



2026



SA Country
Fire Service
Yearbook





10,058

incidents responded to



2,013

vehicle-related
incidents



156

HazMat
incidents



252

structure fires



1,520

rural fires



3,363

special service incidents
(includes tree downs, flooding, severe weather, assist SAAS)

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Views and opinions expressed through the contributions in this publication are not necessarily those of the CFS or Government of South Australia.

CFS Yearbook has been compiled by CFS Communications Team.

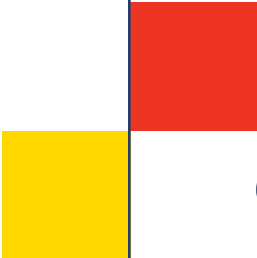
Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, the CFS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Contributors

We acknowledge CFS Promotions Unit and CFS brigades from across the state as the source of many of the photos in this year's publication. We thank everyone who shared their photos and stories.

Photos also sourced from Braeden Gatt, Bob Whitbread, Department for Environment and Water, Murray Bridge News, Port Lincoln Times, State Emergency Service and The SE Voice.



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A Year of Contrasts



It has been a year of contrasts, with fires and floods across the state. It has also been a year of constant improvement, and I continue to be proud of the incredible contributions you make to South Australia and beyond.

I want to start by acknowledging the line-of-duty death of firefighter Peter Curtis from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Yorke and Mid North Fire Crew. Peter's tragic passing while working on a fire in the Pinkawillinie Conservation Park was a loss felt by all who wear a fire service uniform.

Our big, extended CFS family came together and worked seamlessly with courage, compassion, and empathy.

Part of the story I want to highlight is the professionalism and compassion of everyone who was involved in this incident. From the rapid search on the fireground when communications with Peter were lost, the crew who stayed with him, the team at the group base and Region 6 Headquarters who coordinated operations, and the NPWS and CFS members who have continued to support and care for Peter's family. Our big, extended CFS family came together and worked seamlessly with courage, compassion, and empathy. I am always proud of you all, but it is in moments like this, as tragic as they are, that you see just how incredible our agency is.

The success of our partnerships was best highlighted during the Deep Creek fire, where CFS, NPWS, SA Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS), SA State Emergency Service (SASES), SA Ambulance Service (SAAS), SA Police, St John Ambulance SA, SA Fire and Emergency Commission (SAFECOM), Australian Red Cross, Local Government Association, Forestry SA and our interstate colleagues all came together to deliver exceptional service to the community.

The relationship between CFS and NPWS is a seamless one. We are unique in that firefighters from NPWS form part of the CFS, and we rely on each other for different skills and capabilities. I saw it firsthand as a crew member on a strike team working with Victorian Country Fire Authority and CFS crews to tie in the fire at the bottom of the Tapanappa Track. As so often happens, NPWS personnel provided expertise on the drip torch, and everyone worked together to achieve the required outcomes.

We saw this same approach to the fires at Tooperang and Katarapko Island, with MFS standing alongside us during these incidents, providing strike teams for property protection and other key tasks. The commitment from MFS to the Deep Creek fire was particularly impressive, and I received great feedback on how well integrated operations were during the incident.

Of course, we couldn't achieve such positive outcomes without you, our amazing volunteers. You provide a professional fire and rescue service to SA, and then you selflessly travel huge distances to support other communities in need across Australia and beyond. Thank you to everyone who turned out, whether in response to major fires or to the many daily incidents that help our communities.

As we look ahead, we have the New Operational System being finalised, which, combined with FireMapper, will provide you with the updated systems you need to succeed. We will also have EM Merge in place to ensure you receive the support you need to assist people when they require it most. Urban Uplift will continue to be developed and implemented, and several key infrastructure projects will be delivered.

I have no doubt that we will face challenges in the next 12 months, but working together, I am convinced that there is nothing we cannot overcome. Thank you again for your service, your support, and your friendship. You make the CFS the wonderful thing that it is.

Stay safe,

Brett Loughlin AFSM
Chief Officer



Thank you to everyone
who turned out,
whether in response
to major fires or to
the many daily
incidents that help
our communities.

A Service to Be Proud of



In the short time I've been Emergency Services Minister, I have been inspired by the hard work, dedication and leadership of the members of the South Australian Country Fire Service.

In what was a challenging summer of heatwaves, fires, and extreme weather events, CFS staff and volunteers went above and beyond to protect our communities.

I saw firsthand how professionally the CFS worked with other agencies to respond to fires on the Fleurieu Peninsula over summer, saving countless homes and livestock, and giving hope to communities.

I witnessed how these quick response times contained the fires before they could take hold and threaten lives and property.

I also saw staff and volunteers give up time with their families over the summer holidays to aid their colleagues interstate, including in Victoria and Western Australia.

This commitment and dedication makes me extremely proud to be the South Australian Minister for Emergency Services, a role which Premier Peter Malinauskas reappointed me to following the state election.

Being raised in the foothills of the Flinders Ranges, I know how important it is that support reaches every corner of our state. No matter where you live, communities deserve to feel safe and supported.

As I continue to travel around the state visiting brigades, I hope to meet as many of you as possible, and I am always keen to hear how things are on the ground.

As your Minister, I will continue to advocate for quality training and equipment to help you safely protect communities across South Australia.

Together, we will continue to ensure South Australia maintains one of the world's best fire services that everyone in our great state can be proud of.

Rhianon Pearce MP
Minister for Emergency Services

No matter where you live, communities deserve to feel safe and supported.

Rising to the Challenge



The CFS Volunteer Association (CFSVA) remains in awe of the commitment and dedication from our membership.

The CFS Volunteer Association (CFSVA) remains in awe of the commitment and dedication from our membership. CFS volunteers have risen to the challenges of another Fire Danger Season, while dealing with many day-to-day responses. Major incidents around the state have seen volunteers side by side, shouldering the workload.

Bush and grass fires are only a small percentage of CFS responses; however, they can be exceedingly arduous and time-consuming, with our members selflessly reporting day after day to ensure the fireground and communities are safe.

CFS is an all-hazards agency, and with the increase in responses driven by support to the SAAS, we need to be mindful of the additional pressures on our membership, their families, and employers. The association continues to advocate for volunteers to have access to appropriate training, mental health support, and cost recovery for these responses.

After lobbying for the funding from the State Government to conduct a Statewide Facility Audit, we acknowledge and appreciate the participation of our members in providing access.

Auditors accessed around 440 facilities across the state in a timely manner. Without the support of members, these timelines would not have been achievable. The audit will provide a valuable database to inform future station upgrades, replacements, and programmed maintenance.

In response to concerns raised by members about structural firefighting training, the CFSVA worked with CFS and the State Government to support the development of a structured, regionally focused training package. Firefighter safety is at the centre of this work. Funding and staffing remain a key focus, and the CFSVA will continue to advocate for the support needed to strengthen services across the state.

The CFSVA, through the Sector Advisory Committee, continues to recommend areas of improvement to the SAFECOM team, including work injury management, policy consultation, processes, and sector procurement, incorporating the staff and volunteer cohorts into IT-based solutions, with the station computer replacement program being an excellent example.

We welcome the return of the Honourable Rhiannon Pearce MP as Minister for Emergency Services. The Minister has shown a genuine interest in supporting CFS volunteers. With the Minister retaining the portfolio, this provides continuity and enables us to resume previous discussions on matters already tabled.

The association has open dialogue with the Minister and the CFS Executive monthly, providing the opportunity to immediately deal with escalating matters in a timely manner.

We encourage members to be proactive and involved with the CFSVA by nominating as a brigade or group representative and providing vital information to the CFSVA team as we collectively forge the future for CFS volunteers in South Australia.

Jeff Clark
CFSVA President ■

Remembering Peter Curtis



On 23 November 2025, firefighter Peter Curtis tragically passed away while undertaking remote firefighting duties on the Eyre Peninsula.

At the time of his passing, Peter was part of a National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) brigade strike team deployed to assist with a scrub fire in the Pinkawillinie Conservation Park.

Peter began his firefighting career with ForestrySA in 1995 at Wirrabara and, in 2017, transferred to NPWS within the Department for Environment and Water, where he contributed not only as a remote firefighter but also in leadership roles, serving as a Strike Team Leader and Sector Commander.

He dedicated his life to living and working in the Wirrabara Forest and surrounding areas. In recent years, he applied his wealth of practical knowledge and experience across the Southern Flinders Ranges and to other areas of the state. Peter attended numerous fire activities and incidents across South Australia, and contributed to significant incidents in other parts of Australia.

Peter is remembered as a loving husband to Jackie, a father to Guy, Joe, Acacia, and Thomas, and an adored grandfather of 6.

“Not one for small talk, he preferred the silence and the peace. Time blessed the man with compassion, wit and intelligence,” Peter’s daughter Acacia said.

“A community now misses a quiet contributor.”

Peter was farewelled with a Guard of Honour at the Torrens Parade Ground in Adelaide before making his final journey home to Wirrabara.

Hundreds of emergency service personnel, colleagues, and friends stood along the route in honour of a member of the fire service family who dedicated his life to protecting South Australia’s landscapes and communities.

Family, friends, and colleagues later gathered at Peter’s favourite place under the trees of the Wirrabara Forest to honour his life and dedication to service.

Above all, Peter was a caring and considerate person, deeply respected and loved by all who knew him. His loss is felt profoundly across our organisations and the broader community.



A community now misses a quiet contributor.



Credit (Photo 1 & 2): Brett Hartwig, courtesy The Advertiser



Major Incidents



Deep Creek fire

The Deep Creek fire began in steep, inaccessible terrain near Blowhole Beach Road at approximately 4:45 pm on 1 February 2026.

Due to the challenging terrain and unpredictable localised coastal and gully winds, the Deep Creek fire quickly escalated to a Level 3 Incident. An Emergency Warning Message was issued for Deep Creek, Silverton, and Cape Jervis communities on 2 February, with the fire front coming within 1 km of the Cape Jervis township.

Personnel from CFS, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), SA Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS), local Farm Fire Units (FFUs), and other partner agencies worked tirelessly across more than 10 days of sustained firefighting operations. A further 175 personnel from New South Wales, Queensland, Australian Capital Territory,

Western Australia, and Victoria were also deployed to support firefighting efforts and incident management.

From the outset, aerial support played a critical role in managing the fire as ground crews struggled to gain safe access. Throughout the incident, aircraft conducted more than 1,000 drops totalling more than 3.2 million litres of water and retardant.

Thanks to the dedicated work of our firefighters and the other personnel and agencies involved, the Deep Creek fire was declared contained exactly one week after it began. The fire burned 4,952 hectares of private and public land, including Deep Creek National Park and Talisker Conservation Park.

SA Police rapid damage assessment teams identified 12 vehicles and 22 structures had been damaged or

destroyed, including one unoccupied residential dwelling. Countless structures and assets were saved, including around 60 per cent of the Deep Creek National Park and areas inhabited by the endangered Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren.

Donations poured in from local community members, businesses, and other organisations, showing support to the volunteers and personnel working tirelessly to protect their communities. Support from the local community, SA State Emergency Service (SES), and SA Salvation Army Emergency Services kept volunteers well fed and cared for at the Yankalilla staging area, with around 1,500 meals served per day.

The outpouring of support from the local community and from across the state was greatly appreciated by firefighters who spent long days working in tough conditions.

Protecting natural values

NPWS staff, including ecologists serving as Natural Values Officers, played a critical role throughout the Deep Creek fire.

Natural Values Officers are considered technical specialists and sit within the planning unit in a Level 3 Incident Management Team (IMT). Their role is to provide advice to minimise impacts on environmental assets that might be affected by bushfires, suppression activities, or immediate post-fire threats.

Protecting part of the last remaining habitat of the nationally endangered Mount Lofty Ranges Southern Emu-wren was quickly identified by Natural Values Officers as a high priority in Deep Creek National Park. Using existing tracks and low-fuel areas from prescribed burns, a strategic backburn was put in place with the support of CFS aviation, which kept the fire out of this habitat.

Natural Values staff also worked with the IMT to adjust the location of heavy machinery lines in areas of native vegetation that support critically endangered orchid species and protect important revegetation areas.





Tooperang fire

On 18 January 2026, a small fire at Tooperang, 10 km east of Mount Compass, rapidly escalated into one of the year's most significant incidents.

Multiple ignitions at 4:37 pm along Nangkita Road quickly developed into an uncontrolled grass and scrub fire, prompting the issuing of a Watch & Act - Leave Now message as conditions deteriorated.

Burning across 685 hectares, the fire pushed southwest in difficult terrain toward Nangkita, Mount Jagged, Mosquito Hill, and the Mount Billy Conservation Park, driven by shifting winds and rapidly changing weather.

At its height, the incident placed enormous pressure on crews as it threatened homes, farmland, and native vegetation.

SA Police confirmed the loss of 3 structures, including 2 homes, and damage to vineyards, scrub and grazing land, with livestock losses reported. Despite these challenges, at least 12 properties were saved thanks to the coordinated and determined work of emergency services and community volunteers.

The fire was declared controlled at 4:14 pm on 21 January, 3 days after ignition, though firefighters faced elevated conditions during mopping up. The incident was downgraded to Level 1 and handed over to Mundoo Group at 11:20 am on Sunday, 25 January after 67,200 fireground hours.

More than 245 CFS fire trucks and over 820 volunteer firefighters were deployed, supported by MFS, SA Police, SA Ambulance Service and multiple aircraft, including firebombers and observational aircraft. Aircraft conducted around 166 aerial drops, delivering approximately 473,100 litres to assist ground crews.

Additional support came from Forestry SA, NPWS, St John Ambulance, 80 FFUs, private contractors, local community groups, local businesses and the Salvation Army. The incident staging point was the Mount Compass Sports & Social Club, with excellent support provided by the local community.

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”



Northern SA floods

In February 2026, intense rainfall across the state's north caused extensive flooding. With some areas experiencing record-breaking rainfall, CFS volunteers and staff answered the call to support the SES response.

While dealing with flooding in their own neighbourhoods, CFS volunteers and regional staff supported their local communities and responded to numerous incidents throughout the event. Notably, crews in the Southern

Flinders Ranges played a major role in an incident that resulted in a fatality north of Orroroo.

CFS aviation assets provided critical support to SES, including aerial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, reducing the risk to ground crews by minimising the need for ground-based assessment. This support also enabled rapid assessment of large, dynamic flood-affected areas.

At Emergency Services Headquarters, CFS staff also provided incident management support to SES in a range of areas, including operations and public information.

CFS provided significant support to SES throughout the prolonged flooding, strengthening interagency response, coordination, and relationships.



Katarapko Island fire

On 29 January 2026, CFS, MFS and NPWS firefighters responded to reports of multiple ignitions at Katarapko Island in the Murray River National Park.

The island's isolation posed significant access challenges, with crews needing to be transported to and from the island on an SA Water barge. Aircraft provided critical support to ground crews, completing 713 drops totalling more than 1.7 million litres. Crews were also supported by the SES and SA Police.

Throughout the incident, 87 firefighters on 36 trucks worked to extinguish the fires as they burned in grass and river red gums on the island.

The fire burned 293 hectares and was declared contained on 2 February 2026.





Canada deployment

A contingent of 13 personnel, including CFS and NPWS representatives, deployed to Alberta, Canada, in June and July 2025 as part of a 103-member Australian contingent.

Operating in challenging forested terrain, crews undertook arduous firefighting roles alongside other Canadian and Australian agencies, with deployments typically lasting up to 40 days under demanding conditions.

Regional Officer Outback Areas Peter Ikononopoulos deployed as Australia's Agency Representative (AREP), supporting the welfare and coordination of more than 60 firefighters based in the far north of Alberta.

His role included managing mobilisation and demobilisation, supporting personnel across remote locations, and working closely with Canadian agencies.

"I was grateful that I was able to assist another country in their time of need and pick up new skill sets," Peter said.

Regional Operations Manager Danny Crozier deployed as AREP and Senior Agency Representative, coordinating Australian and New Zealand crews across multiple locations.

His role included supporting logistics and crew movements during an airline disruption to help ensure personnel safety and ongoing operational support across the deployment.

"It was an opportunity to build on previous experience and bring valuable learnings back to support CFS operations," Danny said.

Interstate deployments

Throughout 2025-26, South Australian firefighters and operational personnel once again answered the call to support colleagues in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and Victoria.

In July 2025, a team of 13 personnel - 11 from CFS and 2 from NPWS - travelled to the Northern Territory to assist Bushfires NT with fires burning in the Barkly region east of Tennant Creek.

In December 2025 and then January 2026, 50 CFS firefighters and incident management personnel deployed to Boddington in Western Australia's mid-west region.

In January 2026, more than 200 personnel deployed to Victoria to support firefighting efforts as multiple uncontrollable bushfires threatened communities across the state.

Across 7 deployments, South Australian crew provided critical support including frontline firefighting, incident management, liaison, and strategic resource coordination roles, including the Natimuk and Dargo fires in Victoria.

CFS personnel, alongside SES personnel, also provided on-ground support in the Northern Territory following Tropical Cyclone Narelle in March 2026.

These deployments highlighted the strong cooperation between emergency services agencies and South Australia's ongoing commitment to supporting interstate communities during times of crisis.





Major Projects

Assist Medical

Volunteers are preparing to vote on whether their brigade will continue to respond to Assist Medical incidents or opt out at their upcoming annual general meetings.

Assist Medical is defined as an incident requiring the provision of CPR and/or the use of an Automated External Defibrillator. This incident type was introduced in 2023. It does not include patient lifting or driving ambulances.

In response to an increase in requests for support by SA Ambulance Service (SAAS), CFS committed to reviewing its operational policy and procedure related to Assist Medical incidents. CFS also decided to empower all volunteers with voting on whether their brigade will continue responding. Brigades that opt out of Assist Medical incidents will have the capability removed and will not receive pager messages. There will be no change for brigades that continue to respond. If a brigade wishes to add or remove the capability they can do so in the future.



A 2.5-hour training program is being developed by SAAS, specifically for CFS volunteers. It is expected to cover CPR techniques, scene management, ambulance fleet familiarisation, psychosocial support, and manual handling.

Project information nights were held across the state during April and May to provide updates to volunteers, including decisions by Chief Officer's Advisory Council (COAC). Informed by Regional

Volunteer Management Committees, COAC has nominated to reduce the number of back-up beats for Assist Medical from 3 to 1 and enable Group Duty Officer notifications.

CFS has also formed the position that volunteers will only be responded to incidents in line with GoodSAM cardiac arrest events, which are the basic cardiac arrests. These changes aim to reduce unnecessary exposure to incidents where volunteers are unlikely



In January, South Australian company Nova Systems Pty Ltd was appointed to deliver the new BMAP platform, building on an existing bushfire planning system used by the New South Wales Rural Fire Service.

