



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

## November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

### *From the President*

A warm welcome to you all and where has the year 2023 gone?

We are nearly into our traditional Christmas Festivities and of course, the season brings some higher community risks with it. A hot start to November has highlighted the state's fire vulnerability but with pride, I also acknowledge the SES Volunteers who turned out to support the firefighters in their suppression aims whilst still preparing for severe weather and many other incidents that require an immediate community response.

The Association has long been looking for other ways to support the community-based SES units and the volunteers, having now reached an agreement with the National SES Volunteers Association to participate in continuous fundraising raffles. It is indeed very good news to soon to be able to fund beneficial activities for SES volunteers in WA by offering some rewards, some activities, and creating new opportunities.

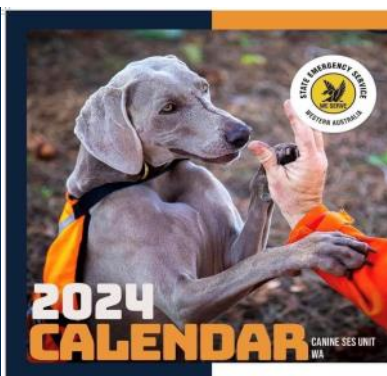
The Association is asking all SES volunteers and the West Australian community to support the raffles ensuring all that this is no scam.

SES Units across the state of Western Australia are now commencing winding back some of their training activities in December to ensure they are prepared to respond to community needs. Whilst training goes into recess over the Christmas holiday period, we in the community can be assured that Unit members are ready to respond to emergencies in WA and in the east of Australia.

The Association continues its quest through this period to create a platform of Skills, Equipment, and Support equity for volunteers. Recently, all emergency services Volunteers Associations have joined together to convince the WA Government to recognise the value of presumptive legislation for PTSD that should be extended to our Volunteers. A reproduced version of the letter signed by the Association Presidents jointly expressing their profound disappointment is at page 5 and 6 of this Newsletter. This is only the start, and we will hear more in the coming days and months.

Once again, I encourage you all to be prepared, create an environment for continuous learning, and apply these lessons to better respond to impact reduction in our homes, businesses, and communities. Take care and remain alert.

Kind Regards, Greg Cook, President



## SES CANINE UNIT 2024 CALENDAR

Calendar are \$20. each and are available for pick up at several places around the metro area, or can be posted for \$10.

For information on how to pay and where to pickup, email :

Rachael Box— [rachaelbox@outlook.com](mailto:rachaelbox@outlook.com)

Leonie Briggs—[Leonie.briggs7@bigpond.com](mailto:Leonie.briggs7@bigpond.com)



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

from the **SECRETARY'S** desk

Email Allen Gale for more information [sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au)



## The WA Emergency Services Volunteers' Hardship Assistance Scheme (Inc.)

### PURPOSE

To give emergency services volunteers the opportunity to seek, or be offered, financial assistance during times of hardship and/or significant loss.

The Scheme was formally established in 2014 with the stated object of distributing funds to provide direct relief from poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, disability, destitution or helplessness to Emergency Services Volunteers and their families.

The State Government has supported the scheme with a one-off payment of \$1 million as start-up capital. This start-up capital is invested and the interest earnings are made available as grant monies under this scheme. Tax deductible donations can also be received.

The scheme is managed by a governing committee consisting of representatives from each of the relevant volunteer associations which together constitute the WA Emergency Services Volunteers Hardship Assistance Scheme (Inc).

Applications for SES Volunteers are submitted and endorsed by the SES Volunteers Association.

### ELIGIBILITY

The Hardship Assistance Fund provides direct relief from hardship to volunteers and their dependants. It is designed to help cover basic living costs such as rent, food and utilities. Applications must be for a volunteer who is a member of an emergency services group created under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998; Bush Fires Act 1954; or the Fire Brigades Act 1942 and who has served a minimum of six months (unless in exceptional emergency situations). Surviving dependants of eligible volunteers (if death has occurred within a 12 month timeframe) are also eligible to apply.

### WHAT IS HARDSHIP?

Hardship is when a volunteer is unable to meet minimum living expenses because of unexpected or unforeseen events. Under such circumstances, hardship assistance is provided in order to bridge the gap between changed circumstances (i.e. inability to meet expenses) and a return to normal circumstances.

Interested in applying? Visit the applications page on the Website

[Emergency Services Volunteers' Hardship Assistance Scheme \(waesvhas.org.au\)](http://waesvhas.org.au)



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

*from the SECRETARY'S desk*

Email Allen Gale for more information [sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au)



## KEY INTEREST ITEMS FROM THE 12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER MEETING OF THE SESVA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### Not happy with the Governments position on PTSD Presumptive Legislation

A letter from the five Volunteer Prescribed Emergency Service Associations jointly expressing profound disappointment with the PTSD Presumptive Legislation has been sent to Minister Stephen Dawson MLA, Commissioner Klemm, Shadow Minister, Martin Aldridge MLA and Premier Roger Cook. The Association has raised matters related to PTSD with DFES Executive and has gone to DFES Legal, but no response received to date.

