



SES Volunteers Association of WA (Inc)

One Association - Many Values

October 2023

NEWSLETTER

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From the President

Hello to you in the land and state of opportunity.

Funny enough, many opportunities are earned and not just given to many of us.

An opportunity for an SES Volunteer is to improve impact outcomes on their and other's lives in communities not only here in the West but also around Australia.

Many Australians and people from overseas see what the SES does in response to major and minor natural disasters. The services provided are unique to the training and operational platform that has been established for the Orange Army.

From a community perspective, we are fortunate here in Australia. If you went to the USA for example, the local fire brigade is supposed to meet all hazards encountered and, of course, this is just not a responsible approach for those volunteers. There is far too much knowledge to acquire and too many skills to maintain for this to be a successful solution.

Using the original Civil Defence resources, Australia through the Federal Government created a State Emergency Service in each state and territory to manage the many hazards that fall outside the primary role of the Fire Brigade. Fire brigades are important to us and attend to many fires and accidents. However, while the SES may attend fewer incidents, these are generally more complex and often affect entire communities.

SES Volunteers help communities with higher consequence emergencies, yet are still made up of local community members, trained and exercised to respond to such operations.

In advance of the Western Australian higher threat months, I say thank you for the year-round service that SES Volunteers provide to our communities.

Be smart, take the opportunity, and act to improve the possible impacts on your lives and assets.

Greg Cook
President



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from the SECRETARY'S desk

Email Allen Gale for more information sesva.secretary@ses-wa.asn.au



Our most well attended AGM in recent years!!

More than 40 SES volunteers were at Crown Perth for our Association AGM on Sunday 10 September with Greg Cook returned as President for a further two years.

The Association expresses a resounding thankyou to retiring Management Committee members

- *Colin Reed, Newman Unit;*
- *Peter Newton, Walpole Unit; and*
- *Vinay Domal, Cockburn Unit.*

for their contributions to the VA and for their representation of the member Units in their region.

After all appointments for the expiring positions were declared vacant and there was no opposition to the respective nominations, all the nominees were appointed unopposed. Congratulations to all the SES volunteers who are taking this very important Management Committee role and representing their respective region.

The following SES volunteers were appointed at the AGM:

Position	Name & SES Unit	Term Expires
President	Greg Cook, SES Communications Support Unit	2025
Vice President South	Alan Hawke, Bayswater Unit	2025
Metro—South East	Martin Seward, Serpentine-Jarrahdale Unit	2025
South West	Ros McConchie, Bunbury Unit	2025
Goldfields Midlands	Pam Walsh—Northam District Unit	2025
Lower South West	Les Hayter, Margaret River Unit	2024
Metro—North Coastal	Simon Robinson, Two Rocks Unit	2024

No nomination was received for the following positions:

Position	Name & SES Unit	Term Expires
Kimberley	Vacant	2025
South Coastal	Vacant	2025
Pilbara	Vacant	2025
Metro - North East	Vacant	2024

The SESVA welcomes expressions of interest from SES Volunteers in each of the regions with vacant positions to be appointed to the SESVA Management Committee. Please discuss with your Local Manager in the first instance.

Information about all the Committee Members can be found on the Association website:

[SESVA Committee Members – SES Volunteers Association of WA \(ses-wa.asn.au\)](http://www.ses-wa.asn.au)



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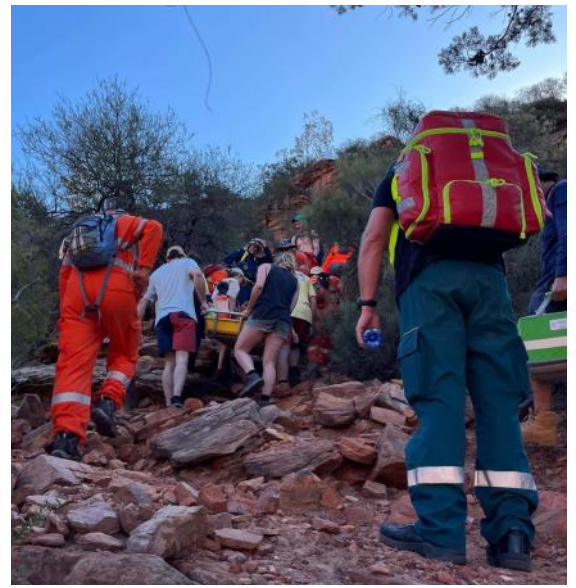
The school holidays have been quite eventful for the Kalbarri SES volunteers and their fellow emergency service responders with challenging callouts to 4 Ways Gorge in the Kalbarri National Park.

