

THE VOLUNTEER

YEARBOOK

2020





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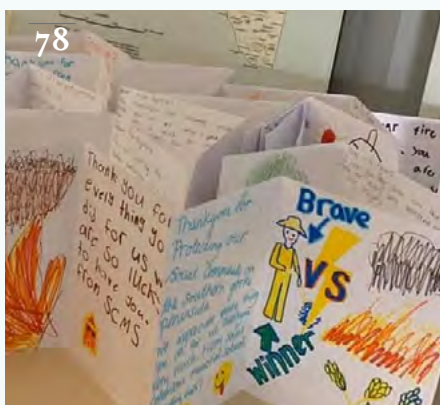


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Volunteer Yearbook is an annual publication which captures significant CFS activities and incidents from the past 12 months.

The views and opinions expressed through the contributions in this publication are not necessarily those of the SA Country Fire Service or the Government of South Australia.

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If you have any feedback about the CFS Volunteer Yearbook or any of our communications, or would like us to cover a story you think should be included, please email CFS.CorporateCommunications@sa.gov.au

CFS Chief Officer, Mark Jones



I would like to start by thanking everyone for the warmth of welcome received in the early stages of my leadership. The season well and truly started as soon as I got here and it was a great opportunity for a new Chief to observe the capabilities and capacities of the service.

When I arrived we were already committed to a significant deployment to Queensland and New South Wales and it amazed me that CFS managed to support the interstate support we gave until Christmas. In total, CFS dedicated more than 1,300 volunteer firefighter and incident management personnel to help the firefighters in other states.

This year's bushfires tested CFS volunteer capacities greatly, and I am amazed that you all gave up so much time to protect our state. The big fires which burned for weeks naturally attracted all of the attention but there were hundreds of others, all of which might have burned well out of control, if it hadn't been for your professionalism.

Put simply – many people are alive today because you made them safer, many businesses are intact because you protected them, and many homes are secure because you saved them.

South Australia has a reputation for close working between services and I also want to thank CFS staff and our supporting agencies: SA Metropolitan Fire Services, SA State Emergency Service, Department for Environment and Water, SA Police, SA Fire and Emergency Services Commission and all other organisations who contributed. One of the humbling outcomes is the number of messages of gratitude I have received from those affected by fires. Those messages are heartfelt and show the esteem in which our service is held.

I am proud to stand as your Chief and I am continually inspired by your service to the people of South Australia and by the way they reciprocate with their support and goodwill. We continue every day delivering the vital safety

services that we provide and your communities need you now just as much as when bushfires are burning – we are an all hazards agency.

We faced some big challenges in only my first few months but even on the toughest days, the good natured smiles and humor of the firefighters was evident and that is one of the hallmarks of great fire services. I look forward to the next year's challenges secure in the knowledge that I serve alongside nearly 14,000 fantastic volunteers and staff in an organisation that makes doing remarkably difficult things look simple.

Chief Officer

SA Country Fire Service

Emergency Services Minister, Corey Wingard

I can think of nothing more challenging for an individual, a family, community or a state than to have normal life replaced by the horror of a natural disaster.

The 2019/20 bushfire season and the first half of 2020 will go down in the year book as a period most will want to forget.

It's only June and South Australians have faced the toughest test life can throw at them. People have lost jobs, livelihoods, homes and loved ones.

But through this, each and every South Australian holds comfort in knowing that they can rely on our emergency services, and in particular the Country Fire Service (CFS), in times of need.

Everyone in the CFS, whether you are a volunteer or a staff member, gives our community the confidence to live without fear. The knowledge that, if the need arises, you are willing and able to help or support, no matter what the circumstances.

It is for this I offer my most heartfelt thank you.

I also want to extend my deepest gratitude to your families. Their role is truly the most self-sacrificing and one that often goes unrecognised. They support you through training, they are understanding of your commitment to the job and they live in fear wondering if you will come home.

Your families are a big part of the CFS family and they are always at the back of my mind when I am fighting for better resources for you.



That was why I was very pleased to receive news that insurance cover for volunteers has now been extended beyond the previous two-year cap. This means that volunteers who sustain injuries or illnesses in the course of their duties, are now covered for ongoing income and medical expenses.

The new Emergency Services State Control Centre is a step closer, with the building's design concept and floor plans now finalised. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the design phase of the HQ project progressed well, with majority of the design work to be completed soon.

Project Renew has delivered around 200 much needed projects to date from the additional \$5 million of State

Government funding provided to CFS volunteers over a two-year period to upgrade and maintain brigade stations/facilities. Examples of some of the upgrades undertaken are pictured below.

But don't worry - I know more needs to be done and I will ensure the CFS has the facilities it deserves.

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted significant aspects of our everyday lives. We are facing an unprecedented challenge and I would like to thank everyone who has supported our efforts to flatten the curve. I become immensely proud when hearing of the fantastic leadership the CFS has given to the establishment and running of the Health State Control Centre, the logistics support function and the all-important State Emergency Information Call Centre during these challenging times.

These efforts illustrate how you are all pulling together and typifies the spirit that runs through our emergency services. I would like to thank you for all the work you have put in so far and for all that is surely to come as we continue to navigate through the pandemic.

We are certainly in an extraordinary situation and I am extremely grateful for the huge amount of work being done across the sector to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on our emergency services sector staff, volunteers and the South Australian community.

I will end this message with something you have heard me say many times but in my opinion never enough.

Thank you.



Arno Bay



A new driveway for Blewitt Springs



Tea Tree Gully's new shed extension



The fenced tower at Echunga.



A toilet for Greenways station



Milang's station revamp.

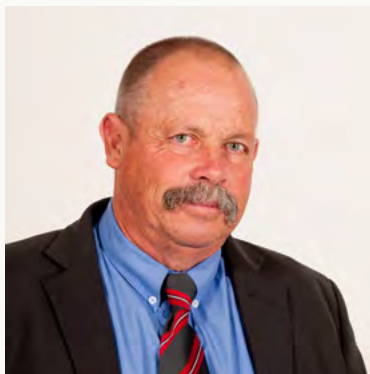


Mt Shank Brigade's new carpark



Murray Bridge Brigade's completed storage shed

Andy Wood, CFS Volunteers Association



For many years the CFSVA has had to deal with politically motivated and driven review after review with the fundamental outcome being that for CFS to provide the level of service that the people of SA expect, we are underfunded. These reviews, and in particular the unknown end state,

unsettles members, as does the current COVID-19 pandemic and the unknown outcomes.

Unsettling is also the "Analysis of the SA Fire and Emergency Services" which appears to be a self-interest driven document prepared by one person hell bent on world Domination, or at least sector Domination, which is currently being implemented without consultation, and with full support of the Minister's office. This is a risk for government.

CFS volunteers provide emergency responses to approximately 90 per cent of SA and generously provide their time and skills and it is so disappointing that we must fight for basic conditions such as parity with our paid colleagues like "return to work" benefits and our CFS Volunteer Charter. Government and Ministers would do well to respond with more than just rhetoric, because without the generosity of CFS volunteers and their families the government would only be left with a number of buildings, many of which are substandard, and a fleet of vehicles, many of which are below par.

To unsettle volunteers is a risk to government, and whilst the concept of farm fire units may sound appealing, they are not a replacement for CFS members on tankers and trucks as once the flames are gone they don't tend to stay around to attend to other incidents. Government must remember that CFS is more than a fire service.

It would be an understatement if I were to say, what a challenging fire season we just experienced; long term deployments interstate; a significant number of large fires around the state; and an especially nasty fire on KI. As a firefighter on KI all I would like to say, thank you.

Thank you to all the members who went on deployments; those who stayed back to look after their own patch; to their families who rarely are acknowledged for their sacrifice; to the farm fire units; and of course our colleagues from SES, MFS, SAAS and the ADF.

Andy Wood

CFSVA President

INJURY UPDATES

Plea to report injuries

By: Ali Martin

The SAFECOM Work Health and Safety (WHS) branch is asking volunteers to ensure they fill out injury, incident or hazard reports.

WHS Manager Louisa Bowes said safety was paramount and it was important that the CFS knew not only when members were injured but what hazards they were facing. That is the only way they can rectify the hazard or know if there are issues.

"In the 2019/20 bushfires we had in excess of 150 incident reports. We can learn and benefit from them to improve our workplace and our working conditions, as well as our firefighting apparel," Louisa said.

For example, in the past there were reports around P2 masks, therefore the team looked into it and working on that (with Operational Infrastructure and Logistics), to reach a solution.

"Although reports have been fewer in the past two years, there's a renewed push to find a better solution, so we're

working on that with Lee Watson's team," Louisa said.

Heat exhaustion reports were high this year, indicating volunteers do not have the right message around hydration. So WHS plans to promote this heavily before the next Fire Danger Season in the hope of seeing a reduction in these injuries.

However, one concerning factor that WHS Officer David Kemp is seeing is a lack of general situational awareness, leading to an increase in slips, trips and falls.

"These incidents need to be reported as it's necessary in the workers' compensation process. In some cases, a small trip has led to shoulder reconstructions," David said.

"We're looking at whether fatigue is a factor in this and how we can educate people in crew rostering and shift management, as well as watching heat stress that could cause people to be dizzy and fall over."

However, David said situational awareness was needed in all situations, and the enhancement of truck safety systems should not mean crews put themselves in dangerous

situations.

"We've seen a number of burnovers this year and, although it's pleasing to hear that Skills Maintenance Drills have worked and they did save lives this year, we need to get across to volunteers that these systems are a last line of defence."

WHS is also working towards a clean cab environment and for dirty PPC to not be worn around the station.

"It's a growing concern as we've found formaldehyde and high levels of carcinogens in dirty Personal Protective Clothing (PPC), so we encourage people to get it washed regularly at the station or have it sent away," David said.

"We want to get to the point where people aren't going to the mess or staging areas with their dirty turnout gear."

Work Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility – not just the Group Health Safety Representative's. If someone sees a hazard, they should say something so it can be fixed early.

Additional compensation for CFS, SES and VMR volunteers under an ex gratia payment process

Additional compensation for CFS, SES and VMR volunteers under an ex gratia payment process

The SAFECOM Board has approved an ex gratia payment process to support additional compensation to CFS, SES and Volunteer Marine Rescue Volunteers whose entitlements under Return to Work Act 2014 have ceased.

Upon cessation of entitlements under the Return to Work Act, additional compensation under this process is available for eligible, prescribed volunteers for eligible injuries.

To be an eligible injury the injury must have:

- resulted from conduct directed at the eligible volunteer that is or appears to be a criminal offence;

- occurred as a direct and immediate result of conduct that is or appears to be a criminal offence; or
- occurred in other circumstances where the eligible volunteer is placed in a dangerous situation, which can include training (however a psychiatric injury is only an eligible injury if caused as a consequence of a specific incident or incidents).

The process will cover payment of wages (income compensation) and reasonable medical/other associated expenses to support volunteers with their recovery and return to work.

Details of the eligibility criteria and process for applying are available on the Volunteer Portal.

Also available in this link is other supporting information including frequently asked questions (FAQs).

SAFECOM Injury Management (IM) will support volunteers through the transition period. IM will monitor treatment and recovery of volunteers that extend to within six months of the expiry of the Return to Work Act entitlements. Volunteers will be informed in advance of when their entitlements under the Act cease, and where applicable advised of the process to seek additional compensation and supported in the process.

For more information visit the Volunteer Portal.

Little brigade takes on big blaze

By: Laura Gemmell

Milang CFS Brigade Captain Alistair McInnes was among the hundreds of firefighters who attended the Cudlee Creek fire when it broke out on December 20.

Along with fellow crew members Katherine Stanley-Murray, Douglas McInnes, Tod Saltmarsh and Kerri Woodgate, Alistair was aboard Milang 34 as part of the strike team on that catastrophic day.

An active brigade member for more than half his life, Alistair has almost 20 years of fireground experience and has seen the likes of the Mount Bold and Sampson Flat fires.

From his perspective, the one at Cudlee Creek was not as big, although "due to the residential setting, it was, by far, much more intense".

At around noon, the Milang brigade began travelling to the staging area at Lobethal, where it would form a strike team with the Strathalbyn, Langhorne Creek and Ashbourne appliances.

By the time the crew reached Nairne, a large number of residents were stuck in traffic that was banked up for almost three kilometres.

After reaching Lobethal and finding that the fire was already impacting the township, Milang 34 went straight into asset protection as directed by the Strike Team Leader.

"We found a house that was under threat pretty quickly and that was it, we just looked for assets that needed protecting," Alistair said.

The brigade later joined the strike team in rescuing a man who was trapped in his home, which was engulfed by fire.

"There was a tree blocking his driveway and everything was on fire and there was smoke everywhere," Alistair said.

"Ashbourne 14 and the command car arrived and we cut the fence, went in through the paddock and up to his house.

"He was standing around the back of his house with everything well and truly ablaze. He was thinking about getting in his car, which wasn't a good idea. We put him in our truck and took him to Oakbank, where SA Ambulance took him away."

After escorting another ambulance back to Lobethal, saving



livestock and protecting more houses from a three-metre wall of flame, the strike team headed towards Harrogate.

"We went through a lot of burnt country, and a lot was still burning," Alistair said.

"I don't think anybody on the strike team had been to Harrogate before, so we were on Google Maps trying to work out what the town actually looked like and where the northern edges were. We had about 10 minutes to work out a bit of a plan, and then it was on.

"It was definitely one of those days where everything was burning, even the green lawns.

"Houses and properties that were saveable we worked hard to save."

The crew utilised private pumps and generators where it could and took advantage of slashed paddock perimeters.

"We'd just finished up with those houses and I could see on the other side of the road where the fire was coming up from the underside," Alistair said.

"And that's what happened all day, we'd just get on top of that job and we'd find something somewhere else where the flames were licking the side of a house. So quick as you can, you'd fold up your hose and go to the next one.

"That's what killed us, doing that all day – there was no reprieve. We were just going from one job to another with only a bit of a breather between."

Alistair said he was able to protect one of the houses using only the homeowner's equipment.

"He was well set up. It was the world's longest garden hose that reached right around his garden and veggie patch and to every corner of his backyard."

The Milang CFS captain said the strike team's success had relied on the large number of well-prepared homes, the communal water supply – by way of gravity feed – and the assistance of private fire units.

At 9pm, just as it got dark, the wind lulled and the fire's intensity backed off slightly. The Milang brigade was given a hard-earned dinner and the order to head home for the night. It had been a long day.

"Everybody put in 110 per cent that day; they gave it everything they had, plus a bit," Alistair said.

"But we were only one of many teams. There were plenty of other crews on the fireground who all put in and would have their own stories to tell."

Mount Lofty Fire Tower back in business

By: Brett Williamson

Volunteers are back at the Mount Lofty Fire Tower following the refurbishment of its observational platform floor.

Two seasons ago, concerns were raised over the condition of the floor and the tower was consequently closed as a safety precaution.

An engineer report cleared the tower's floor but confirmed it would need to be refurbished in the near future.

As the tower was already temporarily closed for examination, it was decided to completely refurbish the flooring at the same time.

Volunteers were pleased with the new floor base and carpet, which was completed in October, and

began busily preparing for the season.

The Mount Lofty Fire Tower was originally constructed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in 1982, with NPWS fire spotters staffing the 34m high platform for the first few seasons.

When funding for fire spotters reduced, Friends of Cleland Conservation Park volunteers stepped in and later helped form the Mount Lofty Fire Tower CFS Brigade.

The brigade was established in November 2,000 and provides volunteers to operate the tower on days of high fire danger.



A 'truly remarkable' reunion

By: Ross Haustorfer

When I first saw Tony Pratt and thanked him, I have to admit it was very hard holding back my emotions and the tears. I know I got a bit glassy eyed and, from what I saw and was told later by his work mates, so did Tony.

I don't know how many times I said "thank you" to him over those three days after we met, but when we parted at Adelaide Airport after we'd arrived back home, I shook his hand and thanked him again, but this time I added "thank you just doesn't seem to be enough" and we parted.

On October 20, 1996, after having been a member of the CFS Port Elliot Brigade for 14 months, I was out riding with my mates when I was involved in a motorcycle accident on Victor Harbor Road, near Old Noarlunga, which left me with multiple life-threatening injuries. Those of significance were two open fractures and, more importantly, the amputation of my left leg below the knee.

This is where Tony entered my life – arriving on the scene as a 28-year-old minding his own business on his way to his girlfriend's house with a pizza for tea.

With a basic first aid kit in his car, he pulled up, jumped out and, with no medical experience, assessed me and applied a tourniquet to my residual limb to stop me bleeding out on the roadside.

Once he was done, another person came to assist – she was a GP from Victor Harbor and suggested a couple more turns on the tourniquet.

I had a multitude of injuries and a long road ahead, but without stopping that bleeding, nothing else would have mattered. Tony's immediate actions obviously played a very big part in saving my life.

Fast forward 23 years later ...

While deployed in New South Wales from December 19 to 24 last year, I was told by my Strike Team Leader that Tony worked for the National Parks and Wildlife Service and was



on the same deployment. I didn't know who he was at that stage, I hadn't connected the name, but he knew who I was even though he hadn't seen me since that near-fatal day.

On December 22, our two South Australian strike teams were pulled together and tasked south-east of Tenterfield in Spirabo State Forest and gathered for a pre-burn brief at our safe zone at the intersection of Billyrimba Trail and Spirabo Forest Way.

While waiting for the second strike team to arrive, it dawned on me that I was going to get an opportunity few people ever get after a life-changing accident – reuniting with the person who saved your life.

I didn't know what Tony looked like, so my Strike Team Leader Mathew Tinker pointed him out. Tony was busy talking

to other park crew members, but as soon as I saw him, I grabbed him on the shoulder and said: "Are you Tony Pratt?"

He turned and said a few words I don't really remember. It was a big moment. I know he said something along the lines of: "Shit, how are you going? I know who you are!"

Tony still has a 20-year-old magazine article on my accident in his drawer. I replied: "Thanks man, thanks for saving my life."

I think I said it a few times before requesting a photo to capture that exact moment (pictured), giving him a hug and thanking him yet again.

We were then briefed to our task of a 12km backburn and only caught up again on the final night at Armidale for a couple of drinks and some facts Tony thought I may like to know after all these years.

That was the last of three deployments to NSW for me as Crew Leader, and they all had their challenges. Not only was I reunited with the man who saved my life two decades ago, but the night I left for the deployment, my niece called me to tell me a mate in Victoria had passed away.

The following morning before I left the staging area, an informal parade and a minute's silence was held for the two firefighters who had lost their lives overnight.

The next day, I met and worked with the man who saved my life 23 years earlier, and the following day I had a call from a mate in Adelaide who told me another friend had just passed away.

I then did three deployments to Kangaroo Island as a driver, Sector Commander and finally Strike Team Leader. While away on my second deployment to KI, my wife contacted me to tell me my First Lieutenant's wife, who is also my wife's best friend, had passed away.

It really was an emotional rollercoaster. But meeting Tony – and then also working with him again during my last tour to KI – was truly remarkable.

Wegeners tally up 150 years of service for Callington CFS Brigade

By: Brett Williamson

Volunteers often think of their local CFS brigade as a second family.

For the Wegeners, (pictured right) it has become more like a second home.

Five members of the family volunteer with Callington CFS Brigade and have clocked up more than 150 years of service between them.

For Colin Wegener, the changes in the brigade since he joined 50 years ago have been remarkable.

"When I got married and moved into this area, my father-in-law dragged me along to the Callington Hall for their annual CFS meeting and I got dobbed in as secretary on the first night and had that job for 10 years," Colin said.

"It was pretty inadequate in those years – we had a little 4x4 petrol truck, you stood on the back with no protection and I can remember going up to a fire in the hills and the fuel started vaporising on a hot day."

Callington has recently received a new 34.

"It's pretty good, that one," Colin said with a smile.

The Wegener family has contributed significantly to the CFS since Colin joined, with Jodie, Raelene, Brett and Nathan combining to volunteer another 100 years.

There were jokes within the brigade that the new truck should have been branded Wegener 34.

"During the middle of the day, and during the early summer when the fire danger is pretty

great as far as farmers are concerned, often we can't get a crew because everybody is at work. I might not be that fit anymore, but I can still contribute something," Colin said.

"Because we live on the land we feel the obligation to protect it, so we all got involved.

"I've been proud of the fact that they have been involved in the community as well."



Lyndoch CFS hosts award-winning community event

By: Shane Emms

On October 19, Lyndoch CFS hosted a Community Demonstration Day organised by the brigade's Lieutenant Shane Emms.

Services attending the event included Williamstown CFS, Concordia CFS, R2 (Region 2) Communications Brigade, R2 CFS Air Ops Brigade, Kelly from Community Engagement, Scott from Region 2, an SA Ambulance Unit from the Barossa, Jason from Major Crash and Sharon from SAPOL Highway Patrol.

The brigades staged three main exercises – a stovetop fat fire, car fire with BA crew and an RCR casualty extrication.

Jason from Major Crash spoke to the crowd about his role investigating serious or fatal road crashes, while the R2

CFS Air Ops Brigade gave a presentation about how it kept water bombing aircraft full of water and Community Engagement answered questions from the public about what they could do to be Bushfire Ready.

There were 40 emergency service personnel involved on the day and around 200 people watching the crews in action, including R2 Commander Brenton Hastie and Deputy Chief Andrew Stark.

The event allowed SA CFS to show the community that it is more than a bushfire service while also demonstrating how it works together with other emergency services.

It was named Community Event of the Year by The Barossa Council at this year's Australia Day Awards, which Shane attended on behalf of Lyndoch CFS.



Women prepare for fire

By: Kelly McMiles

September 2019 saw two Firey Women workshops in the Barossa delivered by local Community Engagement Officers.

The Angaston and Kapunda workshops were well attended, reaching the maximum number of participants.

Volunteers from the local brigades assisted, showing participants how to use of equipment, and fire pump demonstrations.

Many of those who took part were either directly or indirectly affected by major fires in the past few years, and both workshops saw a major transition in mindset, understanding, and confidence from the women. From a place of anger and frustration, participants gradually processed new

information, helping them understand their own role and responsibility as an individual living in a bushfire risk area.

One participant began the workshop angry that no one had come to knock on her door to let her know there was a fire nearby... She completed the workshop laughing at herself, assuring the group that she would not be locking herself away with shutters down and air conditioning on during a high fire danger day again, but staying informed using multiple sources.

Participants learnt about how to recognise fire danger days, how to prepare, and the importance of having a Bushfire Survival Plan.



Angaston put on a show

At the Angaston show in February all four Northern Barossa CFS Brigades as well as Region 2 Community Engagement came together. The appliance display included Nuriootpa HAZMAT, Truro QRV, Tanunda 24, and Angaston 24P, along with stove top fire demonstrations throughout the day drew crowds to learn how to use a fire blanket, HAZMAT equipment was on display with Nuriootpa volunteers providing education to the public and Smokey was as popular as ever.



Edithburgh membership spikes after Yorketown fire

By: Brett Williamson

Many brigades have seen an upsurge in volunteer enrolments following the 2019/20 bushfire season, but perhaps none more so than Edithburgh CFS.

"Before the Yorketown fire we had six members on the books," Edithburgh CFS Brigade Captain Leith Smith said.

Following the November 20 blaze in the Yorketown and Edithburgh area, Leith said the brigade had a huge influx of interest.

"We now have around 22 to 23 members," Leith said.

"We were lucky enough to get most of those people through their BF1 before the training was halted due to COVID-19."

The brigade has also been able to house the spare Region 24, in addition to the 14, thanks to the larger amount of volunteers who have been responding to local callouts.

"It took a lot of legwork and a lot of chasing up, but we are definitely now in a better place than before the fire," Leith said.

"I think the Yorketown fire scared a lot of people locally.

"The feeling around the brigade has lifted quite a bit, and we have a few members who are willing to upskill and apply for RFS (Rural Fire Suppression) and BA (Breathing Apparatus) courses when things return to normal."



Breakfast at Hermitage

By: Kelly McMiles

Shaking things up for their 2019 Open Day, Hermitage CFS invited their local residents to an absolute feast at their October Community Breakfast.

Volunteers and their families went all out in planning with a coffee machine, barbeque, and some very special CFS cupcakes (thank you Lou Thomas) on top of all the usual breakfast staples.

Brigade Captain Ash Tuttle, and Region 2 Community Engagement Officer Kelly McMiles, both delivered short presentations to attendees regarding preparation for the upcoming bushfire season, while all volunteers made themselves available to answer residents' questions throughout the occasion.

The event was a huge hit, with many new connections being made between the brigade and community.



Just in Time

By: Annie Pomeroy

The Yorketown Firey Women course was supposed to happen when it did.

Planning started in June after two courses were cancelled in September and October Community Engagement Officer Annie Pomeroy pushed ahead for a November course.

Registration numbers were good, until 48 hours before the course. Sick family members, changes in plans and a bout of gastro in Edithburgh decimated the number of participants until the night before, when the two presenters were at dinner, there were suddenly only three attending.

The course went ahead on Saturday, November 16 and much discussion was had about what the participants could achieve before next Wednesday as this was already predicted to be a day of Catastrophic Fire Danger.

Wednesday, November 20 saw the Yorketown fire start, effecting this local community, here is the story of two participants:

Shanina lives in a Bushfire Safer Place however her parents, who are around retirement age are still on the farm. She came to Firey Women because she wanted to be able to help them. At the end of the course, she stated that she was going to volunteer for any administration, radio and logistics support she could offer her local brigade.

She spent Sunday and Tuesday doing much needed maintenance on her parents' Farm Fire Unit (with some assistance) and by Tuesday night she was confident that it could be relied upon, and that she could start it by herself.

"On Wednesday I felt like most of my community, I did not understand the warnings, and once the fire broke out and burnt to the coast they underestimated the potential of the impending wind change. I just kept saying "But the east flank will become the front!" With the information I learnt

from the course, I felt very in control and informed instead of panicked and anxious.

So in-control that I went down and told the Stansbury CFS that I want to volunteer on the truck!"

Kelly lives on a farm in Honiton with her husband and children. She grew up in the Mount Lofty Ranges and had previous experiences of fire. Her husband is a local and was less anxious about their risk.

Despite arriving home from their honeymoon on Friday, Kelly ignored the washing and came to the course. There was a running joke during the course, "another job for Craig!" Kelly was madly taking notes of actions they could take to minimise their risk.

Craig and Kelly were busy Sunday, Monday and Tuesday mowing paddocks near the house, removing leaf and bark litter on their driveway, removing flammable material from the verandah and packing an emergency kit. Kelly took irreplaceable photos and documents to a friend's house in Yorketown. On Tuesday night Kelly advised her neighbour to take her kids and pets and go to Yorketown for the day. She was reticent, not believing she needed to leave before a fire started. Wednesday morning, as she was packing her car with water and snacks, Kelly watched with relief as her neighbour drove past her, heading into town with her car loaded up.

Kelly and her kids spent the day at her friend's home in Yorketown, within the Bushfire Safer Place. Around 3pm Kelly decided to leave her children with her friend and went home to check on the animals.

When she arrived home, Kelly checked the dogs who were in an internal room of the house and checked the CFS website, saw the Yorketown fire notification and left immediately for Edithburgh.

Had Kelly looked in her rear view mirror on her drive home, she would have no doubt seen the fire approaching.

Kelly made it to Edithburgh safely and joined many of the community in a local coffee shop/takeaway. She urged everyone to go to an internal room instead of sitting near the large windows and explained about radiant heat.

They kept up to date by listening to the radio and watching the CFS website and Kelly regularly went out to the windowed dining area to look at the tree out the front. She knew that while it was still leaning in the same direction, there hadn't been a wind change.

When the large Emergency Warning Message was changed to a smaller one surrounded by Watch and Act messages, she knew she had a window of time where she could leave Edithburgh and perhaps reunite with her children.

She called her friend who told her many people had driven into Yorketown in the last hour or two, using the route she was planning. She was assured that the road she intended travelling on had not been impacted and was only likely to be impacted after the wind change. At that stage, the wind change was predicted to occur in about six hours and she was intending a 20-30 minute journey.

With some confidence gained from official and local information, Kelly safely drove to Yorketown, talking hands free to her mum the entire journey to help her stay calm and to reassure herself that if anything happened, someone would be aware immediately.

Kelly and Craig suffered damage to their property, but not to their home or the outbuildings near it. Kelly attributes this to what she learnt at Firey Women, not just for the detail of what she learnt but also for the confidence she gained in herself and in the messaging system.

She knows not every decision she made on the day was ideal. She also knows she made a difference to the outcome for her family, her neighbours and those she sheltered with at the café.

Yorketown CFS gets \$10,000 donation from V8 Supercars Team Boss

By: Brett Williamson

A local connection to the Dick Johnson Racing (DJR) Team has turned into a win for the Yorketown CFS.

A previous cadet and member of the brigade, DJR Team co-owner Ryan Story, made the surprise donation to the station after hearing of the difficult season the brigade had faced with the Yorketown fire.

For Brigade Captain Lachie Hennekam, the donation was a great surprise.

"It came completely out of the blue," Lachie said, "it was nice of him."

The brigade is currently working with Region 2 to improve catering facilities at the station.

"The \$10,000 is earmarked to be added to funds we were able to raise at around the same time with a raffle, which may end up going towards that project," Lachie said.

Ryan Story made the donation as a part of a \$30,000 gift to the Yorketown Bushfire Appeal.

Volunteers from the brigade were able to travel to Adelaide for the first round of the V8 Supercars, participate in the Parade of Heroes, and present Ryan with a Brigade Captain's helmet in the DJR Team pits.



School donates trauma teddies

By: Kelly McMiles

Pembroke School donated handmade trauma teddies to Region 2 Commander Brenton Hastie last year.

Echunga CFS member Don Fogg works at the school, who asked for the teddies to be

delivered to children in Southern Yorke Peninsula who were affected by the Yorketown fire.

"Catherine Newgrain, the Head of Middle School Maths runs the bear making programme and we have a dedicated team of students who spend time after school hours each week making them, the bears all have individual names," Don said.

Sam's revved up about winning new car

By: Kathy Baklan

Sam Brighurst, a volunteer firefighter at Lyndoch CFS Brigade, recently entered the 2020 Bushfire Relief Raffle and to his surprise he won the first prize – a car worth \$40,000!

Sam said he found out while he was helping a friend move into his new home.

"I was sitting down having a quick breather on the couch when an unknown number called me and I got the news," he said.

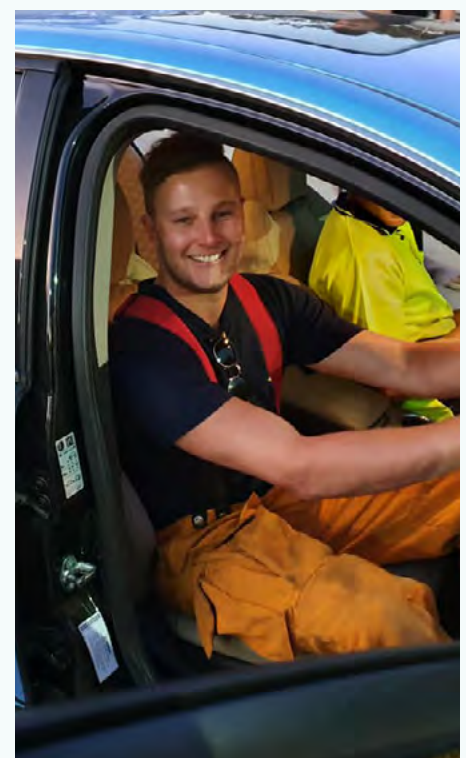
Sam hasn't always been lucky though – four years ago, he and his ex-partner lost everything in a bushfire.

As part of the surprise, Troy Williams from Eye Candy Motorsport and Matt Gollan from Flash Market also donated \$5000 to the Lyndoch CFS Brigade.

The generous donation will assist Lyndoch CFS in purchasing two new thermal imaging cameras for their fire appliances.

When asked about his plans for the car, Sam said: "I've never really driven a car that new before; I'll definitely keep it. I love my cars – I'll probably get attached to it, no doubt."

When he's not volunteering for the CFS, Sam is a sub-contractor for his family's grass maintenance business.



Crews enjoy Field Day at Meningie

By: CFS Promotions Unit

Twelve crews from the Riverland, Murraylands and Upper South converged on Meningie on August 11 for the biannual Region 3 Field Day.

More than 60 members took part in a multitude of exercises which tested skills and problem-solving techniques by providing a range of unique and challenging scenarios.

"The driving force behind the day was the field day

committee, made up of volunteer members from the local area and from across the Region, who did an amazing job to bring the day together," Regional Training Delivery Officer Lisa Kerslake said.

One exercise, a farm incident, incorporated representatives from SA Power Networks (SAPN) and Primary Industries (PIRSA) who spoke about the scenarios that would involve these agencies to protect crews along with

members of the public, stock, wildlife and properties.