The project is jointly funded through \$1.8 million from the National Emergency Management Agency Disaster Ready Fund and an additional \$2.7 million over 4 years from the State Government.

Working with BMCs to develop the system, staff have been engaging with all 9 BMCs through workshops and information sessions to help identify operational and development needs throughout the project.

Once implemented, the updated BMAPs will support more coordinated delivery of bushfire mitigation activities and improved community safety outcomes across the state.

Initial capabilities are expected to be rolled out to Bushfire Management Committee users within 6 months.

Bushfire Management Area Plans

The state's most significant reform to bushfire mitigation planning in 15 years is now underway, with work beginning on the next generation of Bushfire Management Area Plans (BMAPs).

BMAPs guide how bushfire risk reduction activities are planned and prioritised across South Australia. They help agencies work together on mitigation activities that reduce risk to communities before a fire occurs.

Delivered by CFS on behalf of the State Bushfire Coordination Committee, the updated BMAP framework will replace the current system with a more modern, consistent and evidence-based approach. The new system will better support Bushfire Management Committees (BMCs) to plan, review and track mitigation activities over time.

EM Merge

Significant progress was made on the EM Merge program during 2025-26, with work continuing to support the future implementation of a modern regional incident management model for the CFS.

The program will align with AIIMS 2025 and bring together incident management and regional command functions into a single Regional Incident Control Centre (Regional ICC) model across the 6 CFS regions during the Fire Danger Season. The approach is designed to strengthen operational coordination, improve situational awareness, and better support firefighters and incident management personnel during emergencies.

A major focus throughout the year was the redevelopment and consultation of operational doctrine. Updated doctrine was developed across key areas, including incident control, transfer of command and control, operational preparedness, operational chain of command, and Regional ICC operations.

Consultation and engagement activities were conducted with volunteers, staff, and partner agencies. Feedback received throughout the consultation helped refine the doctrine, improve clarity, and identify practical operational considerations ahead of implementation.

Work also continued developing operational resources, including induction materials, role statements, operational guidance, and implementation planning documentation, to support members transitioning to the new model.

The program continued to work closely with regions to support future Regional ICC operations, including planning for facilities, technology, staffing, and operational readiness. Regional exercises and operational trials also helped test elements of the future model and identify opportunities for further improvement.

Implementation timeframes were adjusted during the year to allow additional planning, consultation and operational readiness activities ahead of the 2026-27 Fire Danger Season.

The continued contribution of volunteers, staff, and partner agencies has played an important role in shaping the future of regional incident management within the CFS.



FireMapper

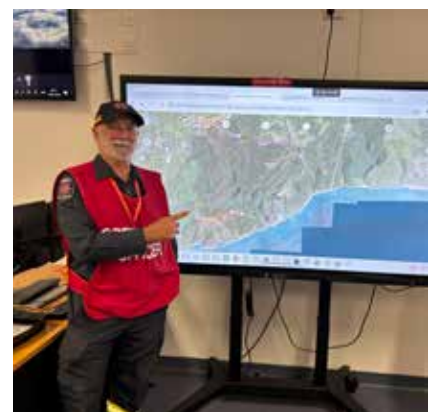
FireMapper has transformed how the CFS manages incidents on the ground. What began within CFS Aviation back in 2018 has matured into a statewide tactical mapping capability that is supporting safer, faster, and more informed decision making across South Australia.

At its core, FireMapper provides a single, shared tactical picture of an incident in near real time. Fire behaviour, aerial observations, control lines, assets at risk, and hazards can be viewed, updated and shared as conditions change.

During major incidents such as the Deep Creek fire and interstate deployments, FireMapper demonstrated its value by improving situational awareness and coordination. Incident Controllers and Operations Officers reported that being able to visualise fire edges, vehicle and aircraft activity, and operational information in one place significantly simplified complex decision making. It also enabled clearer briefings and stronger alignment between ground, air and command elements.

In 2025, following successful trials during the 2024-25 Fire Danger Season, FireMapper was secured as CFS's long-term tactical mapping platform. This secures ongoing investment, refinement, and integration with other operational systems, while aligning CFS with many interstate and international fire agencies using the same technology.

Most importantly, FireMapper reflects a shift in how intelligence is shared at incidents: timely, trusted, and accessible to those who need it. As training continues to expand and new features are rolled out, FireMapper is becoming a routine part of how the CFS plans, responds, and protects both firefighters and the community.



Statewide Facilities Audit

Work on the Statewide Facilities Audit continued throughout 2025-26, with the project now entering its final stages. The audit has captured critical data to guide maintenance, refurbishment, and future upgrades, helping ensure CFS brigades have fit for purpose facilities.

By establishing a consistent statewide baseline, the audit supports the development of minimum facility standards and strengthens asset management across CFS. Delivered across 5 phases, the project is currently in its final reporting stage.

Physical inspections were completed at 440 CFS sites, with statewide audits

finalised in March 2026. These inspections were conducted in close coordination with regions and brigades, led by CFS Volunteer Association President Jeff Clark.

Information collected through the audit has undergone validation and is being progressively uploaded into the Hardcat system. More than 25,500 new asset records have been added, along with system updates to support the expanded information collected during the project.

Final project outputs including site-specific building reports, prioritised risk registers, and floor plans, were submitted to CFS in early April 2026,

with consolidated statewide and regional reports provided to the Assets, Infrastructure, and Logistics teams.

The findings will be shared with the CFS Executive and the Minister for Emergency Services Rhiannon Pearce MP, with regional reports to then be distributed across the state.

The audit provides a clearer picture of the CFS asset portfolio, including facility condition, asset age, replacement priorities, key risks, and future funding requirements.

Overall, the audit supports informed decision making for maintenance, renewal, compliance, and long-term strategic investment across the CFS.

Refreshed Volunteer Portal

The Volunteer Portal Refresh Project launched in June 2026, delivering a more modern, responsive, accessible, and user-friendly experience.

More than 150 CFS members participated in user testing in late 2025, providing valuable feedback that helped shape the design and functionality of the new portal. Their insights confirmed how members prefer to find information and highlighted identified key improvements needed to make the portal easier to use.

In preparation for the launch, content across the existing site was carefully reviewed and reorganised.

Outdated information was removed, and key content was consolidated to improve navigation and usability.

The CFS Communications team worked closely with other teams across the agency to review more than 500 pages to ensure priority content was accurate and up to date. This work will continue after launch to keep information current and easy to access.

In total, more than 800 hours of work went into preparing content for the refreshed portal.

The new portal introduces a range of modern updated features, including a mobile-friendly platform, the ability to save frequently visited pages, and an organisational chart and staff directory with contact information and role details for all staff across the agency.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time and feedback throughout the project.



Urban Uplift

CFS continued expanding structural firefighting capability during 2025-26 through the Urban Uplift project, helping volunteers build the skills and confidence needed to safely respond to structure fires.

The project aims to train around 200 volunteers each year and strengthen the statewide capability of firefighters qualified in structural firefighting operations.

Throughout the year, work continued to build the new Structural Firefighter Development Program (SFDP). The program outlines the core skills firefighters require before participating in offensive urban firefighting

operations, helping ensure a consistent standard across the state.

New infrastructure work forms part of a broader upgrade to structural firefighting facilities and props at the State Training Centre, designed to provide safer and more realistic firefighting environments, including vehicle fire and forcible entry props.

Structural firefighting courses at the State Training Centre will continue under the new program, while the expanded facilities will increase CFS's ability to train more firefighters across more locations using contemporary firefighting methods.





New stations

CFS stations across the state reflect a long and proud history of community partnership and local support.

To help ensure brigades have more consistent, modern, and fit-for-purpose facilities into the future, a new Standard Station Design has been developed.

This design will help guide future builds and upgrades across CFS, supporting improved operational capability and providing a more consistent approach to future brigade facilities.

Planning and construction activities continued throughout 2025-26, with the first stations scheduled for completion in the coming year.

Construction commenced on Maitland station in June 2026. The joint CFS and State Emergency Service facility will incorporate an appliance building, operations building, and storage shed.



Construction of the Lenswood / Forest Range station is planned to commence in July 2026 and is expected to be completed in March 2027.

Freeling station completed its design phase, with construction planned to begin in November 2026.

A new station at Cootra is in the planning stages with construction planned to begin in September 2026.

These projects represent a strong investment in modern, fit-for-purpose facilities that will support CFS volunteers and the communities they protect well into the future.

Major fleet upgrades

Throughout 2025-26, CFS continued upgrading its fleet with a range of new specialist and multi-role appliances. Designed to meet local needs, these vehicles support safer and more efficient operations, particularly in regional and remote areas.

During 2025-26, CFS rolled out 35 new Quick Response Vehicles (QRVs) to brigades and groups across the state. These ultra-light tankers are designed for agility and rapid response, built on a Toyota 79 Series LandCruiser Workmate cab chassis equipped with a turbocharged diesel engine. This makes them ideal for the rugged terrain and remote operations. The final QRV was delivered to Coromandel Valley in May 2026.

Fleet upgrades will continue throughout 2026, with work underway on the introduction of HazMat Urban Rural Pumpers, Heavy Rescue Road Crash Vehicles, and 18,000 litre Bulk Water Carriers, planned for delivery in the first half of 2026-27.



New Operational Systems

The New Operational Systems (NOS) Project continued to make significant progress during 2025-26, supporting the development of a more connected and modern operational management system for the CFS, SA Metropolitan Fire Service and partner agencies.

A key focus of the project is replacing CRIIMSON, which has supported CFS operations for almost 20 years. The project aims to improve how operational information, systems and tools work together to support personnel during emergency operations.

In October 2025, a major milestone was reached with the selection of Juvare Asia Pacific to deliver WebEOC Nexus as the successor to CRIIMSON. WebEOC is already used by several interstate emergency services and Government of South Australia agencies, supporting improved information sharing and coordination during incidents.

Throughout the project, volunteers, staff, and partner agencies have continued contributing through working groups and consultation sessions to help ensure the new system reflects operational needs on the ground.

Key areas of focus include making incident reporting simpler for volunteers, integrating with other CFS operational systems, and improving access to operational information vital for supporting situational awareness and safety during response.

The NOS Project led the rollout of FireMapper as the CFS long-term tactical mapping capability and has also continued working closely with CFS Telecommunications to support future connectivity and integration requirements.

The project has been supported by the Department of Treasury and Finance's Digital Investment Fund, and the Office of the Chief Information Officer, which provided specialist ICT procurement, cybersecurity, and change management support.

Training and implementation activities will continue ahead of the 2026-27 Fire Danger Season as the project progresses toward rollout.



Region One



As I review the 2025-26 year, I find myself reflecting on a period of significant incidents, important milestones, challenges, and achievements across Region 1.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge and thank all the teams, departments, brigades, and groups across the agency who continue to support the delivery of a high-quality fire and rescue service across South Australia.

Once again, Region 1 volunteers and staff deployed across the state and country, supporting our colleagues in frontline operational roles and Incident Management Team roles. These deployments provide valuable opportunities to build experience, strengthen relationships, and continue developing the skills and knowledge we rely on during major incidents at home.

This Fire Danger Season was one of the busiest we have experienced in recent years and brought significant challenges across the region. Region 1 crews responded to countless incidents, including Tooperang and Deep Creek fires. Both campaigns provided us opportunities to learn and improve as a region. Throughout these campaigns, Region 1 brigades also continued delivering daily response across the region.

This year has seen many milestones achieved, including upgrades to the Regional Incident Control Centre in preparation for the introduction of EM Merge, new staff, an increase in new and refurbished appliances, significant movement on station builds and facility improvements, and continued work to strengthen support for volunteers and the community.

None of this would have been possible without the great team of firefighters, brigade officers, captains, group officers, operational support officers, staff and, of course, our loved ones who support us every day behind the scenes.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the Region 1 Regional Volunteer Management Committee and regional staff. Without their dedication, passion, and hard work, the region wouldn't function, and we wouldn't achieve many of the things we do. A heartfelt thank you.

Overall, this year has been a successful and rewarding one for Region 1. I thank each and every one of you for the thousands of hours you put into our agency and communities. Your commitment and professionalism do not go unnoticed.

Remember, be proud of the uniform you wear and the work you do supporting communities across South Australia.

I look forward to continuing to work with you all and to make this great agency even greater.

Micheal Bohrsen ASM
Regional Commander



Macclesfield grass fire

Around 11:00 am on 17 February 2026, CFS volunteer firefighters responded to a grass fire in a paddock and scrub near Lisa Court in Macclesfield.

Approximately 200 firefighters on 40 trucks worked to halt the spread of the fire and protect nearby homes and properties, including door-knocking houses that were under threat during the night.

With the support of aircraft, Farm Fire Units (FFUs), and heavy machinery, crews successfully limited the fire to around 7 hectares and saved nearby homes.

SA Police and SA Ambulance also provided support throughout the incident.



Birchmore grass fire

Around 3:00 pm on 24 November 2025, local CFS crews responded to reports of a grass fire at Birchmore, south-west of Kingscote.

Approximately 110 CFS volunteer firefighters, including mainland strike teams, fought to contain the fire with support from National Parks and Wildlife Service firefighters, 5 aircraft, and FFUs.

Firefighting continued into the night with crews establishing mineral earth breaks and blacking out the fire's edge.

The fire burned approximately 305 hectares and was declared safe on 27 November 2025.



Clarendon house fire

On 25 October 2025, approximately 65 CFS volunteer firefighters responded to a Triple Zero (000) call to attend a fire at a large single-storey home at 3:30 pm at Lovick Road, Clarendon.

Upon arrival at the scene, firefighters found the home fully involved in fire.

Working in stormy conditions alongside 4 SA Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) crews, firefighters fought the fire externally and then internally but were unable to prevent the house from being destroyed.

The occupants were not home at the time of the fire, and the property damage was estimated at \$1 million.

SA Ambulance and SA Police provided support on scene.



Yankalilla HazMat

Around 8:30 am on 6 November 2025, CFS crews were called to investigate a hazardous material (HazMat) incident at a waste refuse facility at Yankalilla on the Fleurieu Peninsula.

A small hydrochloric acid spill was discovered after a driver noticed a chemical reaction in household waste in the bucket of a waste loader.

Approximately 20 volunteers on six vehicles, including 3 specialist HazMat trucks, attended the scene and were able to quickly neutralise the spill. One MFS crew also provided support.

The driver was assessed on scene by SA Ambulance.

Goolwa South house fire

On 28 January 2026, 35 CFS volunteer firefighters on 7 trucks were called to a house fire in Goolwa South.

On arrival, crews found a home fully involved in a fire with thick smoke blanketing the town.

With support from MFS firefighters, crews successfully prevented the fire from spreading to neighbouring homes.

Unfortunately, the house was a total loss with damages estimated at \$500,000.

SA Police and SA Ambulance also provided support on the scene.



Profile:

Emma Patterson

Aldinga Beach volunteer Emma Patterson joined Kyeema Group as Group Deputy Officer in 2025.

After more than 17 years of volunteering, Emma said she still finds it a worthwhile experience and opportunity to give back to her community.

“Most people who join the service want to help people and the community,” she said.

“I think any volunteer, in any organisation, has the same mentality: if you can help, you do.”

Last year, Emma was interviewed by The Advertiser about the importance of bushfire preparedness and encouraged all property owners in bushfire risk areas to be prepared.

“We’ve been to some homes that have made it so much easier for us to actively fight a fire and prevent it from spreading anywhere else because we’ve been able to utilise what the resident has done,” she said.

Trekking for a cause

On 18 October 2025, Sellicks CFS volunteers completed an incredible “trek for a cause”, raising \$4,329 for the Starlight Foundation.

Firefighter Shane Rimmer took on the challenge of walking 28 km from McLaren Vale Station to Sellicks Station via Willunga and Aldinga Beach stations. Wearing full breathing apparatus gear weighing more than 25 kg, Shane was supported along the route by fellow brigade members in firefighting kit.

The walk took around 6 hours, with volunteers and community members gathering at Sellicks CFS Station to cheer Shane and the team across the finish line. Along the way, members of the public stopped to offer encouragement and donate, adding another \$1,000 to the fundraising total.

The brigade dedicated this event to members who have faced significant personal challenges over the past 18 months, including battles with cancer. Their courage and resilience inspired the team to take on the trek and support families doing it tough. All funds raised went to the Starlight Foundation, supporting children and families facing serious illness.

Ensuring everyone’s safety on the trek, along with smooth logistics, planning, community engagement, and the day’s activities, was a testament to the behind-the-scenes effort of brigade members and their dedicated family members.

Following the success of the walk, the brigade is already considering taking the trek further next year, expanding it within their group.



Credit (Photo 1-3): Tide and Tribe Photography



70 years of service

In 2025, Brukunga and Carey Gully CFS brigades celebrated 70 years of service to their communities.

In October, Brukunga CFS celebrated the milestone with an event where its 3 longest-serving members cut a cake and reminisced about the brigade’s history alongside Captain Jackie Kerr.

Carey Gully CFS celebrated in December with a dinner at the station, attended by Chief Officer Brett Loughlin and one of the brigade’s founding members.

Both brigades were also presented with plaques to commemorate their years of service.

Congratulations, and thank you to both brigades for 70 years of support to your communities.

Increased capacity on Kangaroo Island

Kangaroo Island has long faced unique firefighting challenges due to its remote location and the difficulty of moving additional resources onto the island during major incidents.

This year, CFS continued strengthening its capability on Kangaroo Island through improved facilities, increased firefighting resources, and additional operational support during periods of high-fire danger.

A major milestone was reached in late 2025 when a new facility was secured in the heart of Kingscote to house a fleet of 5 surge-capacity tanker appliances along with group, air operations, and agency supplies during major incidents.

Located in the former Ingram's Hardware store, the facility provides a central base close to local services, accommodation and the local Kangaroo Island Group Command Centre.

The facility currently houses 5 heavy tanker appliances ready to support operations across the island when required. The fleet primarily includes 34 and 24P appliances to support rural firefighting operations, with plans to further strengthen capabilities to address growing urban and industrial risks on the island.

Additional standby crewing arrangements and Incident Management Team support have also been introduced during periods of elevated fire danger to help streamline operational response and support local brigades during significant incidents.

The facility is also expected to support future operational training delivery on Kangaroo Island.



Profile:

James 'Nev' Bibby

After moving to McLaren Vale from Wales around 9 years ago, James 'Nev' Bibby knew he wanted to play an important part in his new community.

He joined the McLaren Vale CFS a year later, and since then has attended hundreds of incidents, including the 2019-20 Kangaroo Island fires and the recent Deep Creek fire.

