objectives.

This group was a contact point for all interested SES units to direct questions and queries.

Since COVID there has been little opportunity to undertake community engagement at BGU level and as a result efforts have been focussed elsewhere.

The contact for SES units is still the Community Engagement Team, and as activities begin with lifting of COVID restrictions, the team will continue to be able to provide support to units.

DFES will also provide communication to BGUs through this branch when required."

WORKING ON ROOFS

The current SOP for working on roofs requires a written risk assessment be completed for each task, and to clearly detail the reasons for not using an RSS on a roof task.

The former practise of undocumented dynamic risk assessment is not acceptable.

Worksafe have contacted DFES in relation to complaints from the public regarding why SES teams weren't using RSS.

In most other States it is mandatory for a Roof Safety System to be used on all roof tasks.

Adherence to the SOP is required in all cases.

MEREDIN BUILDING

Completion of New Shed for Merredin State Emergency Service (SES) Unit

The Merredin State Emergency Service (SES) Unit has just received a major boost to their operating facilities with the completion of a new 3-bay shed.

Funding was provided by DFES and construction began in March.

Up until now the Unit has not had a shed to house vehicles, trailers and equipment which have been stored outside, exposed to the elements. The shed will house the Unit's 2 vehicles, incident trailers and other equipment that has been stored within the Unit's main building. This additional secure storage space will allow better use of their main building for activities like meetings, training courses and exercises.

The Unit currently has 12 members and Local Manager Mark Briggs is hopeful that the new shed may help to attract some new volunteers to join the Unit.

The attached picture shows Local Manager Mark Briggs in front of the new shed.



WEBEOC APP

There is available an "off the shelf" APP for WebEOC.

DFES are exploring if this APP has potential for use by DFES Staff and SES Volunteers in the RFA process.

Watch this space as we learn more.

GRU VEHICLE

Below is the latest information we have on the new GRU Rescue Vehicle. This information covers both the North and the South of Western Australia.

"The vehicle delivery has been delayed while resolving weight distribution issues. These were addressed this week and the 6 first-of-type vehicles are now planned to be received from next week.

(Editor note - That is 13th July 2020)

We will focus on confirming suitability for the standard configuration of the vehicle which will go in to the metro area. We have standard configuration GRU builds planned for this calendar year that the user acceptance is impacting. We will use all 6 vehicles initially in the metro area for this trial.

Once the metro trial is completed, we can then commence the Country trials and take time to ensure that the new vehicle suits the harsher use it will get in your regions. We will kick this off with a regional workshop and the in-field trials will commence directly afterwards."

LEADERSHIP AND USING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Why are our best leaders blessed with good emotional Intelligence?

- ☼ Awareness of your strengths, weaknesses, drives, values and impact on others
- ☼ Self-regulation – controlling or redirecting disruptive impulses and moods
- ☼ Motivation – relishing achievement for its own sake
- ☼ Empathy – understanding other people's emotional makeup
- ☼ Social Skill- building rapport with others to move them in desired directions.

Look around and discover that we are born with certain levels of emotional Intelligence skill. We can all strengthen these abilities through persistence, practice and feedback from colleagues or coaches.

The great leaders amongst us in the SES with higher levels of Emotional Intelligence regularly out perform those that try to manage people, goals and targets.

Step back and have a look. The SES VA places extreme importance in its negotiations with DFES on developing leaders now and into the future.

Both DFES and the SES VA agree that this has been sadly lacking for many years in its training resources.

WET WEATHER JACKET BRANDING

We approached DFES regarding having "SES" placed on the back of the inner liner of the wet weather jacket, as it was on the previous jacket we were issued.

Below is the reply received in answer to our request.

"Reinstating of "SES" on the rear of the outer jacket has recently been undertaken by Stewart and Heaton following direction from DC Waters.

The reasoning for not having this applied to the inner also is due to the following;

- * The inner is considered part of the whole jacket and contributes to the "warm" element of the outer rather than a primarily a stand-alone element. The inner can be removed if protection from wet weather is only required.
- * Where warmth is required indoors DFES also supply soft shell jackets to SES volunteers which is the preference.
- * If the inner were to be worn alone, sleeve badging remains visible which allows identification.
- * There is a significant cost associated with the extra stencilling and the benefit is outweighed by this additional cost.
- * Consistency across services indicates that other services either have no stencilling or that this is on outer garments only.

If you have any comments on this matter, please contact bella and advise her of your thoughts.
sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au

RSS REVIEW

We have been hearing rumours DFES are reviewing the Roof Safety System used by SES Volunteers.

On asking the question of whether this was correct, and if any SES Volunteers were on the review group we were advised:

" It appears there is an intent to review the Roof Safety System however this has not yet commenced.

Health and Safety Services and Rescue branch have been advised volunteer participation will be necessary when this process begins."