Lisa said feedback from the crews on the day was very positive, with attendees appreciating the diversity of exercises presented to them.



Exercise highlights Hazmat response

On Sunday, September 22, more than 30 CFS volunteers from the Chaffey and Mid Murray Groups in Region 3 came together at the Accolade Wines facility in Glossop to take part in a hazardous materials incident exercise.

The exercise was jointly facilitated by CFS Technical Operations and Region 3 to provide an opportunity for Hazmat brigades and combatants in the Riverland to refresh their skills and to assess their Hazmat capability.

The drill also provided an opportunity for those yet to be trained in Hazmat to gain a better appreciation of the tasks required in such a response.

Holding the exercise in a realistic setting provided significant value to participants as they came face to face with a realistic example of what they could be dealing with in the event of a Hazmat emergency.

Participants undertook a multiple hazard exercise with a suspected anhydrous ammonia leak requiring Hazmat combatants to enter the hot zone in fully encapsulated gas suits.

They undertook identification, atmospheric monitoring and simulated tasks to demonstrate the lack of dexterity when wearing a gas suit.

At the same time, a liquid spill from drums being transported by a forklift required Hazmat combatants to enter the hot zone in liquid-tight suits to undertake identification, atmospheric monitoring and the collection of a sample for further analysis before moving back through decontamination.

This exercise was designed to reinforce the skills recently learned by these brigades during their atmospheric monitoring training on the delivery of their new MultiRAE Lite multi-gas detectors as a part of their Hazmat stowage.



Women lead in Region 3



By: Simone McDonnell

For Karoonda CFS Brigade Captain Leanne Kruger, service is a family affair.

After supporting her husband's involvement for 14 years, Leanne joined up six years ago and has never looked back.

"I started as a firefighter, expanding my skills to include a HR licence in 2016 and RCR operator qualification in 2019," Leanne said.

"I was elected as Brigade Captain last year and share the role of Farm Fire Unit Liaison."

Leanne has also been involved with International Women's Day, co-ordinating presentations to elderly communities about fire safety.

Balancing commitments to both the CFS and home life is her biggest hurdle, with Leanne admitting that while the safety of her family was her original reason for joining, long hours at incidents take their toll.

"I had wanted to join CFS for many years, but as a mum to four kids it was just too difficult with my hubby already a member," Leanne said.

"Some years ago we had a fire that threatened our property and, after fighting the fire for the best part of a week with our neighbours and my teenage kids, I realised that it was time that I could do this.

"With a teenage son still at home, we find it difficult when both my partner and I find ourselves on a fireground for extensive periods, so we depend on friends and neighbours to watch out for our son's welfare until we return home."

As a leader at Karoonda, Leanne said the small brigade faced the same issues as most, such as an ageing volunteer base.

"As communities become smaller and our younger members of the community go away to work, it is harder to find new members to replace our retiring ones. It also means that we are still relying on members that have been volunteering for nearly 50 years.

"But on the flip side, through the dedication of our members, we still manage to attend every incident. We get those appliances out the shed every time which makes me immensely proud to be part of this team."

Part of what keeps Leanne involved is the comradery between her and the rest of her brigade. While she is

reluctant to tell the full stories, she admits there is a lot of good humour among her team members.

"We do have a lot of fun in between the serious stuff."

Meanwhile Narrung Ferry driver Gill Dulwich (pictured centre with fellow volunteers, Lou Sanders and Bec Falkenhagen) has taken on the role of Captain somewhat reluctantly, with the usual struggle to recruit new volunteers being amplified by shifting regional demographics.

Located on the southern bank of Lake Alexandrina, Narrung is a predominately tourism-based centre servicing visitors to the Coorong and Lake Albert areas.

A change in industry over the past few years has made retaining and attracting residents to the community quite difficult, with an obvious flow-on affect across the town, including the CFS Brigade.

"There used to be a large dairy industry here, but the drought took a huge toll and most small farmers left, and then the farms amalgamated and became cropping properties needing less workers," Gill said.

The Brigade has been hit hard by the drop in employment, with many members – including the former Captain – leaving the district in search of more stable work opportunities.

"No one wanted to be Captain after our last one moved out of the district, and we limped along without one for a while," Gill said.

"Information was not coming to us and with fire season approaching someone had to do it, so I put my hand up even though I was unsure about my suitability. It's been a learning curve for all of us."

Gill said her 20-year involvement with the CFS had centred on her desire to help her local community.

"I got involved in CFS because I've always volunteered in some capacity in the area where I reside, and this seemed like a good fit.

"I enjoy meeting new people and learning new things. At every event you attend there are always opportunities to learn new things and catch up with others from your region."

In her new role as Captain, Gill said she was looking forward to improving her leadership skills while helping to attract new members and train up the next generation of volunteers.

"Through the CFS I have maintained my first aid skills, and I learnt a lot about myself through their leadership course which I attended in February. I hope to learn more when courses resume."

Strategic meetings explore new ideas

By: Ali Martin

Region 3 has been holding strategic Regional Volunteer Management Committee meetings for several years now.

Region 3 Commander Ray Jackson said the initiative was driven by Group Officers as a platform to discuss the Regional Strategic Plan.

"It also gives us the opportunity to flesh out issues a bit more as we can devote more time to them given the meeting goes all day."

The strategic meetings are held annually and allow the Group Officers to workshop and raise issues such as how the group can have more impact into the Chief Officer's Advisory Council.

Ray said the meetings were also a chance to explore new ideas around succession planning, recruitment and administration.

"For example, we are trying to rebuild our cadet programs, so we have put a staff member in charge of that so our volunteers see progress in this area."

Hundreds volunteer for deployments

By: Ali Martin

Volunteers from all over the state were deployed both within SA and interstate this year. For those from Region 4, some had a little further to travel than most.

Volunteers from as far away as Andamooka, Roxby Downs and Coober Pedy answered the call to help their colleagues, despite adding two extra days of travel to their deployments.

Region 4's Quinton Kessner said when deployments to New South Wales started, the Region had no issue filling its deployment numbers.

"We had already learned from the couple of previous deployments and had a different system this year. At the start of fire season we sent out an expression of interest form to all volunteers, which everyone who wanted to go on a deployment had to fill out and send in.

"That helped people get through their skills maintenance drills, so we weren't chasing our tails when looking for people to deployed.

"We set up a group who had showed that interest, had approval from their Captain and met the criteria, so when it came time we paged them to see who was available.

"This not only worked for those interstate deployments but also deployments to Yorketown and Kangaroo Island."

Quinton said two remote brigades, Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs, continually had volunteers on deployment.

"I don't think there is a Group in our Region that at some point in time didn't supply people to these deployments."

Volunteers also included those from the APY Lands – a member happened to be in Adelaide on holidays and put up their hand to be deployed.

In all, Region 4 deployed 753 people during the 2019/20 Fire Danger Season, along with manning its own incidents.

"Towards the end of the KI deployments, we did struggle to get numbers, but we did maintain about 20 volunteers per round," Quinton said.

"For a lot of our farming communities, taking out Monday to Friday on a deployment is basically impossible, but they usually can do Friday to Monday, so we adapted."

Region 4 put Quinton and Nicoli Ackland in charge of the NSW deployments, a move Quinton said made a difference for the volunteers.

"To have continuity really helped those who were deployed. When our volunteers left for their deployments, they knew they had one person who they could contact 24 hours a day if there were any issues. Every deployment that left or landed back into Port Augusta saw me, which meant I could brief them, then debrief them after.

"On a personal note, the pride I had for our volunteers when they left was just exacerbated when I saw what they had done during their deployment."

Region 4 will now have discussions about the expression of interest forms used this season and will implement any changes needed before the next season.

Rangers assist with APY Lands hazard reduction

For the past two years, the CFS has worked with major stakeholders across the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands to create a greater level of fire safety across the region.

One of these stakeholders is APY Land Management (APYLM). In September, APYLM and the CFS teamed up to spend five days implementing hazard reduction burns around the community of Watarru, lowering the fuel load in time for the Fire Danger Season to create a bushfire safety zone.

The Watarru Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) is located at the foot of Mount Lindsay in the Great Victoria Desert and is around 550km south-west of Alice Springs. While the area

is no longer inhabited, its infrastructure remains intact and the traditional owners' vision is to one day reoccupy the community.

In 2017, APYLM gained permission from the Watarru IPA Steering Committee to set up a base at the community and undertake activities as per government funding requirements.

The hazard reduction burns were a huge success thanks to the efforts of Region 4 staff and volunteers, along with ranger groups from within the APY Lands including Watarru IPA, Apari Makiri Puntji, Kalka-Pipalyatjara IPA and Antara-Sandy Bore IPA.



Captains congregate at Pichi Richi

Captains from throughout Region 4 met at Pichi Richi Park in the Flinders Ranges on July 20, 2019.

They heard a presentation from Regional Commander Sindy McCourt, plus representatives from State Headquarters travelled to update them on aviation, the new state headquarters, SACAD, Hazmat, training and media.

Other members of the Region 4 team updated the captains on training opportunities, brigade health checks and community engagement activities.

It was also a chance to catch up to discuss lessons and various other matters with each other before enjoying a campfire together in the evening.



RAAF transport



The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) picked up Region 4 volunteers to transport them to Kangaroo Island several times. It was a great experience for the volunteers to fly in the military aircraft.



Training pays off for Captain Jake

By: Simone McDonnell

The Bunbury fire (pictured below) might have flown under the radar for most CFS members outside of Region 5, but for Padthaway CFS Brigade Captain Jake Rich and his crew, the fire will be an experience they will never forget.

Jake joined the Brigade in 2013 after moving from Adelaide to work in horticulture and attending a farm fire.

"I decided that if I was going to be helping at fires I wanted to be on a truck to try and make a bigger difference."

Jake has undertaken training including Basic Firefighting 1, Road Crash Rescue, Breathing Apparatus (BA), Tactical Command, Frontline Leadership, First Aid, Rural Fire Suppression, Defensive Fire Suppress and advanced resuscitation.

He has served as Captain for the past two years and is also Tatiara Group's Training Co-ordinator.

"In the brigade we try and run scenarios from time to time and try to make them as real life as possible with a few twists thrown in to try and simulate what could happen on a bad day," Jake said.

"Last winter, I organised a BA training session with Padthaway and Mundulla where we had them respond to a structure fire with people inside on a day of high fire danger. At the same time we told them that a grass fire had just started.

"We wanted to try this scenario, as the CFS responds 24/7 across the state and two separate incidents can join together at any time. As a service we all need to be continuously aware of the situation around us and be prepared for anything, which I think this situation really highlighted."

Jake said his training and the preparedness of his crews had served his Brigade well when lightning started an out-of-control fire at Bunbury on December 20.

"We worked quickly to establish mineral breaks. DEW (Department for Environment and Water) crews monitored it for a few days, but as conditions worsened towards the end

of the month, the fire broke its control lines on the 29th and we were called back to provide support."

Jake was Divisional Commander on the night shift and worked with the crews to re-establish control lines and monitor the fire.

"At the end of our night shift at around 8am I recall tasking the two Skidders, two QRVs and a 34 to enter a scrub line that had a slow backing fire, under south/south-easterly winds," Jake said.

"Unfortunately, while crews were performing this task the wind unexpectedly swung 180 degrees and picked up speed, with about 30 to 35km per hour gusts. The wind pushed the fire across the crews' escape route before they were able to get out and trapped them inside the scrub.

"They were able to get clean air away from the fire line in a safe position. Due to the terrain and the information I had from the crews, I requested air support and additional ground units as we were at the end of our shift and our relief crews were uncontactable."

Jake communicated continuously with the crews inside the scrub as well as the Incident Management Team based at Kingston and the Regional Duty Officer based in Naracoorte to supply Situation Reports (SitReps).

"I wanted to ensure a clear flow of communication about the welfare of the crews," Jake said.

"I stayed as close to the scrub as possible in a vantage spot to keep in contact with the crews inside and had crews set up at the track into the scrub ready to assist as required.

"Once air support arrived, they advised that the crews were in a safe position and that the head of the fire had pulled up inside the scrub. I was thankful that air support stayed overhead for a while giving updates until back-up and relief crews arrived."

While the area was eventually deemed safe enough for the crews to exit the scrub, Jake said the stress of the incident had made it difficult to keep a clear head and sense of control.

"I managed to fall back onto my training in keeping SitReps flowing back up the line and trying to keep the crews that were trapped as calm as I could. At the time I was freaking out on the inside but knew at the time I couldn't let the crews know that in order to try and keep them calm.

"When I've been undertaking my training I always knew that it would benefit me in my decision making and communication skills, but would have never in a million years have thought that it would be so beneficial that I could fall back on it and use it without even realising I was doing so at the time.

"Looking back now I can see that I just clicked into the training and it all came together. I didn't have to think about the small parts, I could focus on the bigger picture and the little things just happened automatically."

After the incident, Jake said he felt fatigued and a sense of guilt about how he had handled regional communications.

"The evening after the event, I wasn't really coping so I contacted the Region's Duty Officer, who I had been talking to the morning of the event, for a chat with him.

"I actually rang to apologise to because with the stress of the situation I hadn't thought I'd kept them updated enough or made the correct decision, but he put my mind at ease to a certain extent that I had done the right thing at the time with the information that I had.

"He suggested contacting SPAM (Stress Prevention and Management Team) and then got in contact with them for me. They rang me that night and we had a good long chat which I think really helped me clear my head.

"I really appreciate the help SPAM gave me that night, and coupled with some sleep it made a huge difference. In looking back now with the information I had at the time, I don't think I would do anything different, but sometimes hindsight can creep in which we have to put out of our mind.

"I knew that day the guys that were in the trapped trucks had it far harder than me, and some of them did also struggle but having spoken to SPAM it really helped me."



Unforgettable fire at Keilira

By: Simone McDonnell

Dry lightning paired with strong winds across a drought-stricken landscape made December 30 a date that Lucindale Group Officer Patrick Ross will never forget.

"That morning, I called around all the Captains, and I said 'if we're called to a fire today, I'm calling in all of you'," Patrick said.

After calling the South East his home for more than 40 years, Patrick was taking no risks with being caught short that day. He had experienced the strength and ferocity of such conditions before.

"You always go back to Ash Wednesday, but we've probably had four fairly decent fires in the past ten years or so," Patrick said.

After hanging up the phone to the Captains, Patrick said he prepared his own property as best he could for the conditions and set up his new Farm Fire Unit that had only been delivered the week before.

"I only took delivery of it on Christmas Eve. I went to the neighbours, and I said 'it's there if you need it'."

It was a matter of when, not if, as the dry winds whipped around the relatively flat landscape.

"The first call came in at about 8.10am for a fire spotted about 15km due west of Lucindale. We were still there when the call came through for the fire at Keilira," Patrick said.

Fortunately strike teams from Kingston were able to be dispatched with the local strike teams joining them a short time later. They confronted a fire that would go on to claim more than 23,000 hectares and destroy three homes, including one belonging to fellow CFS volunteer Phil Clarke.

"On that particular day given the conditions, Phil's house was un-defendable," Patrick said.

"To think any house can't be defended is incredible, but the conditions and the fuel loads were just beyond anything we were able to safely get in front of."

The winds were so strong and the smoke so heavy that water bombers and planes from the state's aerial fleet were unable to get close to the fire, leaving it to crews on the ground to do what they could.

"The fire was moving with such speed and ferocity that to get volunteers in there was impossible," Patrick said.

"What people might not understand about the Upper South East is that it's flat but the terrain, the drainage systems and the scrub make some areas impossible to reach."

The fire continued to wreak havoc, and Patrick said he remembers the moment he realised just how strong and quickly it was moving.

"Even people who had been at Ash Wednesday said 'we won't stop this until it gets to Padthaway'. It just had so much wind behind it and it just ripped across the land."

"We had tried to put in fire breaks, but the fire just ran straight over the top of them."

"When I got to the IMT (Incident Management Team), the Incident Controller was on the phone, and he reckoned it had about an hour and a half to hit the Dukes Highway. I was thinking to myself, 'that's about 15km away from the



fire front'.

"That was at about 7pm. I knew where it was and I knew where it was going. But the wind does funny things – it was running south, then it suddenly whipped to the east before turning the fire back on itself. I was surprised."

The wind change gave crews the reprieve they had been hoping for all day, and while the fire continued to burn out of control, it was within the established control lines.

In its wake, the fire left a number of communities shaken but determined to band together, with a community meeting held at Kingston.

Lucindale locals also had their own briefing at which they discussed their preparedness and plans ahead of the catastrophic day forecast for a week later.

Fortunately the community was spared the conditions experienced on Kangaroo Island, and the Keilira fire was declared contained on January 3 before being declared safe on January 9.

Since the fire, Patrick said he was impressed with how locals had banded around those who had experienced loss.

"The community is extremely resilient and generous. They

were offering fodder and agistment, and Phil was even offered a house to stay in right near his place and near his family."

A local farmer also donated \$14,000 after the fire to allow the Lucindale Group to put phone boosters in nine appliances.

While Patrick and the crews know they will see days like December 30 again, with conditions outside of firefighters' control, he is optimistic about his Brigade's preparedness to respond, with the next generation of farmers providing new members.

And with that increase in younger members, Patrick said he was keen to do what he can to help support and prepare them.

"We had some people in Ash Wednesday who never got back on a truck again after what they experienced. But fires are generational, and we need to make sure we are passing on our knowledge and what we learn, so that the next generation of firefighters are in a position to protect their communities."

R6 IMEX training

Region 6 hosted an Incident Management Exercise (IMEX) in mid-July 2019. Sprint Incidents put the locals' skills to work on the Saturday before following up with an eight-hour incident on the Sunday. They will soon be a Level 2 Incident Management Team.



Fire causes Ceduna to be inundated



By: Ali Martin

A large bushfire near the Western Australian town of Norseman caused Ceduna and other communities across the Nullarbor to be inundated with tourists and transport operators in late December and early January.

From December 30 to January 10, National Highway 1 was closed at the Western Australian border. The highway is only one of the two bituminised routes to get to Western Australia (the other route is through Kununurra in the Top End).

Western Eyre Group Officer Mark Hewitson said this was the first time the highway had been closed for that amount of time.

"We didn't know how long the road would be closed for – the stories were changing daily, and it was difficult to get accurate and timely information for the community. Fires in the eastern states took media precedent, which also compounded the information flow," Mark said.

"In an attempt to discourage travellers heading to WA, SA Police placed an urgent request for 'road closed' signs to be erected in Ceduna advising the highway was closed at the border, all be it 500km away. It was an attempt

to get people to stay in Ceduna so they didn't get stuck somewhere across the Nullarbor in a place with limited amenities and supplies."

Mark said although the delay for tourists was good for the local economy, it was clear that many people started to struggle with the additional costs they had to incur because of their extended holiday.

"Because it happened over the Christmas/New Year period, a lot of people were travelling back to Western Australia after visiting family interstate at Christmas. They got caught in the middle of Australia and had to stay away from home longer than they expected, and there were no feasible alternative routes for them to take."

The local brigade and SA Police were in constant dialogue while putting in place contingencies for when the road reopened. On the day the road was reopened, the queue of vehicles at the WA border stretched for over two kilometres.

"There were hundreds of trucks lined up on either side of the fire zone, so add that with all the other mix of cars and caravans and trailers, all in a hurry to get home, it had the

potential for a disaster to occur somewhere," Mark said.

WA Police staggered the opening of the road until the build-up of vehicles could spread out, and fortunately there were no reported road crashes as a result.

"With the amount of traffic on the highway, we thank the transport operators for their patience and the majority of other road users for using common sense during this busy period," Mark said.

"The importance of having a good network of contacts within these remote areas was invaluable. I was able to source information through my counterparts within DFES (Department of Fire and Emergency Services) and those at the Quarantine WA checkpoint.

"We have a good rapport with our WA neighbours and, as with all incidents, there are lessons learned and processes that can be improved and we will work collectively to resolve these challenges. Preliminary discussions have already commenced between our Region 6 Commander, his equivalent in Kalgoorlie WA and our Group."

Lower Eyre DGO tells his story

By: Ali Martin

Kym Kenny has been a volunteer firefighter for about 40 years, but he officially signed up in 1987 after riding the truck for a few years before that.

Starting with the Kapinnie CFS Brigade, located outside of Cummins, Kym said it was a different training environment to what we experience these days.

Since officially signing up, Kym has given a lot to the CFS in the Lower Eyre Peninsula. While riding the truck he became Administration Officer in the early 1990s and when their Captain was killed in a car accident he stepped up to that role.

"I was Captain of Kapinnie for about 17 years, and in that time we had the Tulka fire and the Wangary fire in 2005," he said.

"I became a DGO (Deputy Group Officer) in about 2007 or 2008 and I became Group Officer in 2012."

Unfortunately Kym had to take step back from the CFS when he became a full-time carer for his wife. Following her death, though, Kym decided it was time to come back to the CFS, and took up the DGO role once again in 2016 after moving to Port Lincoln.

Initially Kym joined as he felt there was a local responsibility to protect your own district. His father had been the Fire Control Officer in the Emergency Fire Service (EFS) days prior to the CFS being formed.

"When you're living in those areas, you have a public duty to try and protect them. You can't expect others to protect your farm if you're not able to do it.

"Plus, it's the people that I've met over the years – everyone is there for the right reasons. You want to help the community, and it's a good feeling when you do help them. We live in such a tinder box that fire is always going to be a problem for us."

There are often tough decisions to make and, looking back, Kym said the Sleaford fire of 2012 required a tough decision.

"We decided to put in a 1,000-hectare backburn when wind was still steaming down at 40 knots, but we knew if we didn't do it, the fire would have burned out Lincoln. We put it in and stopped it, which was a good feeling."

Kym has many memories, but another that sticks out is a visit from a French firefighter he met on a trip in 2007 who contacted him two years later.

"This girl wanted to come out and look at CFS, she was trying to get into the Paris Fire Service. CFS was great, they shifted her to Regions around the state in the six months she was visiting. It gave her great experience in rural fires and now she's a firefighter in France."

Kym was one of the first crews into Victoria after the 2009 Black Saturday fires.

"We arrived on the Sunday and saw the destruction in the Churchill fires. To be able to help work there was very rewarding, because you knew they needed help and fires were still going there. To work in those hills was horrendous, really."

He was also deployed to the Kangaroo Island fires this year



and helped out his brother-in-law who lost a farm.

"I went back in late March with some mates to help him clean up. The fencing was all gone and so were the sheds, but the eight of us were able to help Bill clean up a fair bit."

Kym said it was the camaraderie that kept him going, and he enjoyed seeing young firefighters coming through the ranks.

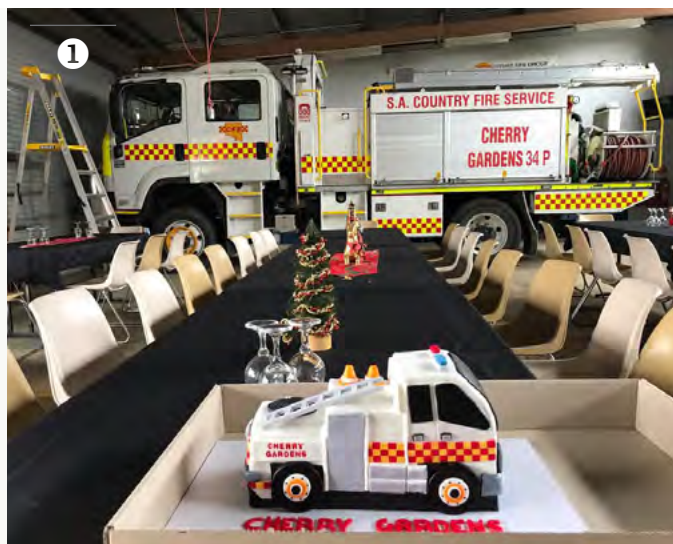
"It's impressive in the Lincoln brigade. The Captain has kept the membership going up, and these young ones are doing it purely out of a philanthropic need. They don't have farms to

save, they just want to do it for their community.

"A well-trained crew is an absolute pleasure to watch when they're working a fire."

One of the biggest improvements Kym has seen to CFS is the introduction of Bulk Water Carriers and aircraft.

"To get them both out to the fire quickly has made a difference. The trucks don't have to keep going to look for water, which years ago could take 30 minutes."



1 From the fireground to a birthday party

A miniature fire truck was at the centre of celebrations for Cherry Gardens CFS Brigade's 85th anniversary in December.

Although many volunteers were called out the day before as the Cudlee Creek fire took hold of the Adelaide Hills, this failed to stop the community from gathering for the special occasion.

More than 50 people attended the event on December 21, with some coming straight from the fireground.

Cherry Gardens CFS Brigade Captain Lawrie Lingwood said the event was an opportunity to take time out from a busy fire season and celebrate 85 years of protecting the community.

"We're one of the oldest stations in the state, and all 60 members whether they work in the communications room, the air strip supplying water to the aeroplanes or on the fireground, everyone plays their part – from people who have just recently joined to people who have been involved with the brigade for decades," Lawrie said.

"Over the years, Cherry Gardens Country Fire Service has built a culture of innovation and comradery.

"The 85th birthday was a night of great food and company with family and friends."

2 Auburn CFS celebrates anniversary

Current and past members of Auburn CFS celebrated the brigade's 80th birthday back in May 2019, with former Chief Officer Greg Nettleton also attending. Saddleworth cadets served food on the day.

3 Happy Valley marks milestone

Happy Valley CFS was acknowledged for 80 years of service during a mid-afternoon event at the Old Oval Estate winery in McLaren Vale last October.

Around 70 retired members and current members were joined by local political representatives. As a special part of the day, members of the brigade who had made 1,000 callouts were allowed to ring the fire bell.

4 Eight decades for Macclesfield CFS

Macclesfield CFS celebrated 80 years of service to the community last year.

Around 300 people came together to acknowledge the milestone at Davenport Square on December 8, including life member of more than 50 years Mario Ferrarese, who cut the cake on the day.

The family-friendly event included games for children, Smokey the Koala and a Captain's Challenge during which Heysen Group Officer Nathan Watts took out first place – as all Captains were disqualified for cheating.

The event was also attended by CFS Chief Officer Mark Jones, Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie, Member for Heysen Josh Teague and Mount Barker Mayor Ann Ferguson.



5 Original members attend Clarendon's 80th

A mix of past and present volunteers, as well as representatives from around the southern Adelaide Hills region, converged on the Clarendon CFS Brigade for its 80th anniversary celebrations.

Among the 90-strong attendees were some of the brigade's first members, who recounted stories about the early days of the CFS.

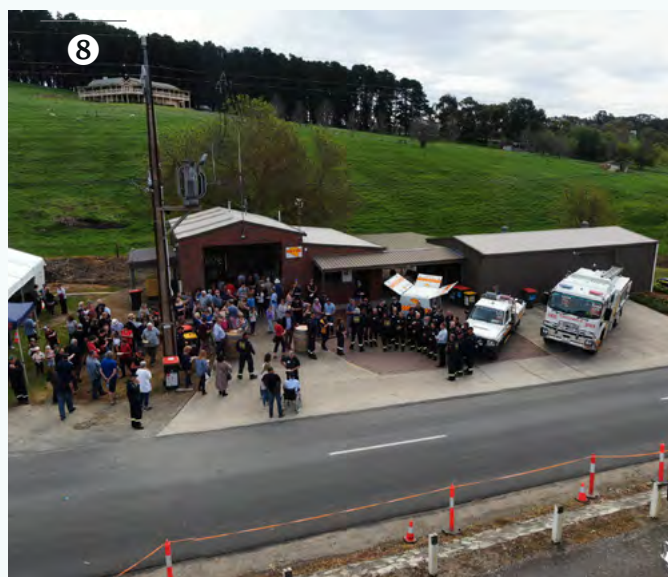
While everyone enjoyed sharing in a commemorative cake, current members received special recognition with a presentation of service medals and other awards taking place.

6 Morphett Vale hosts 75th dinner

September saw the Morphett Vale CFS brigade celebrate its 75th anniversary.

The formal dinner at the Southern District Workingmen's Club was an event for current and former members to come together in acknowledgement of the important role the brigade plays in the community.

Among the awards and medals handed out on the night, Ian Taverner was recognised for 50 years of service to the CFS and Kerry Dwyer was named the brigade's Firefighter of the Year.



7 Open day and dinner for Hahndorf's 70th

Hahndorf CFS Brigade capped off its 70th anniversary with a station open day and formal dinner last September.

The open day gave the community an opportunity to use some of the fire equipment and provided a trip down memory lane, with historic fire trucks, uniforms and memorabilia on display from across the past seven decades.

Smokey the Koala was in attendance, as was the Hills Radio Broadcast Bus, which crossed live from the event over the course of the day.

Meanwhile the formal dinner gave past and present members the opportunity to come together to celebrate and reflect on the activities and achievements of the brigade.

8 Seven decades for Paracombe CFS

More than 150 members of the community made their way to the Paracombe CFS station to celebrate the brigade's 70th anniversary on September 15.

Over afternoon tea, locals gained insight into the operations of the CFS, with foundation members and their families recognised for the efforts in establishing the brigade more than half a century ago.

Among the visitors to the station was Emergency Services Minister Corey Wingard, who praised the local volunteers for their outstanding contribution to the community.

Disc plough pulls up Lameroo fire

By: Brett Williamson

Disc ploughs are not always the first thought when a mineral earth break is required, but quick thinking by those attending the Lameroo fire on December 20 meant an uncontrolled bushfire was quickly pulled up.

Crews were called to a fire running along the sides of the Mallee Highway before later discovering it to be a car versus tree fatality.

Eleven fire trucks, two bulk water carriers and multiple farm firefighting units were quickly on the scene as the fire burned along the highway and rail corridor.

With the prospect of the fire passing from scrub into nearby

grass and stubble, a mineral earth break was required quickly to hold the eastern flank.

Regional Commander Ray Jackson said the idea to use a disc plough, rather than wait for traditional heavy machinery like bulldozers and graders, was instrumental in stopping the fire.

"The plough line on the eastern flank pulled the fire up," Ray said.

"It was one of the first times we had used a plough to create a mineral earth break, and the results were fantastic.

"Disc lines won't replace traditional mineral earth break construction methods, but it is good to know that they are a viable option to help slow fires."



Complex situation at Sunlands

By: Brett Williamson

The complexity of rural structure fires became quickly evident to crews arriving at the Sunlands fire of November 20.

Originally reported as a smoke plume sighted from a distance at 1.48pm, the call quickly escalated to a structure fire.

First-on-scene crews were quick to identify the contents of the shed as a mixture of flammable liquids and chemicals, many of which were producing large amounts of toxic smoke.

With the help of Hazmat on-call resources, firefighters were able to contain the incident to less than one hectare.

A stockpile of sulphur continued to release toxic gases throughout the day and reignited at 12.55am on November 21, which was when crews were called back to the scene.

The scene was declared controlled at 3.07pm before being handed back to the owner for remediation.

Fuel depot affected at Tailm Bend

By: Simone McDonnell

At just after 10pm on December 17, CFS and MFS crews were called to a large fire at the SA Biofuels depot at Tailm Bend.

CFS Manager of Technical Operations Tim McNeilly said the incident was one of the most complex that Hazmat teams had faced recently.

"The fire activity was significant, with a number of explosions and a large plume of black smoke raining contaminant down around the scene," Tim said.

The structural fire quickly became a Hazmat response when the Incident Controller received information that the premises contained large quantities of canola oil, methanol

and sodium hydroxide.

"With the support of the CFS on-call Hazmat/CBRN officer, a plan was put in place to contain and test the runoff," Tim said.

Hazmat combatants conducted atmospheric monitoring to ensure firefighters undertook correct decontamination procedures.

"The fire took some time to bring under control and required the use of B Class Foam to reduce its intensity," Tim said.

The CFS Breathing Apparatus Pod was deployed from the State Training Centre to provide support for crews.



Yorketown reaches Alarm Level 3

By: Brett Williamson

November 20 was one of the most testing days of the 2019/20 Fire Danger Season, with a statewide Total Fire Ban declared including seven Catastrophic level bans – one of which affected Yorke Peninsula.

At just after 3.15pm a small grassfire was reported near the Yorketown Area School – spreading fast and encroaching on a nearby home.

In less than 10 minutes the fire had escalated to an Alarm Level 3 response as it quickly tore through scrub, crop and stubble.

Farm firefighting units and local brigades scrambled to contain the fire, with air support and strike teams from around the state soon joining local resources.

The complexity of the fire soon grew from local properties and homes to include the AGL wind farm at Honiton, but the worst was far from over.

A forecast wind change early the next morning arrived with a greater-than-predicted ferocity and new breakouts directly threatening the township of Edithburgh.

The cause of the fire was later proven to be an electrical infrastructure fault.

Brigades from far attend dangerous goods rollover

By: Tim McNeilly

At 2.55am on March 10, Coonalpyn CFS was dispatched to a report of a truck rollover, possibly leaking fuel on the Dukes Highway at Culburra in Region 3.

