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A Year In Review

An intense 2019/2020 bushfire season closely followed by COVID-19 has undoubtedly put everyone to the test. The COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions enacted throughout the year have been challenging for everyone, but especially for CFS volunteers, who have continued to maintain commitment to the community whilst remaining conscious of their own circumstances and potential risk COVID-19 presents to first responders. At times restrictions have been severe, however, yet again CFS volunteers and staff have stood tall and continuously delivered on your commitment to South Australian communities.

COVID-19 restrictions have also meant that some of the normal processes, debriefs and follow ups to the 2019/2020 bushfire season were delayed, with some still not completed. It is disappointing that as we enter the 2020/2021 bushfire season, we carry over matters from the previous season, however, unprecedented circumstances sometimes create unusual situations.

This year, the CFSVA has received a record number of calls for assistance or support from either individual volunteers or brigades on a wide range of matters. This has stretched the association's resources, and whilst some matters could easily be resolved, much to our frustration others remain without resolution. However, the CFSVA assures you that whilst it may appear that matters have stalled, this is not certainly the case, as the tenacity and resolve of the CFSVA Executive team ensures that your matters continue to remain on the table until a satisfactory conclusion is reached.

During the year, the CFSVA also responded to the Review into the 2019/2020 South Australian Bushfire Season (Keelty Review), and the Royal Commission, as well as progressing the normal business of the association, some of which will be addressed within this bulletin.



CFSVA Welcomes Minister Tarzia

In early August 2020, the CFSVA welcomed the appointment of Minister Vincent Tarzia as Minister for Emergency Services. Minister Tarzia and his staff have met with the CFSVA on several occasions and has shown keen interest in progressing the emergency services and set aside some of the unproductive barriers set in place by the previous Minister.



Review into the 2019/2020 South Australian Bushfire Season (Keelty Review)

The Keelty Review put forward a total of 68 findings and 15 recommendations, and therefore the South Australian Government has committed \$97.5 million to address some of the Keelty recommendations.

These include but are limited to:
\$5 million to fund AVL for CFS vehicles
Funding for 9 additional Regional Staff for CFS
Funding for 1 additional staff member for SPAM

For the full Review [Click Here](#)



Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL)

The need for the fitment of AVL to CFS vehicles has been a consistent recommendation stemming from inquests, audits and reviews of all major South Australian fires since 2009, including Wangary (2005), Sampson Flat (2015) and Pinery (2015). Finally, the significance of of AVL to the safety of CFS volunteers has been recognised with a \$5 million budget allocation made to rollout this vital equipment to CFS brigades. The project is being managed through SAFECOM with David Phillips appointed by the CFSVA to represent the association on the AVL working group.

The latest AVL Project Communique is attached to this Bulletin. [Click Here](#)



Additional Regional Staff for CFS

The CFSVA has strongly lobbied for the engagement of frontline regional volunteer support staff to support brigades with recruitment and retention matters as well as provide support with the ever-increasing paperwork and other imposts placed on volunteers. The CFSVA welcomes the funding for 9 additional staff for CFS and hopes that the additional regional staff will provide much needed support services to volunteers.



Independent Chair for SAFECOM Board

The Keelty Review also recommended the appointment of an independent Chair to the SAFECOM Board. Under the Fire & Emergency Act 2005 (FES Act), the SAFECOM CEO, currently Dom Lane is the also the Chair of the SAFECOM Board. Mr Keelty indicated that the SAFECOM CEO also holding the Chair of the SAFECOM Board may be contrary to good governance and equated it to 'checking your own homework'.

The CFSVA strongly endorses Mr Keelty recommendation.



The CFSVA stated in its "building a Strong CFS - 2014 and beyond"

"The CFSVA understands and supports the structure of the SAFECOM Board, but questions whether the presiding member should not be an independently appointed person as opposed to the ministerially appointed Chief Executive Officer. The CFSVA raises the issue of transparency and the potential for conflict of interest which could place the presiding officer in a difficult and invidious position.

The ability for the Chief Officer to follow Ministerial direction as well as bring forth the direction of the Board has the potential to create serious issues, and on this basis the CFSVA seeks that the Act be amended to reflect the appointment of an independent person as the presiding officer of the Commission.