**The letter is reproduced in this edition of the SESVA Newsletter on page 5 and 6.**

### WAFES Awards and Gala Dinner – feedback sought

There are a limited number of seats for the Gala Dinner and there is a limit of two persons per SES Unit. The Association could assist in clarifying what the requirements are by helping to make the instructions for registering clearer and publicise this across VA media platforms. Also, that the VA Executive request DFES issue invitations to WAFES conference to each Volunteer Association management committee member, as they do with the SESVAC.

**Please give your feedback on the WAFES Conference and the Awards and Gala Dinner to the regional Management Committee Member or Secretary Allen Gale.**

### National Awards and Recognition

WA only represents 7% of total awards on a national level and falling below 10% quota. More people need to be nominated to reach the 10% level. VA to provide people with tools or more substantive information to assist them to make award nominations. DOs should assist with Awards nominations.

### Operational Efficiency Payments (OEP) review - information required

Secretary has attended OEP working party meetings with DFES which he believes will deliver good outcomes for SES, whereas it is likely to be more difficult for fire agencies. The name of the payment system may be changed to Valued Service Payment to reflect its purpose more accurately.

**SES Units can help to improve the current system by letting their regional Management Committee Member or Secretary Allen Gale know what the OEP is generally spent on.**



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva\\_office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva_office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva\\_office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva_office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

*from the SECRETARY'S desk*

Email Allen Gale for more information [sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au)



## KEY INTEREST ITEMS FROM THE 12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER MEETING OF THE SESVA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE Cont'd

### Loss of Training Qualifications without Notification

Many SES Volunteers are losing accreditation outside of their normal core skills which are being taken off the list without being advised or addressed. There is no opportunity or process for Volunteers to retain their qualifications. The Committee resolved to adopt a policy for DFES to reinstate all qualifications that have been removed in the last 12 months, pending a review of the process, and that Volunteers' retention of training qualifications be on par with career staff.

### SESVA Website – October SESVA Management Committee meeting full summary

<https://ses-wa.asn.au/2023/11/03/03-11-2023-sesva-management-committee-meeting-october-2023/>

### SESVA Website – Management Committee Members

<https://ses-wa.asn.au/sesva/sesva-committee-members/>

**Next Meeting of the VA Committee is scheduled  
for Thursday 7 December 2023**

### How to contact the SESVA Secretary

email: [sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au)

mobile: 0419 935 497



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>



Dear Honourable Minister Dawson MLC,

We are writing on behalf of the dedicated volunteers of the:

1. Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service Association of Western Australia (VFRSAWA),
2. Volunteer Marine Rescue of Western Australia (VMRWA),
3. Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services Association of Western Australia (ESVA),
4. Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades Western Australia (AVBFB) and
5. SES Volunteer's Association of Western Australia (SESVA).

We represent well over 26000 of Western Australia's selfless individuals who willingly devote their time and effort to respond to emergencies across our state.

We express our profound disappointment and concern over the recent decision made by the Labor government, in collaboration with the Greens, to vote 19/10 against the amendment proposed by the Opposition to extend presumptive PTSD protections to our dedicated emergency service volunteers. The same volunteers who tirelessly serve our communities day in and day out and save the state more than 2 billion dollars per year.

While we acknowledge and appreciate the recent extension of these protections granted to paid ambulance officers and career firefighters, we are disheartened by the exclusion of volunteers from this vital safeguard. Volunteers form an integral part of the emergency response infrastructure in Western Australia, particularly in regional Western Australia and their dedication cannot be overstated.

Volunteers respond to an astonishing 93% of emergency calls in Western Australia. Their selflessness and commitment to the safety and well-being of our fellow citizens should be recognised and supported at all levels of government. By denying them the same protections afforded to their paid counterparts, this injustice, is one that affects not only our volunteers but, their families and the communities they serve.

It is our understanding that the main basis for reaching this decision is that the services offered by DFES are sufficient, and assessed demand for these services suggests that they are sufficient. In response we would argue:

1. If this is the case, why was it deemed necessary for career firefighters and paid ambulance officers, who attend the same incidents as our volunteers, to receive the cover offered by the proposed PTSD amendment?
2. Whilst the Wellness Branch of DFES does a great job, they argue that they are insufficiently resourced to adequately provide the support they see as necessary. As a result, we believe there are under reported incidents of PTSD within the volunteer network, particularly in more regional and remote areas where provision of these support services is more challenging.



