



SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

February 2021

Newsletter

From the President

Welcome to 2021 and we are told it's now a High Threat Season in the West.

From the Association, all of us extend a "Hi to you" and welcome back. For our newer unit members, welcome to the orange army and family.

Again, I am proud of the extraordinary response from SES members to support our respective and neighbouring communities in times of emergency. There are so many people who have trust in our willingness and capability to pitch in and help.

The dedication shown to the commitment of hours of training, and the skills that we have as emergency responders, and the SES members willingness to put all that aside to load drinks, groceries and even empty rubbish bins to help the keep the wheels turning is unbelievable.

I bet that not many SES volunteers thought they would be tasked to do those duties. It is indeed a bigger picture at times.

So from fire to cyclone, the pointy end of the SES training and skill sets, and it was great to hear from the Newman SES Unit Manager, Connie, as the team were returning from Nullagine.

What is so special about the SES is no, they were not responding to a call for help at Nullagine, but doing the much needed preparatory work and networking that is so necessary to prepare for the possible cyclone threat that is actually happening at the time I write this.

Who thinks ahead and knows their local communities better than the communities local volunteers? Understanding the risk at local level in Nullagine would see a small community that with tropical rain could become isolated, and divided by the Cook and Nullagine Rivers. Yes, the one small town is divided riverine flooding.

Communication is sometimes lost through damage to Telstra infrastructure, power and water can also be lost quickly, but the Newman SES is aware of this and took the long drive to do the preparation with community members.

That's local SES Volunteer motivation and commitment.

We haven't got to the response stage yet? Lets see what that cyclone will bring. I sincerely hope that local communities do not lose that self-direction and local knowledge in the future. .

A community asset is its people, don't hand that away to others

This year will present many activities for your Association, including addressing the elephant in the room, new emergency services legislation.

I would love to provide you with what is proposed but the Department has not shared that with the Volunteers.

So we will be working with the Unit Managers and members to draft the options for what we all feel the SES should look like in the future. Please watch for the Association Committee members contacting your units to engage in that very conversation, and then again we will widely advocate on your behalf, the informed outcomes you advise us.

SES Volunteers are capable of directing their collective futures and focusing the energy required to do so.

Have belief in your powerful voice.

One activity that has drawn on the pride and true history of our orange army has been launched recently at the DFES heritage centre in Perth.

Past SES Volunteers Association President, Gordon Hall ESM has dedicated a considerable part of his time to collate and write a history of the WA State Emergency Service. The history of the WA SES from Civil Defence beginnings to the 21st Century.

Units will be receiving some copies and I feel certain that those amongst us that really don't know the history and pride we bring into our communities, could reflect on a fine pedigree. It also clearly demonstrates the military style organisation we have been trying to maintain within reason for many years. It works, and you need a very valid reason to change a winning formula. Why would you?

I hope and trust that 2021 will bring the success we all are looking for through an enjoyable volunteering experience in the SES.

We should all enjoy the benefits of staying in touch with each other, as isolation brings a little weakness, when a little conversation with SES colleagues can bring such satisfaction. We do have so much in common.

Plan and practice staying safe. Empowering laws are coming to help us.

Kind Regards,
Greg Cook
President



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FROM YOUR TEAM AT THE SESVA

Australia Day Awards

What's in this edition:-

From From the President	1
n Memoriam	2
How to Keep informed	2
Australia Day Awards	2
We appear to be optional	3
Website	3
WOW Day 2021	3
From the Wellness Chaplain	3
Question to the Minister	4
Facebook	4
Albany SES Building	4
Results of November 2020 Survey	
by your Regional Representative	5
Vacancies	5
Writable PDF Membership Forms	5
Selcall Numbers	5
History of the SES	6
Book Availability	6
SES Number Plates	7
Merchandise	7
Historical Photo's	7
Grant - Sponsorship Writer	7
Training Ideas	7

Calls for recognition, congratulations and celebration.

Please join us in jointly recognising the following SES Members:

Mr. Allen Graham Gale. A well-deserved nominee and now awarded the Emergency Services Medal (ESM) as part of the 2021 Australia Day Awards.

Mr Jace Bradley – City of Karratha Young Achiever Award at the cities Australia Day Awards, bringing youth into the legend status.

My Colin (Uncle) Reed – Citizen of the Year, Shire of East Pilbara. Legend!

Karratha SES Unit – City of Karratha Community Group of the year. Legendary Group!

