

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

CFSVA AGM

11TH October 2022

It is hard to believe that 12 months has passed since I was elected in this position, where did that time go? It is also hard to believe the time Sonia and Kirsti have been part of this organisation, where did that time go? As President I get to see in more detail what our staff does for the volunteers and the association. This has a wide range of activities from personal interaction with individual volunteer issues such as disciplinary actions, discussing the impacts CFS actions and policies has on volunteers right through to representation of volunteer views at SAFECOM Board and National AFAC volunteer committee and discussing matters with the Minister.

This will be the first event which is using the rules of the new constitution but there are also some transitional aspects happening this year. This will improve our governance as the rules are now clear not made up as we go. I am also happy how we are slowly improving the business of the Association to make it sound and strong. We have in recent years put money from each budget allocation into a separate account the value of long service and holiday payments so that we do not have a big black hole sometime into the future when that leave is taken. As mentioned before, the hours put in by our staff is high and in the longer term not sustainable. A task of the new Board in the first 6 months is to look at the financial side of the Association to look at what services we think should be provided into the future and also look at what are our options of funding and attracting more staff. We must also plan for the time when especially Sonia does take long service leave that we have someone to fill the position as we can't go for 3 or more months without an Executive Officer.

CFS to its credit is wanting volunteers to be involved in the planning process of various aspects mainly through the volunteer committees. The VA has been asked to have a representative on each committee. We have also been asked at often fairly short notice if we could provide a volunteer to be involved in a specific aspect. All of this requires Sonia to find the right person quickly, sometimes a hard task, but usually we fill the position. Often CFS has been very happy that we could find a person with specific skills which they don't have within staff to suit the task.

Many hours have been spent replying to draft documents in CFS and within SAFECOM. It is often frustrating that we get few responses back from our Branches so we then have to use the limited comments we have and then use our knowledge of what the general thoughts are. Something that is not understood by our volunteers is how CFS is engrained into Government policies. SAFECOM often has an overarching policy such as Bullying and Harassment or Working with Children and then CFS has to create their policy on how they will implement it. That is why sometimes it is hard to change some aspects of what CFS is putting out for comment and why the VA will use different avenues to drive change, with CFS staff, through SAFECOM Sector Advisory Committee, SAFECOM Board or directly with the Minister.

The VA has a new structure and several new faces. I welcome you all to be part of the other aspect of CFS which is focussed on the people not just operational. I also welcome Brett Laughlin as the new Chief Officer and look forward to working with him to achieve greater things for the volunteers and their communities. So, I would like you all to join myself and the Executive team to be part this journey.

David Lindner