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva\\_office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva_office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva\\_office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva_office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

## November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

3. Not all bushfire brigades are covered by DFES, what consultation has been undertaken in this regard with the brigades, given DFES don't represent all of them?

Our organisations emphasise ongoing concerns we have regarding this decision and its potential ramifications. We whole heartedly request that you take into consideration the significant impact this has on the mental and emotional well-being of our volunteers.

The toll that responding to emergencies can take on volunteer mental health is immense, and it is our duty as a society to ensure they are adequately supported and protected through the safety net of the proposed presumptive legislation. We view such decisions as a deterrent to future recruitment of volunteers, particularly in regional areas where the pool is small, as potential volunteers may feel that they are not adequately protected to the acceptable standards of our modern society.

The core values of the Labor party as printed in WA Labor Platform 2022 (p. 2) state the Labor party is founded on pillars of fairness, justice, and compassion for all. We formally request the WA Labor Government to reconsider its position on this matter and work toward extending these crucial protections to our emergency service volunteers. We believe that by doing so, we can collectively demonstrate our commitment to recognising and valuing their invaluable contributions to the safety and resilience of our communities which would then align with the fundamental pillars the Labor party is founded upon.

As volunteers we know and have experienced the power of volunteering in emergency services and the way being involved, with a core purpose of service to community, enriches our lives. Volunteering in emergency services also adds to the resilience of our Western Australian community. We want it to stay this way. Providing the presumptive legislation ensures our volunteers are covered when impacted by their service and is something we as their Associations are passionate about. This is also a volunteer retention strategy element to ensure our emergency services remain loyal and protected in undertaking its community services.

We look forward to a positive response and the opportunity to engage in a constructive dialogue on how we can better support our dedicated past, present and future volunteers.

Sincerely

Paul du Boulay  
President  
VFRSAWA

Jeff Howe ESM  
Jeff Howe  
Commander  
VMR

Lorraine Webster  
President  
AVBFBWA:

Trevor Wise  
President  
ESVA

Greg Cook  
President  
SESVA



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva\\_office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva_office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva\\_office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva_office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

## November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>



## LEGACY WA BUSSELTON CAMP

The Legacy Busselton Camp is a beautiful campground, situation just metres from the beach in Busselton—and right on the doorstep of the magnificent South West.

**The Camp is designed to provide Current and Ex Serving Defence Members and Emergency Service responders and their families an opportunity for respite.**

For further information or questions don't hesitate to reach out to the Legacy WA Team via - [operations@legacywa.com.au](mailto:operations@legacywa.com.au) or (08) 9486 4900, or go to [Search - RMS Online Booking \(rmscloud.com\)](https://rmscloud.com)

## Christmas is just around the corner

Check out the full range of SES Merchandise on the SESVA website: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/sesva-merchandise/>



for more information on ordering SES Merchandise,  
email [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) or call 0499 619 287



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>



## Young People in Emergency Services Volunteering: Recruitment & Retention by Cassidy Kempster

In recent years there has been an increasing emphasis on recruitment and retention of young emergency services volunteers, as they are the future of developing community preparedness in responding to natural hazards incidents and building disaster resilience.

Recruitment and retention of emergency services volunteers and the future leaders of our communities can be greatly improved by ensuring young people are attracted to joining emergency services.

When young people are seen on the front line of community engagement more young people will consider Emergency services as a future pathway. Attracting young people to join the SES can begin by engaging with high school and Uni students. Students can offer new ideas and, being teenagers, there's the added bonus of them being awake and available at random hours of the night. Plus, most of them are available for "story time" at the community library. Most importantly, utilising young SES volunteers in community engagement activities helps to perpetuate youth awareness and interest in emergency services.

For example, a young emergency services volunteer in Carnarvon VFRS relates how once every few months they will get into full kit with oxygen tanks and read to primary school children or mother's groups in the community. This has helped kids in the community understand what the role of an emergency services volunteer is, educates them on proper safety and emergency procedures, and demonstrates that they as young people can become an emergency services volunteer. These engagements help to build trust in the community and provide families with the assurance that emergency services volunteers are present and available to assist 24 hours a day.

Giving young people responsibility in this area develops their communication skills and personal development, reaffirms their decision to become emergency services volunteers, and overall makes them, their friends and families proud of the work they do.

A young person's family can contribute greatly to building that person's strength and independence, as mine was. However, what helped to build my passion and resilience was the reassurance and mentorship I received from older Unit volunteers during training and Callouts. It can take a few years to open hearts with some, but after a while mutual appreciation and respect is built to the point where we would gladly put our lives in each other's hands... something that in my unit is known as "storming and norming".