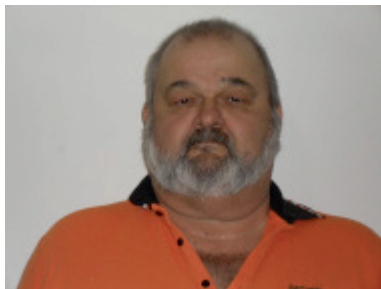
MEET YOUR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Region: Midlands-Goldfields

Sarge Bottacin
0419 909 523

sesva.midlands_goldfields@ses-wa.asn.au

Sarge first Attended Northam & Districts SES (NDSSES) in 1987, on an invitation from a friend who was already a member of NDSSES, and was instantly welcomed as part of the team and the association with SES and NDSSES has been continual ever since.



During his time with the unit he has gained all skills and qualifications that are offered He is also a Trainer assessor in AIIMS Awareness, Basic General Rescue, Chainsaw Operations, Field Radio Operator, Land Search Team Member, Navigate to An Incident, Net Control Station Operator, Operations Room, SES Induction, Storm & Water Damage Operations, and Urban Search & Rescue Cat 1 & WAERN Radio.

sarge has also held the positions of Deputy Local Manager NDSSES, Training Manager NDSSES, Local Manager NDSSES & Volunteer Regional Training Coordinator, Midlands Region where He looked after training for regional Units such as Moora, Merredin, and Toodyay, in fact is still providing training assistance with these units now, and has also travelled to Kalgoorlie and Norseman helping with training.

He ia also a Search Team Leader, Level 1 Incident Controller and Sector Commander.

Winner of the prestigious Peter Keilor Award 2009, Represented WA in The national Rescue Competitions in Brisbane 2009, and Life member of NDSSES and on a more comical side 3 time winner of the NDSSES District Officer Natural Hazards Screw Up of the Year award and probably the last remaining member of the Volunteer Of Midlands Instructional Team (VOMIT).

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SUPPORT OFFICERS

We have had a few requests to outline the role of VMSSO's at each reginal office.

Below is our understanding of their role:

- Works with BGU leaders, DFES and local government staff to improve efficiencies by identifying gaps and deficiencies in BGU administration and management systems and providing advice and recommendations for systems design, enhancement and implementation.
- Works with BGU leaders, DFES and local government staff to ensure BGUs are compliant with data capturing and reporting requirements.
- Follows up on issues that have been referred by BGUs to DFES staff or local government for action.
 - Supports BGU leaders, DFES and local government staff to maintain and ensure the accuracy of volunteer membership and equipment records, establishing appropriate systems if required.
- Assists DFES and local government staff with supply and equipment purchasing and ordering processes for BGUs.
 - Assists BGU leaders, DFES and local government staff with the logistics and communications for volunteer recruitment programs, volunteer recognition events and stakeholder/community engagement activities.
 - Supports BGU leaders to develop and implement local promotions, social media and other communication tools and activities.
- Assists DFES and local government staff with the development and maintenance of relationships between BGUs and stakeholders to create a collegiate environment that increases the quality of information flow and collaboration.
 - Performs special projects and operational support roles as required by the Superintendent to ensure efficient running of BGUs.
 - Provides regional support for operations as required.
 - Carries out other duties as assigned.

MERREDIN TRAINING

Finally, we are now on our way back to normality, with the easing of COVID 19 Restrictions and with a sense of rejuvenated energy.

Merredin SES members have now come out of hibernation and are keenly getting back into routine.

Activity around Merredin's Local Headquarters has been a buzz of late with the much awaited new shed almost completed; see the article in this newsletter

Whilst there are still some teething problems to sort out in the new build, the unit is ready to start moving in. For Local Manager Mark Briggs the move can't come quick enough as this will allow the team to move most of the equipment, being stored in the Operations Centre, out to the shed, allowing much need space to be freed up inside the Ops Centre.

With all this free space in the Ops Centre, the team can now start setting up computers workstations etc. in the Ops Room and the training area; well this can finally be used as a training area.

During the COVID 19 restrictions Merredin have been lucky with minimal callouts, and those that did occur were dealt with accordingly.

With training in full swing Merredin are looking at trying to catch-up and finish 2020 and are now also looking into 2021.

Membership remained a constant with concern of losing newer members due to shut downs,



WELLNESS CHAPLAIN



The service that a Chaplain provides to people has changed quite significantly from what it used to be.

Up until 2016, DFES contracted Chaplaincy Services from the Salvation Army to support their people, but, as of July 2019, after careful consideration of the feedback provided by the organization's key stakeholders and review of the chaplaincy role, the first full-time employed Wellness Chaplain Dennis Sudla was employed.

A more, strategic, comprehensive and holistic approach has been adopted to make sure that the delivery of service is person-centred.