"I'm a social person and I believe that you should put back into the community you live in," Nev said.

"The camaraderie is great, the variety of jobs is great, and we're supporting the community."

In March 2026, Nev attended his 400th incident just days before celebrating his 80th birthday and, despite his age, Nev has no plans to step away from his brigade.

"I'm learning comms, and I'm hoping that I have got at least another 2 years in me, even if it means that I'll perhaps take on more comms work and be at the station whenever I can," he said.

Top honour for Nairne volunteer

Nairne volunteer David Richardson was presented the Award for Active Citizenship at the 2026 Citizen of the Year Awards South Australia.

David has been a volunteer in the Nairne community since joining the CFS at 16 years old and is currently a CFS staff member and volunteer at Nairne CFS.

He is an active volunteer who works hard to build connections between local service groups, clubs, and committees, including the Nairne District Residents Association, Nairne Soldiers Memorial Hall, and Nairne and Districts Netball Club. David is also part of the leadership team behind much-loved community events such as Nairne Twilight Markets, Nairne History Month and Nairne Carols.

David was presented the award by Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC at a ceremony at Government House in January, alongside his fellow award winners, loved ones, and colleagues.



Region Two



As we reflect on 2026 and look ahead to the year ahead, I want to take the opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to every volunteer, staff member, brigade, and community partner across Region 2. Although I joined the CFS only a short time ago, this past year has deepened my respect for the agency, its people, and the culture of service that defines our region.

One of the most rewarding parts of the role continues to be travelling across Region 2 and meeting the volunteers who form the backbone of our capability. Whether at training nights, brigade meetings, community events, or during operations, the sense of pride and commitment within our brigades is unmistakable. Many of you balance CFS with family life, work, farms, or businesses, yet you continue to answer the call.

Beyond the hundreds of grass and structure fires across the region, volunteers have also responded to a number of traumatic road crash incidents, often within your own communities. We acknowledge the impact these incidents have on you as volunteers, families, and the wider community. Your dedication shapes not only our emergency response, but also the resilience of the communities we serve.

This year has demonstrated the strength of Region 2 in both preparedness and operational excellence. We have continued to focus on building our capability for high risk fire weather, particularly across the Yorke Peninsula and northern areas of the region. Our members again contributed to interstate deployments, supporting significant incidents in other jurisdictions and demonstrating the professionalism and adaptability that CFS is well known for.

A major focus for the region has been strengthening Incident Management Team capability. As risks become more complex and as our operational tempo increases, investing in people remains one of our greatest strengths. I have been proud to see so many volunteers step into training, mentoring, and development opportunities. Building depth in our IMTs is not only about managing major incidents, but also about ensuring succession, sustainability, and confidence for our brigades well into the future.

Recruitment also remains a priority, and it has been encouraging to see new members join brigades across the region, bringing fresh energy, skills, and perspectives. Retaining our people and supporting them through their training journey is equally important.

Beyond the operational work, what consistently stands out to me is the strength of the relationships built through volunteering. As I visit brigades, I am reminded that CFS is not only an emergency service but also a community. The friendships formed during training, on the fireground, and through years of shared experiences often become lifelong connections. That sense of belonging is one of our greatest strengths.

As we move into the next year, my commitment remains clear: to listen, support, and work alongside you to continue strengthening Region 2. Thank you for your service, your time, your families' support, and your ongoing commitment to your communities.

I look forward to seeing many more of you on my travels throughout the region.

Byron Tyrer
Regional Commander



Sandy Creek shed fire

Around 8:30 am on 6 January 2026, CFS crews on 6 trucks attended a shed fire at Sandy Creek, near Gawler.

Crews arrived to find a 30m by 10m industrial shed containing an excavator, farming machinery, and tools fully involved in fire.

Approximately 30 CFS firefighters using breathing apparatus, supported by SA Metropolitan Fire Service crews, were able to contain the fire to the industrial shed.

Thanks to their quick and skilled response, crews prevented the fire from spreading to a neighbouring shed containing 30,000 chickens, saving more than \$4 million in stock and infrastructure.

SA Police and SA Ambulance also provided support to crews on the scene.

Damages were estimated at around \$500,000.



Auburn grass fire

On 24 January 2026, CFS firefighters on 18 trucks, supported by 5 aircraft and multiple Farm Fire Units (FFU) successfully halted the spread of a fast-moving grass fire under extreme fire danger at Auburn, south of Clare.

The fire was caused by an accidental motorhome vehicle fire along the Horrocks Highway. The fire quickly jumped the road, extending into roadside vegetation and stubble paddocks and causing spot fires up to 400 metres ahead of the main front.

After issuing an Emergency Warning for nearby properties under threat, firefighters successfully protected all nearby properties.

Early predictions indicated the fire could quickly escalate. The rapid response of firefighters, FFU operators, and aircraft prevented this small fire from spreading further.



Warooka grass fire

On 9 February 2026, around 45 volunteer firefighters responded to a grass and scrub fire near Warooka on the Yorke Peninsula.

Around 2 pm, crews were called to a fire near Warooka with multiple ignition points.

With assistance from 30 local FFUs, firefighters restricted the fire to approximately 113 hectares.

Thanks to their quick response, firefighters and FFU operators prevented the fire from spreading to nearby properties.

SA Police also provided support for this incident.

Spring Farm structure and grass fire

On 7 November 2025, CFS crews responded to reports of a structure fire at Spring Farm, near Clare.

The fire, which started in a farmhouse, quickly spread to multiple sheds and grass on the property.

At its peak, more than 80 volunteer firefighters, including a specialist hazardous materials brigade, worked on the fireground with support from 5 aircraft, SA State Emergency Service, SA Police, and SA Ambulance personnel.



Crews contained the fire to the property and prevented the fire from impacting the neighbouring Riesling Trail and surrounding communities.



Unfortunately, the three-storey farmhouse, 5 large sheds, and a number of vintage cars were destroyed, with damages estimated at over \$1 million.



Profile:

Angas McEvoy

Angas McEvoy has been part of the CFS since joining Brentwood CFS as a cadet at 11 years old.

Now Deputy Group Officer for Southern Yorke Group, Angas helps lead 10 brigades and manages emergency responses, all while working full-time, running his own IT business, and being a father to 3 young daughters.

"I really value community service, both for what it's given me personally and what it means for our local community," Angas said.

Angas was the recipient of the Yorke Peninsula Council's 2025 Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year Award for his leadership and commitment to the CFS.

"Volunteering is an incredible way to give back to the community. For me, it's been rewarding in so many aspects of my life," he said.

Cadet program relaunches at Virginia

In October 2025, Virginia CFS relaunched its cadet program for the first time in almost 19 years.

The program quickly proved popular, with an eager group of 12 cadets joining soon after the relaunch. These cadets who have already shown their enthusiasm and determination to take on all the learning and experiences on offer.

As part of their fortnightly training, the cadets have taken part in a range of sessions covering appliance stowage, radio and communications work, map reading, hose drills, and incident response types.

A highlight of the program so far was heading to One Tree Hill for an end-of-year group barbecue to meet fellow cadets from both One Tree Hill CFS and Tea Tree Gully CFS brigades.



Eudunda celebrates 75 years

In October 2025, Eudunda CFS celebrated 75 years of service to the community.

The brigade marked the occasion by unveiling a new mural by local artist Robbie Nash and placing a time capsule in the ground.

They also presented commemorative stubby holders featuring the names of the brigade's founding members to former brigade captains.

Chief Officer Brett Loughlin and Emergency Services Minister Rhiannon Pearce MP attended the celebrations and presented a plaque, along with medals and life memberships to several members.



Bushfire Resilience Day

This year's Bushfire Resilience Day commemoration was held in a regional setting for the first time, at the Wasleys Bowling Club.

The location recognised the 10-year anniversary of the 2015 Pinery fire, and the resilience shown by the local community to rebuild and thrive after loss.

Wasleys Bowling Club member Brad McDougall said the club house, which was lost during the fire, had become a focal point for the community in the aftermath of the Pinery fire.

"We were able to help unite the community because there was a common cause.

Even though we didn't have a club house following the fire and worked out of a shed, we had great support from the community and the bowls community across South Australia," Mr McDougall said.

"It didn't stop us, it strengthened us."

Bushfire Resilience Day is an annual event remembering and honouring people who have died in a South Australian bushfire. It is an opportunity to reflect on the impact bushfires have had and encourage positive actions for communities to prepare for the next bushfire.

Profile:

Veronica Lukat

From helicopters to Large Air Tankers (LATs), Region 2 Air Operations Brigade Lieutenant Veronica Lukat has worked across a wide range of aerial firefighting operations.

An electrician by trade, Veronica joined the brigade, which assists with refilling firefighting aircraft and providing other logistical support, in 2020 after moving to the area.

With a background as a brigade firefighter at Two Wells CFS, making the move to air operations support was a big change.

"Going from being out in the truck and doing a variety of different jobs to being faced with an airplane sitting in front of you was just a completely different environment," Veronica said.

"Knowing that we have a big part in supporting what the planes are doing in the sky is the most rewarding part."

Veronica is one of a handful of brigade members trained to support LAT operations out of RAAF Base Edinburgh.

"It's not something that you ever get bored of. Every day is different, every call is different."

Region Three



Reflecting on the past year, I am extremely proud of the progress made across Region 3 as we continue to strengthen our operational capability and prepare the region for challenges ahead. This year has been characterised by significant effort from our volunteers and staff to build capacity, invest in preparedness, and lay strong foundations for future years.

A tremendous amount of work has been undertaken by regional staff and our incident management personnel in preparation for the introduction of EM Merge ahead of the next Fire Danger Season. This has included extensive upskilling, exercising, and upgrades of our incident management facilities. We now have the capability to effectively manage large Level 3 Incidents from Murray Bridge, representing a major step forward in supporting complex incident management within the region.

In August 2025, 22 regional leaders from across Region 3 came together for a weekend of professional development and strategic planning. These discussions have placed the region in a strong position moving forward, with clear strategies being developed to upgrade and replace identified fleet and facilities, while continuing to build capacity across groups. It has been encouraging to see strong momentum building in this space.

Operationally, the region experienced a return to a more typical fire season, including the Taylorville and Katarapko Island fire complexes, several multiday rural and urban incidents, and deployments interstate and into Regions 1, 2, 4, and 5. The commitment, professionalism, and skill displayed by our volunteers in managing these fires was outstanding and does not go unrecognised.

Once again, Region 3 has continued to lead with innovation in how we operate day to day across a vast area of more than 57,000 square kilometres, often with limited personnel and resources, challenging communication environments, and the ongoing obstacles facing regional communities.

As always, on behalf of the region, I'd like to thank the Region 3 volunteers and staff for everything you have done for the CFS and your community this year. A further big thank you to the families of our members for support they provide behind the scenes.

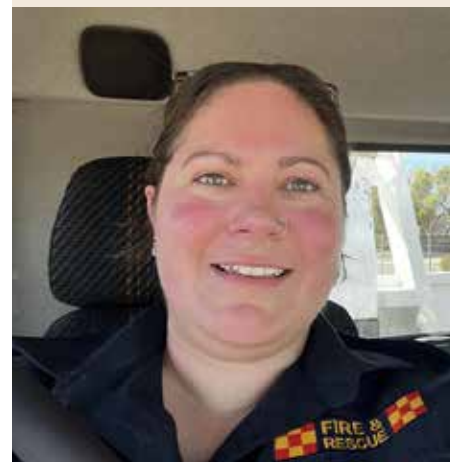
Shane Clinch
Regional Commander

Meningie East grass fire

Around 2:30 pm on 29 December 2025, crews responded to a fire burning in crop and scrub off Yumali Road, north-east of Meningie.

Approximately 20 CFS volunteers on 6 trucks worked to extinguish hotspots and strengthen control lines, supported by heavy machinery around the fireground. With support from aircraft and Farm Fire Units, crews contained the fire to approximately 64 hectares, preventing it from spreading into surrounding scrub.

The cause of the fire was determined to have originated from farm machinery.



Profile:

Danielle Shepherd

Taylorville complex

On the evening of 24 November 2025, a dry lightning event caused multiple fires across Taylorville in the Riverland.

A total of 4 major fires burned in remote and difficult terrain on pastoral lands in the region.

After more than 40 hours of tireless work by CFS volunteer firefighters, supported by National Parks and Wildlife Service crews and heavy machinery, the Taylorville fires were contained.

Through the efforts of crews on the ground, the fires were contained to a combined total of 376 hectares, reducing further impacts on sensitive pastoral lands and threatened wildlife in the area.



Tailem Bend structure fire

On 20 August 2025, CFS and SA Metropolitan Fire Service firefighters on approximately 8 trucks attended a house and shed fire in Tailem Bend.

The fire, which is believed to have started in the house before spreading to the shed at the rear of the property, was fully involved when firefighters arrived and completely destroyed both structures. Damages were estimated at around \$500,000.

Firefighters saved 2 sheds and their contents located at the front of the property, along with a neighbouring house. The affected property was near a railway line; however, crews worked with local teams to ensure rail services were not impacted.

SA Police, SA Ambulance, and SA Power Networks were also on scene supporting firefighters.



Since joining as a volunteer in 2021, Danielle Shepherd has worked her way up the ranks of the Region 3 Operations Brigade and was elected as the brigade's first female captain in 2024.

In her role as captain, Danielle is playing an important part in leading her fellow volunteers and encouraging other women to join.

"Just give it a go," Danielle said.

"As a leader, I think it's important to listen, support people, and make sure my team knows that what they're doing is the right thing or appropriate for the task."

One of 20 operations brigades across the state, the Region 3 Operations Brigade supports the region through radio communications, transporting vehicles and personnel, and being part of Incident Management Teams.

"You don't have to get onto the truck to be helping, you can be in those supporting roles in the background," Danielle said.

"You can see you're making an impact even if it's just a small part of the incident."

Regional Cadet Championships

Region 3 cadets went head-to-head in the annual Regional Cadet Championships in June 2025.

Throughout the day, 30 cadets from Barmera CFS, Moorook CFS, Morgan CFS, Tailm Bend CFS, and Mannum CFS Brigades competed in 4 drills at Swan Reach Area School.

“We hope the event may also help in growing our overall cadet numbers by showing the meaningful experiences our youth can receive,” Regional Volunteer Officer Michelle Egel said.

Mannum cadets were the overall winner for the third consecutive year, also claiming wins in the knapsack and hose categories. Morgan cadets were the elephant walk and turnover winners, while Moorook cadets took out the draughting category.



Regional Incident Command Centre upgrade

Region 3 continued its preparation for EM Merge with the upgrade of its existing Regional Command Centre into a modern and fit-for-purpose Level 3 Regional Incident Control Centre (Regional ICC).

Completed in September 2025, the upgraded Regional ICC is fitted out with 26 workstations able to accommodate multiagency incident management personnel, with the ability to further expand to support a larger Level 3 Incident Management Team.

Since September, the new Regional ICC has already been used to support several large incidents, including several Total Fire Ban activations, the 2025 Taylorville Complex, and the 2026 Katarapko Island fire.



Group Officer Seminar

Current Group Officers, deputies and emerging Deputy Group Officers came together for a 2-day Leadership Seminar held in August 2025 at the Bridgeport Hotel, Murray Brigade.

The program was tailored around the topics participants identified as most valuable, combining strategic updates, practical workshops, and go-karting to round out the experience with a team-building activity.

Key topics included:

- Succession planning and recruitment
- FireMapper and operational systems
- Fleet and facilities planning
- Bushfire investigation
- Transition of control

A dedicated workshop on difficult conversations, delivered by Rob Styling OAM AFSM, encouraged open discussion and leadership skill development around communication.

Royal Australian Navy Commander Chris Jones delivered an insightful session on the core components of leadership under pressure, drawing on his extensive operational experience in warzones.

CFS Deputy Chief Officer Paul Seager joined attendees for dinner on Saturday evening, providing an opportunity for informal discussion and connection across groups.

The seminar concluded with an A Class Risk Site Tour of the Thomas Foods abattoir, offering participants a valuable operational risk perspective within the local area.

A total of 24 attendees participated in the weekend. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants describing the seminar as beneficial, informative, and enjoyable.



Profile:

Joshua Werth

When Tailm Bend CFS reinstated its cadet program in 2022, Joshua Werth was there among the starting group. Now, he has become a fully fledged CFS firefighter.

After turning 18, Joshua was voted into the Tailm Bend CFS in April, marking a significant milestone and reinforcing the value of restarting the cadet program following a pause during COVID-19.

Joshua, who also spent some time as a cadet at Roxby Downs CFS, could not speak highly enough of the support he has received from Tailm's Brigade Cadet Coordinator Shaun Mitton and Brigade Captain Dylan Collett.

"Everyone is super supportive and it feels more like a family than anything else. I would absolutely recommend it to other people. You get to experience so many things and visit so many different places," Joshua said.

For Joshua, being voted into the brigade was a personal source of validation and recognition of the work he had put in as a cadet.

It meant he had been fully accepted, had demonstrated his experience to his peers, and was trusted by others, all of which brought him closer to his reason for joining the CFS.

"I just want to be able to help people and assist in the community. There's not many who want to do that anymore and the CFS is a crucial part of the community," he said.

Region Four



As we reflect on another busy year, I want to thank all the Region 4 volunteers, staff, and their families for the continued support they provided to our regional and pastoral communities in 2025-26.

The region responded to hundreds of incidents across the year, including multi-day incidents at Hornsdale, Wilmington, and North Booborowie. Region 4 volunteers also supported a number of international, intra- and interstate deployments, including providing critical support at the Deep Creek fire.

Major flooding across the region in February and March also saw our members play an important role in supporting affected communities alongside the State Emergency Service. Some of our volunteers and regional staff were among those affected by the floods, yet continued to show up, taking time away from work and your families to support your broader community and I am so proud of the commitment and resilience we see day-after-day across the region and the state.

Looking ahead, I'm excited for what is to come for Region 4 as we work to strengthen our operational capabilities and prepare for the implementation of EM Merge ahead of the next Fire Danger Season.

Every year, I'm blown away by the professionalism, skill, and innovation shown across a region covering more than 800,000 square kilometres of South Australia. From supporting our ever-growing Mid North communities, to upskilling our pastoral and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands communities, Region 4 volunteers and staff continue to do their bit to make communities safe and prepared for whatever challenges lie ahead.

Thank you again for your dedication and passion for supporting our communities and keeping them safe.

Take care of yourselves.

Sindy McCourt
Regional Commander



North Booborowie hay shed fire

Just after 7:00 pm on 1 December 2025, CFS crews responded to a hay shed fire in North Booborowie, north of Clare.