*Continued over page*



Cassidy Kempster and Oscar Vla (Kalamunda SES)  
on deployment in NSW in 2022



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter





# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

## Young People in Emergency Services Volunteering: Recruitment & Retention *cont'd*

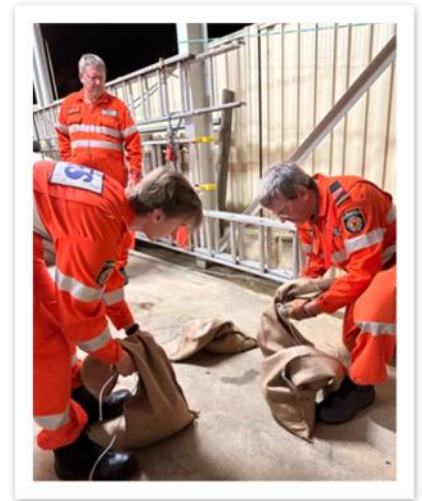
### An Effective Retention Strategy

In my experience, something that has been effective for retention of volunteers is hosting quarterly Reflection Nights. These go for 20-30 minutes and entail a brief explanation on how the peer support or wellness officer feels the unit is tracking, what they have observed and what they want the theme to be for the reflections that night. The teams then break out to discuss individual and group reflections. This includes what they think can be done to improve their experience in the unit and develop strategies to achieve these goals.

This reflection program improves retention for all-age members because everyone has a voice on in how the group can work together to achieve goals. Reflection nights also offer an opportunity to check on the wellness for each member in the team.

The recruitment and retention of young members in my unit has been remarkable this year. We now have 10 members under 30, which I am very proud of.

Recruiting young people into emergency services is important, but retaining them is more so and this means committing to a culture of encouragement and embracing the new ideas and changes young people can bring to emergency services.



Thomas Kleinfelder and Ian Colette  
Northshore SES 2023



Northshore SES Volunteers, Cassidy Kempster and  
Gabby Glass graduate as Registered Nurses

It is often easier to disregard proposals for change because “that’s never worked that way”, or “we just don’t have time for that”. But before giving an outright rejection, please remember that it takes courage for a young volunteer to go to the leadership group with new ideas and they should not be discouraged from doing so. Change in culture through a growth mindset needs to be driven from the top or the collective group will not respond effectively.

Supporting young people for success means remembering what’s going on with them, making them feel included, educating them on complex training themes, and motivating them to continue on their path.

If we embrace a path of valuing young volunteers’ input and supporting them for success, the emergency services across all sectors will become a more accepting, diverse, sustainable and effective organisation.



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

## ~ MANAGING COMMUNICATIONS AND SAFETY ~ DFES'S WITHDRAWAL OF Q-MAC HF-90 RADIO

Leaders and members of SES units across the state have contacted the Association to express their frustration at the decision to withdraw the loved Q-Mac HF Radio from service without a replacement that meets the same needs and safety mechanisms that this equipment provides. By talking with our volunteers, we have also learned that DFES was quietly withdrawing vehicle mounted HF radios from metropolitan SES units. These initiatives have not been formally subject to an appropriate workplace safety risk assessment that we are aware of or have been disclosed.

SES units in country areas need HF base station, vehicle and portable radios for long range communications on operations. Metro SES units will have no HF base station or vehicle capability. This regrettably is an example of the degradation of SES capability which exposes SES volunteers to safety risks when deploying to remote areas. Metro units will also have no capacity to train on HF radios between operations. Operations are not the time to learn how to use communications equipment.

### **Is this the real reason for the discontinuation? Let's have the discussion.**

DFES has informed us that the primary issue is maintenance since the radios are over 30 years old. The Association has been told that many are either unserviceable or unrepairable. DFES identifies this and reports that the reliance on these radios is an operational and safety risk.

The Association has also been advised a reason for their withdrawal is that DFES does not want to pay for a HF radio network. Instead of having a robust network of HF capable base station radios across Western Australia in most of the 64 SES units with trained and committed volunteers, DFES will rely on its 12 regional offices and largely untrained support staff. That is a saving of at least \$275,000.

The Association has been advised that the future of emergency service communications is mobile satellite equipment, handheld satellite telephones and mobile VHF/UHF repeaters for voice. These technologies are not yet rolled out and not tested under state wide operational conditions; cloud cover and smoke compromise the use of this type of equipment. In measuring and assessing risk to communities and volunteers, DFES is taking a risk with its career staff and volunteers, as well as local government Bush Fire Brigade volunteers.

### **Where to next for HF radios and you need to help yourself; be heard!**

SES units that have an immediate operational need for HF radio equipment are advised to request the new Codan Envoy HF radios from DFES Operational Communications through their regional offices to gain support. Requests for HF radios will be considered on a case-by-case basis; this includes the possibility of retaining some of the Q-Mac radios until a suitable replacement is in place.