"The Wellness Chaplain operates within the Wellness Branch and provides a specific role in the area of Pastoral Care and will be contributing to the core strategy of increasing personal resilience and holistic wellbeing of DFES volunteers and employees,".

Dennis Sudla is currently the DFES Wellness Chaplain.

The Wellness Chaplain provides Pastoral Care support to individuals or groups, this includes the five areas of pastoral care approach; Healing, Sustaining, Guiding, Reconciling and Nurturing.

Bereavement support and the developing process on grief and loss is also a vital part of the Wellness Chaplain's intervention when and if required, this include the secondary experience of grief and loss while attending a job which involves a loss of life.

The Wellness Chaplain can also provide emotional/spiritual support and facilitate visits to any SES Unit requiring Bereavement support after the loss of either someone within the SES Unit or after a critical incident that Volunteers have attended.



WELLNESS CHAPLAIN - CONT'D

Brent Findlay, a Bushfire Volunteer and one of the Chaplains from Albany stated that, "This is a Great Resource that has been created by the Wellness Branch at DFES to look after the social and emotional wellbeing of full-time employees and volunteers alike."

If you'd like to email Chaplain Dennis Sudla at dennis.sudla@dfes.wa.gov.au.

Otherwise, you can call the Wellness Chaplain on 9393 9991 or 0436 523 421.

Dennis is more than happy to attend Units for a meet and greet. Just contact him.

TAKE 5 FORM

We have contacted DFES regarding the new "Take 5" form and asked the reason for the enlarged form. The answer we received is:

"The reason for the take 5 being implemented is as a process to ensure that all teams and particularly team leaders are making the best possible effort to identify hazards which are present at jobs and undertake a process of recording. The recording in particular is not something that has been done well in the past.

The take 5 is simply a tool to make that process consistent and repeatable.

By primarily asking yes /no questions it should limit the amount of time taken to undertake the task

The document is taken from the SWDO TRK and aide memoir with the second page added due to the focus on working at height.

The items included should really be considered anyway even if there wasn't a take 5.

The form could all fit on an A4 but was enlarged to make it easier to read particularly in the dark.

The PDF was provided in editable format for use on the tablets with the view that they could be completed and emailed or attached to the WebEOC job. There are already teams doing this both north and south of the river.

The overwhelming take away should be however that DFES is trying to assist Team Leaders by giving them the tools and prompts and a way of recording decisions in a yes/no (predominantly) format.

This isn't intended to make TLs do anything they shouldn't already be doing in their head but provides them a way of justifying decisions that they have made."

COST OF NATURAL DISASTERS

Australia's Cruel summer – despite this being fresh in our memory, don't lose sight of the fact that the Natural Disasters the SES responds to are still greatly larger and affect so many people.

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) has recently estimated the combined insurance losses of this summer's four biggest natural disasters passed the half-billion dollar mark.

The South Australia's Pinery bushfires, Sydney's tornado, the Boxing Day bushfires in Victoria, and the bushfires in south west WA have all added up to \$515 million, as homes and companies make claims for damage property and business interruption.

ICA's CEO Rob Whelan said "insurers are paying out more than \$1.3 million each working day in repairs, building works, settlements and assistance to policyholders just for these four disasters".

"That figure doesn't include the losses from many other smaller events, including recent flood and storm damage in parts of Sydney and the Hunter region," he continued.

And yet, these aren't even nearly the most costly natural disasters in recent history – or even recent memory. Here are the three most expensive events to ever happen on Australian soil.

1) Sydney's hailstorms (1999)

Just before the turn of the millennium, news reports told the New South Wales public how a shower was coming up from the south, though "only a brief one". What followed was the most devastating natural event in living memory.

Storms flooded Sydney, and brought hailstones the size of tennis balls hurtling from the sky. Vehicles, homes, sheds, outdoor property – all was in the line of fire.

Homes and businesses claimed \$1.7 billion from their insurers, with ICA estimating that to be a mind-blowing \$4.29 billion in today's money.

2) Tropical Cyclone Tracy (1974)

On Christmas Day, 1974, while the rest of Australia was unwrapping its presents, Darwin was hit with a huge climate depression. Winds of 217 kilometres per hour followed and swept across the northern seaboard, causing debris to fly and, unfortunately, 66 people to lose their lives.



COST OF NATURAL DISASTERS - CONT'D

The National Archives of Australia says that 70% of Darwin's homes were destroyed or severely damaged, while all public services were taken completely out of action.

The bill for the insurance clean up? A whopping \$4.09 billion if we brought the actual \$200 million insured losses into the current day.

3) Newcastle earthquake (1989)

A quarter of a century ago, an earthquake struck the NSW city of Newcastle. Despite only registering a rather moderate 5.6 on the Richter scale, 50,000 buildings were damaged, leading to 300 being demolished.