Injured hikers have been rescued from the remote and difficult-to-access area, on at least two occasions, which is no small feat. The rescuers had to navigate the rugged terrain of the gorge and the boulder-strewn riverbed to reach the casualties, get them to a safer location for medical attention and then carry them out of the gorge.

Some smart and resourceful solutions to the various difficulties faced included floating the casualty on an inflatable raft at one stage and loading the stretcher onto the SES 'stretcher mule' to traverse the long sandy final section.

Collaboration among the different emergency services, including the Police and Park Rangers, along with volunteers from the Kalbarri SES, the Kalbarri Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, and St John Ambulance is crucial in situations like this. It's a testament to the dedication and teamwork of the all involved that they were able to safely complete these challenging rescue missions and ensure the well-being of the injured hikers.

Efforts like these highlight the importance of trained and dedicated first responders who are willing to go above and beyond to help those in need, especially in difficult to access and dangerous locations. It's a reminder of the essential role that emergency service volunteers play in keeping communities safe and providing assistance when it's needed most.



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NOMINATIONS ARE SOUGHT FOR THE AUSTRALIAN HONOURS MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS KING'S BIRTHDAY 2024

SES Volunteers are encouraged to nominate an eligible SES member for the Australian Honours Meritorious Service Awards and acknowledge the achievements of those who act as role models, make a difference, achieve their best, or have put themselves in jeopardy to protect the lives or property of others.

This is your opportunity to recognise a fellow SES Volunteer who deserves recognition at the highest level.

The Emergency Services Medal (ESM) is awarded for meritorious service by a frontline member of an Australian Emergency Service, or has given distinguished service in relation to emergency management, training or education.

Nominations can be submitted at any time, but must be submitted by **Monday 16 October 2023** to be considered for the King's Birthday 2024 Honours List and August 2024 Bravery List.

For further information email the Honours and Awards Officer at rewards@dfes.wa.gov.au



Abseil 130 metres in support of burns patients!

27-29 OCTOBER 2023

Don't forget to register for the Central Park Plunge, organised by the Fiona Wood Foundation, which is being held from 27-29 October 2023.

Participants will have the opportunity to abseil down the 130 metre Central Park Tower in Perth to raise money for the foundation's research and education initiatives and increase awareness about burn injuries.

Visit the website for more details: <https://centralparkplunge.com.au/>



TAKE THE *plunge*



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WAFES CONFERENCE 2023

AWARDS NIGHT

An inspiring group of emergency services volunteers from across the State were recognised for their achievements at the WAFES Awards gala dinner on Saturday 9 September at Crown Perth.

Congratulations to each volunteer and team who were recognised as making a substantial contribution to emergency services in the past year. All of the SES finalists have a unique story, a journey filled with challenges, triumphs and countless hours of dedication



Peter Keillor Award winner, Leonie Briggs, Canine Unit SES



SES Youth Achievement Award winner, Anjuli Till, Kalgoorlie-Boulder SES



SES Team Achievement Award winners, Lower South West Vertical Rescue Team



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WAFES
CONFERENCE
2023

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

SES volunteers who missed the WAFES Conference at Crown Perth on 8th and 9th September can catch up on the keynote speaker presentations and view the afternoon stream session PowerPoint presentations online.

To watch these exceptional keynote speaker presentations, please click the links below:

Justin Langer AM keynote presentation

[WAFES Conference 2023 - Justin Langer AM - YouTube](#)

Rabia Siddique keynote presentation

[WAFES Conference 2023 - Rabia Siddique - YouTube](#)

To view the afternoon stream session PowerPoint presentations please head to the Volunteer Hub.

