

CFS Promotions Unit Report 2017

The CFS Promotions Unit continues into its 23rd year of operation, and continues with its original charter of:

- Promote the volunteer nature, role and size of the CFS
- Support the members of the CFS
- Educate the public on
 - The operational activities of CFS members (Road Crash Rescue / Rural Fires / Structure Fires / Hazardous Materials Spills/ Natural Disasters)
 - The support roles of CFS HQ and volunteers (eg: Bushfire Prevention & Public Safety Education)
- Encourage new recruits to join the service
- Demonstrate the commitment of CFS volunteers to serving their community
- Gain public support for the CFS volunteers and organisation

Website

The CFS Promotions Unit website, as in previous years, has continued to grow. The site is as large as the space we have available (around 1000 Meg), and we do have to juggle what we have on the site, to make way for new photos & information.

The site continues to hold the most up to date information about CFS appliances and brigades around the state, with continued feedback received from staff and volunteers, that the site is used as a reference point for information about appliances, stations, brigade contacts and details.

While the information is relatively up to date, we are always seeking input from brigades and groups to ensure it is correct as it can be. Thanks goes to those brigades and individuals who have provided photos and updates – no matter how small that update might be. It all goes towards keeping the site current.

As in previous years, several CFS, MFS and SES staff have been very helpful in providing photos and information to update the site - thanks to all those who have assisted.

Due to time constraints, we have been limited in the number of incident and activities we have been able to get to ourselves to take photos, but our collection continues to grow – we estimate that the collection is somewhere in the vicinity of 690,000 images – and growing! The previous fire season was very quiet (in terms of fires!) and the number of incidents, other than tree down call outs was very low, and the volume of images taken lower than previous years.

The number of Facebook page followers has remained steady, with around 10,000 followers. The number of Twitter followers has remained steady since last year, with around 125.

Our aim of making the website more mobile phone friendly wasn't achieved during the last 12 months. We are still looking at alternate ways of achieving that. We must also look at re-programming our site – the original code used for the site is 20 or so years old, and will eventually stop working. We are investigating and trialling new coding, to enable the coding of the site to be upgraded – this is not an urgent task, but it is a large task, and must be done at some stage in the future.

We have been able to undertake a few long trips around the state to update our images – a trip to the South East area in March & again in April meant we updated the bulk of our station photos in Region 5 & large parts of Region 3. Another trip to the Eyre Peninsula in September enabled us to update almost all of the fire station photos across the Eyre Peninsula - we managed to photograph 44 of them, with stations in the West Coast, and Western side of the Eyre Peninsula to be done at another time.

Promotions Unit vehicle

CFS HQ continues to support the unit through the Promotions Car 1 – a 1995 Toyota 80 series Landcruiser, which was formerly a Group vehicle. CFS HQ has allocated this vehicle for the use of the Promotions Unit, and covers the maintenance costs of the vehicle, while the Promotions Unit budget pays for the fuel.

With the changeover to digital VHF across the state, we requested a replacement for our existing CFS supplied VHF radios. Unfortunately, this has not happened, on the basis that CFS HQ “re-assess how the vehicle is used.” We are still working on trying to organise a meeting with HQ to resolve this.

History Project

We continue to work on our appliance history, and adding information and photos on appliances, as we gain the information, and have the time to upload it! We are still on the first phase of this project, which aims to record every vehicle (including trailers) that CFS & EFS has ever had. The information we are endeavouring to show includes make of vehicle, chassis year, builder, pump / pump motor, registration number(s), date when it arrived, and left a brigade, and where it went from the brigade. We are trying to include one photograph of each vehicle. We have over 6130 CFS / EFS entries so far, (140 entries added in the last 12 months) and are still working through our photographic collection, and various data sources we currently hold. We are also seeking information and photographs from CFS members (past & present) as well as members of the public, who may be able to assist.

We have also been working on collating information on brigade & Group histories – including when they were formed / closed, members of the brigade, stations the brigade has had / utilised, and activities of the brigade. A small amount of this information is on the web, while we continue to collate this data.

Graeme & Lorraine McVitty have continued to research the history of several brigades. Graeme's research has shown us how frustrating history research can be – with different people giving differing versions of the same event, and how errors in regard to historical events can be perpetuated! Thanks Graeme & Lorraine!

We created a Promotions Unit History Facebook Page in October 2013, which has around 1330 likes on the page now (an increase of around 130 in the last 12 months). The History page, as the name suggests posts photos and information that is not current CFS activities / stations / appliances, which is opposite to our other Facebook page, which deals with the current. There has been good interaction on this page.

We welcome information and images from CFS members, and members of the public to assist with this project.

Budget

The Promotions Unit continues to receive a budget from CFS, through the CFSVA. While this budget has not increased for some time, the budget does adequately cover all of our expenses, and we are pleased that the funding has continued.

We expect our expenses over the coming year to include the following:

Recurrent expenditure:

- Internet access
- Fax line
- Website hosting
- Domain registration
- Fuel
- Insurance
- Travel Reimbursement (travel undertaken by others, on our behalf)
- Trailer Registration
- Stationery & consumables (eg camera memory cards, batteries, postage)
- Icloud storage (to create an additional storage location for our photographic collection, in case something happened to our current storage)

There may be additional, and unplanned costs, in relation to incidents and activities that we don't yet know about – that is travel to an incident (such as with a strike team somewhere in the state), and accommodation if required, or planned (but as yet unknown) events such as station openings, brigade or group activities, where overnight accommodation is required, due to the distance.

Conclusion

The website continues to be an ever growing, and ever changing beast. As in previous years, there is rarely a day that goes by without at least something being updated on the website – some days only small updates, other days significant or large scale changes.

Time to work on the site, attend incidents & activities to take photos, as well as our own paid work, looking after our two Junior members, and our own brigade responsibilities makes for a very busy time!. At times, it means that there is a delay in being able to sort, and upload photos we have taken, to the site, especially in a busy year, however, they eventually get there.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to the CFS Promotions Unit website – from those who regularly supply photos and information, to those who update their brigade information once a year, and to those who look at the site – without all of you, the site would not exist.

Pip McGowan & Ashley Hosking

Website Administrators CFS Promotions Unit