On arrival, the brigade spoke with the truck driver and quickly discovered that the B-double truck was carrying a mixed load of dangerous goods and there was liquid spilling from the truck in a number of locations.

The Incident Controller made contact with the on-call Hazmat/CBRN Officer via the Regional Duty Officer and began providing information from the vehicle's manifest.

It was decided quickly, given the type and quantity of dangerous goods on board, that the incident would be escalated to a Hazmat response and that the state on-call Hazmat/CBRN Officer would attend the incident to provide support.

The B-double was carrying around 1,000L of sodium hydroxide, 2,000L of ethanol and refrigerant gases in 9kg cylinders along with chlorine, acids and paints.

Given that the B-double was located on its side, with no doors for access, crew members (wearing Category 3 PPC with breathing apparatus, PVC boots and gloves utilising atmospheric monitoring equipment and the State on-call Hazmat/CBRN Officer's GoPro) gained entry to the inside of the trailers via a ladder. They needed to assess the load and determine what and how much had been spilled while also gathering initial intelligence about how to resolve the incident.

Crew members were able to determine that two products in particular had spilled as a result of the truck rollover – flammable ethanol and corrosive sodium hydroxide.

Although atmospheric monitoring showed the ethanol spill was not creating flammable vapours, it was determined the greatest risk to personnel was that of flammability over the corrosive product – hence Hazmat Operators remained in Category 3 PPC.

To begin with, a halogen tool was used to cut a hole through the truck's roof so that undamaged dangerous goods could be manually removed.

Upon further assessment, it was determined that it was too



dangerous to continue working inside the rolled trailers due to heavy general freight items that were hanging in suspension by strapping.

It was felt at this point that it was likely that the truck would need to be winched back onto its wheels in order to safely access the remainder of the dangerous goods.

However, because the heavy haulage crews were unable to undertake a controlled winch, concerns were identified around major risks during the winching process.

Firstly, a 1,000L tank of ethanol was already leaking and could sustain further damage during the righting of the truck. This could lead to a much larger spill and fire risk.

Secondly, the sodium hydroxide containers could rupture and create a further 1,000L spill of a highly corrosive material.

The plan to mitigate these risks included utilising the heavy haulage tow trucks to crane bulk dangerous goods including eight 200L steel drums of ethanol out of the truck.

The heavy haulage crews were also able to crane other non-hazardous items out of the trailers such as 700kg rolls of paper to reduce the load during the winching process.

While craning the dangerous goods and winching the truck onto its wheels, appliances and BA Operators were established on either side of the truck with B Class Foam ready to apply if required.



Safety Officers with thermal imaging were also established to determine any potential ignition of ethanol.

After some hours the truck's load was reduced significantly, thereby reducing the level of risk involved, and the truck was successfully winched back onto its wheels.

CFS Hazmat crews contained the remaining spilled products before handing the scene over to a clean-up contractor.

The operation lasted around 21 hours and involved personnel from Coonalpyn, Bordertown, Murray Bridge, Burnside, Strathalbyn, Karoonda, Tatiara Group, Tintinara, Meningie and Keith SES along with staff from Region 3 HQ, the State Technical Operations team and the State Training Centre with the CFS Breathing Apparatus Pod.



Chemical spill at Angas Plains winery

CFS crews responded to a report of a 2,000L hydrogen peroxide spill at an Angas Plains winery near Langhorne Creek in September.

Upon arrival at the incident, CFS crews found a white vapour exiting from an enclosed shed, along with a liquid leaking from the structure and reacting with the soil.

Due to the nature of the incident, CFS Hazmat technician crews and appliances from Murray Bridge CFS and Burnside CFS attended to support Hazmat crews from Strathalbyn CFS and Murray Bridge MFS.

On-call Hazmat/CBRN Officer Tim McNeilly said a chemical reaction was occurring inside the shed, which was closed and restricting visibility.

"This meant firefighters in liquid-tight suits entered the hot zone with a thermal imaging camera and multi-gas detector

to track temperature changes inside the shed and to detect the presence of any toxic gases or vapours," Tim said.

"There were a lot of complexities with this incident, especially gathering information about how to protect firefighters from the fire, along with the chemicals.

"We discussed different tactics among crews, but also included advice from the Technical Advice Co-ordinator of SafeWork SA. We even took advantage of a live stream from a media helicopter above to get an overhead picture of what was happening in the shed."

Following consultation, CFS firefighters in Category 3 PPC (PBI Gold and BA) entered the shed, locating a fire and a spill of up to 2,000L of hydrogen peroxide.

The area was deemed safe after testing was conducted inside the shed and on the runoff outside.

Fire burns through 235ha at Duck Ponds

By: Simone McDonnell

Crews were ready for a long and difficult day when hot, dry and windy conditions descended on the state on Monday, November 11, with seven Total Fire Bans accompanying an extreme rating on the Lower Eyre Peninsula.

Just after 4pm, the call came through that a fire had been spotted at Duck Ponds, just west of Port Lincoln, and was burning towards houses on the outskirts of town. A race track full of spare tyres was also at risk, which threw up another level of concern.

With emergency warning messages encouraging people to leave or seek shelter, around 90 CFS firefighters joined forces with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and MFS to fight the out-of-control fire and halt the forward rate of spread by 8pm. The fire was officially contained by 3am.

Crews remained on the scene, mopping up and blacking out for four days, with the fireground continually monitored for flare-ups well into the following week.

In all, the fire burned through 235 hectares, with losses including two homes and one shed completely destroyed.



KI faces weeks of challenges

By: Simone McDonnell/Brett Williamson



The 2019/20 Fire Danger Season would turn out to be one of the most challenging in history for the communities of Kangaroo Island.

Dry lightning raked the Island from late December, igniting the Menzies and Duncan fires and planting the embers which would later merge with the Ravine fire.

Local crews and farm firefighting units had been engaged for weeks when the fires burning deep within the Ravine des Cascoars Wilderness Area began to grow and merge.

Dangerous conditions on January 3 saw the fires breach containment lines and charge through the Flinders Chase National Park and western side of the Island.

The whole Island was placed under alert as the fire raged, and at times almost two-thirds of the Island had an Emergency Warning Message in place.

Two men lost their lives when their farm firefighting unit became trapped on Playford Highway.

As the conditions eased, the devastation from the fire became apparent – but the fires were not done yet.

In the following days, Emergency Warnings were issued for several areas of the Island, Vivonne Bay was evacuated and Kingscote and Penneshaw were the only safe areas declared for the entire Island.

The fire reached as far east as Cygnet River, with more than 211,000 hectares of reserves and farming land destroyed, the Island's water treatment plant damaged and 89 homes lost.

The Ravine fire became one of the CFS's most challenging fires of late, with logistical difficulties and firefighting efforts seeing the assistance of SES, Department for Environment and Water, MFS, SA Police, SA Ambulance Service and the Australian Defence Force. All Regions provided volunteer support for several rotations.

Air support was also challenged to levels previously not experienced, with more than 14,000 drops completed by an arrangement of Large Air Tankers, the Helitak and multiple firebombers.

In light of the hours of response time contributed by air support crews over the Cudlee Creek and Ravine fires, re-inforcements were flown in from America to undertake airborne duties.

The Ravine fire was declared contained on January 21 at 11.41am, controlled on January 31 at 4.59pm and safe on February 6 at 5.12pm.

Keilira blaze contained overnight

By: Simone McDonnell/Brett Williamson

On December 30 a fire began at Keilira in the state's South East just after 9am. By early afternoon the fire had grown exponentially, with crews receiving reports of residents trapped in homes and a fire that was inaccessible by ground or air because of hazardous conditions.

Visibility along parts of the Dukes Highway was reduced to below 100m and smoke was reaching as far away as 75km from the front in Naracoorte.

More than 150 firefighters scrambled to protect homes and lives and stop the fire from travelling into nearby communities.

Crews were able to stop the fire spreading during the night, but large tracts of unburnt scrub meant the fire continued to flare up for several days.

By January 9 the fireground was declared safe, with 26,000 hectares burned and three homes lost.



Hundreds of Adelaide Hills homes defended

By: Simone McDonnell/Brett Williamson

Friday, December 20, was a day of widespread catastrophic conditions.

Strong winds whipped the Adelaide Hills as a branch from a tree fell onto powerlines near Cudlee Creek.

The electrical connection broke, causing sparking, which resulted in the beginning of one of the largest fires to tear through the Hills in recent years.

Hot, dry winds helped the fire grow and by mid-afternoon the localities of Woodside, Lobethal, Inverbrackie, Charleston, Cudlee Creek, Brukunga, Lenswood, Mount Torrens, Gumeracha and Harrogate were all under threat.

More than 2,000 volunteers responded to the call, with crews from across the state rushing to the firefronts that spread

across the bordering area between Regions 1 and 2.

Although the main charge of the fire was pulled up within 24 hours, breakouts and flare-ups continued for a further 10 days.

Many firefighters were treated for injuries across the fireground due to the ferocity of the fire, and it was soon confirmed that a resident had succumbed to injuries and died.

Although 85 homes were lost, hundreds were successfully defended as the fire consumed 23,295 hectares.

Air support crews delivered more than 1.25 million litres of foam, retardant and gel to the fireground and resupplied two large air tankers from New South Wales, all while defending their own airbase at Claremont.



Miltalie fire keeps crews busy

By: Ali Martin



The Miltalie fire near Kimba started on December 30 and burned for days, threatening major infrastructure and causing power interruptions to the whole of Eyre Peninsula.

Caused by lightning, the fire burned large areas of private land and the Ironstone Hill Conservation Park.

Much of the land burned was in sandy terrain, making it a slow and difficult task for firefighters to get it under control.

After five days the fire had burned 11,500 hectares and, despite mineral earth breaks, the fire was still not contained.

With hot weather on the way, crews were worried it would further impact the main power transmission line servicing the whole of Eyre Peninsula, along with the Lincoln Highway, Iron Duke Mine site and a nearby GRN tower.

After 18 consecutive days of being on the fire ground, the local Kimba brigade had respite on January 9 when cooler weather and some light rain made the fireground safe.

The brigade was supported throughout the campaign by neighbouring brigades as far south as Lincoln and as far west as Ceduna. Region 4 also assisted with volunteers and within the Incident Management Team.

Pre-planning saves \$4.5m factory



Damage to a \$4.5 million Monarto South factory was significantly reduced thanks to pre-planning and firefighter situational awareness when a blaze broke out at the site last year.

On July 12, the Murray Bridge and Monarto brigades were dispatched to a fire alarm activation at Joint Venture Juicing (JVJ).

Incident Controller Tim McNeilly said an Operational Response Pre-Plan for this facility had been written and brigades had toured the facility prior to the fire.

A CFS Operational Response Pre-Plan is a laminated document carried in appliances to provide key intelligence and situational awareness about a particular facility in a brigade's area.

The plan is produced well before an incident occurs to ensure important information is captured in a non-stressful environment.

"The brigades took the opportunity to revisit the Operational Response Pre-Plan while en route to the site," Tim said.

"They also took the chance to task resources on the way with clear and concise instructions, and this enabled the responding crews to understand exactly what was required of them on arrival.

"The Murray Bridge pumper was tasked to establish water into the on-site hydrant booster system upon their arrival. The Crew Leader was able to reference a copy of the Pre-Plan to familiarise with the location of the hydrant booster, the pump sets involved and the water supply configuration.

"We also integrated the site manager of JVJ into the incident structure early, and this worked well as they acted as a site liaison for our crews.

"I also tasked appliances while en route to stage on the street and only deploy breathing apparatus operators into the property to avoid scene congestion, and this proved effective."

When Murray Bridge crew members arrived, they found the fire burning outside the building but also inside, with smoke issuing from the building.

"They undertook an offensive attack, isolating the power and using thermal imaging to support the initial priority," Tim said.

The incident was eventually escalated, resulting in multiple MFS resources being deployed to the scene.

"After the fire was contained, crews used a multi-gas detector to monitor the atmosphere. This enabled them to determine when it was safe to transition from a SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) to a P2 mask and therefore when it was safe for the Incident Controller and Fire Cause Investigators to enter and survey the damage," Tim said.

"It was a great display of a multi-agency response, with crews working well together. The damage bill was limited to approximately \$160,000, allowing a business to return to operation quickly with no impact on jobs.

A look inside the State Control Centre

By: Simone McDonnell

On days of high fire danger, while you are on standby in your communities, behind the scenes in State Headquarters, co-ordination and planning is well underway, preparing for any fires that may start during the day.

The State Control Centre (SCC) is activated when there are at least two regions with fire ban districts with a rating of Severe or above — or, as we saw this season, a decision has been made by the CFS Chief Officer to activate a statewide ban in the lead-up to dangerous fire conditions.

The roles within the SCC pull together to form a complete picture and leadership structure, with many of the positions within the SCC replicated in the regions as they are needed.

The key personnel within the SCC meet for regular briefings across the day to ensure consistent and appropriate information is shared and understood about any incidents or areas of concern across the state.

State Duty Commander

The State Duty Commander (SDC) oversees the State Control Centre, with regular contact between the State Operations Centre and the Regions to co-ordinate the state's response to incidents.

The SDC imposes Total Fire Bans in consultation with the Bureau of Meteorology, and then manages personnel, operations and facilities at a state level, taking a whole-of-state approach to the allocation of resources based on highest level of need and priority.

Ultimately, the SDC steers the ship operationally, making any key decisions in consultation with other SCC personnel, Regional Duty Commanders and, where necessary, the senior management and individual Incident Controllers.

Management Support Officer

The Management Support Officer provides management and administrative support across the SCC, liaising with agency representatives, disseminating tasks and specific roles within the centre and managing the document control and logs during each shift.

Their role is vital in ensuring that accurate and thorough record keeping is maintained to help with future lessons learned and any investigations that need to take place.

State Air Resource Co-ordinator

Air Operations is a vital part of what we do, with the State Air Resource Co-ordinator (SARC) developing a State Air Operations Plan, and then managing and overseeing all air operations.

The SARC acts on information from the Air Desk, Air Attack Supervisors, Aircraft Officers and the SDC to ensure appropriate co-ordination of the fleet. The SARC takes a whole-of-state approach to air operations, co-ordinating the allocation of the aerial fleet based on the conditions and providing direction on the priorities or incidents that they attend.

Logistics Officer

The Logistics role is to ensure staff, equipment, vehicles and other resources are available to meet the operational needs of the CFS. They arrange the catering, transport, welfare, and any medical or accommodation requirements of personnel in the SCC and anyone required to support field deployments, including any state level Incident Management Teams (IMTs).

During the Kangaroo Island fires, their role involved co-ordinating crews travelling to and from the Island, ensuring there was an appropriate number of trucks and resources on the Island, while also working with air and sea transport providers to ensure personnel were transported to and from the Island in an appropriate and timely fashion.

Logistics also work outside of the SCC to support deployment efforts, most notably providing transport and co-ordination for the 2019 New South Wales deployments.

Work Health Safety (WHS)/Stress Prevention and Management (SPAM)

The WHS and SPAM teams are a crucial part of the team, reporting on any injuries and illnesses from the firegrounds, investigating any accidents or problems and responding to the health and well-being of crews on the ground across the state.

By being in the SCC, they are able to keep across the major incidents and get an idea of where they may be required to provide additional support.

Other Agencies

Depending on the severity of the weather, any ongoing incidents or fire activity and the location of Total Fire Bans, a range of other Emergency Service representatives will join the SCC to provide advice and act as a liaison between the SCC and the various agencies.

Department for Environment and Water

The National Parks and Wildlife Service SA, within the Department for Environment and Water (DEW), monitors and provides first response to fires within South Australia's National Parks.

Being in the SCC allows them to work closely with the CFS to ensure that there is information flow between both agencies about any fire activity occurring in different parts of the state.

When possible, DEW firefighters are supported by CFS and vice-versa. Due to the prescribed burning activity undertaken by DEW outside of Total Fire Bans, DEW personnel tend to have intelligence on the conditions, and are able to provide an understanding on likely fire activity within national park areas.

DEW personnel perform the critical role of Fire Behaviour Analyst and Mapping Support within the SCC.

SA MFS

On days of Total Fire Ban, the MFS is on standby to also provide support to the CFS, particularly with incidents that occur near towns and centres that have an MFS presence.

SAPOL

A SAPOL Liaison will be brought into the SCC to ensure that police can be on the front foot with responding to any community safety such as closing and monitoring roads near the fire ground.

SES

SES attend the SCC to provide any emergency service back-up and support to the CFS. The SES assist CFS with staging area management, base camp management and air operations as required during the Fire Danger Season.

SA Ambulance Service (SAAS)

SAAS liaison works with the SCC and their own agency to ensure resources are redirected to where they are required, and to ensure the SDC and WHS Officers are aware of any treatment being provided to CFS personnel as appropriate.

SA Power Networks/SA Water

When fire affects main utilities, representatives of the relevant agencies join the SCC to ensure they can understand the level of risk, and work quickly and safely to restore the services where possible.

Intel Cell

State Intelligence Officer

A crucial element of the SCC is ensuring a flow of accurate, verified and consistent information throughout the different functions. The State Intelligence Officer oversees the collection, recording, displaying and dissemination of information to ensure that everyone is on the same page with incidents across the state.

They do this through monitoring mapping, sitreps, CRIIMSON and the information received into the SCC from other personnel within the command structure, including Regions and IMTs.

The State Intel Officer reports to the SDC on issues as they arise across the state, and provides feed-in to the public information wing of the SCC, ensuring the information being given to the public is as accurate as possible. They also provide regular planned briefings to other key SCC Functional Leads.

The Intel Officer works with other key members of the State Intel such as Mapping Support Officers, Fire Behaviour Analysts, BOM Embedded Meteorologist and State Planning Officer to ensure that the appropriate information is displayed within the SCC and broader community (through channels such as the website) at all times, and acts as the verifier and validator of all information about incidents taking place.

State Planning Officer

To ensure that we have appropriate coverage and overview of events, the Planning Officer monitors the state's impacts, resources, commitments and any major issues that are arising. They work with areas within the Intelligence Cell to predict and plan for future resource requirements and keep regular contact with their regional counterparts to ensure that a flow of accurate information and appropriate planning is taking place.

Outposted Bureau of Meteorology

During the Fire Danger Season, the Bureau of Meteorology provides a meteorologist who is based at the CFS to provide updates on the seasonal outlook and advice on days of high fire danger.

During activation, the meteorologist works within the Intel Cell, providing regular updates to personnel about wind changes, lightning activity and other occurrences that may impact on firegrounds and increase or alter fire risk around the state.

Other elements of the Cell

The Intel Cell often includes support from mapping experts and fire behaviour analysts, who are able to support the Intel and Planning functions to make decisions with any and all pieces of relevant and appropriate information.

Public Information Cell

A crucial part of ensuring community safety in the lead up to a fire danger day, and throughout, is ensuring public information provided is accurate and distributed as quickly as possible.

State Public Information Officer (SPIO)

The SPIO oversees the Public Information Cell, working to ensure that timely and accurate information is provided to the community across the media, social media and Bushfire Information Hotline channels.

They ensure that the Bushfire Hotline is supported to respond to callers, and works with SAFECOM to ensure there is capacity and capability of the SEICCC as required.

Media Liaison Officer

During days of high fire danger, enquiries into the SCC from the media vary based on audience interest.

It is the Media Liaison's role to ensure a prompt flow of verified and accurate information and incident reports to the media, other agencies and the public.

They are sometimes given with information from members of the public for fact-checking, and support the SDC and other allocated personnel to undertake interviews and responses as required, co-ordinating all media briefings and

activities throughout the activation.

The Media Liaison Officer also works with the Regions to develop Incident Updates as required.

Social Media/Website Officer

With an increase in members of the public using social media as a source of truth, the role of the Social Media and Website Officer is to ensure approved information is uploaded and shared by the organisation in a timely and appropriate fashion.

This role also monitors comments and messages to dispel myths or rumours that may be circulating, and to pick up any trends or growing concerns among community members that need to be addressed through the Public Information channels.

Bushfire Information Line

Dependent on the level of preparedness, the Information Line is stood up when the SCC is activated to ensure that any anyone calling the Bushfire Information Hotline can speak to an operator and clarify any concerns they have about the fire conditions or incidents during the day.

The Information Line is operated by a group of volunteers from the CFS State Operations Support Brigade and the SES, who undertake specific training to be able to help support members of the public with the issues that they raise.

Preseason predictions prove accurate

By: Ali Martin

Prior to each Fire Danger Season, a report is generated predicting areas with above-average fire potential – and this year's prediction was eerily accurate.

Director of Preparedness Operations Brett Loughlin is the CFS representative who teams up with other fire agencies, the Bureau of Meteorology and Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre.

The Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook released in August 2019 had stated that "the 2019/20 fire season has the potential to be an active season across Australia, following on from a very warm and dry start to the year".

Brett said the volume, location and timing of rainfall helped estimate fuel volumes and growth, while the climate outlook for the next few months was also a crucial factor.

This information helps the CFS plan responses in areas of above-average fire potential through strategic planning of assets such as aircraft.

In August, the Lower Eyre Peninsula was identified as having above-average fire potential following heavy rainfall and a bumper cropping season. On November 11 the Duck Ponds fire outside of Port Lincoln burned 235 hectares.

In fact in November there were two cases of Catastrophic fire danger conditions on the Eyre Peninsula.

Kangaroo Island was also identified in both the August and December reports as having above-average fire potential.

"We were seeing above-average fuel loads in parts, and drier than average vegetation in others, especially in areas of forested and scrub vegetation," Brett said.

"The predictions for Kangaroo Island came to fruition, with almost half the Island being affected by what were, at times, intense bushfires."

The December report referenced the three-month outlook from January to March which highlighted continued hot and dry conditions.

"This weather outlook showed all of South Australia has the potential for significant bushfires, including in the populated areas of the Mount Lofty Ranges, along with dust issues during windy conditions," Brett said.

"Although these reports are predictions, they assisted us in preforming plans for those parts of the state identified as high-risk."

2019-20 Fire Danger Season at a glance

195 Total Fire Bans issued
3 Catastrophic Fire Days
1,930 CFS call outs
2.6 million volunteer hours
480,000 hectares burnt
188 houses destroyed
890 homes & buildings impacted

New headquarters at Keswick

By: Ali Martin

Known as the Emergency Services State Control Centre, the building will see executive and senior management teams from CFS, MFS, SES and SAFECOM co-located. It is situated away from fault lines, floodplains and other risks resulting from foreseeable natural and human-caused disasters.

Not only will the new centre have offices for staff, but there will be space for the CFS Foundation, CFS Volunteer Association and SES Volunteer Association, along with training and meeting rooms.

The new State Command and Control Centre will be on the top level, with all agencies working from a dynamic new space where they can integrate to run incidents.

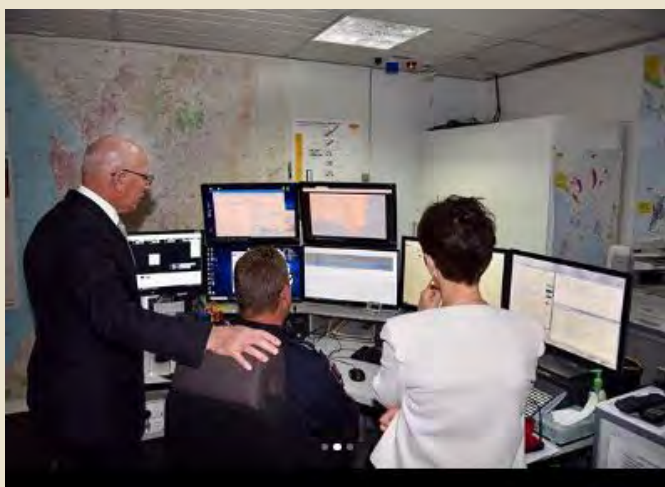
There will be ample parking for volunteers, who are encouraged to visit the new site regularly.

Storage facilities and the ability to house fleet cars and appliances will also be on site, meaning the Thebarton facilities will no longer be necessary.

Construction on the project was due to start in April and more information will be provided to volunteers as the project continues. The project team can be contacted at projecthq@sa.gov.au, or members of the Steering Committee (via Rob Sandford) are available to answer questions.



Governor-General thanks staff and volunteers



His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General of Australia made two CFS visits this Fire Danger Season.

The first, with his wife Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley, followed the Yorketown fire in November when they visited the State Control Centre to thank staff and volunteers for their effort during the catastrophic fire weather and deployments to New South Wales.

They returned on January 7 when they again visited the State Control Centre before travelling to fire-affected areas in the Adelaide Hills and Kangaroo Island.

"Linda and I have been visiting towns left reeling by fires since early October," His Excellency said in an Instagram post.

"Wherever we have gone, several things stand out: the very real and understandable pain and anxiety of individuals impacted, their willingness to think of others even in the most dire of times and, of course, the incredible commitment and performance of volunteers – those on the frontline fighting the fires and those doing whatever is in their power to help others."



Crikey! The Irwins came to KI!

By: Simone McDonnell

The Irwins are synonymous with promoting and protecting wildlife, with the late Steve Irwin's wife Terri and children Bindi and Bob all following in the ecowarrior's footsteps.

Following the devastation to Kangaroo Island's Flinders Chase National Park and the huge reported loss of wildlife that comes from such a fierce fire, Terri and Bob flew in from Australia Zoo to see the damage for themselves.

The Irwins (they are pictured with CFS' Tegan Foster and below CFS and National Parks representatives) dropped in on the Kangaroo Island Incident Management Team on February 12 before heading out with KI Deputy Group Officer Kayne Davis for a look at the fireground.

Joining Kayne on the trip was the National Parks and Wildlife Service's Reece Boulden, who was able to provide the duo with context around the ecological impact of the fires.

The Irwins were thankful for the CFS's help in showing them around the fireground.

"I really appreciated Kayne, along with the South Australia Country Fire Service, for showing us the areas on Kangaroo Island affected by bushfire," Terri said.

"Volunteers like Kayne have done a remarkable job to protect people, property, and wildlife during this crisis fire season. We will do our part to help support Kangaroo Island's recovery by working towards restoring its beautiful environment and wildlife."



PM visits SA during bushfires

By: Brett Williamson

With the Cudlee Creek fire burning, and multiple fires across the western parts of Kangaroo Island still active, Christmas Eve was a busy time for Region 1 Headquarters.

The Regional Control Centre was in one room managing resources for the Incident Management Team (IMT) on Kangaroo Island while the Level 3 IMT for Cudlee Creek was running out of another room. This meant the building was already buzzing when Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Premier Steven Marshall called in at 1pm.

A throng of minders, security and media from around the country completed the procession as the PM toured both IMTs.

Volunteers and staff were greeted by both politicians and thanked for their commitments to the Region.

The boardroom of the Region 1 headquarters was converted into a media room, with the Prime Minister holding a conference to announce the proposed benefits to volunteer firefighters who were spending extended time fighting fires in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.



Agencies pull together for NSW deployment



By: Simone McDonnell

Bushfires had been ongoing since August across the tablelands in the north of New South Wales when the request for help and relief for exhausted NSW personnel was received and the first South Australian deployment was sent on October 10.

With conditions failing to ease in drought-stricken parts of New South Wales, South Australia continued to send personnel to support with firefighting efforts across the state in large groups of firefighters and incident management personnel.

December 10 saw our thousandth South Australian deployed, with around two-thirds of those personnel coming from the CFS. Other agencies involved are the SA Metropolitan Fire Service and Department of Environment and Water, along with the SA State Emergency Service providing Incident Management Team support and the SA Ambulance Service deploying paramedics.

Former Region Two Planning Officer and Jurisdictional Liaison Ann Letcher said the different agencies had pulled

together well to become one SA unit.

"You see them before they get on the plane and they are all in their different Regions or agency groups, but then they hit the ground in NSW, get to know each other and, by the plane ride back, they are mates. It's an excellent experience for them to be a part of."

Monarto CFS Brigade volunteer Robert Barkley said he put his hand up to travel to NSW out of a sense of obligation.

"I volunteered to go to NSW after seeing the news reports about how much larger it had grown and the images from space showing just how big it was.

"I was thinking about how tired everyone else there would be already from battling this series of fires for weeks on end.

"It was an eye-opener for me just to see the destruction all around, but to see everyone from all of the different regions, agencies and states band together to tackle this situation has truly been inspiring. It makes me proud to be a part of the CFS."



Lyndoch CFS Brigade volunteer Cass Barker said there was no hesitation when her pager went off with a request to be deployed.

"They have been battling fires for a while and I wanted to help them out any way that I could."

Cass said being involved in such an extensive fire area was a valuable learning opportunity in her firefighting career.

"It was great to be able to help, and it was an amazing experience for my personal development. I met some truly amazing people."

Region 1 Operations Planning Officer Paul Stribley, who acted as one of the CFS's Jurisdiction Field Liaisons, said the deployments to NSW provided a timely – albeit early – wake-up call to CFS staff and volunteers about the coming fire season.

"There were similar conditions, potential challenges and fire behaviours that we may expect to see in SA as our own summer progressed.

"It was a pleasure to see CFS volunteers integrate seamlessly into operational roles in NSW, working cohesively with volunteer and career firefighters from NSW and Queensland, and also within multi-agency Incident Management Teams."

Deployments continued after Christmas with more than 1,300 South Australians being deployed.



Americans fly in to help SA

By: Ali Martin

A team of 12 North American aircrew landed in Adelaide on January 19 for the first-ever international deployment of aviation specialists to South Australia.

After an unprecedented Fire Danger Season and no end in sight, the CFS requested the assistance of United States and Canadian aircrews to support firefighting efforts.

The team was made up of four air attack supervisors, four air observers and four aircraft officers.

CFS Manager of Aviation Operations Nik Stanley said the US and Canadian personnel provided CFS aircrews with a much-deserved rest to recuperate for the remainder of the season.

"Our crews had been working constantly since mid-November and, in such a specialist and safety critical area of our operations, the avoidance of fatigue is essential," Nik said.

The specialists were given an induction day and then shadowed local crews for a week. They were placed at the Claremont Airbase as part of the Mount Lofty Primary Response Zone (PRZ) and the State Response Zone, Hoyleton, as part of the Mid North PRZ and Edinburgh RAAF base to assist with the Large Air Tanker.

"Thankfully for our ground crews, the operational tempo slowed shortly after the North American crews arrived," Nik

said.

"However, their assistance meant we could still rest our own aviation specialists in case the Fire Danger Season had a late run.

"Although it was fairly quiet for them, there was still a great opportunity to share knowledge and techniques between the three countries, and this will be invaluable in the future."

US Department of Interior All Hazards Program Manager Jason Steinmetz was in Australia serving as a liaison between federal fire agencies in the US and the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council National Resource Sharing Centre. He said it was an honour for US personnel to deploy to Australia.

"Several of our firefighters have worked with the Australians during previous deployments to the US, so this is the opportunity to return that favor, especially as our team will be the first international personnel ever to be deployed into aviation roles in South Australia."

The North American Aviation crew left Adelaide on Sunday, February 16.



Fifty firefighters trained in the Pacific

By: Ali Martin

The relationship between CFS and the Republic of Kiribati in the Pacific Islands has continued to grow in 2019.

Further work in 2020 will see an ongoing focus on training, delivery of tankers and equipment, establishment of maintenance and training schedules and further investigations in to the needs of other island communities.

At the end of November, CFS Pacific Island Liaison Officer Matt Davis, along with trainers Rick Jarvis and Tanya Kuiper, completed Stage 1 of the training pathway.

Matt and Tanya provided training to a further 26 officers from the Kiribati Police Service in Basic Firefighter 1 and Defensive Fire Suppression. This brings the total number of trained firefighters to 50.

"This is an important step in providing a full response capability to the community on the island of Tarawa and allows us to build on these basic firefighting capabilities into the future," Matt said.

"We also talked to them about basic skills drills and a training program for every week. They have even implemented a training activity every month.

"A week before we arrived, they finished building a fire station which they call the Emergency Operations Centre, complete with a storage/meeting/planning room."

Joining Matt and Tanya on the trip was Operational Infrastructure and Logistics Officer Josh Jeffree, who assisted in the handover of two 14 tankers.

"On our previous visit we supplied two tankers, a 24P and a BWC (Bulk Water Carrier) 7. Since that delivery we have had feedback that these were too big for what South Tarawa (the Capital of Kiribati) needed in terms of roadway infrastructure being too narrow," Matt said.

"It was great to have Josh on board as he helped with vehicle maintenance, scheduling of maintenance with the local police service, troubleshooting and upskilling those firefighters previously trained on how to use the two smaller fire tankers.

"Of those tankers we had already supplied, some had major issues, including the brake pedal and clutch seizing. Investigations into how we can assist in the longevity of the equipment we supply is underway to ensure there are tools and parts to address issues and troubleshoot."