<https://volunteerhub.dfes.wa.gov.au/home/news-circulars/news/news-details/2023/09/20/2023-wafes-conference-and-awards-wrap-up>



Volunteer Associations' Room

Each year during the WAFES conference, Meeting Room M3 is allocated for use by the Volunteers Associations. The room provides a space for Associations to have face to face contact with their Volunteers. SES Volunteers look forward to the opportunity to chat with SESVA Executive and Committee members and get their hands on the great range of SES merchandise. Things get pretty frenetic, and it seems every SES Vollie at the conference is trying to get to the merchandise! Pictured right is VA Treasurer Robbie Palmer, relishing a quiet moment before the impending stampede.



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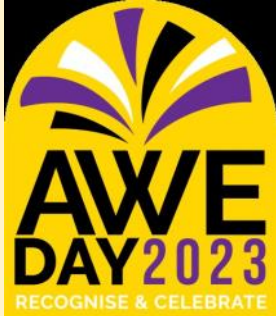
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Australasian Women in Emergencies Day 10th October 2023

The Australasian Woman in Emergencies Network (AWE) promotes, supports and recognises the contributions of women in emergency management and disaster resilience across Australasia. AWE has more than 1800 members from across Australasia, and provides its members with a range of free capacity building programs including newsletters, scholarships, a mentoring program, awards, networking, forums and events and more. AWE convenes Australasian Women in Emergencies Day each year.

AWE Day 2023

On October 10th we celebrate Australasian Women in Emergencies Day, a day to recognise and celebrate women in emergencies and disaster resilience.

Women bring unique skills and strengths to all areas of disaster resilience and emergency management, and their insights and expertise help build resilience across Australasia.

Australasian Women in Emergencies Day is for all women who work, volunteer or study in emergency services, community or not for profit organisations, governments or agencies, universities or schools, and private businesses and organisations. Membership of AWE is open to anyone who plays a role in these areas.

AWE Day is marked by a range of activities to recognise and celebrate women including:

- ◆ Australasian Women in Emergencies Day Forum— <https://events.humanitix.com/awe-day-forum>
- ◆ AWE Excellence Awards
- ◆ Communications and social media campaigns



www.awenetwork.org.au
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VALE JOSH GARDNER

Josh arrived in the Midwest full of life, and if you know Josh full of noise, a big beaming man 6' 4" high and, as he said, most looked up to him, and he liked that. He took life on head first, he was never frightened to accept the difficult challenges just to see how far he could take himself.

Typically, Josh was full noise 100mph, arranging training scenarios in all sorts of weird and wonderful locations, never wanting to go past something he spied out of the window whilst driving, that he thought he could turn into an interesting/complex rescue. It was during these days driving around when the discussion of leadership at the Geraldton-Greenough unit was had.

When Josh said, "Well I could assist with this for a while if you wish, then we can take time to find the right person." The opportunity flashed past my eyes and in just under an hour Josh was the newly appointed Local Manager.

Command, control and coordination was his first order, aligning the leadership team, empowering them to be the best they can. Training, training and more training. Josh believed that positive realistic training was the key to retention. Not long in and his plan for his successor was put forward as Deputy and then onto his succession. Watching him work confirms that you can teach an old dog new tricks.

Tim Dalwood District Officer, Midwest-Gascoyne Region



Joshua Gardner, with Geraldton-Greenough SES members Amy Drage, Joe Mihaly and Nick Pirrottina before all four flew east as part of Taskforce Delta in the aftermath of flooding in NSW in November 2022.



Joshua Gardner, centre back, with volunteers from Geraldton-Greenough SES at the Midwest Gascoyne SES Regional Exercise in Eneabba in August 2022.



Joshua Gardner is presented with his 15 year SES Medal Clasp at Geraldton-Greenough SES by DFES District Officer Tim Dalwood on 12 December 2022.



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Midwest Gascoyne

Regional Exercise September 15 16 & 17 2023

SES Units from the Midwest-Gascoyne took the opportunity once again to come together to uphold the long-held tradition for taking on a challenge to learn and practice skills — the SES Regional Exercise.

From Friday the 15th to Saturday the 18th of September, SES volunteers from the Eneabba Unit, Moora Unit, Geraldton-Greenough Unit, Carnarvon Unit and Kalbarri Unit joined together for the 2023 Midwest-Gascoyne (MG) Regional Exercise in and around Kalbarri. Association President Greg Cook and Secretary Allen Gale also joined in the activities for the weekend.