Units that are unable to resolve operational and safety risks are encouraged to work through their Regional Offices and, where required, their Volunteers Association Committee Member to find a solution.

The loss of a fine HF communications solution is concerning for the community's capability to raise the alarm and provide alerts in times of true disaster. When nothing is working, particularly no utilities, the Q-Mac HF Radio will provide excellent communications.



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



**November 2023**

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

## HF RADIO PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE

High Frequency (HF) radio is an invaluable tool for long distance communication it has enabled people to communicate over vast distances for more than 100 years. From Marconi's initial experiments until the 1950s, HF was the primary means of communication maritime shipping, long-distance aviation, and the military. HF began to fall out of favour when other long-distance options such as satellite communications became viable.

Despite HF's decline, it is still widely used today and is actually staging a comeback. As technological advances continue, many of the challenges associated with HF have been addressed.

### What is HF radio?

Radio waves with a frequency between 3 MHz to 30 MHz exhibit a unique property - they can bounce (refract) off layers of the earth's atmosphere within the ionosphere. This means communications with HF are not limited to line of sight - unlike VHF and UHF.

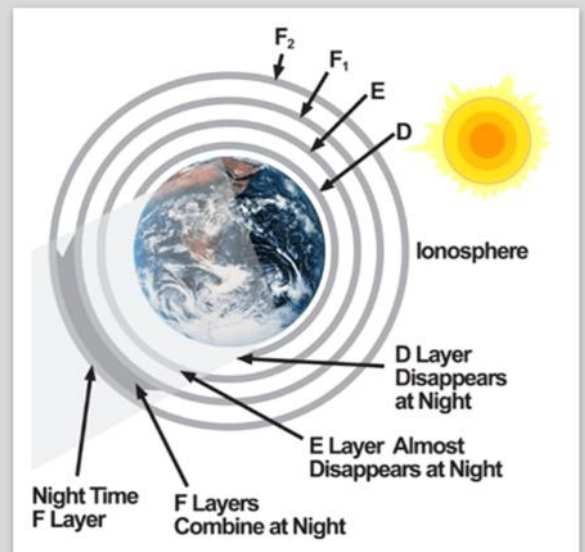
By using the ionosphere, two HF radios can communicate with each other over mountain ranges, forests and beyond the horizon where higher frequencies need some type of relay (repeater)

Because HF uses the ionosphere, transmissions are affected by the 11-year sunspot cycle, the time of day, and atmospheric conditions, so the frequency needed to communicate between two points changes on an hourly basis – particularly during daylight as various layers become more or less reflective. Fortunately, with over 100 years of experience the optimum frequency to use can be predicted and charts are available to assist radio users.

### The challenges of using HF

Traditional analogue HF radio requires a basic understanding of radio propagation, some training and regular practice to use effectively. Signals are affected by just about any electrical interference such as car ignition systems, power lines, or lightning strikes within 1000km. Because of its vast range, unwanted signals from other countries can be received too. The relatively long wavelength means that antennas are bulky and somewhat unwieldy.

Compared to a UHF antenna that might be 20cm long, an HF antenna could be 40m long. This makes portable use a challenge.



*Continued over page*





# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

## HF RADIO

## PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE cont'd

For many years DFES used what was probably the best-designed portable HF radio ever – The ultra-reliable Q-Mac man-pack.

With its small orange case and long wire antenna, this radio could be set up and operational within 5 minutes almost anywhere.

This equipment was widely used by BGUs, particularly in regional WA. Sadly, the Q-Mac is no longer in production and DFES has recently announced its planned withdrawal from service.



As there is no equivalent radio available commercially today, this will leave a huge gap in our comms armoury.

Satellite phones and Sat PTT radios can provide over-the-horizon, long-distance communications, they are easier to use and require less training. However, HF has almost no running costs and the use of satellites as a relay does not come cheap, which means that these resources are necessarily limited in numbers due to cost.

### The future of HF

In the last few years, a revolution in HF has taken place with digital HF overcoming a lot of the inherent limitations of the analogue equipment.

Modern sets talk to each other and automatically pick the best frequency to communicate every few minutes, doing away with the need to work this out manually. They are also able to send and receive text and email. This digital HF equipment was used to great effect during TC Seroja as HF was for a while the only means of communication with devastated areas such as Kalbarri.

In regional WA, HF radio is used by the Emergency Services as the most cost-effective means of long-distance communication. Terrestrial phone, mobile phone and satellite communications can and have been disrupted by natural disasters, breakdowns and by cyber-attacks. Militaries around the globe rely on it for tactical battlefield communication.

As an alternative comms system for Emergency Services, HF radio still has a lot going for it.