Deputy Chief Officer Andrew Stark also travelled to Tarawa as part of the team to assist with working with the community and government officials and provide support to the arrangements.

"Working in this community is unlike anything I have ever experienced," Andrew said.

"The remoteness of the community and the fact that supply of goods is a major undertaking means that, as an agency, the CFS needs to ensure we provide the right type of equipment that can be managed within the country with relative ease. What has been achieved in Tarawa in the short time we have been involved with the country is something we all should be proud of.

"Seeing CFS leading effective and sustainable community development through empowering members of Kiribati Police is a highlight of my career."

On completion of the training, Andrew, Rick, Tanya and Josh travelled home, while Matt went from South Tarawa to Kiritimati (aka Christmas) Island, the second most populated island with a population of more than 10,000 people and situated 3,285km east of Tarawa. This will be the next island that the CFS supplies with equipment and training.

The profile of the island is mainly grassland and smaller community villages, making it susceptible to grassfires and structural fires.

The urban density is smaller with most communities being spread out across the island. The whole island is classified as a sanctuary, with a vast amount of flora and fauna.

To gain access to many areas, permission must be sought from the Ministry of Environment. The island also has a focus on renewable energy and is installing its first solar-powered station which will aim to reduce diesel consumption associated with traditional power plant operations.

There is also a Kiritimati Island Disaster Community Taskforce made up of leaders of community groups who are keen to help with community engagement and training.

"Once external funding has been sourced to progress this part of the project, we can plan for the supply of equipment, tankers and training with a similar process to what has been conducted in Tarawa," CFS Deputy Chief Andrew Stark said.

"Much of this work will be done in consultation with the National Disaster Management Officer and the Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance (PIEMA), who are funded via the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade New Zealand.

"Full support to all projects being undertaken has been given by the Office of the President and includes the establishment of disaster risk management working groups across all of the populated islands."



Queensland faces 1200 fires in two weeks

The start of September saw unseasonably warm weather across parts of the country, with around 1,200 fires breaking out across south-east and central Queensland in the first two weeks.

With so much fire activity, Queensland Fire and Emergency

Services and the Queensland Rural Fire Service were understandably stretched for resources.

Personnel were fatigued and requested support to assist with the fires. CFS volunteers travelled across two rotations over eight days to aid firefighting efforts.

In total, 99 CFS volunteer firefighters and 17 staff and volunteer Incident Management Team specialists – along with personnel from the SA Metropolitan Fire Service, SA Ambulance Service and the Department of Environment and Water – attended to assist Queensland.

CFS leads COVID-19 fight

As the coronavirus threat spread in South Australia, a State of Emergency was declared and the CFS stepped up to provide emergency management support to SA Health.

CFS Chief Officer Mark Jones said the State Co-ordinator (Police Commissioner Grant Stevens) requested emergency management professionals to help establish a State Control Centre.

"Within a few days, we had a fully functioning emergency management team at SA Health's building in Hindmarsh Square. The team consisted of CFS, MFS, SES, SAPOL and the Department for Environment and Water," Mark said.

"I guess it was logical to ask CFS to put together the EMT – we were just coming to end of a fire season in which our incident management skills had been stretched and tested, but we had developed a huge amount of skills."

"It was clear that SA Health was facing a health emergency of unknown scale and duration, and anything partners could do to support them as the control agency had to be a good thing.



"I recognised immediately that the team should be multi-service so as to draw on the best resources that each service had available."

The team started work on March 19 and the first challenge was to create the infrastructure from which they would operate. Leadership of that task was given to Assistant Chief Officer Brenton Eden, who led the team as Commander on a week on/week off basis with Deputy Chief Officer Andrew Stark and SES Deputy Chief Officer Dermot Barry.

"From a blank canvas, I watched as a highly effective emergency management team was constructed," Mark said.

"I shouldn't have been surprised – these were the same officers who worked so hard to fight the states' extreme bushfires this year.

"With good humour and tireless enthusiasm, the team came together and then started to bond with the Health sector to start to give support to their needs."

The team is constructed to undertake the key emergency management functions of Command, Operations, Planning, Intelligence, Logistics and Public Information, along with liaisons from key stakeholders.

The team has assisted with many aspects of the state's

response to the COVID-19 emergency including ensuring vital supplies were available, planning and co-ordinating the massive track and trace processes and repatriation of Australians from overseas to Adelaide.

The team has been boosted by visits from Premier Steven Marshall, Health Minister Stephen Wade and Emergency Services Minister Corey Wingard.

Mark said he was pleased that the emergency services were able to help South Australians once more in their time of need.

"Through the bushfire crisis, I observed our people going hard and sustaining their efforts magnificently.

"This challenge has been no different, and I pay tribute to the combined emergency services and to the entire SA Health workforce who have done so much to keep us all safe.

"The co-ordination provided by SAPOL has been incredible, as has the co-operation of all of our partner agencies."

"As the health risks abated, emergency services officers had a staged handover back to SA Health operations.

"I was mindful that the CFS is extremely busy dealing with the aftermath of the recent fire season, and the preparations for next season are imminent.

"It's also worth remembering that our 'normal' demand continues – CFS responds to vehicle accidents, hazardous materials, special rescues and property fires almost daily.

"I used an expression a few weeks ago that 'we also fight fires' – it serves as a great reminder of the true value of the volunteers and staff of the CFS and its partner agencies."



Australia Day honours for CFS personnel

By: Simone McDonnell

CFS, MFS, SES and Department for Environment and Water firefighters were invited to participate in the Australia Day parade through the Adelaide CBD this year.

The CFS had volunteers from the Athelstone brigade with their pumper following and was thanked by the crowds for its efforts during the fire season.

Australia Day was also a special day for many of our personnel recognised in the 2020 Australia Day Honours.

Local Citizens of the Year

Anthony Baker — Alexandrina Council

Anthony Baker has been an active member of the Mount Compass community and is currently the Mount Compass CFS Brigade Captain. A strong advocate for community facilities, Anthony has also been Vice Chairperson of the Mount Compass War Memorial Community Centre and helps with the co-ordinating of ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day services.

Brian Parker — Wakefield Regional Council

Brian Parker has a long list of groups that he volunteers with, including the Owen CFS, Adelaide Plains Choir, Balaklava Rural Youth and many local sporting clubs. On top of these commitments, Brian was the driving force behind a Men's Shed following the Pinery Fire, and he continues to play a crucial role in its management and expansion.

David Allchurch — District Council of Elliston

David Allchurch is a community champion, volunteering with the Elliston CFS as well as the local Community and Visitor Information Centre and Mid-West Health. He was previously Chair of the Elliston Progress and Tourism Association, and helped the Elliston Area School with tree planting and revegetation. He is known in the community for always giving his time when the need arises.

1 Modris Ozolins — Flinders Ranges Council

Modris Ozolins has been a strong and reliable presence in the Quorn emergency services community. Not only has he been a stalwart of the Quorn CFS, he has also volunteered with the local SA Ambulance Service for more than 30 years. On top of this local acknowledgment, Modris has previously been awarded the Premier's Certificate of Recognition.

2 Pam Herraman — Regional Council of Goyder

Pam is a well-known and well-loved community member in the regional town of Hallett. Starting off as a firefighter in 2003, Pam has been a long-term, reliable member of the Hallett CFS Brigade. In recent years, she has taken an administrative role serving as the brigade's Finance Officer. She is also the local SES Captain, having been involved for more than 25 years.

Peter Richardson — Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council

Peter Richardson was a reliable member of the Saddleworth CFS Brigade and known for his willingness to attend difficult incidents in the local community. After 50 years of service, Peter retired from the Saddleworth Brigade in 2014. Peter has also been a member of the local SES, Meals on Wheels and the Saddleworth Town Peak Body, overseeing many improvements to the community.

Philip Graetz — Mid Murray Council

With 38 years under his belt as a volunteer with Keyneton CFS, Philip Graetz was awarded the Mid Murray Council's Citizen of the Year. Mr Graetz has also volunteered for the past five years as a member of BlazeAid – a charitable organisation that co-ordinates the rebuilding of fences and other structures in fire-ravaged areas.

3 Phillip Simpson — District Council of Grant

Port MacDonnell resident Phillip Simpson has served with the Moorak CFS for more than 50 years. He has been a Lieutenant and Captain with the Brigade, and has previously been recognised with a CFS Medal. He has also been a great contributor to his community as a volunteer with the Port MacDonnell Surf Lifesaving Society, Men's Shed and SA Ambulance Service.

Richard Rackham — Port Pirie Regional Council

Richard joined the CFS in 1986, serving as the Redhill CFS Lieutenant from 1995 to 2004, and is the current Brigade Captain. He has also been involved with many sports clubs, as well as the Crystal Brook Agricultural Bureau, Crystal Brook branch of the SA Farmers Federation (SAFF), SAFF Commerce Committee, Crystal Brook Viteria Silos Committee, Redhill/Koolunga Flood Plain Group, Port Pirie Regional Council Drum Muster Committee and the Redhill Development Association.

Rick Drury — Adelaide Hills Council

Rick was nominated for Citizen of the Year for being a leader of the Paracombe and Inglewood area. Known for always smiling, he is the Group Officer for Gumeracha CFS, was the level two Incident Controller for Cudlee Creek and was deployed to NSW as a Strike Team Leader. Rick is known for his generosity in supporting the community through his local business, Drury Orchards.



Local Community Service Award

4 Allan Pomery — Alexandrina Council

Allan is the Captain of the Port Elliot CFS Brigade. He has volunteered locally and supported the CFS on many interstate deployments over his years of involvement, most recently travelling to support firefighting efforts in NSW. He is also a contributor to his local community, working with the Alexandrina Council and volunteering with St Jude's Church in Port Elliot.

Local Young Citizens of the Year

5 Emily Adams — District Council of Loxton Waikerie

Emily started as a CFS cadet when she was 13. She then went on to complete her BF1 and she now assists the Waikerie CFS Cadet Co-ordinator with the brigade's program. Emily has organised CFS visits to the local primary school to educate students about fire safety. Outside her CFS involvement, Emily volunteers in the local high school canteen and works for Waikerie Out of School Hours Care.

Jai Modra — City of Victor Harbor

Jai Modra has been a volunteer with the Hindmarsh Valley CFS for more than eight years and was previously named Cadet of the Year for his group. He is an active member of the local Youth Advisory Committee and, as a young person living with disability, he strives to improve his processing and co-ordination skills with achievements such as competing in the Sailability SA State Championships.

Travis Goodwin — District Council of Ceduna

Travis Goodwin has been with the Ceduna CFS since February 2006. He joined following a family tragedy as a 15-year-old cadet. He progressed through the training to become a firefighter in 2010 and since then has held numerous positions within the brigade such as training and logistics officer and Lieutenant 3, a position he has held since 2015.



6 Jake Schmidt — Regional Council of Goyder

A shearer by trade, Jake has volunteered in the Robertstown Brigade since March 2017 and is following in the footsteps of his parents, who are both CFS members. Described as a quiet but loyal and hard-working member of the community, he also holds the position as President and Association Delegate of the local tennis club, and often organises working bees for local sporting facilities.

Matthew Gaden — Tatiara District Council

Matthew has been an active member of the Bordertown CFS for just over four years. He is the main fire truck driver and is registered to help the Sherwood CFS and senior brigades. Matthew is also a member of the State Emergency Service, where he is trained in rescue and road crash rescue.

Tiarna Murdock — Kingston District Council

Joining the Kingston CFS in June 2018, Tiarna is known as a quiet achiever but can always be relied on to put up her hand to volunteer for any project. She was SRC Secretary and completed Year 12 at Kingston Community School, where she received the Landmark Agricultural Award for 2018.



Community Events

7 Lyndoch CFS — Cross-sector emergency service demonstration — Barossa Council

A community event led by Lyndoch CFS was a great success in educating the community about the emergency response to critical incidents.

Lyndoch CFS Lieutenant Shane Emms coordinated the event with SAPOL, Major Crash, SA Ambulance Service and local CFS brigades, staging a demonstration vehicle accident fire and rescue to highlight the role of each agency.

The event featured 50 emergency service volunteers and attracted more than 200 people. They also provided practical advice on household fires and what steps people could take to reduce risk.

Shane, who has been an active and dedicated member of the CFS for 27 years, was recognised for his efforts to co-ordinate event logistics and communications in order to deliver a successful, community-focused event.



Awards recognise decades of dedication

By: Ali Martin

In November 2019, Minister for Emergency Services Corey Wingard presented awards recognising the outstanding achievements of CFS volunteers and staff.

Congratulations to the following Emergency Services Medal recipients.

Robin Geytenbeek has been a volunteer firefighter for more than 27 years and has held leadership positions during attendance at regional, intrastate and interstate fires of significance.

Robin has been a staff member since 2007 and in August 2016 he was appointed as CFS Manager Rural Training. He has demonstrated exemplary service in curriculum review and development, and in the delivery of nationally accredited and service-level courses to the sector.

A dedicated leader in youth development and driver of cadet training, Robin sets the standard for mentoring staff and volunteer trainer-assessors. He has greatly increased CFS training quality, capabilities and capacity in this area.



Neville Kies has been a CFS volunteer since May 1978 and was recognised for loyal and dedicated service in the management of Region 2 spare appliances in support of Regional Operations.

His outstanding contribution to managing the Appliance Safety Systems Retrofit Project is highly commendable. Appliances under his care are maintained in excellent condition, and this is as a direct result of his continuing commitment to attention to detail and strict adherence to servicing and maintenance schedule.

Andrew Plush has been a CFS volunteer since 1990 and a staff member involved with Operational Infrastructure and Logistics, in particular the CFS heavy fleet of 800 vehicles, since 2005.

Appointed as Manager Operations Vehicle and Equipment in 2016, Andrew's passion for the safety of our volunteers and diligence in addressing the changing national standards and legislation is widely respected. His implementation of build quality improvements, together with the integration of contemporary design, has resulted in a fleet which is fit for purpose and significantly includes vital safety systems safeguarding the welfare of our volunteers.

Nathan Watts joined the CFS as a volunteer member in 1998 and is an exemplary leader, role model and advocate for mentoring younger volunteer members across the Service.

In his role as Group Officer, he has committed a staggering amount of time ensuring that Brigades continue to unwaveringly deliver the highest standards of service to the community.

In pursuing industry best practice and meaningful change, his positive leadership has been pivotal in achieving and managing the transition of service delivery for the growing Mount Barker community.

Along with medals, some volunteers received commendations for their service.

On Thursday, August 8, CFS crews responded to a heavy vehicle incident on the Sturt Highway. It was a complex and protracted incident involving a head-on collision of two B-double semi-trailers and their flammable cargos, including aerosol cans and grain.

Conditions on the day saw winds in excess of 100km/h and a severe dust storm reduced visibility to less than one metre followed by rain and very cold conditions. Crews were deployed for a total of 10 hours to support SAPOL's investigation, risk mitigation to the public and removal of the badly burned remains of a driver.

Significantly, no further injury or loss occurred, which was a direct result of the actions, professionalism and discipline displayed by the CFS personnel and other supporting Emergency Services Organisations present.

Commendations went to:

Scott Haynes - CFS Regional Training Officer (staff)

Shane Atze - Northern Barossa Group Officer

Gerry Thomson - Para Deputy Group Officer

Matthew Saegenschnitter - Truro Brigade Captain

CFS Volunteer Brigades:

- Truro
- Angaston
- Nuriootpa
- Salisbury
- Tanunda
- Neales Flat
- Eudunda
- Rhynie (Gilbert BWC 13)
- Lyndoch
- Region 2 Air Operations
- Region 2 Operations



Further Commendations went to:

Paul Bebbington joined the CFS as a volunteer firefighter in 2002 and joined staff as a Telecommunications Support Officer in late 2017, bringing his wealth of expertise and detailed industry knowledge.

Paul focused on a new strategy for the financial and business management of the large number of mobile phone and data devices, which are critical operationally reliant assets, to provide enhanced user options at a significantly reduced cost. The strategy included challenging the CFS to design operational systems to ensure we remain contemporary including the provision of vital support through a HelpDesk function.

Kym Eagle has been an outstanding volunteer member of the White Flat CFS Brigade for more than 29 years, serving in many Brigade, Group and Incident Manager leadership positions.

Currently Chairperson of Region 6 Volunteer Management Committee and Group Officer for the Lower Eyre Peninsula (LEP) CFS Group, Kym has guided his Group with patience and professionalism, striving to improve regional training, operational capacity and capability. This

has included driving a recruitment program encouraging volunteers to specifically build on their incident management and leadership skills.

A committed and passionate community member, Kym is self-motivated and endeavours to encourage commitment and dedication in others around him.

Anthony White has dedicated more than 36 years of outstanding volunteer service to the CFS and has held many leadership positions in Region 6 including 16 years as Lincoln Brigade Captain, 12 years as Deputy Group Officer of the Lower Eyre Peninsula CFS Group and 13 years as LEP Communications Co-ordinator.

He regularly travels to Adelaide to represent Region 6 on the State Volunteer Telecommunications Committee and demonstrates exemplary commitment to participating in operational decisions.

Notably after the Wangary fire of 2005, as Deputy Group Officer he worked tirelessly to provide positive and supportive leadership assisting volunteers to recover from this challenging time in CFS history.

Congratulations to Yongala stalwart

By: Simone McDonnell

For more than 40 years, Australian Fire Services Medal recipient Ken Campbell has been a familiar face around the Yongala CFS Brigade.

Joining in 1978, he was Captain of the Brigade between 2003 and 2012 before becoming Group Officer for the Black Rock Group. On top of his local commitments, he is currently the Chair of the CFS Region 4 Regional Volunteer Management Committee and serves as the Region's representative on the Chief Officer's Advisory Council.

A passion for training saw Ken certified as a Trainer and Assessor, providing support to the State and Region while also holding the role of Group Training Co-ordinator from 2008 to 2018.

Regional Commander Sindy McCourt said credits much of Black Rock Group's capability to Ken's commitment to the CFS.

"In his role as Black Rock Group Officer, Ken has supported his brigades to undertake the Hazmat, SCBA and rural firefighting training, which has really boosted their ability to respond to their community," Sindy said.

"As Captain, Group Officer and Crew Leader he has always shown a strong interest in the welfare and well-being of the other firefighters that he works with. Not only is he an asset to the Region, in terms of what he is able to contribute, he's a great bloke, with a strong attitude to get things done for his community."

CFS Chief Mark Jones congratulated Ken for receiving such a prestigious award.

"The Australian Fire Services Medal is awarded to only a handful of recipients across Australia, who go above and beyond the already high standard set by our volunteers," Mark said.

"Ken has shown exceptional leadership within the CFS.

His strong advocacy for his fellow volunteers through his position on the Chief Officer's Advisory Panel, along with his work as a trainer within Region 4 and the State, has no doubt led to many more firefighters being skilled and retained within the organisation, increasing the safety and scope of the Yongala CFS Brigade and Black Rock Group to respond to incidents within the community.

"Ken epitomises the CFS's ethos and has been a reliable trainer, mentor and first responder on a local, Regional and statewide level over his 40-year involvement."

As a firefighter, Ken has undertaken numerous interstate deployments, including Victoria in 2008 and 2019 and the recent NSW fires, and has answered the call to attend fires across South Australia, including the Wangary, Kangaroo Island, Sampson Flat, Pinery and Bangor fires.

We're the Pride of Australia

By: Sarah Spencer

Rallying across the country to fight bushfires in New South Wales has seen the CFS receive a joint national award on behalf of South Australia's emergency services.

Region 3 Commander Ray Jackson attended the Pride of Australia National Award Ceremony at Doltone House in Sydney on December 11.

For the past 15 years, News Corp Australia has honoured our nation's unsung heroes through these annual awards. They recognise the selfless acts of courage and heroism displayed by ordinary Australians in the face of adversity.

This year, however, the award was not bestowed on a specific individual but rather the emergency services – particularly fire authorities – across the country for rallying together to fight the recent bushfires in NSW.

The award acknowledges the extreme risk and sacrifices fire crews assume every time they answer the call of duty.

"We are incredibly thankful to all of our deployed personnel who have given up their time, and to their families and their employers who have made sacrifices to ensure our presence continues in NSW," Ray said.

"I know many of our CFS volunteers join to make a

difference in their local community, but through your deployment to NSW, you have made a contribution to something much bigger."

Ray represented SA and was accompanied by emergency

services staff from Victoria, Queensland and NSW. The awards were published in The Advertiser (SA), Herald Sun (VIC), Daily Telegraph (NSW) and The Courier-Mail (QLD).



Invitation to Opening of Parliament

By: Ali Martin

Emergency services personnel were invited to the Opening of Parliament on Wednesday, February 5.

After Parliament was prorogued (discontinued) late last year, the first sitting day for our elected representatives was met with traditional pomp and ceremony.

His Excellency the Governor of South Australia Hieu Van Le inspected the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and SA Police Band outside of Parliament House before delivering a speech to Parliament.

With the Fire Danger Season being front of mind for many

over January, the SA Country Fire Service was asked to be part of the ceremonies and extended this invitation to SA Metropolitan Fire Service, SA State Emergency Service and National Parks and Wildlife Service SA representatives.

Twelve CFS volunteers (two from each Region) were nominated by their Regional Commanders to take part in the ceremony. They were joined by five representatives from each of the other agencies in a guard of honour outside Parliament House.

After inspecting the RAAF and Police, the Governor met each emergency service representative before volunteers were invited into the Gallery of the Legislative

Council to witness his speech, which included a special acknowledgement of their efforts.

The guests and their partners were then welcomed to a reception at Government House.

CFS representatives included:

Region 1: Darren Sanders and Bill Gibson

Region 2: David Phillips and Rob Styling

Region 3: Adam Hurle and Garrie Negus

Region 4: Jill Krebs and Brett Wittwer

Region 5: Allan Marshall and Shane Francis

Region 6: 'Pump' Davey and Katie Freak



Sam celebrated for strategic support

By: Simone McDonnell

Australian Fire Services Medal (AFSM) recipient Sam Sanderson (pictured left in photo) has had an accomplished 25-year career managing fires across Australia.

Sam joined the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) South Australia within the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) in 2005. Before that, he served with the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry SA.

Starting with the NPWS as a Fire Management Officer, Sam progressed into his current role as Manager of Fire Operations and has demonstrated exceptional service in delivering prescribed burning and fuel reduction programs across the state.

Sam plays a crucial role in firefighting operations, acting as DEW's State Duty Officer in the CFS's State Control Centre (SCC) and interagency Incident Management Teams (IMTs).

CFS State Duty Commander Yvette Dowling said Sam was an asset to the team.

"Sam is heavily engaged with our operations, helping to co-ordinate DEW's response to fire events across the state. He's a reliable and safe pair of hands when it comes to gathering intelligence and offering advice on firefighting strategies.

"He always goes out of his way to help solve any issues that arise and is a constant source of knowledge and support for the State Duty Commanders and other personnel within the IMT and SCC."

CFS Chief Officer Mark Jones also congratulated Sam on his AFSM.

"The Department for Environment and Water is the largest



land owner in the state and is responsible for some of South Australia's most important ecological sites," Mark said.

"The intelligence and firefighting capability that National Parks and Wildlife brings to the table is vital in helping to keep South Australia safe.

"Having Sam, with his background and experience, as a part of our operations and acting as a conduit between our agencies is incredibly important. This recognition of his efforts is very well deserved and cements the important relationship between CFS and DEW.

"As we know, prescribed burning is an important part of bushfire prevention, but it's also a tough job to get right. Sam's work in creating state and national standards for

prescribed burns has no doubt proved incredibly useful in ensuring that we can keep communities near our national parks safe."

During his 15 years of service with NPWS, Sam has worked to develop fire management capability and standards for prescribed burning, leading the introduction and implementation of aerial operations in prescribed burning practice. He has also delivered specialist training courses to staff and volunteers and has mentored other personnel in prescribed burning and aerial operations.

Last year he was made chair of the National Fire Equipment and Design Officers Group, and continues to demonstrate exemplary service to fire management and community safety in South Australia.

Service medals for Naracoorte duo

By: Simone McDonnell

South East volunteers Allan Marshall and Shane Francis have shared the honour of receiving the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) for their years of involvement with the CFS.

Both Allan and Shane (pictured left with Shane, right, and the Governor of South Australia) have worked tirelessly to improve the Naracoorte Brigade and Group, as well as the individual CFS personnel they have served alongside.

They were presented their medals by the Governor of South Australia, His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le, during a reception at Government House in September.

The AFSM is the highest honour for CFS personnel, and was awarded based on the duo's extraordinary contribution to their brigades and communities.

For more information on nominating a colleague for any of our awards or medals, visit the awards and recognition page under the Admin section of the Volunteer Portal.

Allan Marshall

Allan joined the CFS in 1977, starting as a firefighter before holding the ranks of Brigade Captain, Deputy Group Officer and Hazmat Training Officer. He has also been the Brigade Peer Support Officer for Stress Prevention and Management (SPAM) for almost 21 years.

Over his years of involvement, Allan has shown exceptional

leadership, with an involvement in training, logistics, administration and OHSW (Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare). Allan has also been a strong support to the next generation of CFS volunteers through his encouragement and supervision of the brigade's cadets.

Through his work with SPAM, Allan has been recognised for the help he has provided to CFS personnel who have needed support after traumatic events in the community.

Shane Francis

Shane joined the CFS in 1978, and over his 41 years he has been a Brigade Lieutenant, Deputy Group Officer and currently holds the position of Group Officer.

Shane has shown an unwavering commitment to the CFS, helping as both Brigade Equipment Officer and Group Equipment Officer, as well as acting as a bushfire investigator. His strong focus and leadership on protecting members of his brigade has seen a great improvement in OHSW practises across the organisation.

Through his work, he has been able to support and cultivate a strong culture within his brigade, which has vastly improved the capabilities of individual members and across the CFS.



Defence joins Bushfire Efforts



By: Simone McDonnell

The Federal Government's unprecedented response to this year's bushfire season, Operation Bushfire Assist was announced by the Prime Minister on January 4.

Across Australia, more than 6,500 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel were engaged with the Operation including around 3,000 reservists on compulsory callout.

Joint Taskforce 1111 (JTF) was setup to support the emergency and recovery efforts in South Australia and Tasmania under the leadership of 9th Brigade, headquartered at Keswick Barracks.

Support to the bushfire events in South Australia involved soldiers from 9th Brigade units across the state and Tasmania as well as the 6th Brigade unit, 16th Regiment, based in the Adelaide Hills. Other crucial support came from 1st Brigade in Darwin and 17th Brigade, to name a few. The JTF was further boosted by troops from the New Zealand Defence Force.

At its peak, the Taskforce had almost 1,400 soldiers deployed at the Headquarters, Adelaide Hills and Kangaroo Island. Those on the ground undertook varied tasks to support the CFS and local community, including clearing roads and debris - making the roads around the fire ground safe.

They assisted BlazeAid to repair damaged fences, providing medical care and supporting the wildlife park in

their caring for sick and injured koalas.

The ADF also played a crucial role, overseeing the installation and operation of a the Water Purification and Desalination System, supplying much needed water across Kangaroo Island, while its critical water infrastructure was assessed and repaired. The system produced more than 3.6 million litres of potable water, ensuring the Island could continue to be open and safe for travellers and residents alike.

"We were incredibly proud to be a part of the firefighting efforts," said Lieutenant Colonel Peter Morgenthaler, the Commanding Officer of 10th/27th Battalion, Royal South Australian Regiment, which supported efforts on Kangaroo Island.

"It was really important for us to work with the other emergency services, to help respond to the needs to the local community.

"We worked to support SA Water, the State Emergency Services, National Parks and Wildlife Service SA, and of course, the CFS. It was good to be an extra set of hands, helping with clearing and cleaning up, getting out and helping to fix fences, and generally just being able to help where we were needed."

The compulsory call out was declared complete on January 27, as rain started to fall across the country, with a number of professional ADF troops and some reservists staying on in a voluntary role.

Eckermann brothers hang up their helmets

By: Ali Martin / Nicole Ely

Two South Australian brothers are hanging up their helmets after collectively achieving 100 years of firefighting service between the state's fire organisations.

Paringa CFS firefighter Alan Eckermann joined the CFS in 1962 and has clocked up 57 years of volunteer service.

His brother, MFS Riverland Commander Kevin Eckermann, joined the MFS in 1975 and retired last year after 44 years.

Alan, who is a CFS Operational Support Officer, said he was always concerned about fire as he lived on a farm. He joined the CFS after a local saw mill burned down.

"Dad always said to me, 'help the community because you never know when the community will help you'. That stuck with me all my life," Alan said.

"It's something that you get a real passion for. I'm going to miss it - retiring is one of the hardest things I've had to decide."

CFS Deputy Chief Officer Andrew Stark said there were many families involved in the service and it was wonderful to celebrate Alan and Kevin's achievements.

"Alan's commitment to his local community has seen him spend more than half a century protecting it. Since he stopped riding the fire truck in 2016 he's been in the radio room, and is now passing on his skills and knowledge to the next generation."



Kevin said he has always had a passion for serving the community.

"That's what led me to join the MFS 44 years ago, and I've loved every minute of my career since. While I'll miss my colleagues and the uniform, my wife Rhonda and I look forward to enjoying our retirement together."

MFS Acting Chief Officer, Paul Fletcher said Kevin is a highly regarded member of the MFS.

"Kevin is a hard-working and much loved member of the MFS who has a great passion for serving his community. We will greatly miss his service, and congratulate him and his brother Alan on their century of firefighting in South Australia."

CFS thanks the Salvos for the grub!

By: Simone McDonnell

Every fire comes with its own unique set of logistical issues, but the one constant is the need to feed our personnel and the affected communities.

As our firefighters returned exhausted from the firegrounds, they were greeted with the smiling faces and delicious food, provided by the Salvation Army's Emergency Services Team.

In total, the Salvos provided over 28,000 meals to Emergency Service personnel during this year's Fire Danger Season, with presences at Duck Ponds, Cudlee Creek and the Ravine Fire complex on Kangaroo Island.

The Salvation Army's Mark Foyle said getting involved with the fires forms one crucial part of their role.

"The Salvo's ethos is that when a disaster strikes, no one

should have to go it alone- we are always prepared and we know that the best way to support communities is to meet them at the point of need," Mark said.

"We served so many people who were at the point of exhaustion- they were suffering from the heat, from the conditions on the ground, and for many, from the trauma of the whole situation."

"Our crews that attend fires have the training to not only serve the meals, but also to chat to people and provide some really basic mental health first aid."

"Yes, it's been a long summer, but we know that these fires will also have a long term affect and that the road to recovery will be long, and complicated for many of the people who have been affected- so as the fires are out, we may be packing up our catering gear, but we will continue to maintain

a presence in the communities."

As well as the immediate support through the preparation and serving of meals, the Salvation Army also acts as a support agency for people affected by fires, and other natural disasters, providing assistance both straight away, and long-term, in affected areas.

Salvation Army Meal numbers at a glance:

- Port Lincoln - 600
- Yorktown - 1366,
- Balhannah - 1345,
- Gumeracha - 7078,
- Kersbrook - 310,
- KI - 17712.

Weather phenomenon

By: Ali Martin

The Bureau of Meteorology has embedded a Meteorologist in CFS headquarters for several years now.

Severe Weather Meteorologist, Kylie Egan was again embedded this year, working side by side to ensure our strategies and firefighting techniques have the latest weather forecasts and fire behaviour analysis.

"Over the time it's been good, we've built up strong relationships with people at CFS and we know not just those in headquarters but the Regions," Kylie said.

"I feel like this season in particular for me, those relationships with people at a Regional level have been strengthened through working on the Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island fires in the thick of it all."

This year provided a challenge for everyone dealing with fires, and the meteorologists were no different.

"There were lots of interesting fire weather days, and challenging forecasts where we had to get critical information out to for planning or on the day of the event get it as quickly as we could."

It wasn't just the weather forecasts, but the complexities around terrain, and fire behaviour in the Adelaide Hills region.

"Any time you have a fire burning in that complex, steep terrain, it is made more complicated by wind effects such as channelling or gully winds which can be quite localised.

"Not only do you have the large scale weather features, but the local weather effects coming into play. Which means although sometimes you can pick the likely phenomena, the strength and timing of those local effects can mean it's a difficult process."

Providing intel for Kangaroo Island was no easier, with the local effects there meaning weather forecasting and



Embedded Meteorologist Dr Mika Peace giving a briefing and speaking to State Duty Commander Yvette Dowling.



predicting the fire behaviour was again difficult.

"KI has local effects due to coastal influences, so just being able to get a handle on how exactly those coastal winds were effecting fire behaviour was also difficult."

"Both the major fires proved to be quite challenging due to terrain, topography and as well as vegetation types."

On top of that, there were several days in December and January where lightning moved across the state, bringing the potential for more fire starts.

Although we had complexities in South Australia, meteorologists throughout Australia shared their stories.