Approximately 25 firefighters on 6 trucks arrived to find the shed, containing more than 3,200 hay bales, fully involved in the fire.

Heavy machinery was used to create mineral breaks and break down the hay bales, allowing firefighters to extinguish fires in the broken-down hay.

Crews remained on scene in rotating shifts for several days to keep the fire from spreading to surrounding crop and grass.

The shed and hay contents were a total loss, resulting in more than \$500,000 in damages.



Stirling North shed fire

On 16 September 2025, CFS and SA Metropolitan Fire Service firefighters responded to a shed fire in Stirling North, near Port Augusta.

Approximately 30 firefighters arrived to find the fire fully engulfing the shed, which contained waste piles.

To contain the fire, heavy machinery was used to remove the waste piles and spread them out.

This quick response prevented the fire from spreading to neighbouring structures and shed. The estimated damage amount was \$500,000.

SA Police and SA Ambulance also provided support on scene.



Roxby Downs vehicle fire

Around 9:45 am on 25 January 2026, Roxby Downs CFS responded to reports of a fuel tanker on fire.

On arrival, volunteers found all 3 trailers containing diesel heavily involved in fire and additional support was requested from Andamooka CFS and BHP Olympic Dam emergency services.

Thankfully, the driver had safely evacuated and disconnected the prime mover.

Crews worked in challenging conditions with 47-degree temperatures and explosions from tyres, fire extinguishers and the rear tank. Due to initial water limitations and the fire's intensity, firefighters changed tactics, allowing the tanks to burn down to a safe level before completely extinguishing them.

Local businesses, including Roxby Earthmoving and Red Mulga, also provided support, as well as BHP Water Operations, SA Police, and SA Ambulance Service.



Wilmington fire

On 24 November 2025, CFS and National Parks and Wildlife Service firefighters responded to reports of a fire burning in inaccessible terrain in the Mount Remarkable National Park in the Southern Flinders Ranges.

Given the terrain, aircraft played a vital role throughout the incident.

In a first for South Australia, a helicopter firebombing aircraft was used to deliver retardant on a steep section of fire edge that fixed-wing aircraft couldn't safely reach.

Using a 3,400L bucket on a 100ft longline, the helicopter helped ground crews secure a 300m stretch of the southern fire line.

This skilled response helped limit the fire to just 2.4 hectares and prevented the incident from extending into weeks of operations.



Hornsedale grass fire

On 5 December 2025, CFS firefighters on 16 trucks responded to a grass and scrub fire in Hornsdale, north of Jamestown.

Crews fought the fire with support from 5 aircraft and Farm Fire Units (FFUs) and stopped the fire's spread in the early evening.

The fire burned approximately 308 hectares of grass and scrub and was declared contained on 6 December 2025.

During the incident, 2 FFU operators were injured and assessed for burns. Thankfully, both quickly received medical attention and were discharged from hospital the following day.



Profile: Craig Lloyd

At just 19 years old, Craig Lloyd joined Blyth CFS. Now, more than 40 years later, he's ready to hang up his boots.

From experiencing his first burnover during the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires to training new brigade members and supporting deployments, Craig has dedicated much of his life to the CFS and serving the Blyth community.

In 2003, Craig became Captain and remained in the position for 20 years. During that time, he attended a huge variety of incidents.

"You certainly experience a vast range of jobs as a volunteer," he said.

Craig said his greatest memories throughout his time as a volunteer have been centred around mateship and camaraderie.

He also recognised the support of his wife Trish, fellow members of Blyth CFS, Blyth/Snowtown CFS Group, and the Region 4 team.

Town Hall on tour

In October 2025, Crystal Brook CFS graciously hosted the second Member Town Hall, marking the first time a town hall had been held in the regions.

The panel of leaders included Chief Officer Brett Loughlin, Deputy Chief Officer Paul Seager, Regional Commander Sindy McCourt, Stirling North Lieutenant Genevieve Tardieu, and Jamestown Senior Firefighter Tom Campbell.

The session was broadcast live to CFS volunteers and staff who could join online. Members from across the state joined the livestream to stay informed, ask questions, and hear open discussions about key projects and operational updates.

Topics included Technical Operations, Assist Medical project, and Management of Pastoral and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) brigades.



Training with our volunteer colleagues

In October, Middleback CFS volunteers attended the SA Ambulance (SAAS) Regional Conference in Whyalla.

It was a fantastic opportunity for volunteers to learn more about the valuable work of SAAS while showcasing CFS capabilities and strengthening interagency teamwork across South Australia.

As part of the conference, crews participated in a large-scale major incident training exercise.



For the exercise, the Westland Hotel Motel Conference Room was transformed into a nightclub, with more than 50 partygoers present when a vehicle crashed through the entrance.

This was followed by simulated fireworks explosions, creating a chaotic scene with multiple casualties and realistic injury simulations.

Crews from SA Police, SAAS, SA Metropolitan Fire Service, CFS, and State Emergency Service worked together in the challenging, high-pressure environment to test communication, coordination, and response skills.



The future of Jamestown CFS

In 2025, Jamestown CFS revived its cadet program with strong support from local families.

With 17 cadets officially on the books, Brigade Cadet Coordinator Michael Millane said he is confident the brigade's future is in safe hands.

"They really get stuck into everything we do. I reckon some of them are already better at rolling up hoses than some adults," Michael said.

"We're very strong on teamwork and helping each other out because if you go out on the truck one day, you've got to depend on the person next to you."

The cadets, including Michael's youngest children, 15-year-old Caitlyn and 13-year-old Cameron, have been learning important skills, including map reading, radio work, and turnover drills.

A highlight of the program was a visit to Hoyleton Airbase, where Jamestown cadets and their Gladstone counterparts saw firefighting aircraft in action.

"It was a great learning experience for them, and the smiles were there for a few weeks afterwards," Michael said.



Profile:

Amy Searle

Between songwriting, working, and preparing to start her veterinary nurse training, 18-year-old Amy Searle still finds time to volunteer.

After attending training nights with her mum, Louise, at Wilmington CFS as a child, Amy joined the brigade's cadet program. Since turning 18 in September 2025, Amy has joined both the brigade and the Region 4 Operations Brigade as an adult.

"My favourite part of being a volunteer is definitely being able to help my community, being able to get involved and just getting out there," Amy said.

"You make so many friends along the way and you meet so many amazing people. It's such a great community."

Despite being in her early days as an official volunteer, Amy has set herself goals to attend as many incidents as she can and eventually participate in deployments.

Region Five



As we reflect on another year of service across Region 5, I extend my sincere appreciation to our volunteers, staff, and support networks who continue to embody the strength and resilience of the CFS. Your professionalism, adaptability, and unwavering commitment ensure our Limestone Coast communities remain well protected, no matter the challenge.

The past year has again demonstrated the unpredictable nature of our environment. Rainfall over winter and early spring was below-average in the Limestone Coast, while late spring rains contributed to elevated fine fuel loads across the region. The AFAC Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Summer 2025 highlighted that significant long-term rainfall deficiencies were persisting in the South East, and our rural communities were feeling the pain of the ongoing dry conditions.

Despite this, our brigades responded swiftly and effectively to several significant incidents. While the season brought some welcome relief compared with the high level of activity in previous years, several fires across the middle of the region kept crews busy. We also received overwhelming support and commitment from volunteers maintaining back-to-back deployments to Deep Creek. Each response reflected the high level of training, coordination, and dedication that defines Region 5.

On 9 January, there was significant fire weather that impacted many parts of Australia. In Region 5, we saw temperatures above 40 °C, low relative humidity, and strong northerly winds. As our fire danger indices peaked, a fire about 100 kms east of Naracoorte rapidly spread towards Natimuk in Victoria, quickly impacting the town. The Country Fire Authority (CFA) District 17 reached out and asked us to send as much as we could.



Within 45 minutes, we had 2 full heavy strike teams heading to help. Our crews worked alongside Victorian firefighters to help stop the fire at Quantong, protecting Horsham from direct impact.

Behind the scenes, significant work is underway to strengthen our operational capability into the future. Preparations for the EM Merge continue, with exercises scheduled to ensure readiness for the 2026-27 Fire Danger Season. Our strong partnership with Region 3 has also continued to grow, with joint training initiatives such as the Level 2 Incident Management exercises to be delivered again this year.

Infrastructure development remains a key focus. Station replacement projects at Bool Lagoon and Kalangadoo continue to progress, alongside upgrades including toilet facilities at Keilira, Avenue Range, and Willalooka, and all-weather parking for members at Kybybolite and Cadgee. These projects are progressing thanks to the support and additional resources within the Infrastructure Team and will help ensure our brigades are equipped to meet future demands.

To the families, partners, and friends who stand behind our members, thank you. Your support enables our volunteers to serve their communities with dedication and pride.

This yearbook reflects your efforts, achievements, and commitment to protecting lives, property, and the environment. It is an honour to serve alongside you all.

Jason Druwitt
Regional Commander



Penola structure fire

Around 1:00 am on 30 December 2025, CFS volunteer firefighters attended a structure fire at Penola.

Approximately 50 firefighters on 12 trucks arrived to find a house and shed fully involved in fire, which had spread to surrounding grass.

Crews quickly brought the grass fire under control and prevented it from spreading to additional buildings on the property.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus, including members from a specialist hazardous materials brigade, worked defensively to contain the fire to the house and shed.

Unfortunately, the house, shed, and a vintage car were destroyed, with damages estimated at around \$800,000.

SA Ambulance Service and SA Police also supported firefighters at the scene.



Keilira grass fire

On January 25 2026, CFS crews responded to a grass fire at Keilira, west of Padthaway in the Upper South East.

CFS volunteers on 10 trucks were supported by Farm Fire Units, forestry firefighting resources, and aircraft to halt the spread of the fire before it impacted neighbouring properties and farm houses.

With the support of heavy machinery, crews worked throughout the night, strengthening containment lines and extinguishing hotspots across the fireground.

Thanks to their quick response, crews were able to contain the fire to approximately 115 hectares of grass and pine slash.



Bangham structure fire

Around 4:30 am on 13 February 2026, 7 trucks carrying approximately 30 CFS firefighters responded to a Triple Zero (000) call to attend a structure fire at Bangham, south-east of Bordertown.

Upon arrival, firefighters found a farming structure fully involved in fire.

Volunteer firefighters spent 4 hours controlling the fire and prevented significant further damage by containing it to the original shed.

Firefighters were supported by State Emergency Service (SES) and SA Police.

Damage to the property was estimated at \$500,000.



Profile:

Hamish Corcoran

Naracoorte volunteer Hamish Corcoran first pulled on his CFS yellows as a 12-year-old cadet.

More than 11 years later, Hamish continues to volunteer while also working as a Regional Training Delivery Officer with the Region 5 team, a role he commenced 2 years ago.

Hamish said supporting his community was the most rewarding part of volunteering.

“Helping someone in the community on their worst day really gives you that sense of knowing you’re making a difference,” he said.

“Being able to do what you love and volunteer alongside your mates while getting to help people is so rewarding.”

At the 2026 Naracoorte and Lucindale Citizen of the Year Awards, Hamish was named Joint Naracoorte Young Citizen of the Year alongside fellow CFS volunteer Ashley Miles for his service and leadership within the CFS.

Community and connection at Mundulla

Representatives from CFS, SA Police, SES, and SA Ambulance Service came together for a day of relaxation and community at Mundulla in September 2025.

Around 50 volunteers, staff, and their families attended the event, which aimed to strengthen relationships between local emergency services.

The event was supported by Mundulla Football Club and local businesses.



Magarey forestry machinery fires

Shortly before 8:40 am on 9 February 2026, around 18 CFS firefighters on 5 trucks responded to a forest machinery fire at Magarey, west of Millicent.

Firefighters worked in the pine plantation to extinguish the fire, which had spread to surrounding grass and pine branches.

Crews contained the fire to an area of approximately 10 by 5 metres, preventing it from spreading further into the surrounding pine forest.

The fire caused an estimated \$150,000 in damage, and the forest machinery was destroyed.

Crews were supported by SA Police and Forest Industry Brigades.



Natimuk fire

On 9 January 2026, Region 5 was contacted by Country Fire Authority (CFA) District 17 seeking urgent support for an out-of-control grass and scrub fire at Natimuk, approximately 100 km east of Naracoorte in Victoria’s Wimmera region.

Two heavy strike teams were rapidly assembled and deployed into Victoria to support cross-border communities and CFA crews. Firefighters travelled through heavily impacted areas before reaching Quantong, where they undertook direct attack operations to prevent the fire from impacting Horsham.

For several hours, CFS crews, supported by CFA firefighters and local residents, worked to protect houses and outbuildings in Quantong, eventually halting the fire in the early evening.

Crews continued working into the early hours of the next morning undertaking mopping up and blacking out activities before being released from the incident.

Thanks to the quick response and coordinated efforts of firefighters, the fire was halted before directly impacting Quantong and Horsham.

Nine decades of dedication

In August 2025, Penola CFS celebrated an impressive 90 years of service and dedication to the community.

Past and present brigade members marked the anniversary together at a special event, including the unveiling of a new honour board acknowledging leaders of the brigade since 1935.

Chief Officer Brett Loughlin attended the event at the Penola CFS Station. He presented Service Medals to a number of members and Chief Officer Commendations to 2 members.

Retiring Group Officer Fred Stent was also awarded a Chief Officer Commendation and a special award from Acting Regional Commander Ben Pettman, acknowledging his 57 years of service.



Credit (Photo 1 & 2): With Love Photography

Recruiting the old-fashioned way at Lochaber

In this time of systems and technology, sometimes the old-fashioned ways are still the best, as Lochaber CFS Brigade Captain Max Williams recently found.

Leaning into his farming contacts, Max recruited 13 new volunteers for his and other Region 5 brigades just by having a few conversations within his local networks.

"I just went and spoke to people and explained why they should have a yellow uniform and the benefits they can get out of it, such as ensuring they can look after themselves, their families and properties if a fire starts," Max said.

"Joining the CFS and doing the training gives people more information about fire behaviour, along with tips and tricks they can use on their properties before, during and after a fire."

Max has been a volunteer for 37 years and brigade captain for 2 years, along with various roles across the Naracoorte CFS Group.

He said the new haul of recruits will add depth to Lochaber, Naracoorte, Stuart Range and Cadgee brigades, particularly for longer campaigns which can sometimes drain resources.

"They're not going to be first person on the truck but they're there to help us back up for big events, because the second and third shifts are the ones we have trouble making up," he said.

"Like me, the new volunteers see the benefits of being involved in the community and, in this role, we have so much to offer our communities."

Max isn't finished either, pulling together another large group of recruits for a future BFI course that will see more volunteers filter to brigades across the South East.

"There's definitely more to come," he said.



Region Six



Throughout the past year, our volunteers and staff have once again shown an unwavering commitment in responding to emergencies, and supporting both local communities and others beyond our region when called upon. During this period, Eyre Peninsula personnel were deployed to assist operations in Western Australia, Victoria and at the Deep Creek fire on the Fleurieu Peninsula. These deployments highlight the professionalism, capability, and willingness of our people to support communities wherever assistance is required.

The 2025-26 Fire Danger Season presented a range of operational challenges across the region, from bushfires early in the season through to localised flooding and significant rainfall events in early March. Despite these demands, our brigades consistently rose to the occasion. Their teamwork, professionalism, and local knowledge remain the foundation of our ability to respond effectively and keep our communities safe.

This year has also seen a continued focus on strengthening capability across the region. Investment in specialised training, additional fleet, and innovative solutions has enhanced both operational readiness and community preparedness. Notable initiatives include the establishment of aviation dip tanks at North Side Hill and Cathedral Rocks, along with establishing a heavy plant contract with local suppliers and engagement with Farm Fire Units to support response during Total Fire Ban days.

One of the things I value is others recognising the contributions CFS volunteers make to ensure their communities are safe. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our members who attended our awards ceremony in October 2025.

I thank all staff and volunteers for your contribution throughout the year. I also acknowledge the support and encouragement of our families, who allow us to be part of the CFS family, and our extended family of employers and supporters. This includes the hundreds of Farm Fire Units, without whose support our job would be much harder. Together, we all contribute to making our state safer.

Stephen Boucher
Regional Commander



Coulta grass fire

Around 4:00 pm on 10 December 2025, more than 60 CFS volunteer firefighters responded to a grass fire on the Flinders Highway at Coulta on the Lower Eyre Peninsula.

The fire, driven by dry stubble and warm summer winds, quickly jumped the highway, placing nearby assets at Camp Nyroca under threat.

With the support of aircraft and Farm Fire Units (FFUs), crews protected the camp and prevented damage to structures on the property.

Using heavy machinery to establish control lines, crews worked in challenging conditions. Their efforts

contained the fire to approximately 61 hectares the following day. Crews remained on scene well into the evening, strengthening control lines and extinguishing hotspots to ensure the fire would not reignite overnight.

SA Metropolitan Fire Service, SA Police, and State Emergency Service personnel also provided support.

The Coulta fire served as a reminder of the ever-present bushfire risk across the region during summer. It also demonstrated the strength of the CFS volunteer network, whose rapid response, coordination, and commitment helped protect the community and limit the fire's impact.



Tulka grass fire

On the evening of 20 October 2025, initial reports were received of a fire burning in inaccessible terrain within Port Lincoln Conservation Park at Tulka.

Over the following days, CFS and National Parks and Wildlife Service crews worked to contain the fire.

Thanks to aircraft, heavy machinery, and the significant work to create mineral earth breaks around the fire perimeter, crews were able to contain the fire on 25 October.

The fire burned approximately 154 hectares of mallee and native vegetation within the conservation park.

Lock grass fire

On 8 December 2025, CFS volunteer firefighters on 6 trucks responded to a grass fire near the township of Lock on the central Eyre Peninsula.

With the support of 10 FFUs and 5 aircraft, firefighters worked to contain the fire as it quickly burned towards Barwell Conservation Park

Thanks to their quick response, crews successfully halted the fire's spread before it could reach the park.

The fire burned approximately 36 hectares of farmland.

Yaninee truck fire and HazMat

Around 4:00 pm on 7 December 2025, CFS crews were called to a truck fire on the Eyre Highway at Yaninee near Wudinna.

Firefighters arrived to find a triple prime mover carrying industrial rodent bait heavily involved in fire, with flames spreading to the surrounding grass.

Thanks to their quick response, local FFU operators were able to suppress the

grass fire, while approximately 15 volunteers on 5 trucks contained the fire to the truck and one of its three trailers.

Given the nature of the truck's contents, a specialist hazardous materials (HazMat) brigade also attended to apply suppression to the destroyed trailer and to monitor atmospheric conditions.

