



The Country Fire Service Volunteers Association

"Representing the interests of CFS Members"

Annual General Meeting

EXECUTIVE REPORT

October 2016

I am pleased to report that the last 12 months has provided the CFSVA with a welcome opportunity to refocus and work on several CFSVA projects and directions that we were forced to set aside during sector reform.

This year, the pressure from the political arena has reduced, however this is still no room for complacency. A balanced approach is vital as the CFSVA gains strength from the past and looks to the future; with every experience used to pave the way towards a strong and safe future for our members. It is the CFSVA's ambition to achieve the best outcome for our volunteers; as we know that good outcomes for our volunteers result in South Australian communities being well supported in emergency events.

The CFSVA budget has remained unchanged for the last 4 years, as has the sector budget; forcing all emergency services to do more with less; which is no easy task, - and as the public's expectations of emergency services increase, so does the pressures on our volunteers.

Once again through all emergency events this year our CFS volunteers have shown themselves to be professional, competent and versatile in responding to community needs. As an association we are proud of our members and the diversity they show in responding to all incidents; whether it be fighting fires, responding to road crash rescue or as has recently been the case storms and floods. The pressure placed on our volunteers is ever increasing, with the CFS brand being well recognised and amongst the most trusted.

Every news bulletin covering a South Australian emergency shows footage of our volunteers as responders - regardless of whether it is 2 o'clock in the morning or 5 o'clock at night – our members are there! We have indeed set ourselves a high bar!

The CFSVA's successes achieved for our volunteers include gaining presumptive legislation on a par with the paid services; introducing a 25kms speed limit past emergencies; and stopping sector reform; with negotiations in relation to changes to the Return to Work legislation and the CFS Volunteer Charter going into legislation currently in discussion with the Minister.

All of these are great achievements and whilst we hope to not see many claims under WorkCover, these are essential building blocks and are clear recognition that our 14,000 CFS volunteers are professional fire and rescue personnel.

The CFSVA's achievements are also well recognised nationally; as too is CFS as an emergency service agency. In this regard we are the envy of several other states – a fact that all CFS volunteers should be proud of, as it is our volunteers, their diversity and culture that make CFS.

The CFSVA currently has a professional working relationship with Minister Malinauskas and CFS Chief Officer Greg Nettleton, which is a vast improvement from working under the previous Minister, whose clear direction was divide, conquer and dismantle the emergency services. Unity and collaboration are vital to secure the future of CFS, with the CFSVA Management Committee adamant that they will not tolerate CFS being placed under the threats as those of the last few years.

The CFSVA is also currently working on a future direction plan for the next 5-10 years which promises to be an exciting new chapter for the CFSVA, and will see the association embarking on several new projects. These projects will provide value added benefits to our volunteers as well as enabling the CFSVA to provide additional support to volunteers. Our budget may be tight, but that does not stop the association from seeking out new opportunities.

At this point I would like to acknowledge Andy Wood who has been the CFSVA President for the last 12 months; Roger Flavell who is the CFSVA Vice President, CFSVA nominee to the SAFECOM Board and Chair of CAVFA; David Lindner who is the CFSVA Deputy Vice President, as well as the members of both the Executive Committee and Management Committee; your elected representatives and respected members of the CFSVA team and have represented you well.

I would also like to thank Kirsti Oliver for her great effort and flexibility in providing me and the Management Committee with much needed back up support.

Thank you also to all the CFS members who have represented the CFSVA on numerous committees throughout the year, and who have given their time to ensure that the CFSVA continues to have strong representation at all levels.

To our CFS volunteers, you are truly fortunate to have such a dedicated team carrying forward matters on your behalf, and I encourage you all to support your elected representatives to ensure that your thoughts and opinions are truly represented at all levels.

In closing I would also like to acknowledge all our CFS volunteers and their families without whose dedication, passion and generosity a strong emergency service response across South Australia would not exist.

Sonia St Alban
Executive Director
Country Fire Service Volunteers Association
soniastalban@cfsva.org.au
Mobile: 0408 133 349