"During the thick of it, it can be quite isolating just doing what you need to do, but we have quite a strong community of embedded meteorologists so we connect with those working interstate to share our experiences."

"We share ideas and discuss what's working with different technology and we're quite open about what's working for us."

DEW holds Prescribed Burns workshop



By: Simone McDonnell

Prescribed burning is an important part of South Australia's bushfire risk management, with a great deal of preparation and planning undertaken to ensure the safety of the community and any natural habitats or environmental impact.

With extended Fire Danger Seasons seeming to be the new normal, the window for safe and effective prescribed burning is narrowing each year, with the ideal times being in autumn (before the winter rains) and spring (as the fuel loads start to dry out). Each burn comes with its own consideration around the location and risks, including the fuel loads and conditions, as well as the temperature, humidity and any wind on the planned day.

In South Australia, prescribed burns are undertaken by the land management agencies and some CFS brigades. The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) completes a large and challenging program each season on both public and private lands across the state and works closely with the CFS and other agencies to ensure that, if called upon, support and back up is in place.

To aid in this process, the National Parks and Wildlife Service SA (NPWSSA - a division within DEW) ran a two-day Prescribed Burning Operations Officer Workshop in June last year, bringing together officers from across NPWSSA and CFS, as well as personnel from Forestry SA, SA Water and the Bureau of Meteorology.

The workshop provided a unique opportunity for staff to come together as a statewide multi-agency group of practitioners to discuss changes to science, technology and best practice since they have each attended their initial prescribed burning training. The workshop also provided an opportunity to reflect on what's working well and to identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC), Stuart Ellis AM addressed the group, presenting on the importance of prescribed burning as a tool in hazard reduction and community safety – particularly in light of significant national incidents such as the Victorian bushfires in 2009.

In total, 79 people attended the conference, with nine CFS personnel, including the STC's Scott Turner, who is one of our Prescribed Burning Officers.

"It was really useful because it was the first time we had everyone in the one location from across all of the agencies. The workshop provided an opportunity to hear firsthand about burning in different vegetation types across the state.

"There were varying degrees of experience in the room so it gave us all a chance to review some of the systems used in writing burn plans and refresh our knowledge, bringing us all onto the same level with updated scientific knowledge on fuel loadings, fire behaviour, and the constraints around running prescribed burns."



National Parks and Wildlife Service SA: KI Dunnarts

The only place in the world where the Kangaroo Island (KI) dunnart is found is on Kangaroo Island — now that's special!

This small, pointy nosed marsupial was is endangered there has been much effort over the years to restore their habitat and reduce the number of feral cats that prey on them, in a bid to help dunnarts' survival.

Here's everything you need to know about this species, their habitat and how they are recovering after the 2019/20 bushfires:

Pre-bushfire population

Before the recent bushfires it was estimated that between 300 and 500 KI dunnarts lived on Kangaroo Island.

All recorded sightings of the marsupial since 1990 have been within the western end of the island.

Post-bushfire population

Post-bushfires, initial assessments indicated a significant decline in the KI dunnart population, with more than 90 per cent of its habitat burnt.

The exact number of native animals that perished has not been confirmed.

On 11 February the Commonwealth Government named the KI dunnart as one of the top 10 species under threat following the bushfires.

KI dunnart recovery effort

To better understand the bushfire impacts on the KI dunnart populations and other native wildlife species, ecologists are assessing small remnants of unburnt habitat on the western end of the island looking for signs of wildlife.



Local private land conservation organisation Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife (volunteer organisation) has continued post-bushfire to work in partnership with private landholders on threatened species monitoring using motion-sensing cameras.

KI dunnarts were detected on cameras at a previously known site, just a few days after the fires burnt through privately-owned conservation land.

The same monitoring approach is being used in the Island's national parks, with about 50 cameras set up in 12 of the larger unburnt patches of land. These cameras have spotted KI dunnarts in remnants of Flinders Chase National Park and Ravine des Casoars Wilderness Protection Area.

Feral cats are a major threat to the Island's special natives — particularly following the bushfires where little habitat remains.



Feral cat management activities, such as trapping and humane destruction, is also underway on the island to support the recovery of native animals like the KI dunnart.

Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife in partnership with Australian Wildlife Conservancy have built a cat-proof fence around one known KI dunnart habitat to help lessen the threat of the remaining feral cat population and will continue 24/7 feral cat management at known KI dunnart sites within private conservation land.

SES's Humanihuts put to use

By: Simone McDonnell

After close to three years of designing, planning, building and testing, the SES's Humanihuts had their emergency response debut during the Kangaroo Island Fires.

With the ability to establish up to 32 huts, and capacity to sleep up to eight people each, the huts provided crucial accommodation and base camp facilities for emergency service personnel deployed to help with firefighting efforts on the Island in January.

They were particularly useful with accommodating day sleepers, ensuring they could get a good sleep before their shifts, with the huts designed to block out sunlight and restrict noise more effectively than the standard tent camps. The 32 huts, along with over 100 standard tents and marquees lined with camp stretchers formed the Kingscote Base Camp which at times saw the site accommodate up to 450 personnel.

Andrea Geytenbeek from the SES said they were happy with the first deployment of the huts.

"The feedback that we had from those who stayed there was really good. We have never had a base camp that big, with so many agencies able to be accommodated on site," she said.

The Kangaroo Island fire activity provided its own challenges,

with the base camp needing to be relocated from Parndana to Kingscote.

"With the fire threatening the middle parts of Kangaroo Island, a call was made to move the base camp. It was a huge body of work - but with the Australian Defence Force's support, we were able to do the full move in 48 hours."

While Parndana's camp was set up close to amenities, crews weren't going to risk needing to move the camp again, so in the move to Kingscote it was set up in a field with no infrastructure in place where they then had to think outside the square to get power and running water onto the site.

"We should be proud of our efforts literally with nothing there, we had to think outside the square. We've never had to move a base camp before due to fire, but over the course of the fire event we did this as well as evacuating twice due to fire impact threat, then ironically, we had to evacuate one night due to rain and flooding."

Given this was the first use of the Humanihuts, the SES acknowledges there are lessons that they will take away from this event,

"The closeness of staging and base camp wasn't ideal at Parndana, but we were able to improve the layout when we redesigned the set up at Kingscote."

"We appreciated the feedback we were getting along the way because it helped us with the continual improvement of the Base Camp."

Andrea also credited the volunteers, who put in an incredible effort to keep the base camp functioning.

"The Volunteers involved in the Base Camp did everything that was asked of them really going above and beyond, even at one point cleaning the toilets and huts until we could engage professional cleaners. They were managing the accommodation needs of hundreds of people on 12 hour shift rotations."

"What was asked of them was incredible, for the hours that they were doing were amazing, helping with trouble shooting and offering to put their hands up for the next rotation. It wasn't a glamorous role but they loved the interaction with people."

"They were counsellors, negotiators, and even plumbers!"

At the end of the deployments, the Humanihuts were cleaned down and packed into their shipping containers, with the SES concentrating on now providing additional training for their personnel, to increase the number of people who can take the lead with coordinating a Base Camp incorporating the Humanihut set up for future events.

Saving your own home.

By: Ali Martin

Ray Jackson started volunteering as a CFS Cadet in Brukunga in 1982. He's volunteered and then worked for CFS basically ever since, and is now Region 3 Commander. He has been to countless fires, but never had to defend his own home, until the Cudlee Creek fire threatened his Harrogate home.

Being a Regional Prevention Officer for several years, and having his property used for training Fire Prevention Officers, Ray has always kept his acreage well maintained.

"We have a plan in how we prepare, we shift the fire wood back up to the shed, every year the cattle are locked in the paddocks around the house until there's not a blade of grass on the ground. Our landscaping is minimal adjacent to the house, with no vegetation or bushes up to the house.

"It's been a drought year so the lawns were quite dry so we were a bit more prepared than usual we also make sure we have water, rakehoes and the hoses all ready to go. We have a fire hose reel at the back of the house, dedicated fire water and a generator to run pumps and the house if we should lose power."

In the lead up to December 20, Ray had been flat out, having been deployed to Queensland twice, Victoria and New South Wales undertaking the role of Jurisdictional Liaison Officer. Ray also assisted with organising the deployments of volunteers to Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.

"Knowing the forecast the day before I'd brought the generator down and filled it up with fuel, started it just to be sure. I'd only cleaned out the gutters the week before so I knew they were ok."

On the day, Ray was working in the Murray Bridge headquarters and saw the reports of the fire when it started in Region 2, so started monitoring the reports.

"I knew we were in a bit of trouble at home when the fire crossed Onkaparinga Valley Road," he said.

Ray was conflicted about leaving his Region, until Tim McNeilly offered to come in and fulfil the Regional Duty Commander role.

"I felt terrible because we had a fire at Lameroo / Coonalpyn and it was a real wrench to leave the office and head home."

Checking on his wife's family home at Brukunga where they are scheduled to move to in the coming months, Ray put sprinklers on and left to go to Harrogate.

"When I got home I told Tania to put kids in the car and go. I knew that we were in trouble and that it was going to come in a hurry and I was probably better off being on my own because I wouldn't be worried about them as well.

"When I sent them away I knew I had about an hour and a half so they'd be safe. I went out restarted the generator, put cattle at the back of the house, got the sprinklers going and knew I was as ready as I could be.

"I was able to listen to the aircraft so had fair idea of where the fire was. I had three neighbours who also stayed – their wives and children meeting Tania in Murray Bridge.

He said having everyone together was a blessing as everyone who stayed behind was in contact and we just needed to let one person know we were ok.

The neighbours all checked on each other, but Ray said there was one moment where a friend went missing.

"That was the longest 15 minutes of my life – you don't go rushing into your mate's shower very often thinking they may be burnt. Turns out he left his phone in the car and went to help a friend...."

The property was hit with the wind change.

"I've been doing this for a long time, and really my key training and understanding of fire behaviour kicked in.

"I've been talking to the public and community engagement for years and I think the key thing for me to reiterate is knowing you can go inside, you can have some water and you will still be



safe in the house while it's being hit with embers.

"All of those messages in the back of my head told me it was going to be ok."

Ray lost fencing, but no stock, and the next day he found his four chickens huddling in a corner, with freshly laid eggs. He said one thing that helped was having sprinklers in the paddocks and getting the fuel load down!

One thing Ray wasn't prepared for though was the mental stress of the situation.

"My job is all about making decisions. I distinctly remember standing in a paddock and Tania asking what I wanted to do – I didn't know, which was a really alien emotion for me."

"For us the healing really started when we had a working bee. During the fire from about 3pm I had people texting me and trying to reach me. At that time I really only needed to talk to the neighbours and Tania so I wasn't able to respond. We were overwhelmed by the offers of help and we felt the working bee was a good opportunity to do that.

"It was cathartic to have about 50 people there and in our micro community working on the four properties. People from all over the CFS family showed up, from Pinnaroo, Waikerie and Blythe. It was amazing to see everyone get stuck in and help, it was a pressure relief valve."

That little micro community has grown stronger since the fires, Ray said they always looked out for each other, but given it was the first time some of them had defended their property it was an eye opener.

"I didn't understand previously how much of a barometer (CFS members) we can be for the community until one of our neighbours said to Tania, "we knew we were in trouble when we saw Jacko drive up your driveway".

"It really made me think how much people are watching what you do and following your reactions in situations like that.

"It brings home the real importance of setting good examples with property preparation and responding to the threat of impact from a fire because you don't know who is watching."

But there's also a lesson, he said in it being ok to look after yourself.

"It's ok to go and look after yourself and your property and your family, don't ever feel guilt for that."

"Always remember the CFS family is there for you."



'Give it a go', says Bobbie



By: Simone McDonnell

Bobbie Rice doesn't want her American accent to throw you – she feels 'Aussie' through and through.

After almost 33 years of volunteering with the CFS – and on the back of two deployments to NSW, along with attending Cudlee Creek, KI and other fires across SA this year – she has well and truly earned her stripes.

Bobbie has been a firefighter for more than three decades, primarily with Belair CFS, along with a stint in Region 1 Operational Support.

She was one of the first females to join the ranks of the Mitcham Hills CFS Group (now Sturt Group) alongside Tony Tiller and Vanessa Medder, both to Eden Hills CFS coming up from Cadets in September 1986.

Reflecting on her experience, Bobbie said while there were challenges when she first joined the ranks, over years they faded away, with the benefits and friendships she gained outweighing the struggles she originally felt.

"Getting involved with CFS competitions and being a Trainer Assessor on courses helped me hone the skillsets I needed and allowed me opportunities to make friends in the CFS on a statewide basis."

Bobbie took advantage of the variety of extended pathways, getting involved in the early days of the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System, then later specialising in instructing breathing apparatus (BA), basic firefighting and bushfire investigation as well as being part of the Mitcham Council Bushfire Prevention Committee.

She has held multiple roles at Belair including Administration Officer, Assistant Training Officer and Logistics officer. She has also had a long history in volunteering with motorsport events, starting with the Adelaide GP Formula 1 back in 1989 and continuing onwards to this year's Superloop Adelaide 500.

Bobbie said her time with the CFS had been incredibly useful for all facets of her life.

"I learned heaps from all the different past and existing positions I have held and currently hold at Brigade and Regional levels, particularly being able to apply some of the knowledge and skillsets acquired to my own geological/oceanographic/bushfire prevention consulting business.

"I have worked with some wonderful trainers and assessors, learning from the variety of course presentations to present and work towards positive contributions."

Over the years, Bobbie has seen plenty of changes within the CFS, particularly in the area of training, where WHS and fireground technology have evolved and training has had to adapt to meet the growing needs of volunteers, particularly taking the training courses to the volunteers.

"Whilst being a Breathing Apparatus Trainer/Assessor for over 28 years, I've been privileged to be involved in heaps of 'evolutions' of courses including changes from the Draeger A100 (negative pressure sets with the heavy steel cylinders) to Draeger & Sabre positive pressure sets (with light weight FRP aluminium cylinders) and then on to the present Draeger PSS500 sets (lightweight carbon fibre-wrapped aluminium cylinders).

"The BA training facilities and exercises at the different facilities across the state also continue to evolve and develop, most recently with the Brukunga State Training Centre's northern open space drills facility decommissioned and transitioned to the new one in the multi-story tower."

Bobbie's advice for anyone interested in joining or increasing their involvement in the CFS, is: "Put your hand up and give it a go!"

"If you are not initially comfortable with firefighting, try operational support," Bobbie said.

"If you aren't satisfied, change your role. The Volunteer Portal has been revamped and pathways and online training modules are on there – take a look and take advantage of the opportunities that the CFS presents."

OBITUARY

Peter Malpas

In June, the CFS was advised of the passing of Mr Peter Malpas, previous EFS/CFS Deputy Director.

In 1949, Constable Peter Malpas was seconded from his usual police work to assist then EFS Director Fred Kerr.

They worked well together, so in 1951, Peter was asked to be formally seconded to the EFS, where he became Fred's

right-hand man for many years.

Peter was one of a small group of police officers who became the nucleus of the EFS administration team and was promoted to Senior Constable in 1961.

When the CFS was established in 1978, Peter became an Inspector and later Superintendent in charge of Fire

Co-ordination and Control and Service Training. In May 1980 he was appointed Deputy Director.

He retired in 1983 after 32 years of service with the EFS and CFS. By that time, he was a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) and British Empire Medal (BEM).

Incident Management Teams celebrated

By: Kathy Baklan

To ensure CFS has the capability to respond to and manage major incidents anywhere within the state, we operate four Level 3 Incident Management Teams (IMTs) throughout the entirety of the year on a rotational on-call basis.

Consisting of 34 personnel during the peak Fire Danger Season, roles within the team include Level 3 Incident Controller (IC) and Deputies; Operations, Planning, Logistics, Public Information Officers and Deputies; Plans Officers, Resources Officers, IC Assistants, Management Support Officers, Mapping Support, Media Liaison Officers, Staging Area Managers and Safety Advisors – all overseen by an IMT Co-ordinator.

More than 160 personnel are currently operating within this system – including support capacity personnel who are unable to be on call due to work or personal reasons – from across the state, enabling team members to be on scene at an Incident Control Centre within a short period of time.

These teams are normally deployed for up to seven days and have day and night shift capability. However, while a significant number of personnel respond as part of the team's support from Regional Incident Management, more personnel are always needed.

Encouragement is always given to those already responded as part of a Level 2 IMT to continue working within the team once the Level 3 Team has arrived.

The role of the IMT is to assess, plan, implement and monitor strategies for the mitigation of an incident. While we typically see these people responding to major bushfires, they can respond to All-Hazard should there be a requirement.

Many of our people have been deployed both nationally and internationally to assist with incident management – for example, they recently assisted with the Emergency Management Team for COVID-19.

Not only are the teams made up of volunteers and staff of CFS but also from the Department for Environment and Water, MFS, SES and SAFECOM.

Incident Controller Assistant – Mitchell Fitzgerald

- I have been a volunteer at the Belair CFS Brigade for six years and a staff member for three.
- I was the IC Assistant for two deployments at the Kangaroo Island Ravine complex. It was a bit of a learning curve for me, being new to Incident Management, but a really rewarding experience. I assisted a number of Incident Controllers, and it was interesting to see how busy they are and the range of problems and decisions they need to make over the course of a day.
- The pace of an incident was a challenge. The intensity of a protracted incident ebbs and flows, so learning to respond to that was a challenge. However, it is inspiring to see the team rise to meet the demand.
- It was rewarding to see the community come together and help each other, and knowing that the CFS was a part of that was rewarding.

Management Support Officer – Karen Shinnick

Admin Co-ordinator and Lieutenant 2 of the East Torrens Operational Support Brigade based in Uraidla. Her husband and sons are members of the Summertown and Districts Brigade. Karen is employed part-time as Admin/Accounts Clerk and also has her own book-keeping business.



What was your role in the IMT in the most recent fire incident you were involved with, and what are the key aspects of your role?

I joined State IMT as a Management Support Officer in 2019, so Cudlee Creek was the first incident that I had been involved with. Management Support is part of the Planning Section of the IMT but can be required to provide admin services to anyone within the IMT. Predominantly document management and record keeping, distribution of Incident Action Plans, documents etc.

What interested you about working in the IMT?

I wanted to gain an understanding of how IMTs work and to be able to then use that information within our own brigade, which is involved in incident management for lower-level incidents.

What has been the most challenging aspect about your IMT role?

Meeting members of my team for the first time while also learning about my role 'on the fly' as such.

What has been the most rewarding part of working in the IMT?

Being based at the Mount Barker headquarters for that incident, we had members of the public donating supplies like bottled water to be distributed to the volunteers. They were all very grateful for the work of the CFS and it's great to be a part of that.

My favourite quote is... "Hope for the best, prepare for the worst" (which is very relevant for our emergency services)

Operations Officer – Malcolm Amos

Joined the EFS back in 1975 and then continued as a brigade member at Eden Hills. It's been some 45 years – eight of those as Eden Hills Captain – and I'm still an active firefighter.

Back in 1988, my wife and I started Adelaide Belt and Hose and continue to run this business full-time. Recently we celebrated our 32-year anniversary. Throughout this time, we have a lot of interaction and discussions with fellow CFS members, who purchase a lot of our products for their farms or businesses.

Malcolm works as the Operations Officer or Deputy Operations Officer. Some of his roles include:

- Putting the Incident Action Plan (IAP) into action.
- Assisting with the operations part of the upcoming IAP.
- Interaction with air and ground crews to control or contain the fire or other emergency.

What interested myself with working in IMT?

- A lot of what is required in Operations applies within my own company – solving customers' problems and coming up with solutions.
- Applying my fire knowledge to assist situations and fellow firefighters.
- The IMT is only one part of the fireground and we try to add experience and try to prevent further spread.

What has been the most challenging aspect about my role?

- Managing the crews on the ground and supporting them in their requirements to achieve the tasks required and the expected end result.
- The constant shifting of priorities and incidents within the incident during the shift.
- Trying to forecast what issues will confront fire crews before they happen.
- The 'old curve ball' arrives at the least expected time, and that alters your plans and priorities for the shift completely.

What has been the most rewarding part of working in IMT?

- I've worked with some very skilled and experienced people from all departments and volunteers, and from each one you add to your learning.
- Working as a team to achieve the end results required.
- Created a great group of friends who you can lean on in time of need as they understand what you go through with these deployments.
- Seeing the end results from the team's hard effort pay off.

My favourite quote is... "If you can dream it, you can do it"

I also have to thank my wife and family for supporting me while I was away at fire calls or deployments. It is not achievable without that support.

Ken heads up Regions

By: Ali Martin

In late March, the CFS welcomed Ken Hall to the role of Director of Regional Operations, which oversees all six Regions.

Ken started his career as a retained firefighter in the New South Wales town of Condobolin in 1987. He was there for almost a decade before he joined the NSW Rural Fire Service in 1995 as a Fire Control Officer in Central NSW's Lachlan Shire.

From there he moved to the South West Slopes near Cootamundra before becoming Regional Operations Manager in RFS Region South in 2002. He held that role until 2010, when he was made Regional Manager of the same District.

"We had Districts rather than Regions, so within that area I had 11 districts and managed 90 staff and about 20,000 volunteers," Ken said.

The area he covered had areas bordering with Victoria, ACT and South Australia.

"I actually did a course in South Australia when Stuart Ellis was Chief Officer and met people like Rob Sandford at that

time. I also sent volunteers to assist with SA fires in the early 2000s," Ken said.

"We ran a Group Officers meeting in Wentworth (near Mildura and Renmark) and invited South Australian Group Officers to come across as guests. I remember my guys getting quite jealous that they had access to CFS credit cards and other support.

"At one stage we were talking about going to a centralised dispatch service, so the South Aussies were really good at reassuring our volunteers that it was a good tool, they'd been through it and to not be afraid of the change."

While he was not working for RFS when the fires started last year, Ken put his hand up as a volunteer.

"Normally as a Regional Officer my responsibility would be as the interface for the State and IMT (Incident Management Team) in the Sydney State Command Centre," he said.

"This year was the first year that I was able to get away from being in Sydney, so I got back to help volunteer with the local brigade and then help in the IMTs on the South Coast of NSW at Shoalhaven and Far South Coast.

"My community where I live was impacted significantly by the fires in December and January, after the state had already had a lot of fires.

"I ended up getting back on the brigade tanker, doing a lot of social media and public meetings explaining what was going on. It was good to get back into that level of management rather than sitting at arm's length away."

As for his new role, Ken said it would be similar to his previous one.

"I'm looking forward to working through a different set of policies, procedures and legislation, but hopefully I can bring a different view to how we are doing it."

Ken's introduction was greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw the CFS put a stop to Regional visits, and in many cases people had to work from home.

"I'd just arrived on March 23 and things soon came to a screaming halt, so I'm looking forward to getting out and meeting people and starting to make a positive difference to the CFS," Ken said.

"So far it's been such a welcoming environment, and I can't wait to meet more of our staff and volunteers."



CFS welcomes new fleet officers

By: Ali Martin

Six new Regional Operations Fleet Officers joined the ranks of each Region in December. - they include

- Region 1 – Aaron Gutsche.
- Region 2 – Selina Laing.
- Region 3 – Brendan Piller,
- Region 4 – Bob Long,
- Region 5 – Damien van de Velde,
- Region 6 – Dyson Taverner.

The recently enacted Federal legislation relating to heavy vehicles, regulated and enforced by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NVHR), commenced in 2018. The new legislation places significant onus onto the CFS and imposes

severe penalties for non-compliance.

These new Fleet Officers will help the CFS comply with this legislation and educate those within the Chain of Responsibility including Drivers, Captains, Group Officers and Regional Staff. They will also be integral to the management of response vehicle servicing and repairs.

Project Officers Tegan Foster and Amelia Yaron were employed to on-board the six Fleet Officers and develop the Standard Administrative Procedures and tertiary materials to help them navigate the legislative changes.

Tegan said the appliance servicing was still the same but these new policies and procedures would help the CFS gain

consistency across Regions.

"Regions can still have their vehicles serviced in the local community, but now there will be more of a defined process."

There is already a workshop for service providers and mechanics each year, which is open to anyone. If the service providers attend the workshop and can follow all guidelines set out by the CFS, they can continue to service our response vehicles.

"This will lead to greater levels of compliance and therefore greater overall safety for firefighters because there will be a standard."

AIRS reports crucial for volunteers

Australian Incident Reporting System (AIRS) reports not only keep a record of people and trucks on a fireground – they are also vital when it comes to compensation claims to assist volunteers.

These reports should be completed at Brigade and Group level to connect crews to an incident, along with strike team movements and deployments.

Manager Operational Systems Yvette Dowling AFSM said these reports provided a history for the CFS because they demonstrated the experience and exposure of our crews.

They are also used to determine the eligibility a person has for Volunteer Firefighter Compensation, or for access to assistance around post-traumatic stress disorder, cancer and other health impacts from attending incidents.

Yvette said when brigades sought additional funding, a larger or specific truck or equipment, the first place decision makers looked was the AIRS for incident data and trends.

"If a brigade wants to have specialist equipment and their members trained, we'll look on AIRS to see how many of those incidents the brigade has attended recently to form part of the proposal.

"Having up-to-date data on the number of incidents by type that a brigade has attended can help their cause for updated equipment – but if they have attended and the information hasn't been logged, then they are less likely to have their budget bids accepted."

When looking to deploy firefighters or incident management personnel interstate or to fires in other Regions, AIRS is once

again used to see how experienced a person is in a role, which can influence their eligibility for deployments.

AIRS reports can be submitted in a few different ways:

- Online AIRS reporting via CRIMSON
- AIRS Fax Line: 1300 651 232 – faxed reports
- AIRS Phone Line: 1300 651 231 – verbal reports
- Email: CFSairsReporting@sa.gov.au – emailed reports

If you would like to learn how to prepare AIRS reports or need assistance at any time, please contact the State Operations Centre on 1300 651 231 or email CFSairsReporting@sa.gov.au.

Appreciation for Firey Women workshop

The CFS received a Firey Women workshop appreciation email from a participant who said it has had a vital impact on her fire preparedness. The award-winning Firey Women workshops provide women with a safe, non-threatening environment to learn new skills to help protect their families and livelihoods. The workshops cover both information and practical sessions over four evenings.

From: Therese Pedler
Sent: Tuesday, 12 November 2019 6:43 PM
To: Pedler, Therese (CFS) <Therese.Pedler@cfs.sa.gov.au>
Subject: Firey Women's day from 2016

Hi Therese,
I just wanted to take the time thank you to thank you and your colleagues for holding the Firey Women's days from 2016 and all the others you have held.

At the time although I found it interesting I thought not a lot of it would relate to me, coming from the West Coast of SA where it is open and not a huge fire risk area.

Well here I am now in Armidale, NSW, The Bees Nest fires, Oxley Fires, Glen Innis, Llangothin and many more that have now joined up, some have been going for the last month or more. Soon to be entering our 3rd year of drought and horrific fire events to complement it!

Today I am thankful for the day I spent in Streaky Bay 3 years ago, which has mentally prepared me to get organised and start an evacuation kit.

It would be highly unlikely we would stay to defend our property. If we were in that situation, but I am at peace knowing what things to have organised, all important documents and the kids today have a 'special backpack' ready to go as it is barely the start of the fire season it is a worry what is to come in the next 3-4 months given the rainfall outlook doesn't look very good.

Please don't stop promoting and delivering your workshops and I hope you will be involved in the local schools.

Kind regards

Extra intelligence from the air



By: Ali Martin

Aerial operations have a new tool to gather intelligence from the fireground.

The Aerial Intelligence Gathering (AIG) camera is a concept CFS aircrew member Gary MacRae has been involved with for the past decade.

"The AIG paid for itself during the Cudlee Creek fire. We provided intel that we wouldn't have been able to do before," Gary said.

After trialling different cameras for the past few years, the AVT CM 202 arrived at Aerotech in November and was mounted on one of the observational helicopters – just in time for the busy Fire Danger Season.

"You look back at the Sampson Flat fire in 2015, the Incident Management Team (IMT) asked me to see if the fire had crossed Millbrook Road," Gary said.

"To get that information we had to do some difficult flying and it took us about 20 minutes to get that intel confirmed.

"Fast forward to the Cudlee Creek fire in December and we were asked a similar question. We used the camera above Lenswood and, using a fire mapper and through the smoke, we could see the heat source, giving easy confirmation to the IMT.

"Not only was any hazardous flying taken out of the equation, we got the information instantaneously.

"The only thing we can control in that situation is time, so to get there quicker and get the information promptly, that makes this AIG system invaluable."

However, Gary said the camera was yet to be used at its full potential. So, the next step is to calibrate it to get accurate geo-referencing within 25 metres of the target when the helicopter is one kilometre away.

Then there will be training for other Air Observers to use the camera so it can be a steady resource within the fleet.

"For younger operators it won't be too difficult to learn to use, as the system method of control is similar to a PlayStation hand controller – it's just that it is a very expensive military grade PlayStation," Gary said.

"However, the user does need to be an experienced Air Observer so they know what they are looking at."

Behind the scenes of Be Bushfire Ready

By: Kathy Baklan

Each year the CFS develops an educational and awareness-building multimedia campaign to achieve a number of objectives for the Fire Danger Season.

These objectives include increasing the number of households in highly bushfire-prone areas that have a self-assessed level of preparedness for a bushfire, along with increasing the number of downloads of the 5 Minute Bushfire Plan and ensuring the key messages are resonating with the audience.

The most recent Be Bushfire Ready campaign started on October 27 and finished on March 31, so we thought we would share a behind-the-scenes look at how it all happens.

Two primary creative pieces featuring Fire, Fire, Go Away and Why Risk It/ Stay Informed were used across television, radio, press, bus shelters, outdoor billboards, digital and social media.

Stage One

Firstly, all the SA Government processes need to be undertaken and strictly adhered to. This includes going out to tender for creative services for campaign development, research and media buy.

Stage Two

Once approval comes back, along with any requested changes, the creative agency will then start finalising creative for digital, social media, outdoor billboards, bus shelters, radio, print and web landing pages.

The research agency is then appointed to test the creative via focus groups. Focus groups are selected based on the demographics the campaign is targeted at – in this case, South Australians who live in bushfire-prone areas and are either aged 18 to 39 years or are 40 or older.

All feedback is given back to the creative agency for any adjustments. Then approvals go through to the CFS Chief Officer, CFS Executive Leadership Team, the Ministers' office and SAFECOM. Once approved, all creative materials, media plan, communications plan and proposed budget spend are sent online to the Government Communications Advisory Committee (GCAC).

Stage Three

This is where the fun begins! Like being on set for the TV commercial. There is an enormous amount of planning that goes into creating a commercial.

For the CFS commercial, the agency needed to source a house in a setting that was prone to bushfires to film the commercial. So, this meant the TV production team had to drive through the Adelaide Hills and knock on doors of houses they felt would suit the theme of the commercial.

The other big part is sourcing an area where a fire could be lit on a track that a car could also drive through. A lot of work went into finding the right location, and we were very lucky to have such helpful colleagues at the Department for Environment and Water, in particular Ian Tanner and Tim Groves.

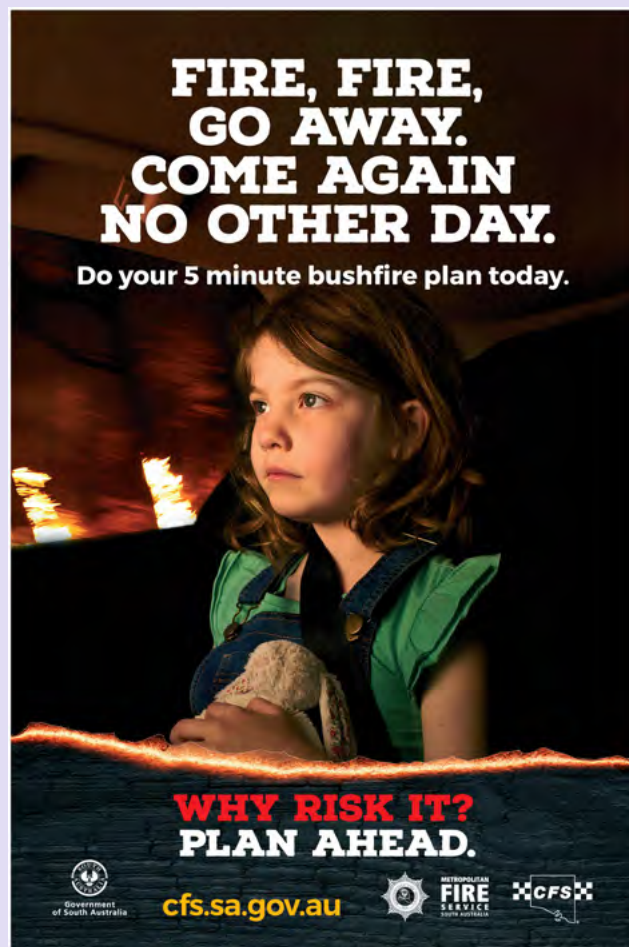
They did a prescribed burn at Greenhill that day and had the local brigade on scene that night to ignite additional eucalyptus that had been brought in. We owe a big 'thank you' to the volunteers from Greenhill CFS Brigade for giving up their time to do this.