Damages were estimated at \$550,000 and SA Police also attended the scene.





Profile:

Jay Stening

When Cowell CFS was struggling with low volunteer numbers in 2025, local Jay Stening was one of the first to sign up with some of his mates.

“When we first started and got our first callouts, I realised how much the community needed us,” he said.

“Since then, it’s become a real passion for me.”

Now captain of the brigade, Jay has big plans to continue growing the brigade and its engagement with the Cowell community.

“We’re really pushing to get the community involved because most people in this town would have never set foot in the fire station,” he said.

Cowell CFS has successfully grown its volunteer base to more than 12 volunteers, and Jay plans to continue recruiting and upskilling brigade members.

Wind farm partnership boosts bushfire preparedness

The CFS, in partnership with ACCIONA Energía, has helped boost local bushfire preparedness with the installation of a 30,000-litre water tank at Cathedral Rocks Wind Farm on the southern Eyre Peninsula. This collaboration ensures the facility is well-prepared while also contributing to broader emergency response capabilities across the region.

The tank provides local firefighting crews with direct on-site access to water, enabling firefighting helicopters to refill quickly during an emergency. This reduces the need for aircraft to return to Port Lincoln, improving turnaround times and aerial firefighting coverage across the Eyre Peninsula.

The installation of aviation dip tanks remains front of mind for further consideration by landholders across the region. Expanding this capability would allow aircraft to operate more efficiently and provide stronger support to firefighters working on the ground.

Regional Commander Stephen Boucher welcomed the initiative and the benefits it brings to community safety.

“We value the partnership with ACCIONA Energía and the proactive approach to supporting community safety through innovation,” Mr Boucher said.

“Protecting the community during the fire season is a shared responsibility, with everyone needing to play their part. We welcome any collaborative efforts that enhance firefighting response times.”

This initiative highlights the importance of partnerships between industry and emergency services, ensuring communities across the region are better prepared and supported during the fire season.

Cadets return to Kimba

After a 10-year hiatus, Kimba CFS reinstated its cadet program in 2026.

The program’s return was well received by the community, with many locals commenting on how much the 12 new cadets are enjoying learning life skills.

The group meets for fortnightly training sessions, with each session focusing on modules from the Basic Firefighting 1 course.

“We are pleased to be able to offer a valuable activity to the youth of Kimba,” Brigade Captain Dean Gillett said.

“The cadets are all very eager to learn each topic we have covered so far and are showing great enthusiasm. We hope the cadet program contributes to Kimba’s future team of firefighters.”





Engaging with our communities

Face-to-face engagement remains a cornerstone of bushfire preparedness, empowering communities and building trusted relationships and readiness across the six groups that make up Region 6, which spans 188,000 square kilometres.

Embedding school-based bushfire safety education has been an important investment in our future. Invitations were extended across reception, primary, and secondary settings to ensure young people develop an understanding of bushfire risk and preparedness from an early age.

The 2026 Tunarama Festival was a standout event for community engagement, attracting a significant crowd of both adults and youth. Strong interest was shown in developing bushfire plans, travel safety plans, understanding the Alert SA app, and participating in conversations around staying to defend or leaving early. Tunarama also supported CFS recruitment and awareness through discussions and sharing operational experiences of volunteer firefighters who dropped in to say hello.



Other community engagement highlights included:

- Road Awareness Program and Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth Program
- Local Government Association engagement
- Community Emergency Ready groups
- Bushfire Ready workshops
- Community Fire Safe groups
- Career roadshows
- Region 5 and 6 Field Days
- Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation partnership
- Community engagement forums
- Joint CFS and State Emergency Service community engagement events.



Profile:

Chris Boothby

Following in the footsteps of his father, Arno Bay CFS Captain Chris Boothby joined as a CFS cadet more than 20 years ago.

Throughout his 2 decades of volunteering, Chris has always focused on giving back to his local community.

“Volunteering really feels like you’re giving back to your community and that’s what it’s all about,” he said.

“It’s not about me, it’s about the community, the township, the farmers, and everyone else.”

Since taking on the role of captain around 7 years ago, Chris has worked hard to grow the brigade’s presence in the Arno Bay and wider eastern Eyre Peninsula community.

Notably, Chris and the Arno Bay CFS team also jumped in to support neighbouring brigade, Cowell CFS, with recruitment.

“CFS is like a family. We have a great support system through the region, and it is so rewarding to be able to give back to the community and be part of that family,” he said.



Across the State

From the Deputy Chief Officer



In April 2026, I completed my first year as your Deputy Chief Officer.

The past 12 months have seen significant achievements across CFS. Following the executive restructure, we have finalised recruitment, and the executive team is now well-established and focused on delivering our important programs and projects. I'm honoured to be part of the executive leadership team and to represent the proud traditions of the CFS.

Last year, I outlined my intent to renew old relationships and build new ones. I've committed to visiting every region at least once per quarter. I completed my 100th station visit in April 2026, just after my first-year anniversary, and I've made a good start on the remaining 350 stations. Thank you to those brigades who hosted me for their Quick Response Vehicle deliveries - I attended 16 out of the 35.

Staff support and welfare have been a key focus area. In May 2026, we hosted the families of fallen firefighters Brian Menadue, Peter Curtis, and Brian Kirkland at the AFAC National Memorial Service in Canberra. We've also supported a number of CFS members and their families affected by accidents and illness.

These losses have caused profound sadness throughout the CFS family. In response, CFS volunteers and staff have reacted in ways that make me proud to be part of this organisation. From funeral guards of honour to hospital visits, fundraising efforts and home visits, the care and empathy shown in these difficult circumstances have been uplifting.

Young members have been another focus area. The CFS Youth Advisory Council (YAC) and State Cadet Committee continue to develop innovative ideas to improve young members' participation. I was invited to deliver several leadership sessions for the Emerging Leaders Program, and to attend the Region 1 and 3 Cadet Championships and the YAC Urban Week training program at the State Training Centre.

We've increased our focus on member recognition. The Chief Officer Awards continue to grow as we receive more nominations to recognise the amazing work being done across the state. If you are aware of outstanding work that has not been recognised, please consider nominating them. We also want to ensure that all medals and awards are presented. If you are aware of any issues, please raise them through your group and Regional Office.

I'm honoured to be part of the executive leadership team and to represent the proud traditions of the CFS.

Many of you know how important positive relationships are to me. Our partnerships with the CFS Volunteers Association, CFS Foundation, CFS AFSM Association and SA Volunteer Fire Fighters Museum Association are strong and continue to strengthen. Our relationships with our partner agencies - particularly SA Metropolitan Fire Service, State Emergency Service and National Parks and Wildlife Service - are collaborative and committed. I'm also proud of the diversity and inclusion support we are providing to ensure that all members of the community can participate in CFS. From participating in the Pride March and raising neurodiversity awareness to improving the safety, well-being, and protection of children and young people, we will continue to build an organisation that is welcoming and supportive of all.

Paul Seager
Deputy Chief Officer



Supporting algal bloom incident management

Throughout 2025-26, the South Australian coastline was impacted by a damaging algal bloom. The event primarily impacted Spencer Gulf and Gulf St Vincent, as well as key South Australian coastlines.

As many South Australian beaches saw dead marine life wash up, a multi-agency Coastal Remediation Incident Management Team (IMT) was stood up in September 2025 to coordinate beach condition reporting and the beach clean-up effort.

The IMT coordinated the deployment of 6 District Commanders running beach cleanup crews 7 days a week, delivering reports on 99 sites across the state for more than 200 days. This meant producing more than 22,500 beach condition reports, covering 1,690 km of coastline, and collecting more than 60 tonnes of dead marine waste.

Work also included the creation of a registration system for more than 120 volunteers, crew training and logistics, constructing a waste management plan for affected local councils, significant specimen cataloguing, and standing up a community oyster shell marine rejuvenation program.



New regional airbases strengthen aerial firefighting response

CFS State Aviation Operations officially launched 3 new aerial firefighting airbases in Renmark, Wudinna, and Malinong in September 2025.

The expansion marked a major step forward for regional firefighting capacity, enabling faster and more effective aerial support during bushfire events.

The new facilities are strategically positioned to serve as reload bases for fixed-wing firebombing aircraft, reducing turnaround times and improving response coverage across some of South Australia's most fire-prone rural regions.

With quicker access to aerial firefighting suppressants, aircraft can provide more agile and sustained support to ground crews during critical operations.

A cornerstone of this rollout was the training and deployment of 14 new airbase operators from Chaffey Group and 9 from Coorong Group to manage operations at the Renmark and Malinong bases.

Their readiness ensures that the airbases can function at full capacity when required, adding a critical layer of capability to regional operations.



CFS receives Highly Commended award for youth program

The Youth in Emergencies Development Program (YEDP) received a Highly Commended award the Resilient Australia Awards 2025.

This recognition celebrates the outstanding collaboration between CFS, Australian Red Cross, Commissioner for Children and Young People Helen Connolly, and the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

The program helps young people build resilience, develop leadership skills, and get involved in emergency preparedness and response in their communities.

A special acknowledgment goes to Liz O'Fathartaigh and the Community Risk Reduction Partnerships team, as well as the State Training Centre Learning and Development team. Their hard work and skill were key in building this program and making it successful.

The YEDP initiative shows how partnerships and youth involvement can strengthen community resilience.

CFS training makes life-saving difference

In November 2025, Bevan and Sandy Pugsley returned to the State Training Centre (STC) to personally thank CFS staff who came to their aid after a serious motorbike accident at Brunkunga 2 months earlier.

A keen motorbike rider, Bevan sustained critical injuries, including damage to his C2 vertebrae. Sandy managed to get him into their car and soon flagged down a passing CFS vehicle, driven by Matt Davis, for help.

This triggered an emergency response at the nearby STC that was supported by Steve Goodrich, Bevan Deppeler,

Micheal Bohrsen, Cooper Davidson-Peacock and Jason Steen. Their calm, professional response and quick decision-making stabilised Bevan and prevented further injury.

Bevan's memories of the day were patchy, but he recalled the comfort of Jason Steen's hands keeping his neck secure and the reassurance that came from the team's confident actions. "One wrong decision and I wouldn't be here," he said.

In hospital, Bevan spent 3 days in an induced coma and underwent surgery to repair his spine. Upon his return home, Bevan and Sandy visited the STC to thank those who made a difference.

At the morning tea, as they shook hands with each responder, Bevan and Sandy may not have recognised every face, but they remembered the professionalism, kindness, and comfort they were shown.

Bevan praised the high standard of training our members receive and the difference it made in his life.



Credit: Brett Hartwig / Courtesy The Advertiser

New HazMat training system

An upgraded training system is providing CFS members with a significant upgrade in their hazardous materials (HazMat) capability and simulation exercises.

CFS has 30 brigades strategically located across South Australia that are equipped and trained to respond to incidents involving hazardous materials.

The introduction of the new HazSim Pro 3 Dual System training platform provides members with more opportunities to safely train in realistic simulations.

Previously, training relied on printed detector screens and limited simulation tools. While real detectors require real hazards to activate, the HazSim Pro 3 creates realistic training conditions without any actual risk.

The HazSim Pro 3 allows users to experience simulated gas and radiation environments in real time. Readings shift as a user moves through the scene, alarms can activate, and hazards change based on decisions made during the exercise. The system is controlled remotely by instructors, enabling dynamic, scenario-based learning without exposure to danger.

While designed for hazardous materials, the system can be applied in other areas of training, including structural firefighting, road crash rescue, and rural fire scenarios involving air quality or gas exposure. It provides a more realistic training environment and strengthens decision-making skills in high-pressure situations.



Commissioning is just the beginning

Over nearly 2 years, the Commercial Development Assessment Service completed the commissioning of the new Bunnings Warehouse at Mount Barker in September. The project highlighted the critical technical knowledge required when overseeing the design and testing of complex fire systems.

CFS personnel demonstrated a strong understanding of integrated fire protection systems, including hydrant and sprinkler networks, boosted water supplies, fire detection, and occupant warning systems, ensuring they operate cohesively under emergency conditions.

Effective commissioning requires the ability to interpret system designs, cause-and-effect matrices, and relevant standards, while verifying compliance with Regulation 103D of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Regulations 2017.

The Mount Barker project also demonstrated the importance of collaboration. Working alongside the SA Metropolitan Fire Service, CFS combined operational and technical expertise to test the system and strengthen the assessment process.



Volunteers take on the Melbourne Firefighter Stair Climb

In September 2025, a group of dedicated CFS volunteers joined more than 1,000 firefighters and emergency service personnel for the 12th Annual Melbourne Firefighter Stair Climb.

Participants climbed 28 floors of the Crown Metropol Hotel, carrying 25 kg of gear, including Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus.

Volunteers from Happy Valley, Morphett Vale, Nuriootpa, Bridgewater, Compton, Burnside, Eden Hills, Strathalbyn, Woodside, Taillem Bend, Baramba, Tea Tree Gully, Stirling, and Two Wells brigades proudly represented South Australia.

Dale Adams from Eden Hills placed 7th overall, while Burnside CFS secured 1st place in the team event.

This year's climb was also a major fundraising success. Compton CFS alone raised \$17,900, placing 6th on the national donation's leaderboard. Their contribution will help support important mental health initiatives for emergency service personnel.

Volunteers take the stage at AFAC25

In August, the AFAC25 Conference and Exhibition took place, bringing together over 100 expert speakers from across emergency management, public safety, and disaster resilience.

Senior Firefighter Leila McEgan from Aldgate, and Captain Rosalyn Smith from Hahndorf represented CFS with their presentation, *Disrupting traditional hierarchical structures in SACFS brigades*.

Their session explored how long-standing practices in brigades can be rethought to create more adaptive, inclusive, and effective operations.

Drawing on real-world examples, they shared how new approaches to leadership, communication, and decision-making can help brigades keep pace with the changing nature of volunteering and emergency response.

"We saw opportunities to use disruption constructively, to spark innovation, improvement, or adaptation," they said.





Helicopter insertion training

In 2025, South Australia's firefighting capability took a major step forward with the introduction of helicopter insertion training for remote area fire crews.

This capability allows remote area fire crews to access terrain previously inaccessible to ground crews in vehicles and provide quicker responses to remote fires.

CFS State Aviation Operations delivered the targeted training in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to nearly 80 NPWS arduous-rated fire crews from across the state.

These crews meet strict fitness and skills requirements to operate in challenging terrain where rapid ground access is impossible.

Early suppression of bushfires in remote areas is critical to preventing small ignitions from escalating into large, destructive fires.

South Australia's rugged landscapes often make vehicle access impossible, leaving helicopters as the fastest and safest option for deploying crews and equipment.

Specialist crews can now be transported by helicopter to suitable landing sites near fire lines. Larger equipment, such as portable pumps and floating collar dams, can also be delivered via sling load operations.

Participants practiced safe procedures for working around aircraft, sling load operations, and boarding and disembarking drills.

The program also included familiarisation with remote area firefighting equipment and helicopter bucket operations.

Recent changes to civil aviation regulations classify helicopter-based fireground personnel carriage as aerial work.

This requires agencies like CFS to implement targeted training and checking systems in line with the updated Manual of Standards. The new training supports compliance while enhancing safety and operational readiness.



Breaking Taboos and supporting volunteers

From the fireground to regional headquarters, CFS members can access free period products thanks to a statewide initiative launched in August 2025.

Period packs were placed in fire trucks and command vehicles, with dispensers installed at major CFS facilities, ensuring members can access essential items wherever they are deployed.

Hayley Slater, of Salisbury CFS, said having period products on hand makes a real difference for volunteers, especially during long incidents or deployments far from home.

"It's one less thing to worry about and shows CFS understands the practical needs of its members on the ground," Ms Slater said.

The program was shaped through a partnership with South Australian social enterprise TABOO, which supplied biodegradable pads and tampons in plastic free packaging.

Now fully embedded across the state, the initiative demonstrates CFS' commitment to diversity, respect, and its volunteers' wellbeing.

Chief Officer Brett Loughlin said the initiative ensures members can undertake their work without unnecessary barriers.

"Just as we prioritise the safety and well-being of the public during incidents, we must also safeguard the health and dignity of our own people," Mr Loughlin said.

"Providing these products demonstrates that we value diversity and are removing unnecessary barriers so volunteers and staff can focus on what matters."

Kapunda truck supports Vanuatu Fire Service

The former Kapunda 24P appliance has started a new life with the Vanuatu Fire Service.

CFS responded to an urgent request from the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council Pacific Partnership Group to help re-establish Vanuatu's firefighting capability, after the last operational fire truck became unserviceable.

The ACT Emergency Services Agency, primary partner with the Vanuatu Fire Service, donated a refurbished 14 appliance. Kapunda 24P was refurbished, restored and renamed, now called 'Nakaswana',

meaning strong or powerful. The two appliances were officially handed over to local crews in October 2025.

Deputy Chief Officer Paul Seager travelled to Port Vila for the handover, with support from the Australian Defence Force and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

"This appliance, gifted with care and purpose, demonstrates our commitment to supporting communities in building robust emergency response capabilities, no matter how remote or unique their circumstances," Mr Seager said.



SAFECOM Health & Wellbeing



This was a busy year for the Stress Prevention and Management (SPAM) team; however, that 'busyness' is something we hold with real gratitude.

Each call, conversation, and referral is a sign of trust in our service and a powerful reminder that it is okay to not be okay. During 2025, the SPAM line received a total of 514 calls from members across the agencies. 297 referrals to our external mental healthcare providers were prepared, and 45 Critical Incident Group sessions were conducted.

We are deeply grateful to every individual who connected with us, either for themselves or on behalf of others. It is a privilege to walk alongside you.

A new furry friend

We are pleased to welcome Quincy, our new therapy dog, to the SAFECOM Therapy Dog program.

Quincy and his handler, Lindsay Hincks, have been visiting Emergency Services Sector Headquarters regularly. As Quincy becomes more confident, we will seek opportunities for him to visit regional offices as well.



Suicide Prevention Plan Launch

On World Suicide Prevention Day, held on 10 September, volunteers and staff from South Australian emergency service agencies came together for the Suicide Prevention Plan launch.

In 2021, South Australia reached a key milestone with the passing of the first Suicide Prevention Act in Australia.

Under the Act, a State Suicide Prevention Plan 2023/2026 was developed, setting out government policies and priorities for suicide

prevention. The Act requires certain state authorities to develop a suicide prevention plan, with the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) one of 10 prescribed agencies.

The plan, titled *With Our People*, covers CFS, SA Metropolitan Fire Service, State Emergency Service, and SAFECOM. It includes staff, volunteers, their families, and the wider South Australian community.