*Submitted by  
Chris Knight, LM CSU*



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

## SESVA—OUT'n ABOUT

### Midwest Gascoyne Leader's Forum — 21-22 October 2023

Volunteer leaders from the Midwest-Gascoyne region came together in Geraldton for a Leaders Forum hosted by Supt Mark Bowen and his staff. SES Volunteers Association vice-president Alan Hawke attended on behalf of your Association.

From midday Saturday to midday Sunday, leaders of all SES, Bushfire, volunteer FES and Marine Rescue BGUs were treated to a wide range of topics of interest to volunteers. The timing gave participants an opportunity to travel from across the region. The facilities were excellent, and the organisation and execution of the Forum were exemplary.



Saturday afternoon presentations challenged the participants' knowledge and views on the exercise of organisational management and leadership as well as insights into emergency management processes within DFES. WA Police showed off their drones and explained their capabilities for land search and reconnaissance. Midwest Development Corporation gave participants predictions on population and economic growth that demonstrate that the region is on the move. These present ever emerging challenges for resourcing of emergency management responders into the future.

The evening was an opportunity for friendly conversations at the local tavern, mixing with DFES staff and volunteers of different services over dinner. The venue was very conveniently just around the corner from our accommodation.

The Sunday started off with the always engaging Chaplain Dennis Sudla. Dennis is embedded into Wellness Branch at Cockburn to support the mental and spiritual health of DFES staff and emergency service volunteers across this State. Participants learned how the effects of trauma are cumulative and how to counter negative manifestations of stress.

Sunday was also the opportunity for participants to breakout into separate services and discuss issues that are relevant to them. The SES fraternity heard from Ross Jones about the SES Volunteer Advisory Committee who convene twice a year to inform the Minister for Emergency Services on SES matters of concern. Alan Hawke spoke on the SES Volunteers Association and how it supports SES units across the State.



The Forum heard how leadership matters and, through an exposé of several regional incidents, staff, and volunteers of all services in DFES can work together for a safer community. We can be confident that there is a real desire in the region to re-establish effective leadership and sound working relationships, and to strengthen volunteer capability and capacity.



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



**SES Volunteers**  
**Association of WA (Inc)**  
*One Association - Many Values*

**November 2023**

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

## BROOME UNIT'S

# Annual Wet Season INFORMATION STALL

On Saturday 28th October, Broome SES held their Annual Wet Season information stall to inform the public on what BOM predicts for the upcoming 23-24 Wet Season and how to prepare their home and family.

This year we changed it up and instead of a Sausage Sizzle and stall in 35+ degree heat we held it at the local Shopping centre.

We got a fantastic response from the public with 10 potential new member sign ups and many more enquiries from those for whom this would be their first Wet Season and wanted to know how best to prepare.

From the photos you can see we had a selection of pamphlets, handouts, magnets from DFES and the VA, and print offs from the recent BOM presentation of temperature and rainfall predictions. And, not forgetting kids and the kids at heart - plenty of stickers, colouring-in and activity books to give away and even a cool tote bag to put it all in.

Lots of fun was had by unit members talking and interacting with the public, and by the public becoming aware - especially if they just moved to town and hadn't been through a Wet Season before.

We'll definitely look at hosting this event again next year.



Submitted by  
 Broome SES Unit



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
 Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



**SES Volunteers**  
**Association of WA (Inc)**  
*One Association - Many Values*

**November 2023**

# **NEWSLETTER**

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

**MySES..**

**Communications Support Unit**

The SES Communications Support Unit (CSU) was created around 1962 as a part of the Civil Defence and Emergency Service of Western Australia. It was the Communications Section of the State Headquarters. Volunteer members were known as Staff Officer Reserve (SOR) and were part of a group of Staff and Volunteers, along with Operations Section Volunteers, who managed State level operations for emergency incidents.

The group transitioned to being part of the Western Australian State Emergency Service when the Civil Defense part of the organisation's name was dropped in 1974. After the transition it retained its name of Communications Section. The group remained with these titles for about forty years until, in the early 2000s, it was formally approved as an SES Unit under the FES act (1998). It then became the SES Communications Support Unit (CSU).

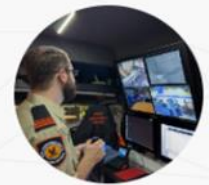
The CSU has continuously operated a volunteer Section/Unit to support the Western Australian community at State, Regional and Local levels and is not associated with specific local government boundaries. It is one of the longest operating SES groups in the State.

The CSU remains unique throughout Australia and has always included innovative volunteers serving their community and travelling throughout the State developing volunteers and staff in the establishment and maintenance of emergency communication systems.