The commercial was filmed over one day and night. The house set up was the first part of the commercial where we filmed the Fire, Fire, Go Away and Be Prepared, Stay Informed commercials.

This took up most of the day as we had four different actors (and a cute dog) to film their parts of the commercial. When making commercials, it is common for actors having to do 10, 20 or 30 takes before the producer and creative agency feel they have captured what they need.

By around 10pm it was a 'wrap' with the producer very happy with what they had captured throughout the day and night.

As usual our volunteers were absolutely awesome, and nothing was too much trouble. They played a crucial part in ensuring the fire came across as realistic as possible, and we can't thank them enough.



Final Stages

Once filming was all wrapped up, the producer had the crucial job of cutting, editing, lighting and providing a soundtrack for the finished product.

To measure how well the campaign is going, market research is used to track the recall of campaign key messages, levels of community preparedness and how well the campaign is tracking against its key objectives.

The Fire, Fire, Go Away creative was the most recalled among all three groups and appears to be the most memorable feature of the campaign.

For the general population, the research found they were much more likely to cite 'leave early/decide early' (likely due to the new campaign showing dangerous scenarios where this did not occur), whereas the target audience more often mentioned 'have a bushfire plan/be bushfire ready' (a welcome finding).

The research also found that specific behaviours were improved among those aware of the campaign (e.g. practicing a plan, discussing it, and making or reviewing a plan), as was deciding what to do in the event of a bushfire.

Downloads of the 5 Minute Bushfire Plan increased as well according to the website statistics and digital reports for all digital advertising.

If there were any key things that stood out that the audience was failing to grasp, this is where amendments could happen to the key messages or the creative etc. However, the mid-campaign research showed the campaign was tracking well.

I hope this has given you an insight into how much work goes into developing campaigns, the approval processes and actual time it takes to do it and, most importantly, why we develop Be Bushfire Ready campaigns.

Linking education with bushfire preparedness

By: Chris Sedunary

As the Hazard Leader for bushfires, the CFS has a role in promoting and facilitating preparedness within our communities.

This includes the preparedness of residents and their homes as well as preparedness for businesses and organisations.

Preparedness activities for communities extend beyond the physical preparedness of their properties and involve planning for before, during and after a fire.

The CFS has a range of engagement programs and resources including Bushfire Ready Workshops, Bushfire Blitz presentations and Community Fire Safe Groups. The success of these programs requires the community to contribute some level of time and effort.

It is important to involve children and young people in preparedness activities so that they can be empowered to make active contributions to their community and learn important lifelong skills in resilience.

One method of reaching young people is through their school, and many brigades have visited their local school or childcare centre with their appliance for a fun activity while building local relationships and raising awareness around fire safety.

The CFS aims to engage further with the education community by promoting Disaster Resilience Education (DRE). DRE involves learning about natural hazards in the local environment to keep communities safe from harm before, during, and after emergencies and is championed by the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR).

Our goal is to promote bushfire preparedness as a topic that can be included in current classroom lessons and delivered by teachers to promote lifelong learning in bushfire safety and disaster resilience.

Before the current pandemic situation, the CFS was scheduled to run a workshop at the annual SA Science Teachers Association (SASTA) Conference in partnership with AIDR.

The aim of this workshop was to promote DRE and provide examples of specific links between bushfire preparedness and the science curriculum in line with Australian Curriculum and SACE subjects. Although the conference was cancelled, we were offered the opportunity to publish

an article in the SASTA Journal.

In the article, one example of a DRE curriculum link describes how predictors of bushfire behaviour such as weather, fuel and topography can be considered alongside the physics of heat transfer.

Another example shows how a scientific understanding of the environment affects decision making in society (e.g. determining Fire Danger Ratings and declaring Total Fire Bans).

A third example is how the prescribed burning work by the Department for Environment and Water contributes to both hazard reduction and ecological outcomes.

This links to the biology curriculum content of how ecosystems are affected by bushfires in the short and long term, and how some species of plants require fire as part of their life cycles. There are also opportunities to link with the psychology subjects in the senior years of schooling by studying human behaviours around risk denial and people's

responses in emergencies.

By pointing out explicit links between bushfire concepts and the science curriculum, educators can feel more confident and motivated to incorporate bushfire preparedness into their lessons.

As the threat of bushfires is experienced on an annual basis and forms a part of the Australian experience, we hope that, by working this content into school lessons, teachers can save lives, empower young people and contribute directly to their community's readiness to deal with and overcome the impacts of all disasters.

The CFS is in the process of recruiting for the position of Child and Youth Project Officer, whose role will include contributing to the development of strategies for child and youth-centred approaches to community engagement, assisting with partnerships between the CFS and child and youth sector, and with the delivery of a range of disaster resilience education programs.



Hazmat vehicles delivered to brigades

By: Ali Martin

There is one Hazmat Technician brigade in each Region, and now all have specialised vehicles.

Burnside, Nuriootpa, Murray Bridge, Stirling North, Naracoorte and Lincoln received the new vehicles, which provide high-level detection and equipment capability to support a Hazmat or CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear) incidents.

Manager of Technical Operations Tim McNeilly said the number of callouts was increasing for these brigades.

"These are the only technician vehicles in the fleet that have radiation detection capability – the ability to detect explosive

properties and extremely small concentrations of chemicals in the atmosphere.

"Although the brigades had this capability before, this is a new, dedicated vehicle for them.

"Already we have received some good feedback, with Murray Bridge and Burnside attending a winery fire-turned-Hazmat at Angas Plains as well as a long duration incident on the Dukes Highway at Culburra following the rollover of a B-double truck carrying a mixed load of dangerous goods.

"Nuriootpa was called to a Hazmat after the Yorketown fire where farm chemicals were present, and Lincoln travelled over 300km to a recent Hazmat incident on the Eyre Highway.

"The SACAD (SA Computer-Aided Dispatch) system is now being customised, so there is a predetermined trigger for technician brigades to attend whenever an incident escalates to second alarm.

"The alarm escalation acknowledges there is complexity within that Hazmat job, so it's important the technician brigades are dispatched quickly as they can have a long way to travel."

These vehicles are also ideal to respond to structure fires as they can provide additional breathing apparatus, atmospheric monitoring and decontamination equipment

International media attention on Ravine bushfire

By: Brett Williamson

As the destruction to Kangaroo Island's nature reserves became known, media organisations from around the world descended on the fireground.

Organisations from as far as Germany, England, China, Sweden, Japan and the US sent in their journalists, photographers and camera crews.

As the communities of western Kangaroo Island came to terms with the destructive path the fire left behind, news crews did their best to share the stories of loss and survival.

It is often difficult for fire crews to see media on the fireground and understand why they need to capture the after-effects.

One strong example of how the media is used to help raise attention and funds for recovery communities is the coverage the Kangaroo Island Wildlife Park GoFundMe page received.

The page and organisation featured on many media outlets across the country and internationally.

Sam and his team at the Park were able to balance their rescue operations with media demands, and the organisation has been given a new building and more than \$2.5 million.

The CFS Media and Communications Unit prioritised getting media onto the fireground as soon as it was safe.

A convoy was escorted through the fireground near Parndana to film and photograph areas that were and were not affected to help those who were unable to return to



their homes know where the fires had burned.

International media without fireground training were driven to sites where they could achieve their stories without being put at risk and showcase some of the still beautiful places around the Island in an effort to limit downturn in tourism.

During fires as large as Ravine and Cudlee Creek, it is a balancing act for the CFS to provide opportunities for

media to cover such events, and this is done with great consideration.

Early coverage can result in elevated response for communities in need, which is something firefighters encountering media during an incident need to try to keep in mind.

If you have any questions or concerns about media on the fireground, call the CFS Media Team on 8115 3531.

Internal communication starts with you

By: Ali Martin

Last year, for the second time, volunteers were surveyed about internal communications within CFS.

A survey was sent to all 12,994 CFS volunteers in an effort to find out how best to communicate with them.

Nearly 1,000 people responded and, like the 2017 survey, most of those were paper surveys being returned. The survey showed that most volunteers want to hear from their Group Officers, Regional Commanders and the Chief Officer.

Some had noticed changes in communication since the previous survey when a range of new initiatives came in. These included a shift to a more digital focus, regular emails and information becoming streamlined and easier to understand.

The survey also asked how people would like to be communicated with and, similar to the previous survey, the winners were email, text message and face-to-face communication.

We try to give volunteers information on a range of platforms to ensure they see important communications. However, there will continue to be more information coming out via email as this was one of the ways those who responded said they wanted to receive communications.

CFS Volunteer Portal

Your Emerald Record The latest doctrine
Online Learning Hub Vol E-News Equipment information
CFS Volunteer email



Forgot your password?
Contact SAFECOM IT Helpdesk: 8115 3960

automatically forward emails

1. Click the settings cog (top right corner)
2. Select Mail
3. Click on Forwarding

4. Select Start Forwarding
5. Type in your selected email and Save





When volunteers first become members, they get access to the CFS Volunteer Portal and their own email address. It's important that you sign in to the Portal on a regular basis to check for updates – although it's likely this information will also be emailed.

If you haven't been onto the Volunteer Portal before, there's a link in the top right of the CFS website (cfs.sa.gov.au). This will take you to the sign-in page where you either enter your Member ID or volunteer email address (firstname.surname@sacfsvolunteer.org.au). If you don't have your password, call the IT Helpdesk on 8115 3960 and they can reset it for you.

Emails from CFS will always be sent to your volunteer emails, so we can capture the whole organisation, but you can forward your email to one you use more often.

This is how you do it:

1. Log into the Volunteer Portal and click on the email icon in the top right corner, then choose the email icon.
2. Click the settings cog in the top corner.
3. Select 'Mail'.
4. Click on 'Forwarding'.
5. Select 'Start Forwarding' and type in the email address you would like the email to go to.

Multi-gas detector rollout complete

CFS Technical Operations is continuing to deliver new multi-gas detectors to Hazmat combatant and Hazmat technician brigades across the state.

The rollout of these new hi-tech pieces of equipment is accompanied by training in atmospheric monitoring and multi-gas detector use for a range of incidents beyond Hazmat, including structure fires.

The new MultiRAE Lite Detectors have the ability to detect and measure the concentration of oxygen, flammable gases and vapours, carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulphide, hydrogen cyanide and unknown substances such as volatile organic compounds.

The new CFS Atmospheric Monitoring and Multi-gas Detector course sees CFS Hazmat brigades now being able to set the boundaries of the cold, warm and hot zones utilising pre-determined exposure standards measured by the MultiRAE Lite Detector.



Trial seeks safer structure fires

By: Ali Martin

A trial is underway to create a safer environment for brigades fighting structure fires.

"We know every structure fire produces large quantities of toxic gases, which present risk to firefighters who are unprotected," said Manager Technical Operations Tim McNeilly.

"A big risk is carbon monoxide, which is non-irritating so you can't see, smell, taste or feel it. It's the same for hydrogen cyanide, which is highly toxic – even in low concentrations."

This trial is about extending atmospheric monitoring capabilities to breathing apparatus (BA) brigades, not just those who are trained in Hazmat.

Tim said it would enable brigades to safely site their entry control point and determine when it was suitable to transition from a BA mask to a P2 mask. It would also determine when it is safe for someone unprotected, such as a fire investigator, to enter the scene.

The trial is being conducted at the Aldinga Beach, Goolwa and Bridgewater brigades, which have a high callout rate to

structure fires and have no Hazmat capability attached to them.

"We are finding contaminants are getting worse at structure fires, especially with changes to furnishings in homes," Tim said.

"Not only is fire behaviour increasing at a faster rate, but toxic gas production is also increasing significantly.

"This isn't a new concept, we know it works, but this trial will ensure that giving this capability to a non-Hazmat brigade is used appropriately."

Training doubles with expansion of fleet



By: Brett Williamson

The amount of aviation training provided for CFS airbase and aircrew personnel has doubled in the past five years alongside aircraft response and resources also increasing across the state.

Aviation Operations Officer Corey Dunn said the increased demands and expectations associated with the growing of the state fleet meant training and recruitment had rapidly escalated.

"In 2012, we had fewer than 100 personnel who had completed training on firebomber loading and airbase management. With the increase in fleet and response capabilities, we now have more than 200 personnel.

"Coupled with a 300 per cent increase in the number

of aircrew personnel now available to manage aircraft operations, the State Aviation Operations training calendar from July to December is now pretty full."

In total 16 skills maintenance and training exercises were delivered to ground support and aircrew personnel across the state, with the largest seeing 33 aircrew trained in flight and incident scenarios over four days at Port Pirie.

Crews were tasked to respond to running fire simulations in the nearby Telowie Gorge Conservation Park.

Ground teams arranged coloured barriers to represent fires, with ground-to-air communications detailing wind drift, conditions and taskings for aircraft which included firebombing co-ordination, intelligence gathering and mapping.

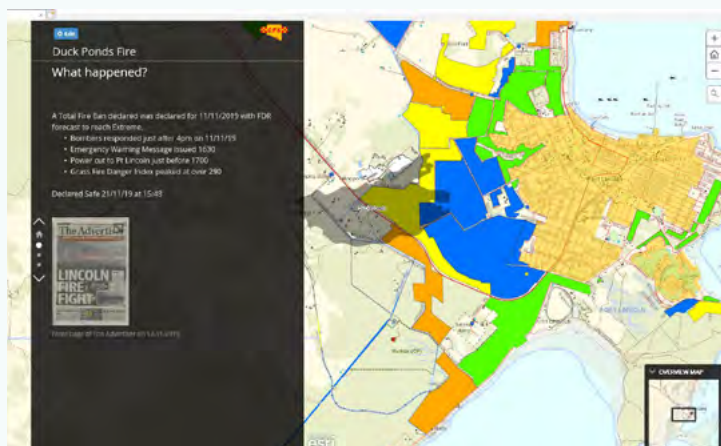
Large Air Tanker-trained personnel from the Region 2 Air Operations Brigade also upgraded their skills just weeks before the Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island fires, where they found themselves loading multiple interstate aircraft across a number of days.

Corey said there had been a large increase in the use of Large Air Tankers this season, and our ground crews had responded "brilliantly" to the extra demands.

He said the loading crews for aircraft are often made up of firefighters looking to transition their truck experience to another area of the CFS.

Corey encouraged anyone interested to discuss their options with their local ground support brigades.

BMAP protects assets



By: Amy Riebe and Andrew Patten

The Lower Eyre Bushfire Management Area Plan (BMAP) was the first Plan of the nine plans to have its four year formal review. This review was undertaken by Lower Eyre Peninsula Bushfire Management Committee (BMC) in conjunction with the CFS Bushfire Management Planning Unit.

It was timely that during the review of Lower Eyre Peninsula BMAP, a significant fire occurred

at Duck Ponds, on the outskirts of Pt Lincoln. This allowed the BMC to compare the fire impact against assets that had been previously identified and risk assessed within the BMAP.

A Story Map was created that displayed the fire impacts, including the assets that were damaged and saved, to tell the story of the benefits of bushfire prevention and preparedness. The Story Map provided insight as to whether the allocation of risk ratings and risk treatments were appropriate for that particular landscape and gave the LEP BMC the opportunity to consider where changes might be required.

When it comes to the use of BMAPs in the context of Incident Action Plans and firefighting operations BMAP is a tool in the toolbox and can assist Incident Managers in the identification and triaging of assets that could be impacted by a bushfire.

Now that all nine BMAPs around the State are complete, there is a good opportunity for BMC member organisations and land managers to consider the assets identified in the BMAPs, and reassess the risks and treatments to see if any changes are needed to better mitigate the fire risk.

A good example of a partnership occurring in the bushfire management planning space is one with the City of Tea Tree Gully, CFS and software developer GeolIT. These agencies secured a research and development grant from the Local Government Association to develop a BMAP Treatment Reporting Tool. The range of local councils and other agencies are now trialling the software.

The online software system gives councils, as well as private and crown land managers, a tool to track the status of bushfire mitigation works in real time, thus contributing to maintaining safety for the community from the impact of bushfire.

CFS gives Council commendation

Alexandrina Council received a commendation from the CFS this year for its commitment to fire prevention.

Director of Preparedness Operations Brett Loughlin presented a plaque to the Council to recognise the work of its Community Safety Team.

This was the first time the CFS has presented such an award, which was given in conjunction with the Local Government Association and aimed at recognising innovative approaches to fire prevention.

The Council's four Fire Prevention Officers inspect around 15,000 properties within the Council boundary.

Prior to the 2019/20 Fire Danger Season, the team worked with Region 1 and the Bushfire Management Area Plan Team to look at ways to prepare for a drier-than-average year.

This resulted in the issuing of 319 notices under section 105F of the Emergency Service Act 2005, which requires land clearing by non-compliant property owners.

The notices resulted in 20 compulsory clearances as of

January 20. Council contractors carried out the works, with property owners handed expiation notices.

The Council also created its own fire safety brochure which has since been used by others around the state. The intent was to catalyse action ahead of the fire danger season to achieve a reduction in fuel loads.

Homes assessed after fire damage

By: Ali Martin

Home owners building in bushfire risk areas need to seek permission from the CFS Development Assessment Service (DAS) during their build.

There is a list of criteria (linked to legislation) home owners need to follow when building to give their house a chance at survival during a bushfire.

Following the Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island fires, the DAS wanted to investigate whether that criteria was successful in saving homes.

CFS Ground Observers, experienced firefighters, DAS Manager Joel Taggart and Officer Leah Bertholini, along with representatives from Western Sydney University, conducted an investigation at some of the properties within the two fire-affected areas.

"We looked at residential dwellings which were damaged or destroyed, surveying the structure, building materials and nearby vegetation," Joel said.

"Although we did a survey after last year's Mount Compass fires, we haven't investigated property damage to this

degree before."

The data still needs further analysis, but Joel said initial observations found that most of the houses that were damaged or destroyed were fairly old and most had vegetation close to them.

"Gutters are a vulnerable point where embers and fire get into roof space, and we saw this during our observations," Joel said.

"Houses started to burn near the gutter – either because of leaf litter build-up or vegetation up against the gutter."

Looking at houses in the Adelaide Hills versus those on Kangaroo Island also gave the team a look at two different parts of the state.

"Vegetation was reasonably dense around houses on Kangaroo Island, and there were more farming properties with older houses," Joel said.

"Although there were also farming properties in the Hills, they tended to be smaller land holdings where residents commute to work, so there were different preparations done in each area and a different understanding of fire behaviour."

Information like this will be used to develop better policies and gives us evidence to approach the Department for Planning, Transport and Infrastructure with to review legislation on planning and building in bushfire areas.

"The University of Western Sydney will use information they gathered here and add it to research they're doing in New South Wales as well," Joel said.

"Having a larger data set will mean we can build a case to improve building and planning regulations at a national level."

Information learned will also be fed back into CFS training for new ground observers.

"In the future we want these investigations to be business as usual, as soon as a fire has passed. We waited about six weeks to do this, but we'd like to get there earlier – even if it's just with one ground observer and a DAS unit member," Joel said.

"That way we can regularly feed data to the University of Western Sydney and add to a national approach."

New trucks delivered



It's been a busy year for Operational Infrastructure and Logistics.

They've been out delivering new and refurbished appliances throughout the State.

The 2019/20 Operational Planned Vehicle Replacements featured 42 new vehicles, 30 refurbished vehicles and saw 34 vehicles be returned for disposal.

Here are just some photos of the new vehicles that we delivered in the past year.



Fleet vehicles get an upgrade

By: Brett Williamson



The latest version of CFS Incident Command Vehicles (ICVs) were rolled out with the Toyota Hilux chassis this season.

CFS Light Fleet Project Officer Andrew Horwood said the change in fleet vehicle offered many advantages.

"We had always planned for the pods to be interchangeable with most dual-cab chassis, extending the life of the service body from a lifespan of around five to seven years to more than double that now," Andrew said.

Among other advantages, the Toyota Hilux SR 2.8L provided the operational benefit of having a higher-placed diesel particulate filter, resulting in a lower fire risk when the vehicle was driven off-road in grassy areas.

"We've delivered six of the MKII ICVs, which are now operational and in the field, with another seven planned for the 2019-20 builds," Andrew said.

The second version of the ICVs differs slightly from the original rollout. Feedback was sought from Regions with the initial MKI Ford Ranger trials used to make upgrades and improvements with the latest build.

Builds and deliveries have been delayed due to workplace reductions during the COVID-19 pandemic, but Andrew said the remaining units would be delivered as soon as normal working conditions returned and the vehicles were completed.

New PPC, online ordering system launched

By: Brett Williamson

This year the CFS moved to a new style of Wildland 'yellows' Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) and introduced a new online ordering system for all users.

CFS Specialist Equipment Officer Stephen Boucher said the tender process took more than a year to finalise, with Stewart and Heaton winning the final contract.

The new PPC features different male and female cuts and is made from a different blend of material than previous versions.

"The colour of the PPC itself has changed, and that is because we have moved to a newer fabric called the Hainsworth Eco-Dry," Stephen said.

The Eco-Dry offers better breathability and tensile/tear strength than previous materials.

"The new fabric is the best on the market today," Stephen said.

Older versions of PPC can still be used. The Eco-Dry version is not a complete PPC replacement for the organisation and will only be issued to new firefighters or those requiring the replacement of damaged sets.

"Wearers will notice the increased breathability of the garment and a softer internal lining, which includes a wool



compound and Nomex blend," Stephen said.

Coupled with the release of the new PPC was the introduction of online PPC and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) ordering for all members.

"This is a big change for volunteers, as traditionally we have gone through Groups and Brigades to order our PPC and now we will be empowering our volunteers to place online

orders, with approvals by the Region," Stephen said.

Volunteers can also nominate the destination for delivery of new equipment and track the order progress.

Details on how to establish online accounts and the delivery process were emailed to all volunteers in February.

If you need to order any PPC or other clothing, visit the TAMS store or the Volunteer Portal.

Turn GRN off before isolating your truck battery

By: Brett Williamson

It's a habit more and more drivers are getting into, and here's why it is important for you to start doing the same.

Unlike UHF and VHF where the radio connection is instant and unauthorised, Government Radio Network (GRN) units go through several security protocols before being able to broadcast and receive.

This series of checks is the reason a handset takes a small amount of time to produce the audible cue to prompt a user that the connection has been made.

"When you first start a CFS vehicle, the GRN unit links to the nearest GRN tower, registers itself and acknowledges itself in its talk group – this process is called an affiliation," CFS Manager for Telecommunications Mario D'Agostino said.

"That connection will remain open until the unit sends a de-affiliation message, or until 12 hours after the last message was received from it."

By not turning the unit off before isolating a vehicle's battery, the GRN holds the connection open for 12 hours.

The 12-hour connection is kept as a safety mechanism for units being used in areas of poor reception.

A similar de-affiliation problem occurs if handheld GRN units have their batteries removed prior to being turned off.

With the CFS currently operating more than 4,000 GRN units and 20 government agencies accessing the GRN, the network can become unnecessarily locally congested if a large-scale response is required and previous connections have not been de-affiliated.

"As the usage of the GRN increases in areas due to the introduction of new stations or vehicles, it's a good habit to get into now to de-affiliate your GRN after using it so congestion issues can be limited," Mr D'Agostino said.

Pager rollout continues

By: Ali Martin

New pagers continue to be rolled out to volunteers across the state.

The new Birdy pagers are more sensitive and have a larger antenna so they will perform better in the field. They are also more robust and, given most pagers end up with water or physical damage, this will help save on ongoing maintenance costs.

Telecommunications Manager Mario D'Agostino said the new pagers would give volunteers more battery life with about 2,000 hours on a standard AA alkaline battery.



"Volunteers will also be able to set their pager's background light so you can easily differentiate between turnout and general messages," Mario said.

There is no change to how the pagers will be issued from the current process. The CFS has a stock of the new Birdy pagers and these will be dispatched as replacements when a faulty pager is returned or when a new pager is required.

Older Apollo pagers are now out of their warranty periods and will be replaced by the Birdy pagers as needed.

Josh delivers the goods

By: Ali Martin



Brigades may know Josh Jeffree delivers new and refurbished appliances to brigades. But the Operational Response Vehicles and Equipment Project Officer does a lot more than just deliver the goods.

Josh co-ordinates the finalisation of new vehicle builds, project manages the mid-life refurbishment program, co-ordinates the disposal of fleet vehicles and not only delivers appliances but does the associated training.

He works with Andrew Hogg at the Angle Park workshop to prepare the appliances and co-ordinate vehicle movements throughout the state.

"The reaction from brigades differs from brigade to brigade," Josh said. "Some brigades are over the moon with their new or refurbished truck, and others are very attached to their old truck and don't want to see it leave. We often get asked if they can keep their old truck too."

Josh said he had seen a lot of appliances come through and great improvements in recent years, including technological advances.

"It's just a matter of balancing that with trying to build a truck that is robust, resilient and can continue to operate in adverse environments. Seeing the ongoing focus on crew safety and continual improvements in this area is fantastic, and we are doing some good work in this area.

"From the new safety features on the new-build tankers to the great work the Fire Trucks Safety Systems team is doing, everyone is committed to the safety of our volunteers and ensuring they have top-class equipment to do what they need to do.

"Even with all these new and latest safety features, we need to keep our own safety in mind when we are operating on the fireground. Our number one priority must still remain to be the safety of ourselves and our crew mates at all times.

"Just because the safety features are there, it doesn't make the truck or you bulletproof if you drive into an intense firefront."

"But it's not just the new appliances that are standing out these days, with refurbished appliances also being thoroughly checked to ensure it's up to date on its service and maintenance and everything is in good mechanical working order including checking the pump, pump engine and plumbing system.

"There's also preventative maintenance on the operational equipment like hose reels and those sorts of things.

"We also bring the visibility markings and branding up to the current standard, which goes a huge way to make them look like new. You can't beat new sign writing and a fresh polish to make a truck look good.

"Then every truck spends at least half a day on the day of delivery getting washed and tidied to make sure they all look as good as possible when we deliver them, which is great when you then drive hundreds of kilometres on wet roads to deliver them."

Josh had one last message about the new builds. He said the modern Isuzus have a very easy to use, air-assisted Synchronesh gearbox.

"We need to show them the respect that they deserve and drive them like a truck, not a car. Slow, gentle gear changes to allow the synchronising rings a chance to do their job. Don't ram the gearstick into the next gear as hard and fast as you can.

"Do not rest your hands on the gear stick. If you aren't changing gears, keep two hands on the wheel at all times. Use the service brakes to slow the vehicle down before changing down gears. Changing down gears at too high a road speed will wear the synchros too.

"Finally, do not double the clutch or try and change gears without the clutch. Do all of these things and the gearboxes can stand the test of time."

CFS finds new way to connect

By: Ali Martin

The CFS is moving to a new phone system to ensure operations are not impacted by National Broadband Network (NBN) reliability while also utilising new Voiceover Internet Protocol.

Region 5 and Region 2 both now have a Telstra Internet Protocol Telephony (TIPT) system, which is not only a step up from the NBN but also provides significant cost saving measures. This will replace the old PSTN phone system.

Telecommunications Support Officer Paul Bebbington said the new system had not only improved functionality but also had built-in resilience in the infrastructure required.

The system allows users to remotely divert phone lines and

will add video conferencing to Regional headquarters and identified Group bases as part of the transition.

"Eventually some form of TIPT infrastructure will be at every site, including Brigades and Group bases. Some Brigades have already received the upgrade after their phones failed," Paul said.

"Because the system is Cloud-based, it gives us the ability to do things remotely so we may not have to send technicians there to reprogram the phone system, which is where the cost saving comes in.

"For our Regional headquarters, if the network goes down, the system has a 4G failover but is on a managed network by Telstra with 99.9 per cent connectivity."

If a phone system fails, the CFS now has TIPT Rapid Response Kits, which were used at the Gumeracha and Kangaroo Island staging areas. These kits provide voice coverage during any outages and use modems and Telstra's 4G network for connectivity.

It will take around 10 minutes to set up a kit of either five or 10 individual handsets, while previously Telstra would be called in to connect disaster recovery lines – so this is another cost saving.

As for how long it will take to roll out this system, Paul is confident that all Regional headquarters will be set up by the next Fire Danger Season, with several Group bases hopefully transitioned as well. The transition of all CFS sites will not be completed for several years.

Project Renew benefits local Brigades

By: Simone McDonnell



As Project Renew comes to an end, the outcomes for Brigades across the state will be felt for years to come.

The two-year funding program offered CFS Brigades the opportunity to apply to upgrade their station infrastructure or amenities, with 200 projects undertaken over the past two years with almost \$5 million invested.

At Mount Schank, in the state's South East, the success of the project came down to timing.

For years the Brigade had been keen to bitumise the driveway and car park to improve the safety of volunteers and people visiting the station.

After receiving approval through Project Renew, the Brigade set about planning and applying for approval from Grant District Council to undertake the minor works. During the application process the Brigade was asked to hold off, with the Council planning to undertake roadworks in the adjoining roads.

The Council approached the Brigade and offered to undertake the works at the same time, reducing the costs and streamlining the management of the project. While it meant a small delay in the project, the works were nevertheless completed in January 2020.

Tea Tree Gully CFS Brigade also benefitted greatly from a partnership with local government support. After last year's improvements, which saw the replacement of unsafe flooring, this year's joint investment between Project Renew and Tea Tree Gully Council allowed the Brigade to extend its shed and appropriately fit out the interior.

Dublin has had a shed extension on its wishlist for almost two decades, with the idea originally planned by Terry Halford in the late 1990s. With an increase in younger members, a lack of appropriate changing facilities and a safe space for storing PPC was identified as a major concern with the existing facilities.

After successfully applying for Project Renew funding, construction was able to get underway, with the plans also including the recommissioning of an area where BA equipment can be appropriately cleaned, a battery charging station and more comfortable space for training and Brigade activities.

The Brigade is also making a contribution by funding new benches and lockers and bench seats for the volunteers.

A new kitchen was on the cards for the CFS at Warooka, with the brigade previously relying on a second-hand kitchen sink and no hot water until it had to be removed during a mouse infestation three years ago.

The Brigade raised around 40 per cent of the funding before applying to Project Renew to help with the remaining costs.



Retrofit slowed by virus outbreak

By: Lee Watson

The last 12 months have seen a number of obstacles in getting trucks through the Safety Retrofit Program.

The Fire Danger Season certainly presented some challenges, and COVID-19 has also slowed the process.

However, by July 1, almost all the dual-cab 24 and 34 tankers will be fitted with in-cab breathing, cabin halo, in-cab pump controls, under-cabin heat shields and metal door handles.

Certainly the assistance provided by CFS volunteers in moving trucks in and out of Murray Bridge has been invaluable and helped to speed up the retrofit process. The next phase is to complete some of the 14s and Bulk Water Carriers where possible.

Dean Norman and Paul Sheridan have recently joined Peter Bonython (pictured) to assist with the Safety Retrofit Project and the movement of tankers around the state.



Radio replacements on their way

By: Kathy Baklan

From 2021, CFS Brigades throughout the state will start receiving new SAGRN UHF Command and Control mobile, fixed and portable radios.

These radios will replace the existing ageing SAGRN UHF radios that are currently used for Command and Control communications.

Command and Control coverage of the replacement terminals will be comparable to the current coverage footprint, with the expectation being that voice coverage will be enhanced in certain circumstances and locations, although the upgrade of these terminals will not fix coverage

issues in known blackspot areas.

Other enhanced features will include digital messaging, GPS location facilities and the potential to utilise Automatic Vehicle Location.

Firefighters will also benefit from improved inter-operability with neighbouring jurisdictions by having access to their channel plan, thus enabling faster communications.

The tender selection process is expected to be completed by September 2020 with the new supplier appointed by the end of October 2020.

The SAGRN Terminal Replacement Project Team will be

consulting with users throughout the project to provide input into the development of the specifications to ensure most aspects are taken into consideration.

Rollout of the new radio equipment will commence in 2021 (taking into account suitable times to meet operational needs) and is planned to be completed in 2023.

Updates will be provided throughout the project via a range of communications including the Vol e-News, training nights and regional meetings, and all updates will be uploaded to the Volunteer Portal.

Mapping tool serves community

By: Ali Martin

A new CFS mapping tool has helped the community get more information about fires happening near them.

The CFS Geohub is the agency's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) enterprise portal. In the past nine months, the team has been moving to a web-based approach, which can bring information from a range of sources together.

Senior Spatial Analyst Bryce Touchstone said the change to a Relational Database Service in the Cloud brings together CFS custodial data along with information from the CFS Geohub

and ArcGIS server. It also enables data and intelligence from air and ground observers to be stored in the one spot.