The plan aims to break down stigma surrounding mental health and suicide through education, training and skill development. It also aims to reduce suicide-related distress and deaths in South Australia.

Honouring Jane Abdilla's retirement

In March, we celebrated Jane Abdilla's retirement, marking the closing of an extraordinary chapter for Jane and an important moment for the team that she has helped build and guide. Jane's impact has been lasting, meaningful and deeply valued.

Through Jane's advocacy and dedication, the SAFECOM Mental Health and Wellbeing team has grown from a single position into a strong group of 6 professionals. This growth reflects her vision and her belief in the importance of accessible help and well-supported agencies.

For the past 25 years, she has also built and led the Peer Support Officer program with dedication, care and purpose.

Jane's guidance and kindness will be missed, as well as her infectious laugh and footy banter.

Learning & Development



Building skills for 17,000 participants

The Learning and Development team supports members and partner agencies to build the skills, capability, and confidence needed to deliver safe and professional emergency responses across South Australia.

Our work focuses on designing, developing and delivering training that reflects operational needs and contemporary practice. Programs are informed by research, operational experience and data, and are adapted to suit the diverse local and regional contexts in which members operate.

We work closely with volunteer trainers, staff and external training providers to coordinate and deliver a broad range of courses each year. These programs support members across a variety of operational, leadership and specialist roles.

The following table outlines the courses delivered over the past year and the number of participants who completed our training.

Training sessions	Participants
Bushfire	9,900
Road Crash Rescue	1,200
Structural	1,800
Hazardous Materials (HazMat)	320
Leadership	500
Incident Management	1,900
Aviation	900
First Aid	800
Driver	150
TOTAL	17,470

Governor visits STC

In August 2025, the State Training Centre hosted Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, and her husband Rod Bunten. The visit was an opportunity for Her Excellency and Mr Bunten to learn about the preparation volunteers undertake for bushfires, road crashes, and rescue operations.

Our highly skilled trainers delivered a range of demonstrations, including leadership and decision-making scenarios, urban firefighting and specialist techniques, and road crash and heavy rescue training.





Strengthening road crash rescue capability

The Urban Training Team hosted its annual Road Crash Rescue (RCR) seminar in February 2026 at the State Training Centre.

Led by State Training Officer David Zakrzewski and Urban Team Leader Ben Lupo, the 2-day seminar brought together 18 volunteer and staff RCR trainers from across the state to strengthen operational capability, consistency, and compliance. Sessions highlighted updates to RCR training packages, quality assurance processes, and contemporary rescue practices, ensuring trainers remain aligned with best-practice methodologies.

Participants also engaged in 2 complex heavy rescue scenarios, demonstrating the technical proficiency and teamwork required to manage challenging road crash environments safely.

A major highlight of the seminar was the announcement that the RAA, through the CFS Foundation, has committed \$300,000 to the RCR program. This significant investment will fund a full-time State Training Delivery Officer for 3 years, dedicated to expanding RCR training across South Australia and supporting the continued growth of heavy rescue capability.

This funding provides a significant boost to the RCR program and will directly benefit volunteers by increasing the access to initial courses, upskill programs, revalidations requirements, and advanced heavy rescue training. As operational demands continue to evolve, this investment ensures CFS personnel remain highly skilled and prepared to respond to complex rescue incidents.

Planning is already underway to enhance fleet capability and upgrade a dedicated training trailer to support the new role. The updated vehicle and trailer will improve statewide training delivery, and be branded to recognise the valued partnership and investment of the RAA and the CFS Foundation.



Simulation and VR Assistants trained to support statewide digital learning

In December 2025, 13 CFS staff and volunteers took part in the first Simulation and Virtual Reality (VR) Assistant workshop, delivered by the Learning and Development Digital Learning Team.

This one-day workshop was delivered in response to growing demand for digital training solutions and the need for safe, practical and engaging methods to train members safely and effectively.

The workshop focused on building practical skills using CFS's simulation and VR tools. Participants learned how to:

- set up and run simulations
- use VR and XVR equipment
- troubleshoot common technical issues
- facilitate sessions
- support learners during scenario-based activities.

Feedback from participants was very positive.

"The whole course was well delivered and covered all aspects of assisting with either VR or XVR. The section about managing group dynamics and engaging participants was great information in general," one attendee said.

With trained Simulation and VR Assistants now in all 6 regions, these tools can be delivered more locally and consistently. This supports safer training and creates more engaging learning experiences for our members.

Participants will continue to develop their skills through on-the-job opportunities, observing and assisting with training courses and supporting community engagement events.



CFA wildfire instructor visits State Training Centre

The Learning and Development team welcomed Peter Cecil, a highly experienced wildfire instructor from the Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA), to the State Training Centre.

The visit provided an opportunity to discuss different approaches to learning, training delivery, and assessment, as well as volunteer time commitments.

One of the key aims of the visit was to explore alternative ways of delivering training and conducting volunteer assessments, and to identify opportunities to strengthen how emergency management skills are taught and recognised. While the CFA delivers separate Crew Leader and Level 1 Incident Controller courses, the CFS delivers a single multi-hazard course, so the visit allowed both agencies to compare approaches and share ideas.

"This visit was a great chance to compare how each system works, from learning outcomes and assessments to the time our volunteers commit," Pete said.

"The opportunity to view CFS courses has given me some ideas when delivering CFA courses, so for me it was a valuable visit, and hopefully we can repeat this again."

CFS trainer Brad Diplock said these opportunities are important. "At the end of the day, it's about building connections and learning from each other," he said.

The IM&L team also invited trainers from CFS regions and partner agencies, including the Department for Environment and Water, to be involved in both training delivery and the visit.

The CFS thanks Peter and the CFA for their commitment to working together and sharing expertise. Visits like this strengthen interagency relationships and help ensure emergency services training continues to improve.

Cadets



CFS cadets make their mark at AFCC

CFS cadets wrapped up another successful year at the Australian Fire Cadet Championships held at Douglas Park in New South Wales in October 2025.

Cadets from across all CFS regions represented South Australia with pride, demonstrating teamwork, resilience, and the skills they've built through training and brigade life. Both CFS Team Alpha and CFS Team Bravo competed in 8 events across 2 days, matching the experienced NSW cadet teams using NSW-standard equipment.

The competition brought together 21 teams from across Australia and New Zealand, creating a strong field of cadet

competitors. Supported by Director Regional Operations – West, Ann Buesnel, the SA teams exceeded expectations and placed strongly in the final rankings.

CFS Team Bravo secured 9th place overall, while CFS Team Alpha followed close behind in 11th. In addition, CFS Team Bravo received a new Incident Management Team Award, introduced by Rural Fire Service Event Incident Controller Inspector Nathan Barnden, in recognition of their outstanding commitment to best practice.

This achievement highlights not only the skills of our cadets but also the values of safety, mateship, and integrity that defines the CFS.

Joining the national conversation

Compton CFS cadet Hanalie drew on her own experience of seeing the impacts of a nearby bushfire to create an award-winning story.

The 17-year-old was one of the winners of ABC's national Heywire competition, which calls for stories from young people living in regional, rural, and remote Australia.

"I wanted to write about the CFS because it's such a big thing in my life and it's been so beneficial for me," Hanalie said.

"Whatever I end up doing as a job one day, I'm going to keep volunteering on the side because it's so enjoyable and it helps so many people."

Hanalie travelled to Canberra for the annual Heywire Summit to meet with like-minded young people.

"The whole thing was amazing. Everyone was so nice and social, and we were able to talk about everyone's life and stories," she said.

New chiefs in town

Chief Officer Brett Loughlin handed over the reins to 2 aspiring chiefs this year.

Both cadets, Cain (who visited in October) and Gracie (who visited in April), were from Lincoln CFS and travelled from the Eyre Peninsula to Adelaide for a day of following in the Chief's footsteps.

From touring Emergency Services Sector Headquarters and Adelaide MFS station, to meeting with leaders and attending a CFS Town Hall, both Cain and Gracie got the full chief experience.



Youth Advisory Council



Youth-focused Town Hall

As part of SA Youth Week, YAC led a youth-focused CFS Member Town Hall at Tailem Bend CFS Station.

The session gave young volunteers the opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives while highlighting

training pathways, leadership opportunities, and projects shaping the future of the organisation.

Speakers from across the agency also provided updates on initiatives, including the New Operational Systems (NOS) project and Volunteer Portal Refresh.

Thank you to Tailem Bend CFS for hosting and supporting the event.

Emerging Leaders Program

A major highlight of the year was the 2025 YAC Emerging Leaders Program, which brought together young members from across the state for a weekend of leadership, learning, and connection.

Held from 4 to 6 July 2025 at the Adelaide Hills Convention Centre and CFS State Headquarters, the program included leadership activities, wellbeing

and crew care workshops, operational discussions, and team challenges designed to build confidence and strengthen leadership skills.

Participants also met with senior leaders, heard from guest speakers, observed operational simulations, and connected with other young volunteers from across South Australia.

The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) continued bringing together young CFS volunteers from across South Australia during 2025-26, helping young members contribute ideas, share experiences, and connect directly with senior leadership.

Made up of representatives aged 18 to 30 from each of the 6 CFS regions, YAC helps ensure younger members are involved in discussions about the future of the CFS, including training, leadership opportunities, communication, and volunteer experience.

Throughout the year, YAC members contributed to a range of youth-focused initiatives and events designed to strengthen connections, build confidence, and support the next generation of volunteers.

CFS Foundation



Supporting our volunteers when it matters most

The core purpose of the CFS Foundation is to support volunteers when they are impacted in the course of their service to the CFS. This commitment sits at the heart of everything we do, standing beside our volunteers and their families during some of their most challenging moments.

Over the past year, the Foundation has helped several volunteers who sustained injuries while volunteering for the CFS. Each situation is a strong reminder of the risks our volunteers face every time they respond to an incident.

The impact of the Foundation's support was best captured in the words of those we assist.

"We are very grateful for the financial and emotional support you provided.

Knowing we were not struggling alone and there was such care and support from you all made a huge difference," Sally Veitch, wife of injured volunteer Simon Veitch, said.

Tragically, this year also saw the loss of volunteer Peter Curtis, who lost his life while undertaking remote firefighting operations on the Eyre Peninsula. Our thoughts remain with Peter's family, friends, and fellow brigade members. The Foundation was honoured to support his family during this incredibly difficult time.

The CFS Foundation remains proud to stand alongside our CFS volunteers and their families, providing support through recovery and beyond.

Gloria Berni
Chief Executive Officer

New faces at the Foundation

After 7 years with the Foundation, we said goodbye to Alysha, who has managed our administration and social media with enthusiasm, creativity, and care. Alysha was wonderful to work with, always bringing a smile, a positive attitude, and a passion for supporting our volunteers. We wish her every happiness and success in the future.

We're thrilled to welcome Mel (pictured) to the team. Mel joins us as our new Administration Officer and Social Media Manager and works part-time at the CFS State Operations Centre.



Recognising our valued sponsors

The CFS Foundation is proud to acknowledge and sincerely thank the organisations whose generous support enables us to deliver meaningful programs and initiatives for CFS volunteers across South Australia.

We are privileged to partner with a group of sponsors who share our commitment to supporting those who serve our communities. These include RAA, SA Power Networks, ElectraNet, Police Credit Union, Flinders Port Holdings, and North East Isuzu.

Each of these partnerships reflects a shared commitment to safeguarding the wellbeing of our volunteers and recognising the invaluable contribution they make to our communities.

Their ongoing support makes a real and lasting difference.

Supporting our emerging leaders

The Foundation was proud to support this year's Youth Advisory Council Emerging Leaders Program, which brought together around 70 enthusiastic young CFS volunteers from across the state.

Nathan Van Berlo, Assistant Coach for the Adelaide Football Club and Ambassador for the CFS Foundation, hosted a Q&A session where he spoke openly about leadership, staying calm under pressure, and the role of mindfulness in high-stress situations.

The young volunteers were quick to draw parallels between the intensity of AFL competition and the real-life challenges they face on the fireground. His insights sparked thoughtful discussion and left many feeling motivated and inspired.

The Emerging Leaders Program was a great success, an engaging and meaningful opportunity to support, inspire, and empower the next generation of CFS leaders.



CFS Foundation Luncheon

We are thrilled to share that the 2025 CFS Foundation Luncheon was our biggest and most successful yet, raising over \$25,000.

This achievement would not have been possible without the contributions of our amazing sponsors, supporters, and donors. A special thank you to all the businesses and individuals who generously donated items for our silent and live auctions and the wine wall. Your contributions helped create an unforgettable experience for our guests.

Most importantly, we want to thank everyone who attended and supported the luncheon.

SA Volunteer Fire Fighters Museum



A special feature

A special feature of this year's memorial service was the use of a new, custom-made wooden lectern.

Made by the Millicent Men's Shed, the lectern showcases a blend of local woods, including pine and bluegum, and features a laser-etched museum logo.

The project was led by men's shed member Chris Mathias, who is also Group Officer for Woakwine CFS Group.

Honouring fallen firefighters at Naracoorte

Four new plaques were unveiled at the Memorial to Fallen Firefighters at the SA Fire Fighters Museum in Naracoorte in April, honouring firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Held on Saturday 11 April, the museum's annual SA Fire Fighters Memorial Service and Wreath Laying ceremony was attended by more than 100 people, with an additional livestream audience.

The service, held in wet and windy conditions, commemorated National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) brigade firefighter Peter Curtis, who died in the Pinkawillinie fire on the Eyre Peninsula in November.

Brian Menadue, Troy Kinslow, and Neil Adams, recognised under South Australia's presumptive cancer legislation, also had plaques added to the memorial in their honour.

The plaques were unveiled by Chief Officer Brett Loughlin, who delivered eulogies acknowledging the service, dedication, and sacrifice of each honouree.

Fire Management and Compliance Director Fiona Gill also delivered an address on behalf of the NPWS, recognising Peter Curtis's contribution.

The service was emceed by Stuart Stansfield, who conducted the call to order, while the CFS Chaplain Jim Keatch conducted the memorial service.

CFS cadets from Naracoorte and Port MacDonnell were present and lowered the flags to half-mast.

Visit the museum

The SA Volunteer Fire Fighters Museum and Memorial, based in Naracoorte, welcomes visitors.

Located on Kingston Avenue, the Memorial is always open for people to pay their respects to fallen firefighters from across South Australia.

The museum features vintage firefighting equipment and is open by appointment.

Book a private tour via Facebook, email info@savffm.net.au, or call **0417 820 134**.



Honours

A huge thank you and congratulations
to the latest recipients.

Australian Fire Service Medal

The Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) is a peer-nominated medal that recognises distinguished service by members of an Australian fire service.

The Governor-General awards this medal on the recommendation of the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services.

SACFS Australian Fire Service Medal Association

It's been a busy year for the SACFS AFSM Association since its official launch in May 2025.

Members of the association attended various events throughout year, including receptions at Government House and meetings with the CFS Youth Advisory Council, Awards Committee, and Volunteer Association.

The 2025 AGM was held in September, with Andrew Lawson AFSM, Lee Watson AFSM and Rob Styling OAM AFSM, re-elected as President, Secretary, and Committee Member respectively.

The association will continue working to share the knowledge, experience, and leadership of AFSM recipients in ways that support volunteers, staff, and the broader CFS community.



John Probert AFSM

John Probert said he was humbled to receive his AFSM and that it had been a privilege to work alongside CFS volunteers across his more than 45 years of service with the CFS and State Emergency Service (SES).

"In emergency management, we see the worst of times, but we see the best in people as they come forward to help," Mr Probert said.

"It's been a huge privilege to be able to work with people whose hearts are in the right place and who are there for the right reasons.

"I'm just enormously proud of being a part of the CFS and being part of the bigger team."

Since his start as an SES volunteer in Mount Gambier in 1981 and as a CFS staff member in 1999, Mr Probert has volunteered and worked extensively across the state in roles including Level 3 Incident Controller, State Duty Officer, and Regional Commander.

Throughout his career, Mr Probert has led responses to major incidents including the Blackford fire, Coles fire, and the Kangaroo Island fires.

This leadership included supporting crews and communities during large-scale firefighting efforts and traumatic events.

Since 2022, Mr Probert has served as the CFS Industry Project Officer, implementing legislative reforms for industry brigades and working closely with the forestry industry in the Lower South East.

He is well known for his leadership in frontline operations, commitment to building capability, and enduring support for volunteers.



Martin Carney AFSM

Martin Carney has served the CFS for more than 45 years since joining Bradbury CFS in 1980.

Soon after joining, Mr Carney was appointed Training Officer and later Brigade Captain.

Drawing on his background in risk management, Mr Carney has developed numerous comprehensive training and preparedness programs for his brigade and community.

“People join the CFS for a number of reasons, to learn new skills, the camaraderie – for me it was the community service aspect,” Mr Carney said.

“That service also extends to supporting your neighbours, outside of when you’re at a job, who may not know how to prepare for a fire.

“I’m happy that I can help and equip them with important knowledge.”

Mr Carney later served with the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) as a volunteer support officer and as the State Manager of Emergency Services for Red Cross SA, which saw him lead major deployments to disasters such as Cyclone Larry, the Queensland floods, and Victoria’s Black Saturday fires.

Mr Carney was also an early and active supporter of women in operational firefighting roles.

His contributions to community safety through leadership, innovation in volunteer training, and commitment to resilience and inclusion are widely respected.



Michael Wouters AFSM

Following a career of distinguished service driven by a strong commitment to improving community safety, Michael Wouters has been awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM).

“I’m proud and grateful to receive the medal but I also see it as a reflection of the work of all the people I’ve worked with over the years,” Mr Wouters said.

“It’s also a reflection of our families and loved ones that have given us the support to do this work. Everyone’s played their part.”

While working as a seasonal fire crew member and research assistant in Victoria during his university studies, Mr Wouters developed a passion for fire management, behaviour, and science.

This passion led him to South Australia where he led the Fire Science, Predictive Services and Incident Mapping functions within the Department for Environment and Water and was instrumental in establishing the state’s fire behaviour analysis and incident mapping capability.

These capabilities are now central to bushfire operations, providing enhanced situational awareness and supporting safer, more effective decision-making during major incidents.

“When I first came to South Australia, we just didn’t have that capacity. Over a decade, we were able to slowly build that function to what it is now,” Mr Wouters said.

“It’s a small team but it’s one that can be called upon when needed to support the planning process during an incident.”

He has long been recognised for his passion for understanding fire behaviour and translating complex science into real-time operational decision-making.

SA Emergency Service Awards

SA Emergency Services Medal & Ministerial Commendation

Established in 2001, the SA Emergency Services Medal recognises the tireless and extraordinary work of persons contributing to community safety through operational emergency service organisations and associated agencies.