An amendment Bill is currently being drafted to amend the legislation so that an independent Chair is appointed to the SAFECOM Board.

ROYAL COMMISSION [Click Here](#)

The Royal Commission into the 2019/2020 Bushfire Season was released in late October 2020 and can be accessed on the link attached. The CFSVA did given evidence to the Royal Commission which addressed matters from a national approach.

ANALYSIS OF THE SA FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (Dom Lane) WITHDRAWN / REMOVED FROM SAFECOM WEBSITE

THE JOINT EXECUTIVE CHARTER (an agreement between the CEO of SAFECOM / Chief Officers of SACFS, SASES, SAMFS and former Minister Corey Wingard) WITHDRAWN / REMOVED FROM SAFECOM WEBSITE

The greatest disappointed for the CFSVA this year has been the inordinate amount of time and precious resources which have focused on the flawed Analysis of the SA Fire and Emergency Services, written by Dom Lane under the direction of the previous Minister, Corey Wingard. The SAFECOM CEO's misinterpretation of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (FES), coupled with the former Minister insistence to promulgate erroneous information displayed an utter contempt for the very foundations of the sector.

The CFSVA has been strong in expressing its concerns relating to the application of the recommendations made in the Analysis which saw the signing of a Joint Executive Charter, an agreement between the CEO of SAFECOM and the Chief Officers of SACFS, SASES, SAMFS and former Minister Corey Wingard to collaborate on all decisions).

The CFSVA can advise that the Analysis of the SA Fire and Emergency Services and the Joint Executive Charter have been withdrawn and removed from the SAFECOM website.



Sectory Advisory Committee (SAC) and COAC (Cheif Officer's Advisory Council)

The CFSVA continues to support the Sector Advisory Committee (SAC), as SAC, which is a legislated committee under the Fire and Emergency Service Act 2005 is a vital link for key stakeholders within the sector and the SAFECOM Board.

SAC comprises of all Chief Officers (CFS /SES /MFS/SAFECOM) and representatives from our sector partner including associations, unions and staff and is the united voice of the sector and an important conduit for communication and discussion amongst sector partners and the SAFECOM Board. SAC continued to meet throughout the year either face to face or through Microsoft Teams. Andy Wood recently completed his 2-year term as the Chair of the SAC, and as per the SAC Terms of Reference (TORs), Mr Peter Codderington from the SESVA was elected to the role for the next 2 years.

Andy was elected the inaugural Chair under the current TORs and has done an excellent job as Chair and will continue representing the CFSVA, as a committee member, and along with Jeff Clark both have represented CFS volunteers with strong determination and resolve.

SAC undoubtedly fosters relationships and allows the for the sharing of information and views amongst emergency services partners.

The CFSVA would like to acknowledge and thank Ken Schulz who has chaired COAC for the past 4 years and welcomes Dr Phil Reeve (Paracombe Brigade) who will take over the role from December.

The CFSVA would also takes the opportunity to thank all volunteers who responded to the CFSVA's Expression of Interest for the position of COAC Chair. The number of responses received confirms that CFS is indeed fortunate to have so many talented and dedicated volunteers.



Volunteer Charter

The CFS Volunteer Charter, after continuous lobbying by the CFSVA, is now enshrined into legislation. Work to formalise the Charter into a document which clearly articulate the obligations of all parties has stalled as the CFSVA is not satisfied with the 'wording' provided by the Crown Solicitor, which the association does not believe is in keeping with the spirit of the legislation, and in fact subrogates Government's responsibility to consult. The SESVA shares the CFSVA views, so work on the Charter will continue until a mutually agreeable outcome can be achieved. This means that at times the CFSVA must remind Government of their obligations to consult with CFS volunteers.



New Emergency Services Headquarters

Construction of the new Emergency Services HQ is progressing well.

[Click Here](#) for full report

The CFSVA has lobbied over many years for funding for a new CFS HQ and is pleased to see the new HQ take shape. Chief Officer Mark Jones and Rob Sanford are the CFS representatives on the HQ committee and have represented CFS staff and volunteers well, standing firm CFS' commitment to volunteers that the new facility will be functional and easily accessible to volunteers.



Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA)

An important part of the CFSVA's work is also to represent CFS volunteers nationally through CAVFA, our national body which collectively represents over 250,000 volunteer firefighters nationwide. CAVFA also provides a national benchmark for the CFSVA and it is rewarding to note that the CFSVA measures up extremely well when compared to our interstate counterparts, and whilst we are not the largest organisation, nor the best funded we carry considerable achievements and influence when it matters. Andy Wood is the current Chair of CAVFA, whilst Sonia St Alban

represents CAVFA on the AFAC Volunteer Technical Management Group (VTMG) and enables the CFSVA to influence the national agenda. The CFSVA, through its representatives of Andy Wood, Sonia St Alban and David Lindner is highly respected nationally for its work and the outcomes achieved on behalf of our volunteers.



Project Re- Connect

COVID-19 restrictions also curtailed some of the association's plans to travel around the state to catch up with brigades, groups and individuals, however in the new year the association hopes to launch Project Re-Connect, which will see the association travel to locations around the state to engage with CFS volunteers and carry the simple message "Are you ok". Arrangements to facilitate this project and lock in dates will be done in conjunction with CFSVA Branches and Branch Presidents.

The CFSVA remains particularly focused on the health and wellbeing of volunteers with particular attention turned to extending support and mental health services to volunteers, which given the events of the past 12 months have become more significant and critical. The association continues to carry a Life Insurance policy on all volunteers injured in the line of duty, which is over and above normal WorkCover entitlements, and from this year also includes a nominated benefit for diagnosed cases of PTSD.

The CFSVA would like to acknowledge OZ Minerals for their donation following the 2019/2020 bushfire season.

This generous donation will be used to support Project Re-Connect.



CFSVA Other News and Information



The CFSVA would also like to acknowledge BankSA Community Partnership who have generously donated to numerous Brigades across the state. The initiative has now been in place for several years and the CFSVA encourages all volunteers, family, friends, and acquaintances who may take out a home loan through a BankSA employee to nominate a brigade.

The Community Partnership Program is a simple and effective way to generate an additional income stream that will help support your local CFS Brigade continue to help South Australian communities.

For every settled Home Loan that is referred to BankSA from a CFSVA member, supporter, family or friend BankSA will pay a commission of 0.3% of the total of the loan directly to a nominated CFS Brigade.

For more information contact
David Brownie
Business Development Manager
mobile 0466 404 074

Koalas and CFS Watches are available for purchase from CFSVA Office.



Cost for the CFSVA Koala is \$25 each plus postage.

CFSVA also have watches available for purchase. \$169 each.
To order contact kirsti.oliver@cfsva.org.au



CFS Volunteer National Park Unique Codes 2020/2021 now available

We again thank the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) for this program. The intent of this offer is to recognise the direct relationship between CFS Volunteers and South Australia's National Parks System.

This offer entitles the recipient and immediate family to:

Free entry to all parks in the state where vehicle entry fees apply (excluding Munga-Thirri Simpson Desert Regional Reserve and Conservation Park).

Free camping for up to five nights in any one location at any one time (must book online, excluding Munga-Thirri Simpson Desert Regional Reserve and Conservation Park)

25% concession on the cost of the Desert Parks Pass.

25% concession on the cost of personal access and guided tours in parks, where such tours are operated by the Department for Environment and Water.

25% concession on the use of facilities in parks, e.g. tennis court, oval, accommodation.

CFSVA can provide CFS Volunteers with a Unique Code number which you can then use to make an online booking of a campsite, accommodation or facility via the website www.parks.sa.gov.au

For Desert Parks Passes email DEWDesertParks@sa.gov.au or phone the Desert Parks Hotline on 08 8648 5328.

To apply for your CFS Volunteer unique code send an email to the CFSVA Office by including your name, Brigade, mobile number and CFS Portal email address to kirsti.oliver@cfsva.org.au



Current AFAC Standards Watch newsletter [Click Here](#)



Click here for the:
[SA Fire Fighters Museum December 2020 Newsletter](#)



**CFSVA would like to wish all CFS volunteers, staff, and families a
safe Christmas and roll in 2021**

Andy Wood
President

David Lindner
Vice President
President

Sonia St Alban
Executive Director

Jeff Clark
Deputy Vice

www.cfsva.org.au