The Wagoie campsite facility about 20 kilometres south of Kalbarri was the base for the weekend's activities, with many of the exercises conducted on the coastal cliffs and beaches, as well as the banks and in the water of the Murchison River. The ICV from Geraldton, along with its crew, operated for the duration of the exercise to support effective command, control, coordination and, most importantly, safety of all involved.

Participants were treated to a nice hot dinner sitting around a campfire on the first evening – a nice meat and vege stew cooked in huge camp oven! Round Robin training kicked off the early challenges on Saturday morning followed by a range of scenarios Saturday afternoon, fellowship Saturday night around the fire and more realistic scenarios Sunday morning.

The cliffs and beaches proved an ideal location for Volunteers to practice vertical rescue, off-road driving, first aid/casualty transfer techniques, rescue from heights, radio communications, land search and rescue, in rugged as well as sandy conditions.

The river provided the scene for realistic rescue scenarios on water, land and river searches and rescue on the banks and an island, as well as first aid/casualty transfer and radio communications scenarios.



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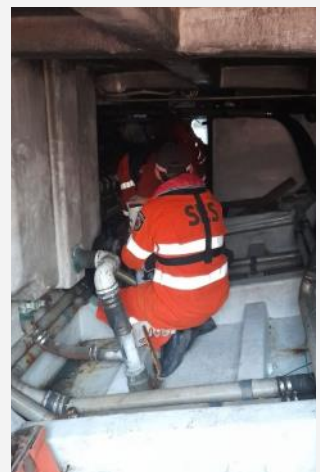
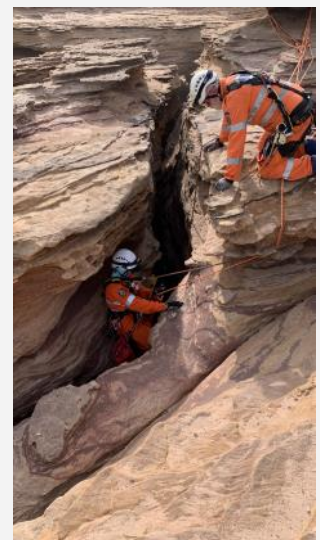
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Midwest Gascoyne Regional Exercise cont'd

Wagoe is a popular reef fishing spot near Kalbarri, which offers chalet style accommodation as well as caravan bays. SES Volunteers stayed in chalets and had the option to stay on until Monday to enjoy this unique location.

Local Manager Steve Cable, Kalbarri Unit, and Trevor Patton, Karratha Unit, once again set creative scenarios for the regional exercise based on their extensive operational and training experience, ensuring another well organised and successful event that left everyone with a feeling of "this is what it is all about."



It is envisaged to continue to run these regional exercises across the state to further develop and prepare our volunteers for times of emergency.



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Remote Datacomms

New technology is a game-changer—Pt 1

All emergency services are becoming increasingly reliant on computerised data systems. Access to databases, mapping, voice and video etc. outside the office environment, generally relies on using the mobile phone networks to provide access.

The phone networks provide coverage for 99% of the population but cover only 27% of the land mass, meaning that the building of additional phone towers to extend the range of reception is unlikely as it would be uneconomic to do so. Therefore the mobile phone coverage is unlikely to expand much more.

Once outside a centre of population there is little or no ability to communicate via this means. This is a big problem for Emergency Services who operate in these areas, particularly during a natural disaster where what connections might exist could be inoperable or overloaded.

Until recently, the only solution was to use geostationary satellites to provide the data link. Unfortunately, the ground stations required to communicate with the satellites orbiting 36,000 km away are bulky, expensive and provide limited service.

Around 25 years ago the first of the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites were launched, positioned 780km above the earth and allowed communication using hand-held devices (sat phones). This technology is still in use today and provides voice and limited text communication anywhere in Australia. While extremely useful, doesn't provide an Internet connection.

In the last few years many thousands of small communications satellites have been launched to even lower orbits (around 550kms above the earth). The lower the orbit, the faster they travel and more satellites are required to provide seamless coverage, however the advantage is that they can allow smaller ground stations and provide much better transmission capacity or data transfer speed.

Recently the WA Police announced they were investing \$8m to equip police cars in remoter areas with satellite data communications using the Starlink system. This means that these vehicles can now access all Police ICT systems in real time whilst on the move as well as relay mobile phones and enable live stream of personal webcams, enhancing safety and effectiveness.

