



The Country Fire Service Volunteers Association

"Representing the interests of CFS Members"

Presidents Report April 2018 General Meeting

Firstly I would like to thank Sonia, Kirsti and the Management committee for all their work, support and encouragement since our last meeting. The management of our association is and needs to be a team effort.

As everyone is aware, we have a brand new government in South Australia, and I know this is welcome result for many members. With any change there are opportunities and challenges. The opportunities from working with a Liberal government, who should have a good understanding of country South Australia should be obvious. A challenge might be that because the Libs have not been in government for 16 years, we know very little about them, so instead of hitting the ground running, it will take, I believe, considerable time to develop the necessary relationship with them. I suspect we will not be at the top of the government's priority list. Sonia, David and I will be meeting with our new minister after this meeting today to start the process.

Leading up to the election a lot of work was done on our positions document "Building a strong CFS 2018 and beyond". This document has been well received as evidenced by the responses we received from all political groups prior to the election. This is an example, in line with our strategic plan, of lifting our political profile. Some adjusting of our work plan, to line up with our new political circumstances is needed.

Looking back through previous reports the item that comes up every time is communication. This is still our biggest failing. We are not alone in this, every organization I talk to has a similar issue. Currently CFS is doing a lot of work on improving the information flow system and as an association we will be working closely with CFS with the view to benefit from their research. It will not surprise anyone the just forwarding on emails doesn't cut the mustard, we, I believe, need to get out and talk to people, evidenced by the road trip last year by Sonia and myself. If we are to truly represent our members, we need to connect with as diverse a group as possible. Branch meetings are important, but I think we need to go beyond the regular meeting structure, road trips, while being resource heavy, help fill in some of the gaps by visiting members on their turf. I believe it is wrong to always ask members to come to us. This year will see a trip on the eastern side of the state.

As some members would be aware, last year we created a separate body within the association with the ability to receive moneys from a range of sources, without having any impact on our grant moneys, for the purpose of providing benefits back to members. From time to time we get opportunities to generate additional funds or benefits for our members but because of the structure of the association have not been able to take advantage of these opportunities. "The Axillary" will enable us, in time, to further support our members and to some extent future proof us.

Early this week Sonia and I attended the Council of Volunteer Fire Associations" CAVFA" meeting in Melbourne, of which we are members. CAVFA works in a collaborative manner to pursue volunteer interests on a national level. It is interesting that most associations have similar issues. It is sometimes difficult to quantify the achievements of CAVFA but there is certainly benefit in being able to say that we are part of a national body that represent 253,000 volunteer firefighters around the country.

Please feel free to contact me with questions, concerns or ideas regarding your association.

Andy Wood

Country Fire Service Volunteers Association President

po box 466 Kingscote SA, 5223

mob 0418835009 | **Email** Andy.Wood@sacsvolunteer.org.au