During emergency operations, the CSU are regularly activated to establish and maintain critical communication links in areas where there is little or no existing radio and telephone services. In the earlier years the CSU specialised in HF, VHF and UHF radio and telephony systems and networks. Today however, the range of services provided extends to satellite communication, digital audio/visual data management over the Internet and dedicated secure channels.

For many years CSU was based in at the 'Bunker' in Belmont and is currently based at the SWORD facility in Kewdale. The Unit consists of more than forty volunteers, whose 'daytime' jobs range from students, ICT professionals, radio technicians and professionals from various fields.

As an SES Volunteer unit, the CSU has been managed by Volunteer Local Managers including Cheryl Greenough, Stephen Summerton, Henry Edwards, Rob Crawford, Greg Cook and currently Chris Knight.



**Latest Technology**



**Hands On**



**Dedication**



**Diverse**



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
 Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

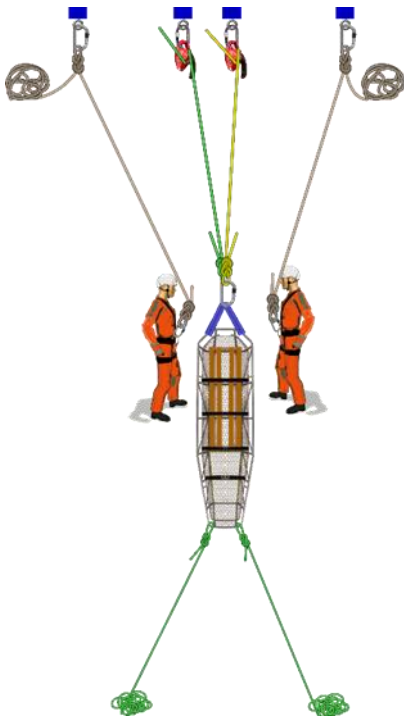
One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

## DFES Academy General Rescue Training Update



No doubt you all remember the Equipment Recall and Prohibition (ERAP) Circular banning the body belay and ladder hinge/slide techniques. You may be also aware that there isn't any training in power hand tools, jacking and cribbing or hydraulic hand tools.

To cover these areas, we are pleased to advise that the new General Rescue Course is close to completion and will be available in early in 2024.

This Course is designed to bridge the gap between Basic General Rescue (BGR) and Vertical Rescue (VR)/Road Crash Rescue (RCR), giving all units rescue capability.

General Rescue is a modular four-day course that can be broken up into two week-ends with the following components:

- **Anchoring** – similar to VR and Roof Safety System
- **Low angle Rescue** – rescue from slopes too steep to walk with a stretcher and rescue from height or depth (from a roof or hole in the ground)
- **Rescue of the lightly trapped** – including power hand tool use, jacking and cribbing and shoring.

The General Rescue course was successfully trialled in Bunbury and following the quality control process, it will be published.

This course will be a prerequisite to Storm Damage Operations (SDO), VR and RCR meaning these courses can be shortened in the future or that we can enhance the existing courses to make time for more practical activities.

Interested volunteers can apply to become the foundation trainer group by lodging an expression of interest through their District Officers.

BLUE LIGHT CARD.

### SES Member Benefits - Blue Light Card Discounts

**BIG SAVINGS**  
on brands you love

The discount service exclusively for frontline workers and emergency volunteers

Offering member benefits like Blue Light Card discounts is a great initiative for recognising and appreciating the dedication and service of much valued SES Volunteers. SES volunteers can apply online for these benefits— follow these simple steps:

1. Go to [Discounts for Frontline Workers | Blue Light Card](#)
2. Create your account (\$9.95 for 2 years access)
3. Provide your DFES ID number and show employer name as *Department of Fire and Emergency Services*,

PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter





# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

## FEATURE:

# Health & Wellbeing



*Thriving at DFES*  
Mental Health and Wellbeing  
Strategy 2021-2023

In 2021 DFES launched its first Mental Health and Well being Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023, known as **Thriving at DFES**

<https://thrive-dashboard.web.app/survey.html?s=-NazZuwYAD2UX-hbb6VI>

As the current Thriving at DFES Action Plan comes to an end it is vital that we evaluate the current version and commence developing the next.

To help achieve this we are launching the *'Thriving at DFES Evaluation Survey'*.

If you are a manager or a duty manager, please encourage your crew to complete the evaluation.  
We want to hear from you.

### Survey Details:

- Completely voluntary and anonymous
- All data is confidential and only aggregate results will be shared with DFES.
- 30 minutes—we know this is a long time but it is worth it!

### Why should you complete the survey (i.e. what are the benefits)?

- It's a chance for you to voice your views on your experiences working/volunteering at DFES on mental health and wellbeing related matters.