Over the past year, DFES have conducted trials of a limited number of Starlink systems. The SES Communications Support Unit (CSU) has been involved in these trials and successfully provided datacomms to the scene of natural disasters such as the Fitzroy Catchment floods, as well as Bushfires in Cervantes and Norseman where local infrastructure was compromised. These are highly portable, air-transportable systems designed to provide datacomms to Control Points.

For the technically-minded, we have gone from a 6Mb/s and 880ms latency for the equipment providing emergency comms at Kalbarri during TC Seroja, to 200Mb/s and 70ms latency recently at the fires near Norseman using Starlink. This represents more than a 33-fold increase in performance.

Performance has been consistently excellent, and the units have been very reliable, resulting in the intention to provide the units more widely in the regions.

Remote Datacomms Part II will be published in November's Newsletter

*Submitted by Chris Knight
Local Manager SES Communications Support Unit*



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WA SES Volunteers Association Honours long serving member, John Capes OAM

John Capes originally joined the Wanneroo SES in 1978 where he held a number of positions, including six years as Local Manager.

In the late 1980's, seeing the need for SES Volunteers to have a representative body that advocated for them, John was instrumental in the establishment of WAVES, the Western Australian Volunteer Emergency Services Association (Inc.), the predecessor of the SESVA WA. John was appointed to the FESA Board to represent the State Emergency Service in 1999 until 2012 when the Board was abolished.

WAVES was Constituted in 1990 with John appointed President, a role he served in for several years. Other leadership roles with WAVES and the SESVA included serving as Vice President and Treasurer.

John continues to serve the SES, now in the role of Webmaster of the SESVA WA, having responsibility for managing the Association's media and publications, which include the website, App, and Facebook.

In 1997 John was awarded Life Membership of the SESVA. It was a great pleasure to surprise John and wife Nita Capes to once again recognise and honour John for his selfless service and commitment to the Association and the community at the recent AGM, as well as recognising Nita for her enduring support and assistance to the SES in WA.



Nita Capes: Beside every great man is an amazing woman.



SESVA President, Greg Cook presents John Capes with his recognition plaque.



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MySES Unit

Geraldton-Greenough SES

Submitted by Ross Jones, Local Manager Geraldton-Greenough SES

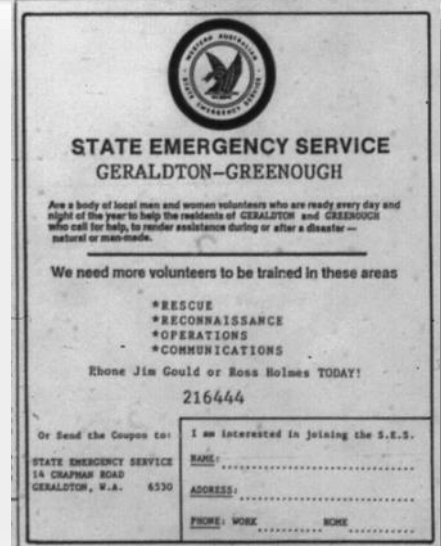


In 1984 the Geraldton Civil Defence Unit was faced with a membership of only three. Natural disasters were affecting the Western Australian community more frequently and the volunteer emergency service had to change with the times.

Local Coordinator Jim Gould, a Shire of Greenough Councillor and Deputy Shire President, with assistance from newly arrived WASES Regional Manager, Ross Holmes, advertised in the local paper for new members and recruited nine new members.

A decision was made to modernise and form a State Emergency Service Unit, and so the Geraldton-Greenough State Emergency Service (GGSES) was formed on the 31st of August 1984. For the next six years the unit shared the Regional Headquarters at 14 Chapman Road until 1990.

With the completion of the new Greenough Regional Prison, the unused maximum security prison located on Chapman Road came available and was given a new lease of life by the volunteers as the unit's administration home.



1984 SES recruiting advertisement



Unit members renovated the old prison, removing steel reinforced concrete walls and installed a roof before taking up occupancy for nearly 13 years until 2003. The vehicle shed was located separately in Place Road, which included the HF radio mast and antenna.