"The Geohub will serve as the central repository for all CFS incident and warning data in the future," Bryce said.

"It is also where we create story maps and web maps, which we can embed onto websites such as the CFS website."

These features were used extensively this Fire Danger Season, with the 'area burned' feature giving more accurate information to the community while also assisting in strategic decisions and firefighting techniques.

The information was not only shared to the CFS website but was used by other agencies and stakeholders. It even went as high as the Prime Minister, who was watching the information come in at the Crisis Co-ordination Centre in Canberra.

This tool can also be used by volunteers – for access, send an email to CFS.GISRequest@sa.gov.au.

Volunteers can view our series of web maps, web mapping applications and story maps to view interagency data and an abundance of agency custodial dataset.

New doctrine by December

By: Ali Martin

In 2017 CFS started a review and upgrade to its Operational Doctrine Library. Six sections were finalised with another six to be implemented by the end of the year.

Manager of Operational Policy, Capability and Improvement Sam Quigley said it's hoped the remaining six sections will be finished by the end of the year, although this could be impacted by research and findings from reviews currently underway.

"We know there are some residual Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that need to be developed," Sam said.

"For example, we need something in Command, Control, Co-ordination and Emergency Management around traffic control during emergencies and the evacuation of people.

But we will have to wait for Lessons Learned before we can do this.

"A large amount of the material that needs to be developed will be based on existing practices, but the new doctrine will provide a clear and succinct structure for our new SOPs."

Once the new doctrine is released, the team will work on any gaps within the new structure.

However, Sam said all old SOPs, Operational Management Guidelines (OMGs) and Operational Bulletins would be rescinded and incorporated into the new functional themes.

"The new structure has been exceptionally well received. The structure makes it easy to access and navigated and also easy to be updated if we have learnings to implement quickly."

Doctrine already implemented

Section 1: Command, Control, Co-ordination and Emergency Management

Section 2: Safety, Personnel and Welfare

Section 4: Incident Management

Section 6: Operational and Public Information

Section 8: Aviation Operations

Section 12: Operational Improvement

The remaining six sections

Section 3: Pre-Incident Planning and Response

Section 5: Operational Communications

Section 7: Rural Operations

Section 9: Rescue and Special Services

Section 10: Urban and Special Risk Fires

Section 11: Hazmat, CBRN-E Operations

Observations for Lessons Learned

By: Ali Martin

It was not only a busy year for the CFS with bushfires – there was also a large number of hazardous materials incidents.

Lessons Learned Manager Mark Thomason said as a result of these incidents, his section had collected the largest number of observations from fires and other emergencies across one year. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, this work is still continuing.

As a result of the large amount of data collected, along with external investigations being conducted, Mark said the Lessons Learned analysis would take a few more months before a report could be presented.

One recurring observation is now being investigated. CFS

and SAFECOM Work Health and Safety (WHS) are looking at identifying factors during and leading up to the 2019/20 Fire Danger Season, along with turnover incidents.

"The information collected from debriefs and images taken will contribute to enhancing doctrine and training," Mark said.

"One of the outstanding observations raised at debriefs has been that firefighters' actions were instinctive, immediate and automatic.

"They praised the Skill Maintenance Drills and said their actions were a direct result of those annual drills.

"However, it is concerning that there is a lack of formal reporting at a number of these incidents. That needs to be improved on, and this will be recommended in the

investigation.

"Both Lessons Management and WHS would like to thank those volunteers who recounted their experiences. They were so detailed and enriching in recounting of actions that we are attempting to share those stories in the future."

Another positive learning from observations has come from recent structure and Hazmat debriefs, and this has led to the trial of atmospheric monitoring with SCBA brigades.

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen the cancellation of the National Lessons Management Forum, but a series of webinars are being planned and will be open to volunteers. Further information will be circulated to volunteers when it becomes available.

Planning for the future

By: Ali Martin

CFS is developing a 10-year Strategic Asset Plan and asset management plans to ensure future funding, maintenance and capital works requirements.

Geoff Norris started working at CFS in early 2020 and is now reviewing the asset management system to track assets and their condition and performance to inform priorities for works, refurbishment and replacements.

From there he will develop a policy, asset management framework and Standard Administration Procedures to plan

for and manage CFS assets.

"I'm working with different areas across CFS to align provision of assets with regional operational needs," Geoff said.

"We need to identify what needs upgrading, replacing and maintaining for our vehicles, properties, communications and other equipment. In the long term this will also include funding requirements to ensure our assets are well managed."

By having a 'whole of life' approach, CFS can ensure the

condition and standard of assets improves over time and is consistent across the Regions.

An increase in data relating to the risk, along with an understanding of how assets perform over time, will help reduce the workload overall.

"More information means we can reduce the need for Brigades and Groups to undertake audits and submit requests for refurbishment and upgrade works," Geoff said.

"This will also reduce the risk for CFS, but it will help us meet the legislative requirements that go with asset ownership."

New view from above

By: Ali Martin

Digital learning continues to grow within the CFS, and new technology is helping make this training as real as possible.

The Digital eLearning team now has a drone to capture video footage and still images to help with the development of its training materials.

State Training Officers Michael Mathew, Adam Shearer and Mitchell Fitzgerald all have their remote pilot licences to collect this footage, even at night.

Michael has an aviation background and will soon be the CFS Chief Remote Pilot once the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has approved the Remote Operators Certificate.

"Although initially purchased for training, there needs to be more work done to introduce drones into CFS operations," he said.

This involves some changes to CFS doctrine to enable future initiatives. However, there will be many restrictions to the use of drones, with the Chief Pilot having to co-ordinate and approve all CFS-related use.

Volunteers will not be allowed to use their own drone for any CFS-related activities at this stage.

"Basically, if you have a drone, you need to leave it at home," Michael said.

"If a volunteer is using a drone at a CFS-related activity, CASA will see it as commercial use and individuals can be severely reprimanded. This also applies to anyone within CFS with their own licence.

"CFS-related drone use has to comply with the CASA-approved CFS Remote Operations Manual."

Drone operators must also comply with the CASA requirement against flying over or near bushfires to avoid creating a hazard to piloted CFS firefighting aircraft.



Contamination addressed at STC

By: Brenton Eden, Director Operational Training and Professional Development

In August 2019, ground water investigation was undertaken by the Department of Energy and Mining (DEM).

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) advised the State Training Centre (STC) that there was evidence of PFAS contamination in Dawesley Creek along the boundary of the Centre and the Brukunga mine site.

STC staff immediately commenced Phase One of a two-part process – a longitudinal investigation of PFAS contamination.

The CFS brought together representatives from the EPA, a private scientific analysis company and representatives from DEM to investigate the extent of the contamination.

While the use of PFAS-containing firefighting foams had largely ceased more than 20 years ago and such foams had not been used since the Government banned their use, the Training Centre had a history of foam use, both for CFS training and for industrial clients over the years since its inception.

There was no risk to the water sources at the Training Centre other than the stored water used for firefighting purposes, as all other water is drawn from the mains supply.

In conjunction with the EPA, the STC held a community

meeting to outline the extent of the investigation and to seek community co-operation as there was the potential for the contamination to have travelled via the creek and underground water sources to areas some distance from the Centre.

Since the initial community meeting, a range of tests have been conducted or were scheduled to be conducted, including extensive examination of ground water, stored water on the Training Centre and bore water on private properties. A range of additional new bores will be drilled across the community and the grounds of the Training Centre throughout May.

The results of all testing will conclude the investigation phase. As a measure of the comprehensive nature of the testing, analysis will have been undertaken on soil, water, concrete, sludge, underground water, apples, vegetables and meat samples. The aim is to determine the level of contamination and therefore risk anything emanating from the Training Centre.

Throughout the process, the community has been constantly informed of actions to be taken in relation to their property, and individual landowners have requested specific sampling on their site.

No requests have been denied as the STC sees itself as a long-term model citizen of the community and therefore intends to address all issues.

Phase Two

Following publication of all the results, the STC will hold a second community meeting to announce what remediation activities are proposed.

In discussion at this stage is the long-term lease of a PFAS Filtration Plant which will treat all water from the mine site and water stored at the STC.

It is proposed that the plant will then deliver clean, filtered, PFAS-free water back to the STC storage tanks for years to come.

In preparation for the proposed filtration plant, a considerable amount of site works is occurring with DEM to determine the most efficient and cost-effective way to capture their water from the Mine Site Remediation Plant, which is located around 800m from the Training Centre and 45m uphill from the site.

The final hydraulics design aims to support not only the delivery of clean water to the Training Centre but the discharge of clean water to Dawesley Creek.

Over the months of May and June it is expected that there will be a number of projects occurring to remediate not only the water but the soil and potentially the concrete surfaces of the hot pads.

BA complex undergoes facelift

By: Ali Martin

CFS firefighters undertaking breathing apparatus (BA) training will be put through their paces in a new-look facility.

State Training Officer (Specialist Firefighting) Mark Gloster said the new BA facility would feature shipping containers that have been used to construct a two-storey prop that would provide a new set of challenges, but he didn't want to give too much away.

"When firefighters arrive at a structure fire, they usually have no information about the layout of the building they are walking into. Therefore when they do their training, we want to simulate that. Not knowing the facility's layout will mean students have to assess their environment. They aren't given any clues.

"Structure firefighting has changed recently, and although the basics in training are the same, the environment people go into is very different. Modern houses are evolving, with more and more combustible materials inside."

The new BA training complex was completed in January 2020. Information received from students and trainers over the first few courses will help develop the facility and the way the course is delivered.

The State Training Centre teaches as many as 150 people each year, with around 14 people in one course. Most are taught at Brunkunga, but BA courses can also be conducted at the Cadell Training Centre and Jamestown training facility.



Staff on show at AFAC

The approach CFS has made to staff training over the past few years was highlighted at August 2019's Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) Conference in Melbourne.



**South Australian
COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE**

PROGRESSING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Strategy for South Australian Country Fire Service

SACFS Staff Capability Framework is aimed at enhancing professional development with a focus on capabilities.

The Framework with the AFAC Leadership Capability Framework at its core, brings together the relative staff salary streams, the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF); the Public Safety Training Package with other qualifications including courses from the Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) identified as fitting to our industry and people.

2-day professional development (PD) workshops are provided to all staff each year and are aligned to specific capabilities from the AFAC Leadership Capability Framework. The workshops are provided with a residential option to encourage team building across functional areas and to aid relationship building for those new to the organisation. Courses are an intentional mix of staff from across the state/directorates and across different levels of leadership to further drive inclusiveness and remove potential barriers.

Integration of the AFAC Leadership Capability Framework goes beyond PD activities. The Framework is used within bi-annual staff PD meetings and is an aid for the creation and revision of Position Information Descriptors. The AFAC Leadership Capability Framework is a working tool within SACFS and is referenced throughout the Staff PD Policy and Process.

Ethics & Collaboration

The first PD workshop was facilitated with the key capability areas of ethical behaviour, governance and compliance chosen as the first for focus. The course was well-received with many staff impressed with the people involvement provided for all. Tangible outcomes were gained from this course and all staff are provided a summary document highlighting input at the conclusion of each year in order to create transparency of thoughts and to show common themes emerging.

Self & People

Following the success of the first staff PD session in 2016, SACFS continued the momentum with the focus on self and people. The values provided an opportunity for all staff to know and to develop a greater sense of self-awareness of both their own work and that of others.

These sessions were understandably challenging as they included real life experiences and some cases. The sharing of personal experiences, the feedback identified that the majority of staff found this to be a worthwhile provocation and for some, enough to suppress a journey of better self-care.

With the recent extension of a position of mental health first aid finding to cover all SACFS members, this was a timely focus on the welfare of our people.

Influence & Results

SACFS staff were provided with strategies to influence and gain results, the capacity to engage and influence others is an amalgam of several skills of thought, communication, negotiation, influencing and even a degree of sales. The sessions started with discussion of team and organisational goals as individuals with diverse goals and plans perform better, are more engaged, are more resilient and as a result have better mental health.

The workshop progressed to problem solving, inspiring customer/community needs, expectations and aims and how we can remain agile by a better understanding of these, building a model and behaviour that applies the benefits of continuously improving our service to accommodate change.

Staff worked in pairs and how they might be investigated and changed. A range of thinking tools enabled staff to examine issues in a different light and hence bring about change.

Strategic Agility & Inclusiveness

The year sees an exciting program of provision to staff within the area of strategy and inclusiveness. Bringing together reasons will have learned since 2014 about diversity and inclusiveness, we challenge whether we are indeed inclusive and how we can improve our practices both individually and with our service.

CFS

For more information contact:
General Enquiries
Training Officer - Learning & Development
or "Ask Me" Staff
Email: training@csf.sa.gov.au
CFS State Training Centre, Adelaide

We have collected over 14000 Staff Capabilities
Information to develop the CFS Staff Capability Framework
The framework is a tool to help us develop
the future of our organisation and to ensure
the best outcomes for our people and the community.
We are proud to be a part of the CFS Staff Capability Framework
Thank you to all staff who have contributed to this project.

AIIMS training proves popular



By: Ali Martin

Australasian Interagency Incident Management System (AIIMS) to manage all of its incidents – everything from a road crash to a large bushfire.

The State Training Centre has a number of courses, with Introduction to AIIMS now being delivered across the state to 18 other agencies.

Manager of Learning and Development Scott Turner said AIIMS was the second-most demanded course in CFS last year behind Basic Firefighting 1, which shows an increase in interest across the CFS in how incidents are managed.

"Australia has two primary Incident Management (IM) platforms – the AIIMS used by emergency services and industry across Australia and ICCS-Plus, a policing-based IM system," Scott said.

"Although the two courses have been developed to complement each other, AIIMS is being used to manage

fires (rural and urban), Hazmat incidents, medical incidents including COVID-19, plant disease, floods, animal disease, storms and pest invasions.

"AIIMS provides a solid platform for agencies to build and support their internal command network while providing the control agency with clearly defined functions to perform control across all agencies participating in an event, incident or emergency.

"AIIMS provides a common platform which allows people to use their skills in defined functional areas regardless of the event, incident or emergency, ensuring a scalable and adaptable approach to emergency management."

Australia adapted AIIMS from the American Incident Control System. It has been adapted to address Australia's multi-agency and all-hazard emergency response opportunities.

Those deployed to Canada and the United States were able to integrate seamlessly into local Incident Management Teams (IMTs).

The CFS continues to be a strong contributor to national incident management development and systems, including the national Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme (EMPS, <https://www.emps.org.au>).

"National and International research identifies that having common, tested, validated and assessed incident management personnel and teams greatly enhances the tactical and practical response," Scott said.

In recent years, the CFS facilitated multi-agency IMT-managed fires across the state, Gawler and Light River flooding and also deployed to assist with emergencies in other states including Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.

CFS incident management personnel – along with CFS-trained incident management personnel from the National Parks and Wildlife Service SA, Department for Environment and Water, MFS, Local Government and SES – have been embedded into the State Control Centre Health to command the COVID-19 response.

"The AIIMS is scalable and adaptable, providing a simple system that can be transitioned from managing a building fire through to controlling a locus outbreak," Scott said.

"The opportunity moving forward for South Australia is to share and enhance the knowledge and use of the system across emergency management partners."

The COVID-19 response has shown a need for more agencies to understand the basic principle of command, control and co-ordination.

"Many agencies need to look beyond their internal systems to embrace and adopt common shared emergency and incident management," Scott said.

"A greater integration of a common platform for incident management can only enhance the state's response to emergencies, incidents and events and will ensure that South Australia is better prepared to support our community."

Trailer makes revalidation easier

By: Ali Martin

A new road crash rescue trailer is making it easier for brigades to do their training and revalidation.

Complete with the full complement of road crash rescue equipment you'd find on a truck, the trailer means brigades don't have to take a truck offline while they train.

State Training Officer David Zakrzewski said either the brigade could stay online or, if there were a lot of people to train, they could use the appliance and trailer to have two sessions going at once.

"The trailer has everything you would have in an appliance – drills, hand tools, hard and soft protection... it replicates what you would have in a 34P and the stowage is the same.

"There is also room for additional equipment in case we have future developments."

State Training Officer David Richardson said the trailer was first used in Naracoorte and has since visited different parts of the state.

"We did a revalidation at Strathalbyn with half the training on one side and half on the other, so that meant we could get through 12 people that night."



The trailer also has its own power supply, with LED scene lighting and transportable light towers.

Although it wasn't built to assist in operational scenarios, David said it could be a support resource if a major crash

requiring additional equipment occurred.

If your brigade is due for a revalidation course, contact your Region to organise trainers to assist.

VR gets a reality check



By: Ali Martin

The State Training Centre now has a Virtual Reality (VR) Suite to simulate the real-life firefighting experience.

Still in the building and testing phase, the VR courses give training participants the chance to discover what a high-impact situation would look and feel like.

State Training Officer Adam Shearer said VR was becoming an expectation with the younger generation, who want to experience training in a more realistic environment.

"I would love to get to the point where we see compartment firefighter or ground observer training with the whole classroom using VR headsets."

State Training Officer Lynseece Naylor said VR gave a more in-depth insight when compared to reading a document.

"It also tests your emotional levels if you're at a car accident. You can hear and see what's going on, and you can test yourself before you're in that situation.

"Seeing and feeling a situation has such a bigger impact. Those visual cues in training can help when you get in that situation in reality. This could be key in some personalities."

All VR simulations (like those pictured here) have CFS trucks and clothing to replicate what people would see in the field.

For the First Arrival Officer Training, it starts in the appliance and you receive information as you would on the way to a structure fire.

Every detail is thought about, including other agencies who may attend, the ability to walk around the home and into different rooms – all while the VR trainers are feeding you a changing scenario from the control room.

"You're operating in a safe environment, so we can increase the pressure in the simulation to see how people react," Adam said.

"We have the ability to run four simulators at the same time, with audio and visual features being run from the control room."

The program is fully customisable to make everything look realistic – including the creation of local businesses such as Bunnings included.

"Building these simulations does take time, though. For the First Arrival Officer Training, it will go for about eight to 10 minutes, and it takes about an hour to build each minute of interaction," Adam said.

"We could build up to do a multi-sector incident, though, which could take eight hours in VR, so a long time to build."

The Youth Advisory Council has trialled some of the simulations and provided great feedback.

The next course to be built will be in Incident Management, with Tactical Command Levels 2 and 3 following, and eventually VR could be on the Online Learning Hub through the Volunteer Portal.



Keeping yourself in check

Jane Abdilla is the SAFECOM Health and Wellbeing Consultant for CFS, SES and Volunteer Marine Rescue. She also manages the Stress Prevention and Management (SPAM) program.

Jane would like to say firstly a massive 'thank you' to all the volunteers, staff and family members who gave up so much of their time over the 2019/20 season to assist the community both here in South Australia and interstate.

With so many fire-related incidents that occurred around Australia this year, you will find that different people will have reacted differently. For most, it can be a positive and rewarding experience, doing what you are trained to do and supporting the community in its time of need.

For others, the experience may not always be a positive one due to the things they have seen, heard or felt. If you have

experienced an event that is troubling you, please reach out to trusted crew members, friends or family and talk to them about how you are feeling.

Sometimes reaching out to colleagues and family is not enough, and you may require professional help.

If your experiences during the fires have impacted you and you are still thinking about it, not sleeping well, or feeling anxious, you do need to seek help as soon as possible.

Whatever your experience, it is really important to look after yourselves and your families in the days, weeks and months to come.

Please remember that support is available.

You are invited to ring and make a referral to one of

our Mental Health Professionals. The Mental Health Professionals, who work with three providers such as Auspsych Australia, Human Psychology and Cognition, can provide individual counselling for you and your family. They can also provide a critical incident group session following a traumatic event.

Either way, for assistance, please call the SPAM Help Line on 8115 3950.

(The previous SPAM help line number 8211 9612 is currently being diverted to the new number.)

New flyers have been posted to brigades, and posters will be sent out by the middle of the year.)

If you are struggling with any issues, please don't wait for a call from us – pick up the phone and call us on 8115 3950.

Are they Triple OK?

Last year the well-known mental health organisation RUOK? launched a specific campaign for emergency service workers.

Are they Triple OK? is a campaign to encourage higher peer and social support for police and emergency services workers across Australia.

The campaign was developed in response to Beyond Blue's nationwide Answering the Call study, which found emergency service personnel report suicidal thoughts more than twice as often as adults in the general population. However, personnel with higher levels of social support and resilience reported lower levels of suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

Are they Triple OK? encourages early intervention and help-seeking by providing police and emergency services workers with the skills and tools to begin an R U OK? conversation.

Agencies from across Australia supplied people from each state's police and emergency services to provide a local connection to those the campaign is aimed at.

Representing the SA Country Fire Service was Region 1 firefighter Leah Salamon, who encouraged people to seek help if they think they or someone they know is struggling.

"Sometimes your thoughts are ruminating and that tap, you can't just turn that tap off, that drip has become a flow and often you don't realise it until someone goes 'hey, you're a bit out of place, do you want to have a chat?'" Leah said.

Mount Barker SES Unit Manager Stuart Catt and MFS Employee Support Co-ordinator Dennis Taylor were also featured in the campaign.

"I've had mental health challenges myself in the past, and if it wasn't for the openness in the conversations, we wouldn't be having a conversation today," Stuart said.

"Even if they don't want to have a conversation, make yourself available to them because not everyone wants to talk about their problems as soon as someone asks. It might take them a little while to warm up to the idea that there is someone who wants to help them, or there is someone who wants to have a chat."

Dennis said mental health problems were common within both the emergency services and wider community.

"Just breaking that barrier and being able to drop the stigma to talk and reach out for help is huge.

"I may not be the expert on it, but I know that I can get recommendations or solutions to get the person to the place they need to go for more help, with the view to follow up at a later date."

For more information or to seek assistance, visit ruok.org.au/triple-ok.

ARE THEY TRIPLE OK?

**We're always there to help.
Let's make sure we help each other and ask R U OK?**

RUOK?
A conversation could change a life.
ruok.org.au

How people feel after a traumatic event

By: Human Psychology

“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.”
(Remen, 2006)

Our response to stress

The **stress response** is a life-saving adaptation that exists among all living creatures. When we are confronted with a life-threatening event, this fight, flight, or freeze reaction is what gives us the ability to take instantaneous action, even before our thinking brain catches up.

Our nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones rouse the body for emergency action. Our heart pounds faster, muscles tighten, blood pressure rises, breath quickens and senses become sharper.

Traumatic stress is the stress response to a traumatic event(s) in which one is a victim or witness. Repeated stressful and/or traumatic events can chronically elevate the body's stress response.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can occur after someone has been through a traumatic event.

People are different in the way they react to being involved in a traumatic incident. It is a very personal experience, with no one set of typical reactions that applies to everyone.

For some, reactions may be minor and will pass quickly, while for others this will not be the case, especially if the incident brings up past difficulties or traumas for them. For many people, their reactions will be somewhere in between.

A normal reaction to trauma

Being involved in a traumatic incident affects the way a person feels physically and emotionally. It also affects a person's cognitive (thinking) processes and how they act.

Physical reactions (body)

- Increased susceptibility to minor illness (e.g. colds, viruses)
- Lack of energy, feeling tired and run down
- Sore and tense muscles
- Shortness of breath, perhaps accompanied by pain in the chest
- Stomach upsets or other gastrointestinal problems
- Headaches
- Disrupted sleep and appetite
- Feeling edgy, restless or easily startled

It is wise to check any physical signs of ill health that do not go away quickly with your GP.

Feeling reactions (heart)

Anyone who has experienced a traumatic incident will recognise that strong feelings are involved. These feelings can be overwhelming in the early stages, and anticipating them is the first step in dealing with them.

The following words are common in how people describe how they feel: hurt, shocked, confused, angry, sad, devastated, lost, guilty, moody, feelings of unreality/disbelief, irritable, lonely, scared, empty, numb, longing for how things were before.

Whatever your feelings, recognise them as valid.

Cognitive reactions (head)

It is to be expected that our thoughts will be focused on the incident for some time, and we are likely to experience at least some of the common cognitive reactions:

- Forgetting things easily and having difficulty in taking in new information
- Becoming easily confused
- Thoughts of the incident popping into our mind when this is not wanted
- Trouble concentrating and having a short attention span
- Mind going blank
- Mind racing with thoughts that seem to be out of control
- Dreaming of the incident
- Flashbacks to the incident
- Having difficulty in making decisions

Behavioural reactions (action)

- Becoming more quiet and withdrawn
- Trying to avoid reminders of the incident, or the deceased, or injured person
- Wanting to talk about the incident as often as possible and/or seeking out reminders
- Losing interest in normal activities
- Showing emotional behaviour, such as crying, or losing patience easily
- Being unable to settle, showing restlessness

It is important to understand that the range of behaviours displayed by one person may be the opposite to the range of behaviours displayed by another.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Most people have some stress-related reactions after a traumatic event. If your reactions don't go away over time and they disrupt your life for some time, you may have PTSD. A person with PTSD can experience a range of problems:

- Reliving the traumatic event through unwanted memories, vivid nightmares, flashbacks or intense reactions such as heart palpitations or panic when reminded of the event.
- Feeling wound up – for example, having trouble sleeping or concentrating, feeling angry or irritable, taking risks, being easily startled or constantly on the lookout for danger.
- Avoiding reminders of the event (triggers) such as activities, places, people, thoughts or feelings that bring back memories of the trauma.
- Negative thoughts and feelings such as fear, anger, guilt, or feeling flat or numb a lot of the time; or loss of interest in day-to-day activities and feeling cut off from friends and family.

It is not unusual for people with PTSD to experience other problems like depression or anxiety. Some may develop a habit of using alcohol or drugs as a way of coping.

Firefighters, as first responders to traumatic incidents such as bushfire and car accidents, are exposed to a number of stressful conditions ranging from threats to their own safety to witnessing the devastating effects of these events.

The prevalence of PTSD has been described as high as 20 per cent in this group, and volunteer firefighters may have even higher rates of PTSD.

While being a firefighter is associated with a higher risk for PTSD than some other occupations, being a firefighter does not cause someone to develop PTSD any more than being involved in a natural disaster causes a person to develop PTSD.

Traumatic events are common, and almost everyone who goes through such an event will be emotionally affected in some way. For some, the effects can be long-lasting.

If you or someone you care about is continuing to struggle weeks or months after experiencing trauma, you can get help. It's never too late to get help for PTSD.

What helps after a traumatic event?

- Look after yourself. Recognise that being involved in a traumatic incident can take a physical toll. Pay special care to important basics such as diet, sleep and exercise.
- Give yourself time to recover and heal. Accept that your reactions will not always be the same as others. What will affect you will not always affect your colleagues. And if your colleagues are affected, they may not show their reactions in the same way as you do. Be tolerant, observant, and supportive of others who were also involved.
- Talk to your colleagues. They may have had a similar experience, and talking helps to create an open and supportive work environment for your CFS Brigade.
- Find a good listener – someone who will listen non-critically, even when you want to go over the same information time and time again.
- Balance the time you spend with others with having quiet time to yourself. This will help you work things through in your own mind and to come to terms with what has occurred.
- Don't hesitate to ask for what you want from your friends and family. Often others do not know what to do to help and hence they keep their distance, or inadvertently make the occasional insensitive remark. Tell them what helps you.
- Re-establish your normal routine. Structure your time. Make yourself do things that you normally enjoy.
- Don't self-medicate. Don't try and avoid your reactions by using alcohol or other drugs.
- Try not to make major life decisions at this time – give yourself time to put everything into perspective.

When should you seek help?

If your signs of stress do not seem to be fading, seek help from the SPAM team, your GP or a psychologist to talk things over.

Having a clear understanding of the incident and its impact on you can allow you to put it into perspective – to deal with it and move on. It is a sign of strength, not weakness, to access support. Having a trauma reaction makes you human, not weak.

There is no one right time to seek help. Usually acute signs of distress start to lessen anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, but don't hesitate to talk to a professional earlier if your reactions are bothering you.

Don't overlook signs that suggest that the incident may have been “the straw that broke the camel's back” – traumatic incidents often come on top of other life stressors or stir up old problems.

The CFS has a number of people available who are ready and able to assist with the health, safety and well-being of volunteers and staff. Group intervention support for CFS brigades is available following a traumatic event, as is individual counselling through the EAP.

Stress Prevention Management and Peer Support Services (SPAM) Helpline advice and referral service – Phone 8115 3950 – The SPAM Helpline.



Cadets shine at national championships

By: Simone McDonnell

While most high school students were enjoying their term three holidays, 12 of our CFS cadets were putting their training to the test at the seventh Australian Fire Cadet Championships.

The championships, which brought cadets together from across Australia's fire organisations, took place from September 30 to October 3 at Arcadia, New South Wales.

The biennial event aims to showcase the skills and tenacity of the cadets taking part while also providing an opportunity to network, build comradery and enjoy friendly competition with their interstate counterparts.

CFS cadets came together from across the state to form two teams of six. Having only met each other the day before, the cadets did exceptionally well in their teams, with Team Alpha placing sixth and Team Bravo placing 18th in the championships.

The championships were co-hosted by the NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW Rural Fire Service Association. Photos from their trip are featured above on both pages.

Port Wakefield hosts presentation night

Port Wakefield CFS held a cadet uniform presentation night on August 6, 2019, giving the Brigade an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate its youngest members.

Through generous community and council donations, as well as fundraising by the cadets, around \$7000 was raised to purchase 17 field uniforms, boots, field t-shirts and dress polo shirts.

Around 60 people attended the event, including the Mayor and Councillors from Wakefield Regional Council, representatives of the Australian Defence Force and members of the Group and local Brigade.

Following official proceedings, during which the cadets were made to stand at parade, the night was capped off with an informal barbecue and two double-layer cream cakes.



YAC helps break barriers

By: Simone McDonnell

Just like the rest of CFS, the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) has had a busy 12 months.

Representing CFS volunteers aged 16 to 30, the YAC ensures that young people are given a voice in decision-making processes. It provides a youth perspective on matters (especially in the higher levels of CFS management) and actively involves young people in the CFS.

The current members of the YAC are:

Region 1 rep: Corey Littler (Morphett Vale) – Chairperson

Region 1 proxy: Michael Amos (Mylor)

Region 2 rep: Jessica Cadd (Weetulla/ Nalyappa) – Communications Officer

Region 2 proxy: Josh Forshaw (Virginia)

Region 3 rep: Sam Hagger (Mypolonga)

Region 4 rep: Alex Giles (Napperby)

Region 4 proxy: Abbey Rayner (Coober Pedy)

Region 5 rep: Wade Chant (Port MacDonnell)

Region 6 rep: Katie Freak (Lincoln) – Deputy Chairperson

Deputy Chief Officer Andrew Stark attends the meetings, which occur in person during cooler months and via teleconference over the busy Fire Danger Season.

The YAC is currently involved with the development of the youth, young people and cadets section of the Breaking Barriers strategy and sits on the Chief Officer's Advisory Council, Infrastructure and Logistics Committee and the ICT working party. It is often called to give input on other working parties and projects.

The YAC is tasked with engaging with young people in the regions so that we can raise their issues and find ways to be advocates and help out. It looks at models within other organisations to set up regional YAC branches.

As with most engagement sections of the CFS, the YAC's plans for 2020 are now in disarray, with a lot of the second half of the year concentrating on the cancelled Emergency Services Tech Expo. The event was scheduled for April 2 at the Adelaide Showgrounds and was focused on promoting the emergency services to high school students.

The YAC is also planning an Emerging Leaders Day in Region 2 and will continue to support young members of the CFS with AILMS, Rural Skills and Urban Skills courses.

For more information, or to get involved with the YAC, send an email to yac@cfs.sa.gov.au.

Vision for volunteers museum becomes reality

By: Ali Martin

The first stage of the SA Volunteer Fire Fighters Museum was officially opened on Sunday, February 16, at Naracoorte.

To a crowd of around 200 volunteer firefighter supporters, Member for Barker Tony Pasin and Museum chairman Rex Hall declared the Museum open.

This followed a special memorial for the anniversary of Ash Wednesday. Nine News presenter Brenton Ragless gave a history of that fateful day in 1983 before CFS Chief Officer Mark Jones and members of other agencies laid a wreath to remember the fallen.

The crowd then followed a troupe of bagpipe players into the Museum for the main event.

The Chief Officer officially launched Rex's latest book documenting the history of the Museum – the idea for which came from a volunteer firefighters conference in New Zealand.

The Museum has been 19 years in the making, starting as part of the CFS before moving to an entity of its own.

After countless fundraisers, the Museum committee was granted \$320,000 from the Federal Government last year.

"It's very rewarding to see it come to fruition," Rex said.

The Museum includes old appliances, uniforms, firefighting equipment and many photos of times gone by.

Members of the Tea Tree Gully and Greenock Brigades made the trip to the Museum opening to see their former items on display.

Among the crowd was former CFS Chief Officers and Directors Allan Ferris, Vince Monterola, Lloyd Johns and Greg Nettleton.

