



Frontline



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**WORKING IN HARMONY
SES SHARE SKILLS • MINISTERIAL AWARDS
PROSPECT UNIT CELEBRATES 40 YEARS**



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CONTENT FOR FRONTLINE

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Chairman's report



**“Volunteers
are hard to find
so we need to
ensure that they
are valued.”**

I trust that as many of you as possible had a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year but more importantly got to spend these festive times with family and friends, rather than responding to incidents.

In larger Units, time off can be simple to arrange, however, for a lot of smaller country Units, arranging time off can create problems. Even with just one person taking leave creates problems for the Unit. That one person away may mean that the Unit can no longer be considered operational for the time. Of course, no Unit would openly admit this, but in some parts of the state this is a problem that has no simple answer.

Some volunteers in emergency services are aware of this problem and simply don't take time off, preferring to stay close to home just in case there is a callout because they would not want to let their team down. But just how long can these people stay on duty 24/7, after all they are volunteers and have lives outside of SES?

The answer is simply not just recruiting and training more volunteers. In country regions, there just are not the people to recruit. Older members of the community begin to think about slowing down, while the young have had to

move to the city for work or to continue their education. Those that have stayed are too busy making a living to think about volunteering for an emergency service. If they did decide they could find the time, they, like a growing number of volunteers, may have found that their employers don't support volunteering during working hours.

The SES is not the only organisation finding it hard to recruit volunteers. In the lead up to Christmas there were a number of articles in the press about this very issue. Volunteers are hard to find so we need to ensure that they are valued. The Volunteers Association will continue to remind politicians, the press and Headquarters staff of this in an effort to get more support for volunteers, their families and their employers. That is what we are there to do, so make use of the Association and let us know how we can help you. As a group, we have more weight and say than any individual member.

I and the Association look forward to hearing from you and the challenges the year brings.

Warren Hicks
Chairman, SASESVA

from the
CEO's
desk



When you read the scientific reports indicating the likely climatic changes due to global warming and witness first hand how many significant weather events we are enduring, you wonder what the future will bring.

There is no doubt the SES will play an increasingly significant role in prevention, preparedness, response and recovery relating to severe weather events. The legislation has nominated us to do this and accordingly our policies, systems of work and structures are changing to adapt to the emerging requirements.

The recent Unit Managers' conference saw the tabling of our new draft policies and procedures and the next step in the development of a position description for the Unit Managers. The new Fire and Emergency Services Act was workshopped to give a better understanding of how the changes impact upon us. The feeling I took away was that we have a pretty good level of awareness of our future roles and responsibilities and our whole leadership team from across the State is ready for the challenge.

The future looks good for the SES and the passion that our Volunteers have for the organisation is the key ingredient.

We have played a major role in the preparedness, response and recovery phases of the recent Adelaide flooding events.

The Premier, Mike Rann, paid special tribute to the SES and the other Emergency Services roles during the floods at the recent Gawler and districts community forum of Community Cabinet and at the SES Annual parade. It is great to see our Volunteers and the organisation receiving this level of recognition for their outstanding contribution to the community.

As we start another year and we reflect on the past 12 months, we are conscious that we have made some significant steps forward. We are providing operational leadership in our area of responsibility, have made huge leaps forward with our public image, have some improved systems now around OHS&W and financial management and have completed our organisational restructure.

Not perfect however! We have to improve our communication between the paid and volunteer work force and provide more support to Units in terms of admin and training. We are working on that!

As we look forward to a bright and even better 2006 for SES, can I take this opportunity to thank you for the incredible commitment you have shown to your communities again last year. It has been a pleasure to work with you.

David Place

Chief Executive Officer
State Emergency Service South Australia

“The future looks good for the SES and the passion that our Volunteers have for the organisation is the key ingredient.”

Executive Officer's report



“Many members are spending more weekends than not attending courses and exercises so as they can continue to assist their community.”

As mentioned in the last edition, I have been able to get around to many of the Units over the last 12 months in conjunction with the SES management team. This has enabled me to feed information back to the SASESVA committee on some of the trends both positive and negative that are apparent around the state. I would like to share this information with you so as we can all continue to move the service forward. The obvious main concerns have been around PPE and training. The PPE Specification has now been signed off and the next stage is to order the first run of overalls etc and work out the process to maintain and update the database.

Training requirements are still an ongoing issue around the state with Training Officers being worked hard to assist Units in maintaining and gaining competence. The ongoing feed back from Units is that they see value in gaining qualifications and safe work practices but it needs to be done in a timely and less intrusive way. Many members are spending more weekends than not attending courses and exercises so as they can continue to assist their community. They are saying that this is still affecting their home lives and their careers.

The SASESVA will continue to bring these issues to the fore and do our best to ensure that time requirements for training and support are kept realistic so as we can continue to get time off from our jobs and families to respond to the many emergencies that arise.

