
CFS Promotions Unit

A Volunteer organisation of the South Australian Country Fire Service and the South Australian Country Fire Service Volunteers Association

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CFS Promotions Unit Report 2023

The CFS Promotions Unit continues into its 29th 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 and Social Media

The Promotions Unit website 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 not just as a reference point for information about appliances, stations, brigade contacts and details, but often the place to get the most accurate information regarding appliances and stations!

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 and NPWSSA staff have been very helpful in providing photos and information to update the site - thanks to all those who have assisted.

The number of Facebook page followers continues to increase each year, with over 12,500 followers on our main page - around 500 more than this time last year. The number 'X' (formerly Twitter) followers has remained steady since last year, with around 126 followers. This number has remained around that level for several years.

Our Facebook posts have generally have a reasonable amount of engagement – however a post in September, about a training exercise involving a header went viral, and had a post reach of over 1 million!!!

Our Instagram page, launched around 12 months ago, has grown from 94 this time last year to 196 followers currently. We expect followers to slowly increase over time.

We continue to supply images that appear on our site (many taken by us, some taken by people who submit their image to us) – to various organisations, including CFS HQ, newspapers, researchers / universities and more. We have a massive photo collection, with only a portion of it on display on the Promotions Unit Galleries - but still in the thousands. With the ease of access for members of the public / organisations to those photos leads to requests. Given we have a budget that covers our costs, images are supplied free of charge.

Promotions Unit vehicle

Our Promotions Car 1 – a Pajero, delivered to us in February 2020 is working well for us. It provides us the ability to get out & about to a range of activities. Being marked up, it also allows us (appropriate) access through road blocks etc.

The running costs / fuel / service / tyres for this vehicle are funded from the Promotions Unit budget – and so far has proven not to be beyond our budget.

The vehicle has been fitted with an AVL tablet, however we are still waiting for our GRN radio to be replaced (as part of the GRN radio upgrade). We did not receive a replacement VHF portable radio when the rest of the State was changed over, nor do we have VHF car set. We are keen to engage with CFS HQ to be able to obtain VHF radios for the Promotions Car – given we do respond to rural incidents, and spend time on firegrounds (including large fires, such as the Cherry Gardens fire), and having a VHF will increase our safety.

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 have also been collating information on fire stations – in particular volunteer fire brigade that existed from the 1870's onwards. This is an ongoing project.

We have completed uploading appliance images from the Betteridge / Jarman & Michael Edwards Collections to our Appliance History pages – we now have entries for 7989 appliances – around 500 more than the same time last year. The data captures each appliance call sign and each appliance registration in each brigade – so one appliance may appear multiple times in the data in a different brigade, or with a different callsign / registration in the same brigade over the lifetime of an appliance. We do know that we are yet to capture details on many appliances used in the service of the CFS/ EFS. Note, that because of the way our website is programmed, the number is generated when an appliance is created on our database – so it will include MFS, CFS, SES Forestry and National Parks appliances.

We continue to seek information and photographs from CFS members (past & present) as well as members of the public, who may be able to assist in adding to our collections.

Our Promotions Unit History Facebook Page now has around 2750 followers on the page (an increase of around 350 over last year). 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.

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
- Website hosting
- Domain registration
- Fuel
- Insurance
- Vehicle service repairs / tyres
- Trailer Registration
- Stationery & consumables (eg camera memory cards, USB sticks, batteries, postage, bulk digital storage)
- Accommodation (when travelling for events)

We will be purchasing new cameras and lenses this year. Our two main cameras and lenses are no longer performing to the level we expect and will be replaced over the next 12 months.

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, and 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.

A special thanks to Braeden Gatt (from SA Emergency Services Photography) and Steve Schueler for the many photos supplied to us.

Special thanks to the staff from Infrastructure & Logistics - Jason Kleemann, Andrew Hogg, Dean Norman and Andrew Horwood, and Regional Staff – Emily Mace, Josh Jeffree, Amy Cullen, Brendan Piller, Damien Van der Velde and Ben Pettman for appliance information and photographs.

Thank you to the CFS VA for your ongoing support. For the Promotions Unit to still exist after 29 years, to continue to evolve and succeed is a testament to the support we receive.

Thank you.

Pip McGowan & Ashley Hosking
Website Administrators
CFS Promotions Unit
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