The project's second stage will include the addition of meeting rooms and toilets.



Memorial still recognised



The Firefighters Memorial on Saturday, April, 4 was still recognised this year, albeit in a different format. The restrictions around gatherings due to the COVID-19 outbreak meant the scheduled memorial service was postponed. However, flags were still lowered to half-mast to recognise the fallen firefighters of CFS and Forestry.



A Merry CFS Christmas

Many CFS Brigades were out and about celebrating the festive season by participating in local Christmas parades, parties and carols.

Each year it's great to see CFS volunteers throughout the state celebrating with their local community.





1 An Anzac Day with a difference

With the COVID-19 pandemic putting a stop to usual services, CFS brigades chose to pay tribute to our Returned Service men and women in a different way. Paringa CFS lit up their station early on April 25 and social distanced while paying their respects.

2 CFS celebrates our wonderful women

By: Simone McDonnell

International Women's Day (IWD) was celebrated around the world on March 8, but closer to home the CFS took part in the IWD Breakfast on Friday, March 6, at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

The breakfast, which sells out every year, saw 2500 people converge on North Terrace to celebrate women and to hear from former Equal Opportunity Commissioner (and current global Male Champions of Change strategy convener) Elizabeth Broderick AO.

Ms Broderick addressed the gathered crowd about her time overseeing cultural change within the ranks of the Australian Defence Force following the airing of multiple sexual harassment claims from women within the various organisations.

The CFS was represented by volunteers Bobbie Ricke, Jill Krebs, Rosemary McDonnell and Sonia Mittelstadt; along with staff members Ali Martin, CFS Senior Media and Communications Officer; Sandy Pope, Manager of Operational

Facilities; Zoe Williams, Administration Officer, Region 4, and Brianna Green from the Air Desk. They were joined by Chief Officer Mark Jones and Deputy Chief Officer Andrew Stark.

Mark said the CFS has appreciated the opportunity to attend the breakfast.

"We heard from various speakers and learned of the challenges that remain to deflate the scourge of domestic violence and workplace inequality. But, in looking around our table, I was inspired by the women of our service. I am delighted to see women being influential at all levels within our service."

Coffin Bay Training and Administration Officer Sonia Mittelstadt, who has been credited by the Region with strengthening the Brigade, said it was an amazing experience to be a part of.

"Being around such like-minded ladies who have shown strength and resilience made me feel very proud and privileged. Meeting women in leadership positions reminded me that it is possible for me to be a leader in the CFS."

The CFS Social Media then focussed its attention on the women in the organisation across Sunday, profiling the volunteers involved in the breakfast as well as State Duty Commander Yvette Dowling, Region 4 Commander Sindy McCourt and Region 2 volunteer Cass Barker.

"It's important that we continue to promote the roles that women can play within the organisation," Yvette said.

"The CFS can be viewed as a bit of a male domain, so by putting the spotlight on the different women within the organisation, hopefully we can encourage more to want to get involved."

3 Personnel join Pride Month parade

By: Simone McDonnell

November 2 saw the Adelaide CBD come alive as the city celebrated the Adelaide Pride March, with Pride in South taking place in Port Noarlunga on November 23.

With the Morphett Vale Pumper wrapped for the occasion, around 40 CFS personnel and their families took part in the parade, making it one of the bigger entries of the day.

Deputy Chief Officer Andrew Stark said the event was a great opportunity to celebrate the diversity of our staff and volunteers.

"The CFS is made up of people from all walks of life, and we want everyone to know that regardless of what gender or sexuality you are, you are welcome to join, and we want them to feel welcomed within our organisation."

4 Tour Down Under highlights fire damage

This year's Tour Down Under Stages 1, 2 and 3 included areas that had been significantly burned in the Cudlee Creek fire, highlighting to spectators the damage done.

The CFS and SES once again provided fire support, with 21 volunteers from CFS and SES and nine staff crewing the support vehicles of the Police Operations Centre.

Held in January, the operational tempo was at an all-time high.



Regional Operations Staff Officer Steve Schneider said it was an extraordinary effort from the Group Officers who connected with the co-ordination team in a series of whirlwind face-to-face meetings.

But they managed to pull together all the planning at short notice and ensure a smooth, well-executed event.

"A huge 'thank you' to the numerous Brigades involved in ensuring safety on the day by either being on active standby or relocating to ensure an ability to respond," Steve said.

"Tour Down Under organisers were very thankful for the effort volunteers made, and worked with local fundraising groups to highlight Cudlee Creek fire-affected areas and concurrently including a link for donations on the live feed.

"Several teams signed jerseys for the CFS to keep for fundraising purposes – currently we are working with the CFSVA and SESVA to auction off the riders' jerseys.

"Almost all riders signing a CFS jacket as a thank you for our efforts, which was a lovely touch after a big season for everyone in CFS."

5 V8 fans unite behind our volunteers

While the departure of Holden dominated headlines and signalled the final year of one of Australia's greatest rivalries, Superloop 500 attendees temporarily set the competition to one side as they celebrated CFS volunteers and other Emergency Service personnel and fire-support charities and organisations.

Volunteers and their families were invited by organisers to access free tickets to the iconic event, with around 275 CFS personnel attending Saturday's race.

At just after 3pm, CFS personnel – along with the SES, SAPOL, MFS, Australian Defence Force, SA Ambulance Service and St John Ambulance – assembled with volunteers from BlazeAid and Foodbank, and were then led by appliances as they walked the main stretch of the race track for the Parade of Heroes.

Many of the CFS volunteers expressed feelings of being overwhelmed and amazed as the crowd rose to their feet to thank them as representatives of everyone who has worked so hard on this year's fire season.

Regular Adelaide 500 attendee and Morphett Vale CFS volunteer Katie Francis said walking pit straight was a bucket list item, and the reaction was something unexpected.

"The community response has been overwhelming. To have strangers coming up to me to say 'thank you' makes volunteering so worthwhile. It was an experience I'll never forget."

Volunteers were then invited to stay on pit straight as the master of ceremonies announced the teams before being escorted to a safe area to watch the first V8 supercars race of the day.

6 Women in Firefighting reunite

By: Pip McGowan

In November 2019, a group of CFS members came together, to celebrate 20 years since the establishment of the Women

of the CFS Committee (WoCFS).

Those who attended including members and helpers from the original committee, original conference attendees and some new members of the CFS, with an interest in the activities of the committee.

Back in 1999, the 'Women of the Country Fire Service' held the first Women of the CFS Conference.

The committee was founded with the vision to encourage, empower and inform female volunteers of what they could achieve within the CFS.

A progressive movement of its time, as a sub-committee of the CFSVA and comprising of volunteers and staff from around the state, who shared the passion of inclusion and diversity, they encouraged women to strive for more challenging roles by providing opportunities to train and learn the various components within the service.

The committee undertook a number of events, including:

- Women in the Fire Service Conferences with funding from Westpac, CFS Volunteers Association and CFS including inspiring key note speakers (Georgina Sutton).
- 'Come and Try' Workshops in Regions and at the State Training Centre, this included AIMS, Breathing Apparatus, Communications, Hot Pad, Off Road Driver Training, Operating Pumps, Road Crash Rescue, etc.

As a result of the work of the committee, there were a number of changes that occurred in CFS – with benefits to all members, not just females. These included having toilets at staging areas, availability of small sized personal protective clothing, changes in how some practical training was undertaken, including the ability to try a Breathing Apparatus set before being nominated for a course.

When life gives you lemons...

By: Sarah Spencer

They say when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.

That is exactly what happened in Mount Barker as a way to heighten community spirit and raise funds for volunteer firefighters who had been involved with the major fires throughout the Fire Danger Season.

CFS Preparedness Operations Director Brett Loughlin is a local in the area and said it all started when he had a knock at his door in January.

"Several families came together to run a little cake and lemonade stand in our suburb at Mount Barker.

"The kids made flyers and went around and door knocked people to invite them.

"Our house was among them, so we went down and brought some treats. It was such a lovely gesture, and they had plenty of customers and all money raised was for the CFS Foundation and Kangaroo Island.

"I thought it was pretty special to see people coming together to do their part."



Award for Lifeblood fundraiser

Congratulations to everyone who participated in the Lifeblood Emergency Services Challenge last year. The CFS raised the second-highest number of donations. Blood donors Brett Williamson and Adam Pascoe received the award on the CFS's behalf.



Volunteers step up for charities

By: Simone McDonnell

Melbourne Climb

CFS volunteers from across the state travelled to Victoria in early September 2019 to take part in the annual Melbourne Firefighter Stair Climb.

Region 5 was represented with Corey Crafter, Blayne Price and Renee Ackerley from the Compton Brigade, along with Ryan Jellesma and Kalli Quinlan from Millicent.

Andrew Patterson flew the flag for Region 3, and from Region 1, Shane Rimmer from Sellicks, along with Willunga's Courtney Orrin and Aldinga's Liz Pryor, joined more than 600 firefighters from as far away as New Zealand to take part.

Andrew said the event was a chance to give back to a cause close to his heart.

"I was motivated after being in a dark place following the breakdown of my marriage. I was depressed and drinking, and I ended up utilising services like Lifeline and the Black Dog Institute to get me back on track."

As a part of Andrew's recovery, he started training for a half marathon before this opportunity came along.

"I saw on Facebook that someone I knew from the CFA had just smashed the New York climb. I messaged her to find out how to get involved, and when she told me about Melbourne's Firefighter Stair Climb and the services it raised funds for, I knew it was meant to be - time to give back to those that gave so much to me."

Wearing full structural gear, including breathing apparatus, the firefighters climbed the 28 flights of stairs of Melbourne's Crown Metropol hotel, between them raising more than \$10,000 for charity.

Kalli said she viewed the climb as a platform for conversations about mental health.

"My main goal was to raise as much as money as we could and raise that awareness about mental health in our services. Ryan and I raised over \$1500 in less than two months, but more importantly, we started a conversation in our community about it being okay to not always be okay in the job we do."

The event raised more than \$500,000, which was shared between the Black Dog Institute, Lifeline and the Emergency Services Foundation, which contributes to research, removing stigma and increasing awareness of mental health within the Australian Defence Force and Emergency Services.

Sydney Climb

For the third year in a row, Dalkeith CFS volunteers Dion Curnow, Andre Ponce De Leon, Jonathan Raymond and Steven Shaw participated in Furies Climb for Motor Neuron Disease (MND) in Sydney.

This year's event took place on November 9, with participants from across Australia taking the 1,500 steps to the top of the Sydney Eye.

This year the team raised more than \$2,000 for Macquarie University's vital research into finding a cure for the terminal illness, with the whole event raising more than \$750,000.

The team prepared for the challenge by increasing their cardio and core exercises and working out at the gym, as well as changing their diets.

While physically they were able to get themselves ready for the climb, Jonathon said the mental element of the more than 1,000 stairs was a very different issue.

"There isn't really much you can do mentally as a team as everyone reacts differently to the tower. Every year I get nervous waiting at the muster point, but once inside climbing I'm completely fine."

The team said it was important for the CFS to participate in community events like this because of the connections that can be made and the support that can be raised in the community.

"It's important for members to participate in events such as this to promote awareness of a disease that indiscriminately kills two or more Australians every day. Without participation, vital funds for research into finding a cure are non-existent.

"The best advice for anyone wanting to participate in next year's climb is to train and eat healthy. It will be one of the most gruelling events you can do outside of firefighting, so you will want to be in the best shape you can be."



A word from the CFS Foundation

The CFS Foundation team has been deeply saddened by the tragic bushfires, not only here in SA but across Australia.

Here in South Australia, many of our volunteer firefighters lost their homes, livelihoods and farms while out protecting the community. However, we are thankful that there was no loss of life.

The CFS Foundation has worked very hard to deal with the high volume of inquiries, phone calls and emails since December 2019.

We are usually a team of two part-time staff members consisting of a CEO and Administration Assistant, however we were fortunate to have additional support from our Board members — especially Rob Snowdon, who personally handled all dealings with CFS volunteers and families impacted by the recent catastrophic bushfires.

Over the last few months, the Foundation was fortunate to receive extremely generous support, encouragement and donations from the community and corporate sector.

To date, using our own cash reserves and donations, we have distributed more than \$2.6 million of immediate financial support to more than 70 CFS volunteers and their families who suffered losses while protecting their community.

The generosity of the community was amazing in this unprecedented fire season, and the CFS Foundation sincerely appreciates their support and we extend our heartfelt thanks to all.

The CFS Foundation will continue to provide long-term support to our CFS volunteers, for both physical and mental well-being, ensuring we future proof our ability to provide support when needed.

We also take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge the thousands of volunteers who worked tirelessly to save lives and property across Australia.

Our commitment is that no CFS volunteer firefighter who is actively engaged in protecting lives, property and communities will go without our assistance.

There can be no doubt that we have all had our lives impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we can advise you that you are in our thoughts.

On behalf of all connected with the Foundation, we wish everyone who has been affected by the recent bushfires the very best at healing and rebuilding their lives and homes.

We pray that during this time of uncertainty and isolation we remain connected to others wherever possible and we will all get through this together.

Gloria Berni

Chief Executive Officer

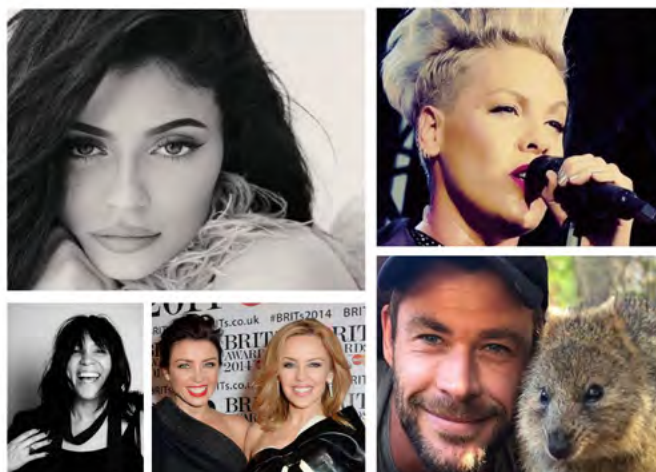
Thanks to our Corporate Sponsors

Aside from the generous donations and contributions we received during this terrible bushfire season, the Foundation would not be able to support our CFS volunteers without the ongoing support from our major sponsors, and we thank them.



Celebrity donations

The outpouring of support has been enormous, and we really have felt encouragement from around the world. The Foundation was fortunate to receive donations from a number of celebrities based in and outside of Australia. A few celebrities we would like to make a special mention to for their generosity are Kylie Jenner, Pink, Kate Cebrano, Dannii and Kylie Minogue and Chris Hemsworth.



The Foundation would also like to take the opportunity to thank Sophie Guidolin on her passion to raise much-needed funds for the CFS Foundation through her Facebook fundraiser and her fitness boot camps. Sophie's father was a firefighter with the South Australian MFS, and when these devastating fires occurred, she knew she wanted to help. Sophie's thoughtful act of generosity has helped raise more than \$500,000!



Rob Snowdon, Jim Sandford, Sophie Guidolin, Jim Ketach and Gloria Berni.

Corporate donations

Along with donations from celebrities, we would also like to thank the numerous businesses and corporations that made significant donations to the foundation, including the following:



We would also like to make special mention of the Southern Ocean Lodge, which tragically lost its entire building to the devastating Kangaroo Island fires in January 2020.

The business owners wanted to make a donation to the CFS Foundation as their way of saying 'thank you' to the incredible CFS volunteers who worked hard to try and save the lodge.

In their time of need, they were still so generous and gracious to make the donation to us.

We wish the team at Southern Ocean Lodge all the very best with the planned rebuild.

Board member changes

For almost 10 years, Rob Snowdon has been a Board Member and Chairman of the CFS Foundation and is always championing its work.

Rob made the decision to step down as Chairman before Christmas. However, with the major outbreak of bushfires, he stayed on as a Board Member and liaised with Brigade Captains and CFS volunteers that had been injured or lost property. He also managed the support given to these volunteers by the Foundation.

We thank Rob for the dedication, time and effort he has contributed to the CFS Foundation and wish him well on all his future endeavors.

John Lynch OAM has been appointed the new Chairman of the CFS Foundation. John recently retired as CEO of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and is looking forward to making a positive contribution to the work of the CFS Foundation.



Overwhelming public support

Many thanks to the generous businesses which offered free tickets and passes to our brave volunteers to enjoy some 'down time'. These were distributed to volunteers via our Facebook page and the CFS portal.

- Statewide Super for donating tickets to various events
- West End Brewery (Lion Nathan) for donating its corporate box
- Adelaide Entertainment Centre for donating tickets to various concerts including Jack Whitehall, Michael Bublé and Alice Cooper.
- SA Almond Growers for donating almonds which we sent to various Brigades

- Multiple others who organised concerts and events and invited CFS volunteers along as VIP guests

CFS Foundation song Let's Stand Together

In early December, the CFS Foundation produced a song and video clip, Let's Stand Together.

The song was the initiative of the CFS Foundation in order to raise awareness of the Foundation and the volunteers it supports. The recording and video clip features CFS volunteers with John 'Swanee' Swan providing the lead vocals.

We were fortunate to have John Swan provide the lead vocals. Swanee recently saw first-hand our brave volunteer firefighters at work fighting fires that were burning on the rear of his property in New South Wales, so was keen to do his part to support them.

A dozen CFS volunteers provided backing vocals, and we thank everyone who took part in the recording and filming of this song.

The video clip for Let's Stand Together can be seen on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/IrkvXmuEauE>).



CFS Foundation Initiatives

Thanks to Police Credit Union for delivering Valentine Day donuts to the staff at CFS State Headquarters! As organised by CFS Foundation.



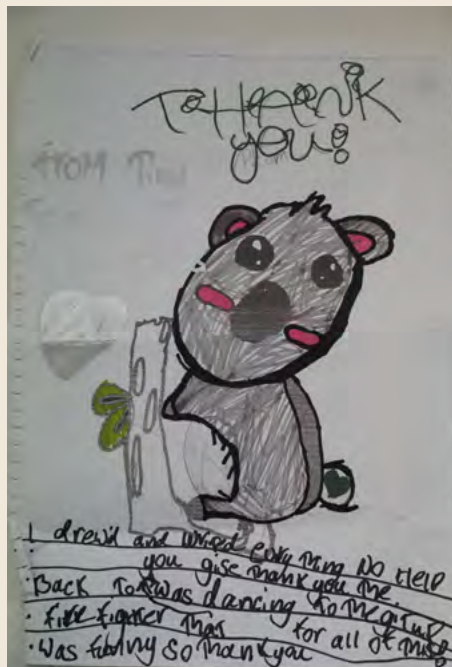
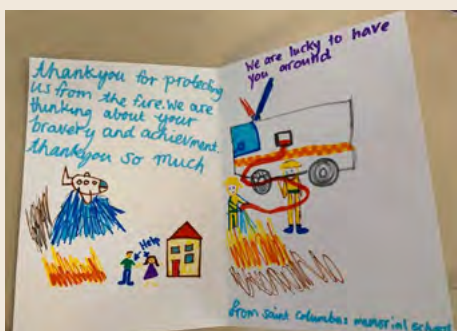
THANK YOU

Australia's 2019/20 Fire Danger Season created huge news throughout the country, and the world. The plight of firefighters working hard to control the many blazes throughout the country won the hearts of fellow Australians, and those watching on overseas.

CFS Headquarters was inundated with letters thanking volunteers, especially from school children. These came from local schools, as well as those in Arizona, Florida, New York and other parts of the United States (who are no stranger to bushfires). The reception was covered in colourful creations

thanking all firefighters, operations support, staff and incident management personnel.

Although this whole publication could be filled with just these thank you cards and letters, we chose a few to highlight how special our volunteers and their service is to the community.



Yorketown community shows its appreciation

By: Sarah Spencer

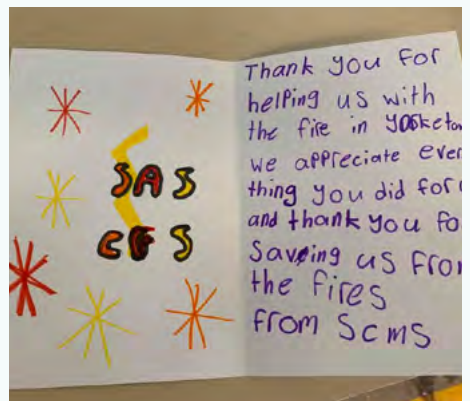
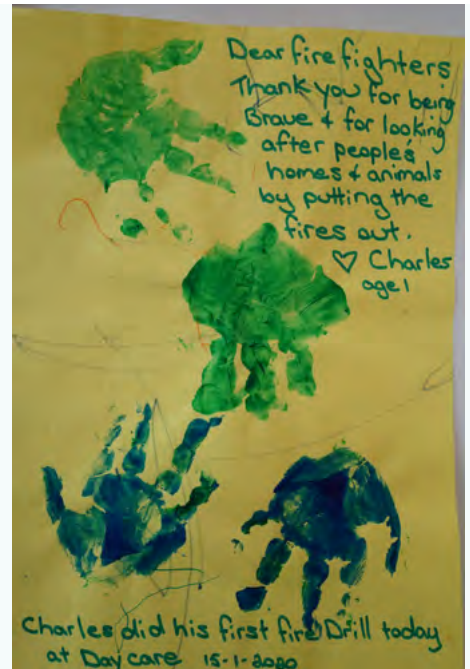
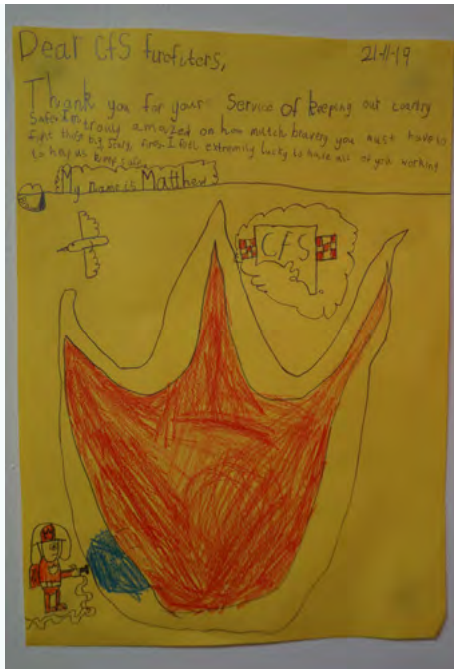
The Yorketown community had a wealth of praise for our CFS firefighters who came from near and far to save their town during the bushfires which burnt more than 5000 hectares last November.

Among the heartfelt messages was one from St Columba's Memorial School students, who sent a collection of handmade cards thanking volunteers for "taking time off your things to help fight the fire".

The children also hoped the firefighters enjoyed the food prepared by the community to keep them going while they were "looking after our country".

Members were thanked for their efforts by the community, including one local who spent her day making 100 sandwiches for volunteers, pubs which raised money for the CFS and others who publicly displayed their appreciation.





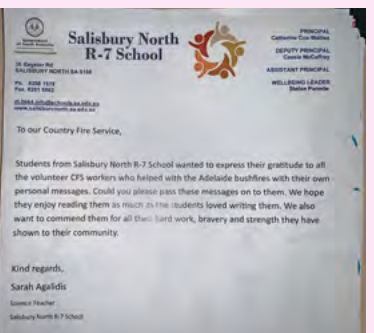
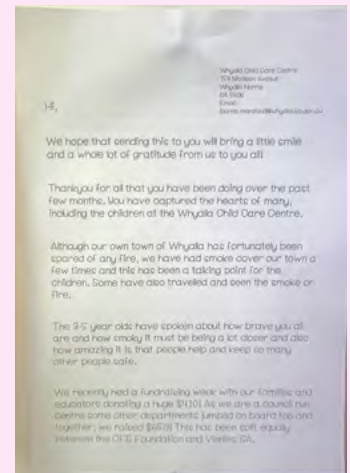
THANK YOU

Letters of thanks...



Cupcakes of compassion

A big thanks to Bella, who put on a bake sale in January to raise money for bushfire victims. The 11-year-old made cupcakes, jam and biscuits in an effort to do her bit to help those affected by the fires.



'Royal' welcome for firefighters

By: Luke Trewartha

Aldinga Beach CFS Brigade captain Luke Trewartha was one of several CFS volunteers to take up the offer of a four-night complimentary cruise out of Sydney on the Royal Caribbean International.

Luke shared his experience aboard the Spectrum of the Seas:

For first responders, the cruise was a fantastic experience! From the moment that the ship approached the docks, you could feel the excitement.

Hundreds of first responders were eagerly watching on and waving back to the excited staff, who had gathered up on the deck and were waving down greeting everyone.

My family of four was lucky enough to be accepted aboard the first of three complimentary cruises.

From the moment we embarked until we disembarked, we were in awe. The food was amazing.

The kids had a ball going from the water park, to the dodgem cars, to rock climbing, to the Flowrider wave machine and IFLY (a wind tunnel to simulate skydiving) – and everything in between.

The stage shows at night were breathtaking, and the staff in general... you could not find friendlier people.

It was a great time to relax, let your guard down and socialise with people far and wide, others from our own service and people from all over the country.

People being able to share their stories and hear different perspectives, I felt, was perfect after the summer we have all just had.

I feel it would have done a lot for people mentally to recharge and refresh, and in some instances debrief in a different form.

We are forever grateful to Royal Caribbean – the service was exemplary. As first-time cruisers, we were completely at ease and will one day certainly cruise with them again.



... Celebrities get in on the act



Alice Cooper autographed the helmet and uniform he wore on stage to pay tribute to our volunteers at his Adelaide concert in February 2020.

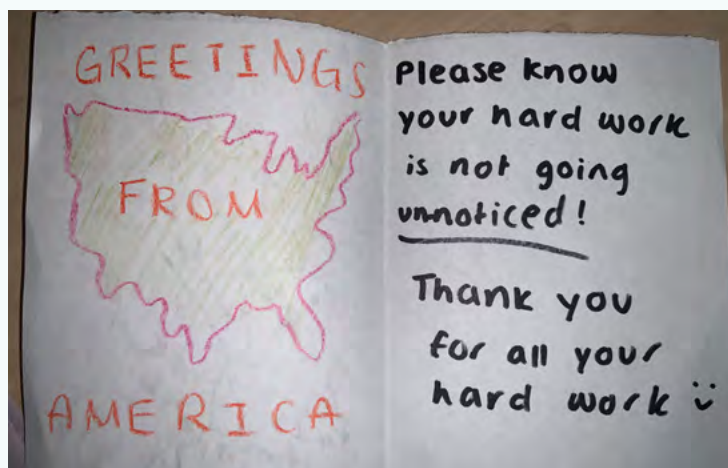
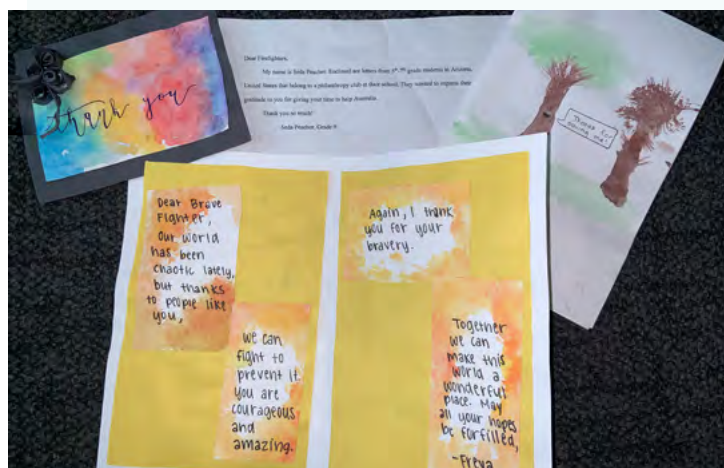
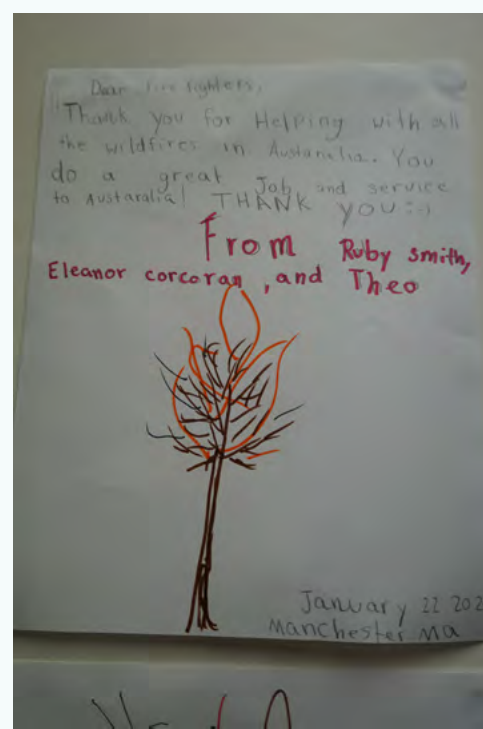
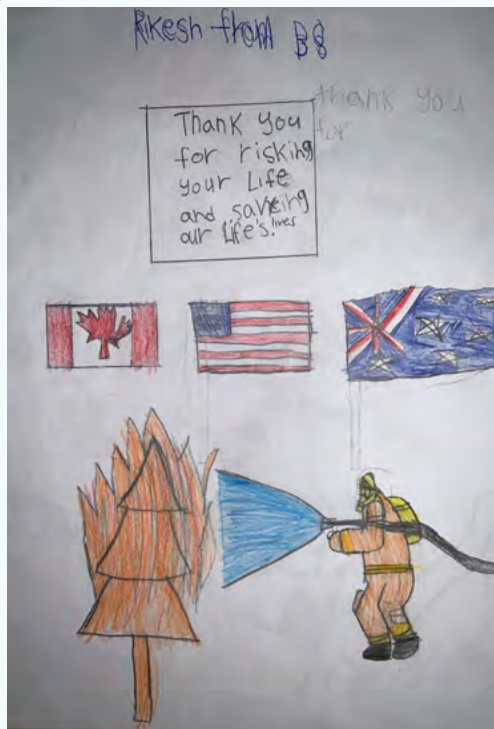
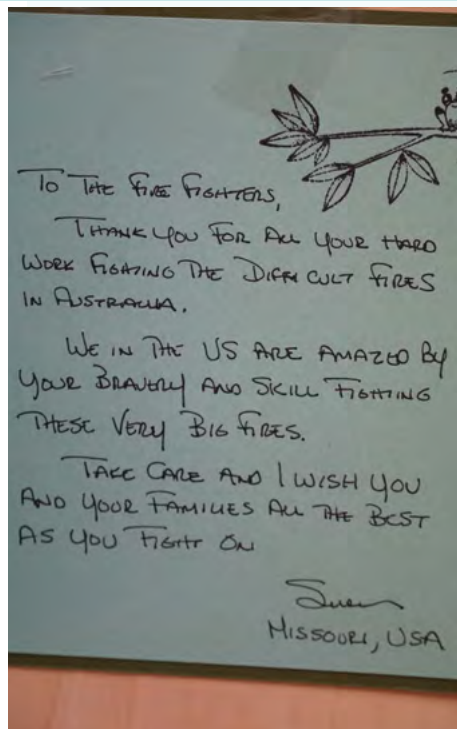
English bake sale for CFS...

By: Ali Martin

From as far away as England, people were thinking of CFS during the fire season. Seven-year-old Freya and four-year-old Maisie put on a bake sale in Wadebridge, Cornwall, to raise £123 for CFS volunteers. Thanks, Freya and Maisie, for your kindness.



... & admiration from the USA



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Email: CFSRegion2@sa.gov.au

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Email: CFSRegion3@sa.gov.au

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Email: CFSRegion4@sa.gov.au

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Email: CFSRegion6@sa.gov.au

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Telephone: 08 8398 9900

Email: CFStrain@sa.gov.au

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Telephone: (08) 8115 3372

Postal Address: GPO Box 2468 Adelaide SA 5001 DX 666

Email: CFSDDevelopmentAssessmentService@sa.gov.au

COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION (CFSVA):

Address: Suite 3, Transport Training Centre, 17 Wirriga St, Regency Park 5010

Telephone: 08 8244 6500

Postal Address: PO Box 2359, Regency Park SA 5942

Email: admin@cfsva.org.au

Website: www.cfsva.org.au

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Telephone: 08 8115 3318

Email: CFS.CommunityEngagementSupport@sa.gov.au

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT BRANCH - VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT:

Address: Level 6, 60 Waymouth Street Adelaide 5000

Telephone: Head Office: (08) 8115 1281 Recruitment: 1300 364 587

Postal Address: GPO Box 2706 Adelaide 5001

Email: volunteernow@safecom.sa.gov.au

BUSHFIRE INFORMATION HOTLINE: 1800 362 361

CFS FOUNDATION

Telephone: 1300 270 278

Email: office@cfsfoundation.org.au



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