



**The Country Fire Service
Volunteers Association**
"Representing the interests of CFS Members"

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT October 2021

The events of the past year have undoubtedly impacted us all, and each year at this time we reflect on the year just gone, however as I don't believe that we need further reminding of events which have defined the past year, so will focus on the opportunities it presents.

Undoubtedly our world has changed, whether in our personal lives, the way we do business or the way we respond as CFS volunteers, and it is up to us all to make the most of it and seek and create opportunities as we move forward.

It goes without saying that flexibility and adaptability has always been a strength of CFS, so the question is where to from here?

Over the past 10 years CFS and the CFSVA has been subject to no less than 14 reviews driven by various government agendas with the anticipation of pre-determined outcomes, which have been both distracting and unsettling. Aside from the distractions, these reviews also rob CFS of precious sector funds which are in critically short supply and would have better directed towards supporting emergency responses.

The time has come for CFS and the CFSVA to be the drivers of CFS' future and for volunteers to be proactively involved in determining how CFS will be defined as we move forward.

In the lead up to the 2022 South Australian state election the CFSVA is clearly focussed on its expectations from any future government, in that we are seeking commitment from Government that will allow CFS and the CFSVA in partnership to lead, define, and direct the future of CFS.

If there's one lesson, we've learnt over the past 10 years is that the only constant which has remained through some turbulent times is the goodwill and commitment of CFS volunteers, so who better to drive CFS into the future.

There are opportunities and challenges ahead for CFS so now is the time to establish a 5, 10 and indeed 20-year plan which, in line with the recently released CFS Strategic Plan will makes us the masters of this plan. This may create challenges at time, but CFS has on many occasions demonstrated its strength and tenacity which is what makes CFS a highly respected South Australian icon.

We must also realise that at times changes may be necessary, this may be uncomfortable for some, but we must remain openminded and receptive to change; not change for the sake of change but change for the better. With every door that closes others open, and we must grasp these opportunities with both hands. The CFSVA looks forward to being part of this journey and pro-actively representing volunteers with diligence, pride, and consideration.

Over time, the CFSVA also been reviewing its own structure through a working group which has carefully considered the association's future and its sustainability. Shortly, proposed changes to the CFSVA Constitution will be presented to members for consultation and comment. We commend the proposal and ask that it be carefully considered as the association continues to work to tight budget and every increasing workload. The reliance on the goodwill of the Executive Team is becoming an increasing impost and is not sustainable in the long term.

Sadly, this year Andy Wood, the CFSVA State President will be stepping down from this role. We would like to acknowledge and commend Andy for his work on behalf of the Association both at state level and as the National President of CAVFA. The significance of the association's work is often understated, and only when you take on an executive role do you truly understand the level of commitment necessary to do the job well. Andy has been an exemplary leader and his dedication and commitment to the association has been outstanding. Andy will be missed, although I'm sure he won't miss my early morning phone calls. We wish Andy all the best and sincerely thank him for all he's work.

Earlier this year Jeff Clark, resigned as CFSVA Deputy Vice President to accept a CFS staff position. Jeff passion, dedication, and drive on behalf of volunteers has always been exceptional and his move to CFS although a loss to the association, is a gain by CFS, and it is reassuring to know that Jeff has not moved far and that his representation and support of volunteers will continue through his work with CFS. We wish you all the best Jeff and know that our connection will continue as we all strive to achieve the best outcomes for CFS volunteers.

I would also like to acknowledge David Lindner, and Kirsti Oliver who remain valuable members of the CFSVA Executive Team and for the support and back up they provide me; I further acknowledge members of the CFSVA Management Committee and all the numerous CFS volunteers who I've tapped on the shoulder and asked to support the association through representation on various working groups and committees. We are indeed fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated team of volunteers who generously give their time to support the CFSVA.

Lastly, and by no means least thank you to all CFS volunteers and their families for their continued support; your dedication and commitment has no equal.

I commend this report to everyone here today.

Sonia St Alban
Executive Director