In Memoriam

Respecting those who are now in active service with the elite Orange Angels - RIP

Kalbarri Unit – Mr Daniel Neal

Communications Support Unit – Mr. Bruce White

Kalgoorlie Unit – Mr. Vitor Birt

The WA SES VA Executive and Committee offers our sincere sympathy to the families, friends and unit members on the significant loss to you all.

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 are on Facebook.

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.





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Newsletter

We appear to be optional

Below is an email sent to all BGU's in North East and South East Regions.

We have had comments raised by Local Managers about being spoken of as optional, especially when the meeting is being held in a co-location centre which includes an SES Unit, and they believe the SES will be involved in supporting fire personnel this fire season - or maybe they won't be?

What do you think?

(The bolding of "Local Managers Optional" was applied by us to show the words we are talking about. The original email did not have the words in bold type, just regular type.)

"Dear All

As part of a Members of Parliament Roundtable, an invitation has been extended to the Captains, and Officers from your BGU (**Local Manager's Optional**)

This has been arranged in collaboration with the Metropolitan North East and Metropolitan South East Operations Regions, on behalf of the Member for Swan Hills and Member for Kalamunda with selected BGU's.

The purpose of the meeting is for the Minister, Members & FES Commissioner to address participants of the roundtable and to discuss the upcoming fire Season and the progress on the reforms and initiatives in DFES (Bushfire Centre of Excellence, Rural Fire Division).

The event will be held at:

14 Wandeara Crescent, Mundaring @ 1100hrs to 1300hrs on Saturday 28th November 2020.

For catering purposes we request an RSVP no later than COB Wednesday, 25th November 2020."

Website

The SESVA website has been upgraded and improved.

Check it out!

If you have any questions, comments, improvements please contact our webmaster

John Capes sesva.webmaster@ses-wa.asn.au

WOW Day 2021

WOW Day for 2021 is not far away.

It may seem several months, but time flies, and we would like your input into what you think should be done to celebrate WOW Day across the huge State of Western Australia - not just celebrate in the Metropolitan area, which has been the past emphasis.

Please email your suggestions to Bella at the Office

sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au

It is our intention to raise your suggestions with DFES Staff, and try to make this the best and most inclusive WOW Day ever celebrated in Western Australia by the SES.

From the Wellness Chaplain

On the 24th of Nov 2020, I had the pleasure of visiting SES Cockburn and on the following day 25th of Nov, I met the SES team in Mundaring.

Both visits were very engaging.

The unit members and their leadership team were very welcoming and asked relevant questions on Wellness, Chaplaincy Services, and processes that are in place in supporting the State Emergency Services WA.

I am looking forward to 2021 and hoping to visit more of our valued SES Units within the state.

Dennis Sudla
BA Theology and MA Theology
Wellness Chaplain





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Newsletter

Question to the Minister

Late last year Kalbarri SES Unit were advised they were being visited by the Minister, and asked to provide details of a question they wished to ask the Minister.

This they did and the question is reproduced below.

To date we have been advised the visit took place and as yet the question has not been answered.

"Question to the Minister

The attempted amalgamation of SES into DFES has been both painful and a dismal failure.

SES Volunteers do not embrace DFES as a controlling agency nor do they respect their operating modes.

SES needs to remain SES to preserve our history and our organisations, to ensure our well proven operating modes are delivering the best to our community.

Why have we had a systemic failure to embrace DFES?

- DFES has demonstrated a largely a fire mentality with little understanding of non-fire volunteers in terms of subject matter and operating modes.
- Nearly all DFES staff are of a fire background and make decisions based on fire service ideas – and the decisions are often not appropriate for non-fire services.
- DFES ethos of one size fits all does not, and cannot work – all services have different requirements to manage effectively.
- The system is heavily influenced by the UFU
- According to the Insurance Council of Australia, the most expensive disasters to occur in Australia are natural disasters, not fire based disasters, and yet most of the DFES budget goes to fire services with only a minimal amount to other agencies who manage the major natural disasters.

What would work

Allow SES to operate under a Chief Executive Officer!

SES to remain independent on a day by day basis, but operate with DFES as an overarching entity. (Similar system to the ADF) Any investigation into the above should be balanced and not referred to spin doctors, in order to receive the answer you politically may want.

The SES's voice is the SES Volunteer Association whom you should contact in order to clarify the true position of affairs.

Only then can we move ahead with unity and positive outcomes.

The question to the Minister is

Why can't SES Volunteers be managed to enable them to do what they do best - this requires the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer?

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.

