



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

CFSVA Executive Director's Report

October 2026

The role of the CFSVA has evolved over time, as the associations has become more than just advocates for CFS volunteers, but the intermediaries between CFS, SAFECOM and Government. This ensures that the volunteer voice is heard at the highest level and that volunteers are respected and appreciated for their tremendous contribution to South Australian communities: a fact that should never be underestimated nor taken for granted.

The CFSVA continues to look inwards at itself to improve the ways we can best support you, our members and meet your expectations, and it is pleasing to note that an independent review of the association highlighted the excellent work of the CFSVA team and the many benefits the association has achieved for our volunteers.

As we continue to review the CFSVA's future strategy and direction, your input and guidance will be important, as we endeavor to expand volunteer involvement and encourage more volunteer participation whether through state, branches, committees or working groups. Your input and support will help guide the association's future.

The CFSVA continues to monitor the CFS structure ensuring its focus remains on supporting CFS volunteers from the ground level up, with emphasis on appropriate training and resourcing of volunteers and supported by operationally qualified staff.

The CFS led by Chief Officer Brett Loughlin, Deputy Chief Officer Paul Seager, Executive Director Statewide Operations Brenton Hastie, Executive Director Frontline Operations Chris Howie, brings extensive knowledge, experience, and a strong commitment to CFS and our volunteers, and the CFSVA is very proud to stand alongside them.

The CFSVA continues to sit on CFS selection panels for executive positions, and appreciates the opportunity, as this ensures that the volunteer perspective is represented and considered when new appointments are made.

This year, there has been one change of Minister, with Minister Rhiannon Pearce retaining the portfolio after the South Australian state election. This provides a welcome level of stability to the relationship built with the Minister and her staff and allows long standing CFSVA matters to be progressed.

The CFSVA's honest and open approach to all sector partners ensures the association is highly regarded and well respected when your matters are raised through numerous committees, forums and with Ministers and Government both at a state and federal level.

The CFS Facility audit, a project for which the association successfully lobbied for funding, was completed earlier this year, and whilst the association is satisfied that priority building issues were

immediately addressed, it is disappointing that over six months later, we are yet to see the completed report, as it was a commitment from a previous Minister that the report would be available as the audits progressed. The outcome of the audit is essential for the CFSVA to identify and build its case for significant Government investment into CFS stations and facilities and will provide the evidence necessary to seek this long overdue funding.

This CFS / CFSVA liaison officer, Jeff Clark has this year been reviewing the PPC Laundering contract. As the conduit between volunteers, CFS, SAFECOM and the supplier. Jeff has absorbed much of the volunteer frustration with the current process and has maintained a sustained efforts to address issues and improve the volunteer experience. There is still a way to go before with the current arrangements, however we note several improvements and urge volunteers to continue to support PPC decontamination and reports issues as they arise.

Within these past 12 months, the Presumptive Cancer legislation has been expanded with 7 additional cancers included in 2025 and 4 more cancers included under legalisation in 2026. This is a great outcome, and again provides CFS volunteers with the highest level of coverage Australia wide. The CFSVA set the trend in 2013 when our volunteers were the first to receive presumptive cancer compensation, with CFS volunteers continuing to be the leaders in this space.

The CFSVA continues to support volunteers who find themselves in a vulnerable position, which provides welcome relief and support for them and their families at these most difficult time.

The CFS funding model based on the Emergency Service Levy continues to be inadequate, and whilst the levy increases annual in modest increments, the cost of sustaining a 24/7 fire and service continues to increase exponentially. This impacts our volunteers who are continually asked to do more with less. The CFSVA continues to raise its concerns with the Minister and Government.

Your adaptability and flexibility as CFS volunteers continue to be the strength of CFS and the CFSVA and embodies the generosity of spirit that is shown repeatedly as demand for your services increases and our resources stretched.

The CFSVA Executive Director and State President also continue to raise matters impacting CFS volunteers through Parliament and have continued this conversation on a regular basis.

The CFSVA meets monthly with Chief Officer Brett Loughlin and the CFS Executive team and has representation on all relevant CFS committee or working group which ensures your voice, as a CFS volunteer is heard. The CFSVA's extensive network, with only a small team, creates a burden for the association, however the passion and commitment of this team cannot be underestimated, nor their tenacity challenged. The association's work ensures that all matters that may impact you as a CFS volunteer, includes early volunteer consultation and results in good outcomes.

The CFSVA meets monthly with the Minister for Emergency services and their advisors and has an open door policy, with the Minister should an urgent may arise. This relationship is built on mutual respect and is another part of the work the CFSVA undertakes on your behalf, and whilst the wheels sometimes turn slowly, be assured that your CFSVA representatives remains resolute and enthusiastic and are constantly working to achieve outcomes for you and on your behalf.

In closing I would like to thank the CFSVA Executive team, Jeff Clark, David Lindner, Frank Regan and Kirsti Oliver, and to our branch representatives who as the direct contacts to our membership and play an important role in the CFSVA's work.

I also farewell David Linder who has served at the CFSVA State President and more recent State Vice President and thank him for his contribution over the years, and welcome Greg Stone as the CFSVA incoming State Vice President, and I look forward to welcoming and working you.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to those have worked closely with me with passion and determination to achieve great outcomes for our volunteers and am most grateful to the members who have been tapped on the shoulder by the association and have committed their time and expertise to represent the CFSVA and further its work.

Having recently attended several Awards presentations, it never ceases to amaze me the wealth of knowledge, experience, and operational capability amongst our 13,000 CFS volunteers. A special thank you to you all, and your families for your continued support.

It is your dedication, commitment and goodwill that makes CFS the professional, respected, and resilient emergency service that it is.

Sonia St Alban
Executive Director
Country Fire Service Volunteers Association
sonia.stalban@cfsva.org.au
Mobile: 0408 133 349