The summer season is upon us. I wish all of our members and their families the best for the 2006. To the country Units specialising in RCR, I hope it stays quiet and you can enjoy some time with family and friends. To the metro Units, enjoy the family time and let's hope that the silly season revellers don't continue to use other people's houses as brakes for their cars.

Thank you for your support again this year and as always, feel free to call with anything that you want to discuss (about SES).

Regards

Derren Halleday
Executive Officer
SASESVA

Peter Nygaard



As promised in the last edition of Frontline, Fatigue Management, Safe Driving and Disease Control have been placed high on the SASES OHSW priority list. Here is a quick insight into these issues, with more formal documentation to follow after consultation with staff and volunteers in the near future.

Fatigue Management

Fatigue is the state of feeling tired, weary or sleepy that results from prolonged periods awake, loss of normal sleep, prolonged mental or physical work, extended periods of anxiety and exposure to harsh environments.

There have been various studies on fatigue and some of the results are alarming. In recent years the performance effects of fatigue and alcohol have often been compared. If a person wakes at 0700 and then stays awake for 17 hours, their performance will be impaired as if they had a Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of 0.05%, the legal driving limit in Australia. If a person wakes at 0700 and stays awake for 23 hours, impairment has been rated at 0.10% BAC, double the legal driving limit in Australia.

Most volunteers and staff are aware of the types of tasks we attend. At many of these incidents, if it develops into a protracted event, we do not always have a "second shift" ready to come on and provide relief. It is not as simple as packing up the bongos when the clock strikes knock off time. We also need to pay more heed to the time our volunteers have spent on other activities PRIOR to being called out.

Until this is addressed fully and we can solve these issues, I ask all members to continue working together to support and assist those around them. Commanders and Team Leaders will continue to monitor and act where necessary.

Safe Driving

Just to reiterate the importance of safe driving. In the heat of the moment, adrenaline pumping and minds on the task ahead, do not forget the basic safe practises whilst driving.

Seatbelts are often forgotten. Responding priority 1 to a task also increases the risk for you, your team and the other road users around you. Better to drop the speed, drive to the conditions and arrive than push too hard and be on the next pager message.

Tying in with fatigue management, it is often after a task has been completed and everyone is "on the way down" that fatigue will set in on the drive back to your unit. There is no shame in declaring you are unable to drive due to fatigue. It is actually taking responsibility for your safety and the safety of those around you.

Disease Control

Recently, the flooding at Virginia prompted some members to enquire about Hepatitis A vaccinations. All our members have the opportunity to be vaccinated if their response areas present a hazard. Hepatitis (A+B), Tetanus etc may be present and as part of SASES's Duty of Care to our members, we offer this service through the SAFECOM OHSW Branch. Contact me for more details (before getting the vaccinations).

These are just three issues that affect our members. I am working on these and many others and will inform the regions and units as information comes to light. I am starting to receive more nominations for OHS Liaisons and Regional OHS Representatives and ask all the units who have not addressed this matter to do so ASAP. With an OHS network up and running, the above issues and others can be dealt with in a more timely fashion and with more direct input from our volunteers. Those that have nominated, thank you, and as soon as I have an appropriate number, we can initiate the new OHSW Committee system.

Stay Safe

Peter Nygaard

OHSW Officer
State Emergency Service
South Australia

“Better to drop the speed, drive to the conditions and arrive than push too hard and be on the next pager message.”

SES SHARE SKILLS

One of the best examples of how police and other paid emergency services rely on the professionalism of SES volunteers can be found in the Southeast of South Australia.

They have keen amateur radio enthusiasts who have a unique talent to offer as well as other specialities. South East Regional Headquarters SES Unit Manager Mr Wayne Kilpatrick has been touring throughout the region recently, conducting basic Global Positioning System (GPS) training to Local SES Units as well as SAPOL groups.

The basic GPS training was devised and administered by Mr Kilpatrick to SAPOL. He taught officers to understand a GPS Unit.

As part of the entertaining training, police had to navigate the Mount Gambier Police Station carpark, with GPS in hand.

Nobody was injured or lost.

The brief training allowed attendees to gain a greater understanding of the full features of the often overlooked device.

Judging by the smiles of the faces of participants, the training proved to be informative and enjoyable.

The South East Headquarters SES Unit was established to assist with the operation of the South East SES Regional Headquarters and the South East Regional Emergency Operations Centre in the lead up to, during and after Major Emergency Incidents.

The South East Regional Headquarters Unit has another specialty. It includes a group of amateur radio enthusiasts who specialise in Information Technology, many forms of computerised mapping, along with the tracking of radio signals from vehicles or personnel on foot and having their location automatically appearing on the computerised maps.

The Unit now has at its disposal 2 large model helicopters, one of which has a digital camera mounted below it.



Officers learn the best use of a GPS Unit and that it can't be used to order Pizza or vote for their Australian Idol

This camera can transmit live images down to personnel on the "ground." Some of the Unit's members are specialists in Emergency Position Radio Indicating Beacon (EPRIB) location on behalf of AusSAR (Australian Search & Rescue) and Police both in South Australia and Victoria.