Thirteen people lost their lives and more than 1,000 Australians had to be displaced due to the damage to their homes and businesses, Australian Geographic reports.

ICA estimates the insured losses from the earthquake at \$862 million. However, that was back in the late 80s. Normalise that amount for today's prices and the insurance bill is a staggering \$3.24 billion.

So from the SES, don't lose our focus in the smoke haze that this is real and little is done to address this in a fire state. Remember this?

Ten years on, the great Perth hail storm of 2010 remains WA's most expensive natural disaster

By Irena Ceranic

Monday March 22, 2010, started like any ordinary early autumn day — it was warm, the sun was out, winds were light.

But something extraordinary was brewing in those seemingly calm skies and it had even the most experienced forecasters on edge.

Key points:

Ø The warning for Perth was issued just over an hour before the storm hit

Ø With \$1.3 billion in claims, the 2010 storm was the costliest in WA history

Ø UWA was extensively damaged, including historic Winthrop Hall

"[It was] a beautiful sunny day, but there was a nervous energy in the office, we were all looking at the meteorological data and we knew we had a loaded gun in the atmosphere," Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) senior meteorologist Andrew Burton recalled.

COST OF NATURAL DISASTERS - CONT'D

"Everything was set up for severe thunderstorms to happen and for them to come over the metropolitan area."

By peak hour, the sky had turned an eerie grey as clouds rolled in from the north, unleashing the fiercest storm to hit Perth in living memory.

A one-in-100-year storm

To the general public, the storm was as unexpected as it was severe, barreling in with little notice during school pick-up and the afternoon commute home.

But Mr Burton, who was in charge of BOM's severe weather services that day, described the mood in the office as "adrenaline charged".

COVID-19

COVID - looking to the future

WA is currently in a very good state but experts tell us that this won't last.

It's highly likely that we will eventually get a second, and even third, wave.

When you think that just one member coming down with coronavirus could temporarily shut down your unit, you realise that it's time for some solid resilience planning.

If we have another outbreak, how will your unit organise training, keep members involved and motivated and what needs to be in place for people to respond safely to each type of call out? What help is available inside and across units? What other resources can you use and share?

Now's the time to quietly set things up. Don't wait until you're under pressure.

FACEBOOK

Just a quick reminder the SESVA is on facebook.

Western Australian SES Volunteers Association



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/42218868165/>

Follow us to get all the current information affecting SES Volunteers.



MOUNT BARKER SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Mount Barker SES strengthen ties with the community by donating over 100 blankets to two Albany charities this winter.

The blankets were given to the charities to help them support vulnerable demographics. The donations were to Anglicare and Pivot who provide support and counselling to vulnerable and homeless people in the community.

Mount Barker SES Local Manager Kirsten Beidatsch said the blankets were durable and would help homeless people keep warm this winter.

"[They are] the best blankets to keep people warm when they are sleeping outside," said Ms Beidatsch.

Ms. Beidatsch said she first saw the request from the charities in a Facebook post asking the community to donate blankets for vulnerable people this winter.

"It was an opportunity for the SES to help outside of an ordinary emergency situation", she said.

The blankets were part of the State Storm Cache that is housed at the Mount Barker SES Unit. The Mount Barker Cache is the regional detachment for the Great Southern and the materials can be deployed to other regional Units for the management of severe weather events.

Ms. Beidatsch said the donation won't impact the effectiveness of the Storm Cache for severe weather management.

"We sought permission from the State Operations Cache before we donated", said Ms. Beidatsch.



Mt. Barker Local Manager Kirsten Beidatsch with the donated woollen blankets from the State Storm Cache

FUEL CARD

Emergency Services Volunteer fuel card to be automatically issued.

- Volunteer groups who previously held \$1000 fuel card no longer need to reapply for a new card this year
- DFES to contact groups who have not previously applied for the card
- Part of nearly \$6 million State Government initiative by Royalties for Regions

The fuel card, a gift from the State Government to recognise the contribution of Volunteers, will be automatically reissued next month to those that previously held one.

Those who did not hold a card last year will be contacted by DFES over the coming weeks.

WEBSITE

We are renovating our website and would like to include more current photo's of Unit activities.

If you have any current action photo's of Unit events you would like included, please send them to Bella at the office for consideration.

sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au

MERCHANDISE

Don't forget the SESVA has a range of items that can with recruitment campaigns and promotion of your Unit.

Just contact Bella at the SESVA office.

HOW TO KEEP INFORMED

Don't forget we have a website which keeps you informed of what is happening across the state in SES land.

We also have "the App". (SESVA WA)

And also, if you would like our newsletters, other relevant information etc forwarded direct to your email, just contact the SESVA office (sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au), and advise your details.