Predominantly answering the call during winter for storm damage and land searches during summer, the Unit was called on several times over the last four decades for flooding in the Geraldton townsite and surrounding areas. The Unit's training included Vertical Recue, Dropmaster and Air Observing, Land Search and Rescue, with numerous callouts to the Kalbarri National Park for injured hikers and air searches for vessels at sea.



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MySES Unit—Geraldton-Greenough SES cont'd

Ironically the roof at the Chapman Road headquarters was continually leaking requiring more than temporary repairs, necessitated a move to another repurposed site in Urch Street (2003-2009) and later to the Shire of Greenough old works depot in Davies Road (2009-2019). In July 2019 a brand new 1.9 million dollar facility was constructed and became the new home for the Geraldton-Greenough SES, including a vertical rescue tower.

In 2021 the new facility was used to its maximum capacity as a Level 3 Incident Control Centre, with the landfall of Tropical Cyclone Seroja. GGSES operated out of the Local Manager's office during the protracted incident.

The Unit has had over 550 members since 1984 and currently have a membership of 55 members.

Due to the numerous homes and moves over the years, the Unit's history was mostly unknown, until now, with the exploits of the GGSES and the different Local Managers over the years having been uncovered through research in preparation for August 2024 when GGSES will celebrate 40 years of service to the Western Australian community.



GPS WORKSHOP

Sunday 22 October 2023

Gosnells SES EOC

0745 hrs – 1130 hrs followed by a BBQ lunch

RSVP – 13 October 2023: Nazim – Training Manger



Know your way around your GPS



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Young People in Emergency Services Volunteering: A personal journey by Cassidy Kempster

Involvement of young people in volunteering is a relevant and integral part of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services future. To me, young people are the key to creating a culture in DFES and its volunteer sectors which embraces diversity, new thinking and sustainable wellbeing in disaster resilience.

SES is no longer just about SES callouts or training. SES is about making yourself a better person, building independence, empathy and resilience; and staying committed to our purpose, which is helping our community.

I have heard from many volunteers in leadership positions that they actually don't know how to engage with young people in an effective way. Which is understandable considering some brigades and units, particularly in rural areas, have zero VOLLIES under 30.

I won't dive into the statistics in this article. Instead, I will be talking on the benefits of volunteering for young people (16-30 y.o.) and what effective support and guidance looks like to us.

I am Cassidy Kempster, SES volunteer and advocate for young people in emergency services, and I hope this article provides some insight into a young volunteer's mind, and how you can support us in the best way possible.

For some context, I have volunteered with the SES for almost six years. I started when I was 16 after my older brother Carl left to live in Switzerland. At first, I didn't really understand why so many people liked such "dry" topics and being a teenager, I often found myself falling asleep during Power-Point presentations at Wednesday night training.

Throughout the 16-18 years period, I was allocated a mentor, who talked to me like a friend and treated me like an adult. She just got me. When you're a teenager, all you want is validation and to feel like you're doing good with your new found independence. SES was perfect for that.



Rowan Frankowiak and Maddie Smith
Northshore SES camp 2021.

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Young People in Emergency Services Volunteering cont'd

I was constantly learning and being validated by older members. They remembered things about me, they wanted to hear about my school stuff, boyfriends and friend dramas; and they quickly became the essential escape from everything in my “normal life”. Whenever I had an issue I didn’t really want to talk to my parents about, I knew I could go to anyone at SES and ask for a hug or advice.

That said, I have not always had a rosy time on my volunteering journey. I have experienced the shooting down “NO” culture many times, sexual harassment, post-disaster mental health issues, and more. Many of these issues have been swept under the rug for many, but that’s something young people have the potential to change.

Young people can be seen as being immature in relation to their understanding of deep political issues within their units. But we must never forget the power a fresh set of eyes, education and passion has on the growth of an organisation.



Mentor Laura Snowball left, and Cassidy Kempster at 17 in 2018.

It is easy for units to get stuck in the trap of no succession planning and in the past this has led to an ageing unit with fewer active members; less passing on of knowledge and passion; and, sometimes the complete halt of the unit or brigade entirely.

I’m not saying young people are the only answer to this, but if they are given a voice and an opportunity to do great things, then they will do great things.

Although many young people enjoy positive experiences, a concerted effort needs to be made to better support young people (not just cadets) in their development to become our future leaders.

Next month’s instalment of Young People in Emergency Services will look at how to attract and retain young people .