This medal is given to an individual or group who has demonstrated “distinguished and/or meritorious services of the highest order” in recognition of significant contribution to the emergency services in South Australia.

The Ministerial Commendation recognises significant effort, bravery or service and is awarded for meritorious or courageous action.

Tim McNeilly – Medal

Commander & Manager
Technical Operations

Jason Druwitt – Medal

Regional Commander
Region 5

Anthony Rosenzweig – Medal

Group Officer
Western Eyre CFS Group

Geoff Slater – Citation

Administration Coordinator
Tea Tree Gully CFS

Jason Kleemann – Commendation

Director & Lieutenant
Infrastructure & Logistics
and Dalkeith & Tanunda CFS



National Medals

National Medal

Ross Anderson	Andrew Francis	David Mackenzie	Amanda Slipper
Matthew Angrave	Graham Freeman	Alexander Magraith	Aaron Smith
Drew Baker	Garry Fuller	Attila Marton	Derek Snowball
Trevor Baldacchino	Luke Gabell	Mark May	George Stolz
Jacob Beinke	Kym Geue	Cadell McElroy	Jacob Strauss
Wally Bolt	Paul Gillen	Bradley McKay	Natalia Tanti
Peter Boraso	Kathryn Gillespie	Jason McKay	Christopher Thompson
Justin Bradbury	Travis Goodwin	Luke Mildwaters	Joel Trace
Joseph Brettig	Darren Grove	Warren Miller	Michael Trebilcock
Scott Burnard	Timothy Groves	Luke Mitton	Emily Vanzo
Eamonn Carey	Mark Hart	Adam Moller	Michael Vickery
Ann Carr	Christopher Hedger	Trent Murphy	Kevin Walton
Andrew Carrick	Lyndon Hewett	Rodney Murray	Shane Weckert
Karen Carver	Shannon Hewett	Lachlan Napier	Ben Weckert
Timothy Champion	Stephen Hewett	Daniel Nicholls	Ryan White
Gregory Church	Ryan Hewett	Michael Patterson	Andrew Whitehorn
Shane Clinch	Timothy Howard	John Peet	Peter Wilkins
Luke Collins	Jamie Hutchinson	Michael Penhall	John Williams
Paul Cooke	Avan Ireland	Ricky Quaiat	Brett Williams
Kathryn Coombe	Edward Ive	Daniel Quarrell	Antony Williams
Simon Cox	Luke Jantke	Shane Rigden	Benjamin Wrightson
Tamahina Cox	Deinion Jones	Peter Robinson	Cameron Yelland
Nigel Darlington	Bradley Jones	Jonathon Robson	
Graham Davis	Paul Jones	Colin Rogers	
Mark Devlin	Geoffrey Kay	Leigh Rogers	
Edward Dolling	Scott Kennedy	Hayden Rogers	
Andrew Dunn	Benjamin Kleemann	Tyson Rohrlach	
Geoffrey Earle	Kylie Kleinig	Anthony Rosenzweig	
Isaac Eckermann	Samuel Koerner	Jessica Rosenzweig	
Peter Edwards	Deborah Lang	Michael Rosewarne	
Timothy Edwards	Andrew Lange	Raymond Rothe	
Joshua Edwards	Wade Lawry	John Rymill	
Johan Elferink	Derek Lawry	Samual Sanderson	
Sera Ellis	Rodney Leske	Christiana Schammer	
John Elton	William Levers	Ashley Schreiber	
Andrew Faehrmann	Graham Lovell	Adam Shearer	
Christopher Flak	Craig Lowe	John Silverblade	
William Flynn	Peter Lunt	Phillip Sims	

National Medal 1st Clasp

Kenneth Anderson	Simon Oster
Trevor Arnold	Shane Parker
Leith Barker	Karen Philp
Nathaniel Bastian	Shane Rigden
Robert Bowley	Brian Robins
Shawn Brown	Leigh Rogers
John Carey	Colin Rogers
Ann Carr	Delwin Rohrlach
John Carver	Peter Ryan
Karen Carver	Ashley Schreiber
Chad Clark	Scott Smith
Trevor Colbert	David Southern
Richard Coombe	Daryl Stichel
Graham Davis	Stephen Taylor
Edward Dolling	Paul Unsworth
Mark Dowling	Christopher Van Der Wijngaart
Brad Eccles	Garry Walsh
Peter Edwards	Andrew Warner
Geoffrey Ellis	Jason Wayman
John Elton	Andrew Whitehorn
Sue Foureux	Peter Wilkins
Graham Freeman	David Wilkins
Garry Fuller	Yvonne Wurst
Barrie Gale	
Kathryn Gillespie	
Colin Groves	
David Harmon	
Ross Haustorfer	
Stephen Hewett	
Shannon Hewett	
Lyndon Hewett	
Kym Hill	
Glenn Jackway	
Christian Kiessling	
Brian Laidler	
Andrew Lange	
Derek Lawry	
Tamara Leggett	
Graham Lovell	
Jason McKay	
Adam Moller	
Daryl Mustard	

National Medal 2nd Clasp

Shane Atze
 Raymond Blackshaw
 Barry Burt
 John Carver
 Karen Carver
 Bevis Dixon
 Peter Edwards
 John Elton
 Graham Freeman
 Garry Fuller
 Raymond Grose
 Neil Harvey
 Lyndon Hewett
 Mark Hewitson
 Christopher Howie
 Trevor Huddleston
 Shaun Irrgang
 Philip Jackson
 Alan Julian
 Graham Lovell
 Barry Merritt
 Stephen Pollard
 Roberta Rice
 Colin Rogers
 Leigh Rogers
 Troy Rohrlach
 Ashley Schreiber
 Barrie Scott
 Andrew Whitehorn

National Medal 3rd Clasp

Geoffrey Capper
 John Carver
 Graham Dunlop
 Graham Freeman
 Garry Fuller
 David Furner
 Mark Hewitson
 Robin Holmes
 Aubrey Rohrlach
 Graham Rohrlach
 Graham Sleep
 Malcolm Yeates

National Medal 4th Clasp

Graham Freeman
 Robert Kirby
 Aubrey Rohrlach
 Wesley Schilling
 Geoffrey Smith
 Peter Wicks
 Rodney Youn

CFS 70+ Year Service Medals

Russell Grear AFSM

Region 1 / Sturt CFS Group – Eden Hills

CFS 60+ Year Service Medals

Robert McDougall

Region 1 / East Torrens CFS
Group – Cherryville

Jeffrey Varcoe

Region 5 / Woakwine
CFS Group – Furner

Ronald Grosser

Region 6 / Eastern Eyre CFS
Group – Arno Bay & District

**Vincent Monterola
AM AFSM**

Region 1 / Mount Lofty
CFS Group – Stirling

Peter Agars

Region 6 / Elliston
CFS Group – Sheringa

Lyall Howard

Region 6 / Tumby Bay &
District CFS Group – Koppio

Bruce Buckby

Region 2 / Light CFS Group
– Woolsheds / Wasleys

Russell Branson AFSM

Region 6 / Lower Eyre
Peninsula CFS Group
– Cummins

Leslie Kammermann

Region 6 / Elliston CFS Group
– Murdinga

Dennis Ford

Region 2 / Yorke Valley CFS
Group – Weetulta / Nalyappa

Peter Doudle

Region 6 / Lower Eyre
Peninsula CFS Group – Coultas

Kenneth Little

Region 6 / Elliston CFS Group
– Port Kenny

Malcolm Grundy

Region 2 / Southern Yorke
CFS Group – Yorketown

Joseph Elleway

Region 6 / Eastern Eyre
CFS Group – Tuckey

Peter Meaney

Region 6 / Lower Eyre
Peninsula CFS Group
– Mount Hope

Robert Tonkin

Region 2 / Southern Yorke
CFS Group – Stansbury

Kevin Elson

Region 6 / Eastern Eyre
CFS Group – Cleve

Kevin Preiss

Region 6 / Eastern Eyre CFS
Group – Arno Bay & District

Grantley Trotter

Region 2 / Southern Yorke
CFS Group – Port Vincent

John Ettridge

Region 6 / Western Eyre
CFS Group – Smoky Bay

Bryan Trigg AFSM

Region 6 / Eastern Eyre
CFS Group – Cleve

Kelvin Stringer

Region 4 / Spencer CFS
Group – Mundoora

Eldon Glover

Region 6 / Lower Eyre
Peninsula CFS Group
– Yeelanna

2026 SACFS Chief Officer Awards

Chief Officer's Unit Citation for Service

APY fire training and hazard reduction program

Peter Ikonomopoulos, Ross Haustorfer, and Tim Cooper were awarded for their outstanding service in the development and ongoing delivery of a long-term fire training and hazard reduction burning program on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands.

Since 2016, they have established a highly successful and enduring partnership with First Nations Rangers, integrating traditional fire knowledge with contemporary bushfire management practices. Through regular deployments to remote and challenging environments, they have delivered structured training, operational mentoring and prescribed burning support, significantly enhancing local capability and fire management outcomes.

Their commitment, cultural respect and long-term collaboration represent an exceptional contribution to CFS operational excellence and community safety.

Recipients: Peter Ikonomopoulos, Ross Haustorfer, Tim Cooper



Chief Officer's Certificate of Commendation



Road Network Analysis Tool (RNAT) 2.0

Philip Hosking and Malhar Amin were awarded for their outstanding leadership and collaboration in delivering the Road Network Analysis Tool (RNAT) 2.0, a transformative advancement in emergency response planning across South Australia.

They led the development of a sophisticated upgrade incorporating up-to-date road network data, advanced capabilities, and improved routing assumptions. This enhanced tool provides more accurate, transparent, and defensible data to support operational and strategic decision-making.

Through extensive consultation, they ensured RNAT 2.0 reflected both technical excellence and local knowledge. Their commitment to transparency, innovation and collaboration has delivered a system trusted across the sector.

Their work has significantly strengthened emergency response planning, ensuring it is fair, reliable, and future-ready.



Public Information Team

The Public Information Team was awarded for its outstanding professionalism, innovation, and commitment to community safety.

A key achievement was the development and implementation of the incident banner functionality on the CFS website, significantly improving the visibility and timeliness of critical incident information for the community.

The team also coordinated the Bushfire Resilience Event at Wasleys, supporting strong community engagement and preparedness messaging in collaboration with key stakeholders.

During the Deep Creek Fire, the team delivered clear, consistent communications across multiple channels and coordinated public meetings, ensuring communities were well-informed and supported.

Their high-quality communications, trusted advice, and collaborative approach have strengthened the CFS's ability to inform and protect the community.

Recipients: Monique De Silva, Rob McLean, Rachel Guy, Tara Baird, Madeline Hosking, and Kaysee Miller



Development Assessment Team

The Development Assessment Services team, under the leadership of Leah Bertholini, were awarded for their outstanding contribution in delivering the Emerald Uplift OPAL system, enhancing the sector's information management capabilities.

The team secured funding and navigated complex government procurement processes to deliver a comprehensive workflow and customer management system. CFS now benefits from a reliable client and premises database that supports multiple permission levels and improves response planning.

The team demonstrated strong commitment to change management, developing training and transition resources while building capability across the organisation. Their proactive sector-wide needs analysis has enabled greater collaboration and strengthened interagency data sharing.

Recipients: Leah Bertholini, Colin Paton, Damien Roland, Caren Seigfriedt, Annie Pomeroy, Amy Harris, Jess Page, Darren Chapman, Kevin Churchward, and Angela Fisher



Chief Officer's Certificate of Commendation

Yeelanna aviation incident

Greg Napier, Chadd Glover, Ross Kerr, Eli Modra, and Cameron Dangerfield were awarded for their outstanding efforts in responding to an aircraft incident at Yeelanna on Eyre Peninsula on 8 September 2025.

The incident involved an aircraft crash, and the pilot was confirmed deceased on arrival. The pilot was a well-known and respected local man, deeply connected to the community.

In a highly emotional and complex environment, Chad, Ross, Greg, Cameron, and Eli demonstrated exceptional leadership and professionalism. Recognising the significant personal connections among those on scene, they provided calm direction, supported personnel, and ensured the situation was managed respectfully until the arrival of SA Police.

Throughout, they managed sensitive information with discretion and led crews with empathy and care. Their actions were exemplary and reflect the highest standards of leadership within the CFS.

Recipients: Greg Napier, Chad Glover, Ross Kerr, Eli Modra, and Cameron Dangerfield



YAC Emerging Leaders Program Development Team

The CFS Youth Advisory Council Emerging Leaders Program Development Team was awarded for its outstanding contribution to the development of future leaders within the CFS.

Through strong commitment and collaboration, the team designed and delivered the Emerging Leaders Program, supporting members aged 18-30 to build leadership, communication, and decision-making skills.

Their efforts have strengthened succession planning and supported a culture of leadership development across the CFS, representing a valuable and lasting contribution to the organisation.

Recipients: Sharna Juett, Tessa Edwards, Forrest Norman, Dylan Robertson and Zachary Nicholas





Tanya Norman

Tanya Norman was awarded for her valuable and sustained contribution to the CFS and the broader emergency services sector over more than three decades.

Commencing as an operational firefighter in a traditionally male-dominated environment, Tanya consistently performed to a high standard. She has made a significant contribution to training and development, most notably through establishing and leading the Aldinga Beach CFS Cadet Program, which has produced many capable personnel who have progressed into roles across emergency service agencies.

Tanya has also contributed as an instructor, Air Desk member, and Regional Planning Officer, supporting operational capability and interagency coordination.

Her ongoing service and commitment have made a meaningful contribution to workforce capability and emergency service preparedness.



Simeon Telfer

Simeon Telfer was awarded for his outstanding leadership and technical expertise, delivering significant improvements to community safety and CFS capability.

He played a key role in implementing the Australian Fire Danger Rating System and contributed to the Grain Harvesting Code of Practice, translating complex evidence into consistent guidance for industry.

His work in natural hazards research and predictive services has strengthened fire simulation capability and improved operational planning and community information. He also co-led the development of AI-enabled bushfire warning initiatives.

Simeon consistently translates complex science into practical outcomes, building strong partnerships across agencies. His contributions have enhanced decision-making and delivered a safer, more capable CFS.

Blackford Bushfire Investigation

Bobbie Rice, Brett McLaren, and Liz Pryor were awarded for their professionalism and expertise as Bushfire Investigators following the Blackford fire near Lucindale in January 2021.

Tasked with determining the cause of this incident, they conducted a thorough investigation and concluded that the fire originated from a vegetation pile burn. Their findings became central to a protracted civil litigation process, requiring each to provide expert evidence under rigorous legal scrutiny.

Throughout the proceedings, they delivered clear, consistent and well-substantiated testimony, effectively addressing challenges and upholding the integrity of the investigation.

Their conduct exceeded expectations, demonstrating exceptional skill, professionalism, and resilience in a complex, high-pressure environment.

Recipients: Bobbie Rice, Brett McLaren, and Liz Pryor



Chief Officer's Commendation for Service



Pinkawillinie Conservation Park fire incident

On Sunday 23 November 2025, during operations at the Pinkawillinie Conservation Park bushfire, a coordinated multi-agency response was required following the tragic death of National Parks and Wildlife Service firefighter Peter Curtis. Ken Anderson, Sam Sparvell, Kylie Kleinig, Aaron Macumber, and Danny Doyle each demonstrated exceptional leadership, professionalism, and compassion.

Divisional Commander Ken Anderson led the initial response in a remote and challenging environment, initiating timely search efforts after identifying the firefighter had not made contact. He escalated appropriately, suspended operations to coordinate a search, secured the site, preserved dignity, and prioritised crew welfare.

Regional Volunteer Officer Sam Sparvell deployed rapidly to Wudinna and assumed Forward Command to oversee an efficient and respectful retrieval operation. He provided calm, decisive leadership under extreme risk, supported interagency coordination and investigative requirements, and directly participated in the retrieval while maintaining responder safety and ensuring dignity for Peter.

Regional Duty Officer Kylie Kleinig coordinated aerial search efforts and supported strategic decision-making, ensuring effective resource allocation and stability throughout a complex and emotionally charged incident.

Incident Controller Aaron Macumber provided clear leadership throughout, ensuring effective coordination of search, recovery, and investigative activities while prioritising the welfare of impacted personnel.

District Ranger Southern Flinders Mid North Danny Doyle led next of kin notification supported by SA Police and played a pivotal role in the immediate response and ongoing management of the impacts of this tragic incident.

Collectively, their actions reflect outstanding leadership, compassion, and professionalism under profoundly difficult circumstances.

Recipients: Ken Anderson, Sam Sparvell, Kylie Kleinig, Aaron Macumber and Danny Doyle



Dean Norman

Dean Norman was awarded for outstanding and sustained contribution to the CFS and the community over more than 3 decades of dedicated service.

Since commencing at Aldinga Beach CFS in 1993, Dean has demonstrated exceptional operational capability, leadership, and commitment across a broad range of roles. As a frontline firefighter and officer, including Captain and later Group Officer of the Kyeema Group, he led with professionalism and integrity, strengthening brigade capability, mentoring members, and fostering a strong culture of training and development.

Dean has contributed to numerous significant incidents, including the Kangaroo Island fires and interstate deployments during the 2019–20 Black Summer fires, where he served as a Divisional Commander.

In his current fleet role, Dean has significantly enhanced operational capability through the delivery and commissioning of firefighting appliances across the state.

Carol Frawley

Carol Frawley was awarded for demonstrating outstanding leadership, professionalism, and sustained commitment as Tea Tree Gully CFS Cadet Coordinator over the past five years.

She has been instrumental in the Cadet Program's significant growth and success. Her dedication has fostered a strong culture of inclusion and development, with cadets, families, and community members widely acknowledging the positive impact of the program.

Carol has delivered a broad range of activities including inter-agency visits, commemorative services and interstate competitions, while also supporting cadet programs across other brigades and at state level.



Connor Kelsall

Connor was awarded for his exceptional work in digital learning development, supporting volunteers, staff, and external stakeholders.

Throughout 2025, he played a key role in the design, development and deployment of the Basic Firefighting Course Version 6, translating complex operational content into accessible, user-centred digital learning resources in collaboration with subject matter experts. He also independently redesigned the Breathing Operator Pre-Course, modernising its structure and delivery to enhance training outcomes.

Connor has contributed extensively across Learning and Development initiatives, including leadership modules and multi-agency awareness training packages, consistently delivering high-quality outcomes under tight timeframes. His initiative, professionalism and technical expertise have significantly strengthened organisational learning capability and operational readiness.

Danielle Drever

Danielle Drever was awarded for her exceptional professionalism and resilience, and sustained commitment in leading the establishment, procurement and delivery of services to support the next generation of Bushfire Management Area Plans (BMAPs) for South Australia.