Albany SES Building

Below is an article from Facebook, stated to be from the ABC Great Southern:

"NEW \$3M STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE HQ FOR ALBANY
ABC Great Southern | Facebook
January 12 at 3:20 PM ·

A new State Emergency Service facility will be built in Albany.

The State Gov has announced up to \$3 million for a new SES building on Mercer Road.

It will be rated a Level 3 Incident Control Centre, suitable for coordinating large-scale emergencies, and should be open within 18 months.

SES WA Commissioner Darren Klemm says it'll be a big boost to local crews.

"This new facility will put them in a fantastic place in terms of the fit for purpose nature of the facility and it will only enhance their ability to provide their service to the community, and it should also assist them with attracting more members," he says."

The SESVA is very pleased Albany Unit is finally getting their new building, especially after they believed for years that funding for the building had been approved and the finding of a location for the building was the problem.

On investigation by the SESVA in June 2020, we found funding had not been approved, and then suddenly the SESVA Great Southern Representative was advised in August that funding had been found and was approved.

An interesting coincidence.

PS. We love the ABC comment "SES WA Commissioner Darren Klemm" - They are obviously unaware under the current legislation the SES in WA does not have a dedicated Commissioner, not even a dedicated Chief Officer - a Chief Officer being something we would like, and as indicated by the 92% response to our November 2020 survey, so would the SES Units in WA.

(Survey results on the next page)



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Newsletter

Results of November Survey by your Regional Representatives

In November 2020 your Regional Representative contacted your Unit to discuss several important matters affecting SES Volunteers and to obtain your Units position on the subjects, and thus help formulate the future directions taken by the SESVA in advocating on your behalf with DFES and other stakeholders.

The results of the information provided by SES Units to the Regional Representatives is summarised below:

1. Training – Is the current SES training provided through DFES meeting the needs of your communities response expectations?

Yes	64.00%
No	32.00%
No Opinion	4.00%

1a. Can your Unit Volunteers do your job now as well as they did 10 years ago?

Yes	51.85%
No	22.22%
Unknown	20.00%

1b. Are your Unit Volunteers as well trained now as they were 10 years ago?

Yes	60.00%
No	20.00%
Unknown	20.00%

2. If no to either question 1 or 1a or 1b, what needs to be improved to meet your expectations?

- More instructors
- More local delivery of training
- Training gap with East closed
- National Competency skills should be delivered

3. Do you support a state-wide SES administrative structure within the DFES umbrella to manage the day to day activities of the WA SES?

ie: a Chief Officer under the DFES umbrella to manage SES. Operations would still be managed under Metro and Country Operations

Yes	92.00%
No	8.00%

4. If you have 2021 wish list of things that your Association could achieve with you, what would the top three things be currently?

- Obtain Chief Officer
- Protection of SES as an entity
- Serious recognition of SES By Local Govt

Vacancies

At the present time the SESVA have vacancies for Regional Representatives for the South Coastal, North Coastal and North East regions.

Being an SESVA Representative for a region is a very rewarding experience.

If you are interested in becoming involved in assisting and advocating for your fellow SES Volunteers, and are a member of an SES Unit in either of the above regions, contact the Secretary to discuss.

0428 612 480

sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au

Writable PDF Membership Forms

DFES have released writeable PDF versions of the SES membership form.

Everything about the form is the same as it was except it is now in a writeable PDF and theoretically easier to read. Hopefully it is also easier to fill in and email.

The new forms can be found on the Volunteer Hub in the “SES Administration Toolbox” in the “New volunteer members” section.

<https://volunteerhub.dfes.wa.gov.au/home/toolboxes/administration/ses-administration>

If any problems please get in touch with

Jennifer Pidgeon
Manager Strategic Volunteer and Youth Programs
Phone: (08) 9395 9989 | Mobile: 0429 365 862
E-mail: Jennifer.Pidgeon@dfes.wa.gov.au

Selcall Numbers

For those Units who have/use HF radio we mention the HF Selcall list is maintained on the Volunteer Hub, reviewed annually and is updated when required.

https://shared.dfes.wa.gov.au/business-units/doctrine/opsresourcescommunications/SES_HF_Selcall_Numbers_2017.xlsx

The Selcall list is also published in several of the regional directories annually.