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Get Ready For



MOVEMBER®

& Mo up Bro

Movember is the leading charity changing the face of men's health. In the month formally known as November, Mo Bros and Mo Sistas across the world Grow, Move and Host to increase awareness of men's health and to raise much-needed funds. With the money raised, Movember finds and funds innovative and impactful men's health projects across mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer research.

How to Join.....

Grow a Mo

Whatever Mo you grow, you'll raise funds and awareness for men's health

There are four ways you can get involved

Move for Movember

Run or walk 60km over the month. That's 60km for the 60 men lost to suicide each hour, every hour across the world.

Mo your own way

Whether it's a gruelling test of physical endurance or some other wildcard idea. Take whatever Mo Your Own Way means and run with it.

Host a Mo-Ment

Hosting a Mo-ment is all about having a good time for a good cause. A DFES Event Guide has been created to help you host your Mo-Ment

Make sure to sign up & encourage others to do so at the Movember website & search DFES Challenge



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Emerging Minds

Is inviting first responders, emergency services, and emergency management and disaster response workers to participate in the 2023 National Workforce Survey for Child, Parent and Family Mental Health.

First responders and emergency personnel are often faced with supporting families in times of great stress, or work in systems which do. This year the Emerging Minds survey explores what this workforce needs to be able to support parents, children and families in the context of disasters.

The survey will gather information on the current capabilities, practice challenges and learning needs of workers in sectors which connect with or influence the health, safety and wellbeing of children and their families. You do not need to work with children or have a focus on mental health to participate.

What do I need to know about this survey?

- We will use this data in reports, research and to communicate your needs to sectors, agencies, policymakers and government. It will also be used to guide the development of Emerging Minds resources to better support your workforce.
- The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete.
- Your survey responses are **anonymous**; if you would like to enter the prize draw, your contact details will be captured separately.

Win 1 of 5 iPads

- There are 5 iPads to be won over two draws. The first two prizes were drawn in September with the last three prizes drawn in November 2023.

The survey closes on 15 November

Take the Survey here

Copy and paste this URL into your browser

<https://survey.zohopublic.com.au/zs/MBBtNU?link=partners>

To learn more about the survey, check out the Emerging Minds website or contact Dr Melinda Goodyear, Manager, Research and Evaluation, Emerging Minds at goodyearm@emergingminds.com.au



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Safety Snippet

Provision and maintenance of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) at workplaces

Background

WorkSafe has become aware of risks arising from a lack of maintenance of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) at workplaces.

An AED is a piece of first aid equipment designed to be used by any person, with or without training, to provide a quick and effective response to cardiac arrest. Without treatment, a cardiac arrest can be fatal within minutes.

AEDs provide audible step-by-step instruction on how to use them and how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). An AED can detect whether it has been applied correctly, will instruct whether defibrillation is appropriate, and will only shock a person who is in cardiac arrest. Workplaces should be provided with AEDs, especially where there:

- is a risk to workers from electrocution;
- would be a delay in ambulance services arriving; and
- are large numbers of members of the public.

Duties under the work health and safety legislation

Under the work health and safety legislation, a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has a primary duty of care to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of workers and other people, such as visitors, is not put at risk. The PCBU at a workplace must ensure:

- first aid equipment is provided
- that each worker has access to the equipment
- there is access to facilities to administer first aid
- an adequate number of workers are trained to administer first aid

A risk management approach, based on the circumstances of the workplace, must be considered when deciding what first aid arrangements are provided, which includes the provision and maintenance of AEDs at the workplaces.

Summary of hazard

Defibrillation is the only way to restore a heart with a fatal heart rhythm back to normal.

As a consequence, if an AED fails to operate when used on a person who is in cardiac arrest, first aid will not be effective or reduce the risk of fatality.

Contributory factors

- Flat batteries in workplace AEDs.
- Expired or missing AED pads.
- AED failing to operate when used.
- AED not visible or accessible when needed.

Actions required

The PCBU at the workplace should ensure:

- AEDs are maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications
- pads and batteries are checked regularly, as these will expire over time
- pads are replaced if they have been used
- AEDs are located in accessible areas with clearly visible signage
- workers are trained in first aid, including the location and use of AEDs, and provided refresher training as necessary
- first aid and emergency procedures are regularly reviewed.



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