Unit members also have the ability to send digital images to predetermined locations via amateur Radio Communications and have established computer-controlled local and remote "live" weather monitoring stations with their data being transmitted back to a central location.

Ramona Stollery

Administration Officer
South East Regional Headquarters Unit



“The Unit now has at its disposal 2 large model helicopters, one of which has a digital camera and can transmit live images.”



WORKING IN HARMONY

Workplace Dignity and Harassment: Case Study

Sophie is a new member of the unit. She joined about 2 months ago and is part way through her Basic Rescue. Sophie has approached you as a fellow team mate with concerns about the behaviour of some members in the unit.

Sometimes after training, most members of the unit go to the local pub for a drink. Sophie had gone along also on a few occasions, not wanting to be left out and to be part of the team. On a couple of occasions whilst at the pub, one of the male members had approached Sophie and put his arms around her then pinched her on the behind. She told you she had noticed this type of behaviour from several of the male members of the unit towards other females and sometimes from females towards males.

She also told you that she didn't do or say anything at the time as she wanted to be part of the team, but it did make her feel uncomfortable and uneasy. Sophie mentioned also that there seemed to be a lot of smutty and degrading jokes about women and men circulating among the members, most of them written and printed from email sources. Again, she had pretended not to be offended when someone handed her a few of the written jokes, but found it difficult to find the humour in the jokes as they were so distasteful. Sophie did not want to come across like a prude or go against the existing values, attitudes and team culture.

Sophie said she was considering joining a neighbouring unit or another volunteer organisation as she felt that, although everyone was very friendly here, she was not getting the professional respect that she expected and wanted as a volunteer.

“Sophie did not want to come across like a prude or go against the existing values, attitudes and team culture.”

What do YOU do?

Prevention of workplace harassment and bullying is a responsibility of EVERY member of the State Emergency Service. If the case study sounds familiar, or you have seen or experienced harassment, sexual harassment or bullying in your unit, there IS something you can do about it. The SES have policies and procedures on how to deal with harassment issues as well as trained Volunteer Harassment Contact Officers and Workplace Dignity Training which can be delivered at your unit on a unit training night. For more information, contact your Volunteer Support Officer. For a confidential referral to a trained Harassment Contact Officer, phone 1300 364 587.

PROSPECT UNIT CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

Prospect SES recently celebrated its milestone 40th anniversary while long serving member Peter Mundy received his certificate of service. He joined the SES in 1974.

The Prospect SES started out, as did most older established Units, as the Prospect Civil Defence in 1965. In 1971, the Unit received its first vehicle. This was a result of some members talking to a local car yard owner who donated a 1957 Mainline Ute for Unit use. This vehicle, while old, towed the trailer on many taskings from 1971 until mid 1981.

In 1981, the Prospect Council bought a Bedford dual-wheel van to replace the ute. Unit members modified it to suit SES operations. Also in 1981, the garages were removed to make way for building extensions and the Prospect Guide Hall was converted to garages for their vehicle, trailers and equipment.

In 1988, the Unit shifted to "new" premises at the Prospect Council's Work Depot. The Unit had the eastern half of the "car barn" as headquarters with a three-door garage on the northern side of the building. Also Don Rose became Unit Controller in July 1988, a position he still holds today.

In February 2002, the Unit moved to its present location which is shared with State Stores.

"In 1988...the Unit had the eastern half of the "car barn" as headquarters"

In 2004, the areas of responsibility of each metropolitan Unit was changed away from "Council boundaries", which meant that the Unit's area increased dramatically. At this stage, the Unit is the primary response for a considerable area of inner north-western Adelaide. The boundaries stretch from North Terrace; northern side of Port Rd; Churchill Rd and Regency Rd, Dry Creek. These include the suburbs or part of the suburbs of Woodville, Prospect, North Adelaide, Walkerville, Kilburn, Regency Park, Grange, Osborne, North Haven, Blair Athol, Renown Park, Brompton to name a few.

Previously, Prospect SES has been involved in many large events, such as registering evacuees from Darwin's Cyclone Tracy in 1974, assisting during Ash Wednesday bushfires in the 80s, flood and pump operations during Two Wells 1992 and Glenelg 2003 flooding events and also some members were sent to NSW to assist with storm damage clean-up in 1999.

The Unit continues to flourish and at present there are 32 active members aged between 17-59 and many having over 10 years experience with the Unit and at least 5 having earned the National Medals (15 years service). This blend ensures continued growth and development of the Unit as the requirements and training adapts to the increasing diverse challenges of taskings being undertaken by Unit members.

Training is held Monday evenings with training in Basic Rescue, Advanced Rescue, Storm Salvage Operations, Map Reading & Navigation, Land Search Operations, Chain Saw Operations and Vertical Rescue.



Minister for Emergency Services, Carmel Zollo, SES CEO David Place and Prospect Mayor Kristina Barnett cutting the cake.



Peter Mundy with Carmel Zollo and David Place

2005 Review