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Newsletter

History of the SES

The WA State Emergency Service (SES) History from Civil Defence into the 21st Century

This compilation of the history of the State Emergency Service in Western Australia, was intended to bring together as much of the history as possible from the Civil Defence days of the 1930s, to the formation of the State Emergency Service in Western Australia and covers the subsequent years, from when it was part of the Civil Defence and Emergency Service of Western Australia, part of the Police Department, its' own entity as the State Emergency Service, and in more recent years as a clear role within the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia and finally in 2012 being merged into a fire culture within the new Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

The book also attempts to cover some of the support aspects of the SES, as well as a number of interesting operations and some of the committees involved.

Two chapters showcase all SES Volunteers who have received state awards or been honoured through the Australian Honours and Awards system for their dedication and distinguished service in the WA State Emergency Service.

It is well recognised by communities at all levels of government that the true altruistic nature of State Emergency Service Volunteers provides significant social capital by instilling a sense of community and caring, a level of civic pride, and a sense of self-reliance and security for their own community.

The book consists of 213 pages with associated pictures and a short history of a number of the SES Units.

There has been a limited number of the books printed and an eBook will be available for downloading in February via Amazon.

It has been compiled by Gordon Hall ESM and has been peer reviewed by John Capes OAM and Allen Gale - all SES Volunteers.

There is a forward by the Minister for Emergency Services and the FES Commissioner.

Please direct all enquiries or requests for further information to Gordon Hall;

gordon.m.hall@bigpond.com



Mr Gordon Hall ESM
- Author of the
History of the SES



Commissioner Darren Klemm AFSM,
Mr Gordon Hall ESM,
Minister Fran Logan MLA at the launch

Book Availability

All SES units, who answered the email of 8 January 2021 requesting an email address to send books to their unit – if they wanted some – have had them posted or are being in the process of being delivered.

The eBook version

The eBook is available at the following outlets at the very least – as the days go by a simple internet search will reveal more as suppliers supply other suppliers. The paperback will usually take a week or so to work its way through the supply chains:

Generic link to multiple sites that will populate more over time:

<https://books2read.com/WASES>

Individual sites:

<https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B08TVWJDR9>

<https://www.booktopia.com.au/the-wa-state-emergency-services-ses--gordon-m-hall/ebook/9780648949695.html>

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B08TVWJDR9>

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08TVWJDR9>



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SES Number Plates

Expression of interest - SES Number plates

Over the last few years we have had several requests for SES Number plates.

As the current series has been exhausted, we are now asking if you would like us to start a new series.

A couple of things we need to be aware of from the Dept of Transport (DOT) in order to start the project and to keep it running:

- A series requires an initial order of 30 sets of plates to commence.
- A minimum ongoing demand of 10 plates per year applies thereafter.
- Plates will cost between \$200-260 depending on the plate type decided upon.
- Any other fees set by DOT are payable by the new certificate of entitlement holder.

The Benefits

- Help raise the exposure of the SES.
- Help you with your phonetic alphabet
- Great way to show your support to your family member/s who are in the SES.

If there is enough interest we will apply to DOT to kick of the next series.

Please let us know if you are interested and would purchase a set of number plates.

When sending your expression of interest, please include name, email and phone number.

Expressions of interest should be sent to sesva.treasurer@ses-wa.asn.au

Merchandise

Merchandise Specials.

Don't forget the SESVA has plaque and gifts available for sale.

You never know when you might need that last minute thank you or gift to go to a member, polmie or such like, so keep a few items at your Unit for that moment.

Until 30th March 2021, we are offering 25% off our multi tool, plaque and bears prices.

Just contact Bella at the SESVA office.
sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au

Historical Photo's

Don't forget the SESVA are looking for photos, video's, slides and/or film from the Dawn of Time to create a visual history of our great organization.

Copies can be sent to us in a digital format - just ensure the scan is high resolution (at least 300dpi). Just send them to Bella at the office.

Grant - Sponsorship Writer

The SESVA are looking for someone to assist us with grant application writing.

Funding to operate the SESVA so we can effectively advocate for the SES Volunteers of Western Australia is always a problem, and in order to assist us overcome and/or reduce the issue we are asking for assistance from someone who has a professional background in grant writing.

If you would like to discuss further, please contact our Secretary Lin Booth on

0428 612 480

or email

sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au

Training Ideas

The SESVA is expanding the training initiative we commenced at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We produced some training ideas for Unit Training Managers to help them with Unit Members training during the lock down period..

Now, we are expanding this initiative and hope to include many new ideas for training.

The start is a selection of Team Building exercises.

These can be found at

<https://ses-wa.asn.au/ses-volunteer-training>

If you have an idea for training, and wish to share it with other SES Volunteers, please contact the Secretary

sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au