### How do I complete the survey?

**The evaluation will be live soon so keep out for the banners, links and circulars.**



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

## November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>



## Days Gone By A Proud Heritage

### Regional News



#### MIDWEST REGION

#### ROAD ACCIDENT RESCUE TRAINING

A joint Fire Brigade/SES Road Accident Rescue (RAR) Skills activity was conducted at Denham Sunday 22 November '92 for members of the Shark Bay and Useless Loop SES units and members of the Denham Volunteer Fire Brigade.

The aim of the activity was to familiarise SES personnel, in nine hours, with the skills necessary to participate as a member of a RAR Team, other than RAR First Aid, but

does not exempt any SES participant from attending a future RAR Techniques course if they intend to participate as RAR Team members of the SES.

The course was conducted by Mid-West Assistant Regional Co-ordinator Allen Gale, who is a qualified RAR instructor. RAR Team Leader Roy Sargent, of the Carnarvon Unit, assisted with instruction along with the Captain of the Denham VFB, Ron Kidd. Ron attended as an observer for the morning component and added valuable comment with respect to RAR in the Shark Bay area and also from a Lead Combat Agency (WAFB) point of view. He provided Motorised Hydraulic Rescue Equipment

instruction and supervision of practice during the afternoon on one of three bullring stands. Ron's RAR training and experience, along with his positive attitude towards multi agency response and support arrangements was a welcome addition to the activity.

The harmony and the spirit of support and co-operation demonstrated between SES and VFB members at Denham is one that some communities in our state would envy and could use as a model. The Denham participants were discussing their next joint RAR exercise whilst enjoying some well earned refreshments at the conclusion of the activity.

*Western Alert Autumn 1993*



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva\\_office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva_office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva\\_office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva_office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

## November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>



### PULL UP BANNER

Large double sided pull up banner on base that can be filled with water to maintain safety and stability in outdoor settings. Packs away in its own carry bag. Approx. 2 metres tall.



**SES WA GAZEBO** —3 X 3 metres. Packs away into a wheeled carry case for ease of handling and transport.

### TEAR DROP BANNER

Approximately four metres tall. This high impact banner comes with a heavy steel base and ground spike.



Mundaring Unit use the Gazebo and Banners at a recent public event.



**GAZEBO & BANNERS NOW AVAILABLE  
for your Unit to borrow  
FREE OF CHARGE**

**SES UNITS CAN BORROW THESE ITEMS FOR  
PROMOTIONAL/PUBLIC RELATIONS EVENTS**

For more information email Bella

[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)

or call 0499 619 287



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter



# SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

November 2023

# NEWSLETTER

To make sure you receive the SESVA Newsletter monthly, subscribe via the link: <https://ses-wa.asn.au/subscribe-to-newsletter/>

## Opportunities to expand your Volunteering experience start here.....

### Association Training Advisory Group — State Emergency Service (ATAG-SES)

DFES are looking for SES volunteers with relevant training experience to be fill vacancies as Regional Representatives for the ATAG-SES.

Its purpose is to provide a forum for the communication of training information between the Department of Fire & Emergency Services (DFES) and State Emergency Service personnel and will have the following objectives:

- The group shall concern themselves with matters related to the training offered through the State Emergency Service Pathway, its delivery, associated systems and relationship with DFES strategic plan.
- The group will provide formal recommendations to be considered in developing strategies to improve training for State Emergency Service personnel to meet current operational needs and requirements.
- To improve the operational effectiveness of Volunteers through the group's advice and recommendations into the ongoing development of DFES Professional Development Pathways.
- To improve the operational effectiveness of continuation training for Volunteers through the group's advice and recommendations.

As a Regional Representative you will be:

- Disseminating and communicating the minutes of the ATAG – SES to their subgroups and members.
- Actively seeking input into deliberations of the ATAG – SES through their respective committees and networks.
- Providing a report to the ATAG – SES.

This is an opportunity for SES volunteers on the coal face to raise concerns they encounter when providing the current training, along with being able to have input into the future training needs of their fellow volunteers. You will not only be representing your Unit but your region.

The ATAG meets twice a year, however there are times when the group will reach out to its membership to seek their advice/feedback throughout the year. :

To nominate provide your name, Unit, and contact details together with a brief summary of your skills and experience. This can either be SES related or outside the service.

**Nominations should be sent to Matt Folini—[Matt.Folini@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:Matt.Folini@dfes.wa.gov.au)**

For general enquiries, please reach out to either Supt Matt Folini or Robbie Palmer (SESVA representative)  
[sesva.treasurer@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.treasurer@ses-wa.asn.au)



PO Box 3218 (91 Leake St )  
Belmont WA 6104  
[sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au)  
[www.ses-wa.asn.au](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)

Unsubscribe by sending an email to [sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au](mailto:sesva.office@ses-wa.asn.au) if you no longer want to receive the SESVA Newsletter