Through effective leadership of a complex cross-government procurement process, she has demonstrated sound judgement, adaptability and technical expertise in bushfire risk management and contract development. Her efforts have underpinned the most significant reform in strategic bushfire planning in over 15 years, securing approximately \$4.5 million in new funding for enhanced risk assessment and mitigation planning.

Danielle's dedication has ensured a robust foundation for improved collaboration, capability and evidence-based bushfire management across the state.

Grant Reibel OAM

Grant was awarded for his exceptional professionalism, innovation and sustained commitment in advancing the State Bushfire Risk Assessment (SBRA) for the State Bushfire Coordination Committee (SBCC).

He independently led a transformative review of South Australia's approach to statewide bushfire risk assessment, driving significant improvements in scientific rigour, transparency, and usability. Through leadership of a cross-government team, he developed a nationally leading framework incorporating climate change projections, advanced fire spread modelling, and comprehensive social, environmental, and economic resilience metrics.

The resulting SBRA provides forward-looking insights to 2050, strengthening strategic bushfire management across prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, and significantly enhancing coordination across SBCC member organisations.

Obituaries



CFS Chief Officer Lloyd Johns 1940 – 2025

Originally from New Zealand, Lloyd Johns led the SA Country Fire Service from 1979 to 1985, during a time when the role was known as Director.

He is perhaps best remembered for his leadership during the devastating Ash Wednesday bushfires in 1983, an event that profoundly impacted our organisation and community.

Lloyd's calm and steadfast stewardship during that crisis remains an enduring part of his legacy.

Over his 6 years of leadership, Lloyd played a pivotal role in strengthening the organisation's foundations, advancing training, enhancing regional operations, and modernising equipment to better serve communities across South Australia.

Lloyd served with courage, empathy, and an unwavering commitment to protecting others. His works remain a significant part of our history.

Kym Barrowcliff 1953 – 2025

A longtime Two Wells CFS member, Kym is remembered for his mateship and contribution to the CFS.

'Kymbo' served for more than 20 years and attended more than 1,500 call-outs.

He was a past Captain, Lieutenant, Senior Firefighter, President and Equipment Officer.

Richard Bourne 1945 – 2025

A member of Bool Lagoon CFS, Richard served as a firefighter for 43 years.

David Butler 1955 – 2025

David joined Minlaton CFS in 1974 and dedicated 51 years of service to the community.

He was a firefighter through to 2017, at which point he took on a Brigade Operational Support role for 9 years.

At the regional level, he was a Deputy Group Officer for 5 years.

Robert Butler 1949 – 2025

Robert – 'Bob' – was a member of the CFS for over 42 years, serving with Basket Range and Norton Summit-Ashton CFS brigades.

Bob served with the Basket Range CFS, with several years as Brigade Captain, before serving with the Norton Summit-Ashton CFS.

Bob also served as Group Equipment Coordinator for the East Torrens CFS Group.

He was awarded CFS Life Membership, the National Medal and 2nd Clasp, the National Emergency Medal, the CFS 40 Year Medal and Clasp, and the Norton Summit-Ashton CFS Member of the Year Award in 2022 and 2023.

Philip Clothier 1953 – 2026

Phil first joined the CFS with the East Woolloombool CFS, now Woolloombool CFS.

He served as an active member of the brigade for more than 40 years, including 18 as a Brigade Lieutenant.

Trevor Crane 1944 – 2025

Trevor served with the Bordertown CFS and was a Brigade Lieutenant for 22 years, with a further 12 years as Senior Firefighter.

Trevor was awarded CFS Life Membership in 2007 and was presented with the 3rd Clasp to the National Medal in 2022.

Stanley Darley 1931 – 2026

Stan Darley was the Crystal Brook Captain from 1978 to 1984 and was a highly regarded member of the Crystal Brook community.

Julian Desmazures 1945 – 2025

Julian Desmazures was a member at Colebatch CFS from 1978 to 2025.

Alongside his firefighting duties, Julian also held logistics roles and was widely respected within the local farming community.

Herman De Roos

1945 – 2025

Herman served for 59 years after joining Stirling CFS in 1965.

He remained a firefighter until 2012 before transitioning into a Brigade Operational Support role and later attained honorary membership in 2024.

During his time with Stirling, Herman served as Brigade Lieutenant and was Brigade Captain from 1997 to 2002.

Herman was also Mount Lofty CFS Group Deputy Group Officer for 2006 to 2009.

David Elleway

1968 – 2026

David joined the CFS in 2002 and served the Tuckey community for 23 years, where he took on the role of Brigade Captain and Brigade Equipment Officer.

Clifford Elton

1932 – 2025

Clifford joined Rendelsham CFS in 1966 and served the brigade for more than 30 years, including 10 years as Brigade Captain.

He was awarded CFS Life Membership in 2025 during the brigade's 75-year anniversary celebrations. The award was presented by his son, John Clifford, the brigade's current Captain.

Kenneth Filmer

1930 – 2025

Kenneth – 'Gordon' – served as Chief Fire Control Officer of Corny Point CFS and was awarded CFS Life Membership in 1981.

Gordon joined Corny Point CFS in 1973 and was a firefighter until 1994 before continuing in an auxiliary role.

Donald Fry

1944 – 2025

Don was a firefighter with Meadows CFS between 1966 and 2004.

Across his 37 years of service, he held the roles of Brigade Lieutenant, Brigade Training Officer, and Brigade Logistics Support Officer.

Chris Green

1954 – 2025

Chris Green joined Mount Torrens CFS in 1993 and was a firefighter for much of this time with the brigade.

During a break between 2005 and 2009, Chris remained involved with the brigade in an operational support role.

Chris was Brigade Captain for a period, while acting as Senior Firefighter and Lieutenant for the remainder of his service.

Graham Hissey

1936 – 2026

A member of Birdwood CFS for 67 years, Graham Hissey left an indelible mark on his community and was widely respected.

He served as Birdwood Brigade Captain from 1952 to 1998 before becoming Lieutenant from 1998 to 2002.

Graham remained on the books as a firefighter until 2005, before commencing a Brigade Operational Support role for 13 years until 2019, later becoming an honorary member.

Michael Huscroft

1983 – 2025

Michael was a respected member of Bridgewater CFS, having joined the service in 2020.

He was a firefighter and regarded as a valued member of the team, respected and appreciated by all who knew him.

Michael's ties to the local community were extensive, resulting from his local business, Bridgewater Home Maintenance, and he was loved by his customers, who understood that he might leave in a hurry to respond to call-outs.

Glynn Jackson

1952–2025

Glynn emigrated to Australia at 17 and joined Piccadilly CFS following the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires.

During his time as a volunteer, Glynn was known for his willingness to answer the call of duty at any time.

In 2015, Glynn joined Mount Pleasant CFS and, 3 years later, was appointed Brigade Captain.

At Mount Pleasant, he instigated the redevelopment of the fire station and led the brigade's response to the 2019 Cudlee Creek bushfires.

He also established an annual comedy fundraiser for the brigade that celebrated its 10th anniversary last year and has raised \$10,000.

Rod Koza

1959 – 2025

Rod served with Bowhill and Districts CFS for nearly 4 years, including as a Lieutenant.

During his tenure with the brigade, he also held administrative roles, making a strong impact in a short amount of time.

Obituaries

Rexton Hocking

1944 – 2026

Rex first commenced volunteering in 1970 with Avenue Range CFS.

He spent 35 years serving in leadership roles within the brigade, including 31 years as Captain and 4 years as Lieutenant.

He received his 50-year Service Medal in 2022.

Noelene Hunt

1956 – 2025

Noelene Hunt was a Life Member of the CFS and Dalkeith CFS and is remembered as a trailblazer, leader, and role model.

A highly respected and dedicated member of the CFS, Noelene's service spanned nearly 30 years.

Noelene commenced her service in 1981 with Smithfield CFS and transferred to Dalkeith CFS in 1994 when the brigades merged, serving until around 2010.

During her time at Dalkeith, Noelene served as Dalkeith's first female Lieutenant and, to date, as the brigade's only female officer.

Roger Kilpatrick

1947 – 2026

Roger served as a volunteer for more than 44 years, joining Murray Bridge CFS in 1981 and the Region 3 Operations Brigade in 2000.

He remained active with both brigades for the next quarter of a century, adding a cheeky grin and strong mentorship across his period of service.

Roger was exceptionally active, undertaking deployments to New South Wales in 1994 and 2001, and passing on his experience through training sessions and mock accidents.

Roger was a Life Member of the Murray Bridge CFS Brigade and the CFS. He was also awarded his CFS 40-year Clasp, and National Medal: 1st and 2nd Clasps.

Tony Magiera

1951 – 2025

Tony started with the former Nangwarry Mill CFS before transferring to Nangwarry CFS.

He served as a Lieutenant in both brigades and was the Nangwarry CFS Brigade captain for 6 years.

Tony was awarded CFS Life Membership in 2004.

Kym Marshman

1964 – 2025

Kym served with Mallala from 1996, holding the roles of Lieutenant for 12 years and Senior Firefighter for 8 years.

At various times, he also served as Brigade Training Officer and Validating Officer.

His loss is felt by Mallala CFS and the wider community.

Yohanan Meyer

1972 – 2025

Yo served with Naracoorte CFS for nearly 11 years after commencing in 2015.

He was a valued member, widely regarded as a good all-round bloke and someone whose knowledge and experience made a lasting impact on those around him.

Yo took a real interest in every brigade member, and his curiosity allowed him to connect with people from all walks of life.

Don Millard

1941 – 2025

Don Millard served for a period just shy of 50 years, first commencing as a firefighter with Mount Hope CFS in 1974.

Throughout his service, which concluded in 2023, he was a Lieutenant for Mount Hope and served as the Brigade Administrative Officer for 26 years until 2000.

Tom Preece

1957 – 2026

Originally joining Pleasant Park CFS, Tom joined Mil Le CFS after taking a short break from volunteering.

In 1992, he was elected Mil Le Brigade Captain and held that position for the next 10 years.

From there, Tom spent 18 years serving as a Deputy Group Officer for the Mount Gambier and District CFS Group.

Tom was awarded CFS Life Membership in 2025.

Keven Rendell

1948 – 2025

A volunteer for 24 years, Keven Rendell joined Ceduna CFS in 1974 and remained a firefighter until 1998.

Between 1974 and 1995, Keven served as a Brigade Lieutenant and was also a Brigade Administrative Officer for 18 years.

Keven was also the Western Eyre Group Training Officer for nearly 18 years and spent one year as a Brigade Auxiliary member.

Daniel Rickaby

1938 – 2025

A long-time member of Jervois CFS, Daniel was a firefighter from 1973 to 2025.

Between 1973 and 1998, Daniel was a Lieutenant, and in his final year with the brigade, he took on a Brigade Operational Support role.

Lachlan Rosenzweig

2007 – 2026

Lachlan was a Brigade Cadet at Angaston CFS.

He had been with the brigade since 2018 after registering as a cadet on his 11th birthday.

Bevan Schaefer

1946 – 2025

Bevan spent many years as a leader within Kingston CFS, including 5 years as Captain and another 12 years as a Lieutenant.

He was awarded the National Emergency Medal for service during the Bunbury and Keilira fires in the 2019-2020 season.

Bevan was awarded CFS Life Membership in 2022.

Raymond Squires AFSM

1947 – 2026

Ray was a CFS member for nearly 62 years, joining the Currency Creek Emergency Fire Service – Goolwa at the age of 15 in 1962.

In 1980, he joined Narrung CFS, before transferring to Meningie CFS in 1996, where he served until 2024.

He attended major incidents, such as the Kuitpo Forest and Tooperang fires in the 1970s, and undertook a deployment to Sydney in 1994.

Ray held the positions of Coorong CFS Group Officer, Coorong CFS Deputy Group Officer and Narrung Captain and was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal and National Medal as well as the 3rd Clasp for that award in 2017.

Ray also received CFS Life Membership in 2012 and the CFS Service Medal 60-year Clasp in 2023.

Peter Swann AFSM

1938 – 2026

Peter Swann was a volunteer for 51 years, beginning in 1965 with the Kapunda Emergency Fire Service (EFS).

He later became a Rufus Group Officer and was elected Regional Officer for Region 2 in 1971, a role he held until it became a full-time, paid position in 1980.

Peter was a State Country Fire Service Board member for almost 10 years.

He was also a recipient of the National Medal, CFS life membership, the British Fire Service Centenary Medal, Australian Fire Service Medal and was Light Regional Council's Citizen of the Year in 2014.

Ashley Thompson

1975 – 2025

Ashley was a respected and long-standing member of the CFS, dedicating more than 30 years to serving his community.

Over the years, he was involved with Salisbury CFS, Mount Lofty Fire Tower and, most recently, the Dalkeith CFS.

He was also involved in Group Communications, the Dalkeith Cadet Program, the Road Crash Rescue Training Team, and incident management teams.

Rosemary Van Der Meer

1948 – 2026

Rosie was a valued long-serving member of Upper Sturt CFS for more than 57 years. Holding the position of Brigade Operational Support role for the duration of her volunteering, previously known as the Women's Auxiliary with the EFS/CFS.

Rosie was integral to supporting the frontline firefighters by ensuring their welfare through local catering and fundraising.

She always ensured firefighters were well cared for and supported.

Nigel Nilsen

1940-2026

Nigel joined the Willunga CFS in 1982 and served his community for more than 3 decades. He held the rank of Brigade Lieutenant for several years before bringing his experience to the South Coast Training Centre, and later to the Kyeema Group.

His steadfast commitment, quiet leadership, and genuine friendship will be remembered by all who had the honour of serving alongside him.

Frank Wallace

1938 – 2025

A volunteer with Caltowie CFS for 39 years, Frank commenced his CFS service in 1987.

Brigade Lieutenant from 1994 to 2018 and fulfilled brigade communications roles for 17 years.

Thomas Wharton

1986 – 2025

Tom was a member of Bridgewater CFS from 2013, serving as a firefighter.

He was known for being an active member of the brigade, jovial, friendly and a comedian.

Tom's regular daytime availability made him a great asset to the brigade, and you would often find him in the driving seat of a truck.

Andrew Yaeger

1972 – 2026

Joining in 2003, Andrew – 'Yogi' – served for 17 years with Ceduna CFS and Western Eyre CFS Group.

Throughout his time with the CFS, served as the Ceduna Brigade Captain and as a Deputy Group Officer. He was also heavily involved in regional-level training.

AFAC Memorial

In May 2026, the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) honoured fire and emergency personnel who have died in the line of duty at the National Memorial Service.

Three CFS members - Peter Curtis (1960–2025), Brian Kirkland (1957–2026), and Brian Menadue (1940–2020) - were commemorated alongside their peers.

Their families received Memorial Medallions and their names were added to the Memorial Wall at the National Emergency Service Memorial. Deputy Chief Officer Paul Seager, Executive Director Frontline Operations Chris Howie, Regional Commander Jason Druwitt, and Chaplain Jim Keatch travelled to Canberra for the service.



Peter Curtis

Peter Curtis began his firefighting career with ForestrySA in 1995 before transferring to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in 2017, where he served in senior leadership roles including Strike Team Leader and Sector Commander.

Peter passed while undertaking remote firefighting as part of a NPWS brigade strike team deployed to a scrub fire in Pinkawillinie Conservation Park, west of Kimba on the Eyre Peninsula.

He was deeply respected for his skill, leadership, and generosity in mentoring others.



Brian Menadue

Brian Menadue became a volunteer firefighter at Virginia CFS in 1960 before transferring to Salisbury CFS, where he served from 1961 to 2011. The next decade saw Brian continue volunteering with Para Reserve CFS.

He was determined to stay involved with the CFS for as long as he enjoyed it and was physically able to contribute, describing the organisation as “a big family with an unbelievable bond”.

Brian’s passing in 2020 has since been recognised under the presumptive cancer legislation.



Brian Kirkland

Brian Kirkland joined Bray CFS in 1985 and volunteered for more than 40 years until his passing in 2026.

During his service, Brian held leadership roles including Lieutenant and Captain for Bray CFS and spent around 22 years as Robe CFS Group Officer.

He also contributed extensively across training, administration, and communications, as well as multiple roles in incident management.

Brian was also an active member of the CFS Volunteer Association, most noticeably serving as the South East Branch president for 12 years.

Brian’s passing has been recognised under the presumptive cancer legislation.

Contacts



CFS State Headquarters

37 Richmond Road, Keswick SA 5035

Phone 08 8115 3300

Postal GPO Box 2468, Adelaide SA 5001

Email CFS.Enquiries@eso.sa.gov.au

State Training Centre

Pyrites Road, Brukunga SA 5252

Phone 08 8398 9900

Email CFS.training@eso.sa.gov.au

Region 1

Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island

75 Gawler Street, Mount Barker SA 5251

Phone 08 8391 1866

Email CFS.Region1@eso.sa.gov.au

Region 2

Upper Mount Lofty Ranges, Yorke Peninsula and Lower North

Spurling Circuit off Mudla Wirra Road, Wasleys SA 5400

Phone 08 8522 6088

Postal PO Box 1506, Willaston SA 5118

Email CFS.Region2@eso.sa.gov.au

Region 3

Murraylands and Riverland

11-17 Kennett Road, Murray Bridge SA 5253

Phone 08 8532 6800

Postal PO Box 1371, Murray Bridge SA 5253

Email CFS.Region3@eso.sa.gov.au

Region 4

Flinders, Mid North and Pastoral Areas

40 Flinders Terrace, Port Augusta SA 5700

Phone 08 8642 2399

Postal PO Box 2080, Port Augusta SA 5700

Email CFS.Region4@eso.sa.gov.au

Region 5

South East

46 Smith Street, Naracoorte SA 5271

Phone 08 8762 7100

Postal PO Box 8, Naracoorte SA 5271

Email CFS.Region5@eso.sa.gov.au

Region 6

Eyre Peninsula and West Coast

32 Matthew Place, Port Lincoln SA 5606

Phone 08 8682 4266

Email CFS.Region6@eso.sa.gov.au

Development Assessment Service

37 Richmond Road, Keswick SA 5035

Phone 08 8115 3372

Postal GPO Box 2468, Adelaide SA 5001

Email CFS.dascommercialteam@eso.sa.gov.au

SA Country Fire Service Promotions Unit

Postal PO Box 73, Basket Range SA 5138

Email info@fire-brigade.asn.au

Web fire-brigade.asn.au

Volunteer Services

37 Richmond Road, Keswick SA 5035

Phone 1300 364 587

Postal GPO Box 2706, Adelaide SA 5001

Email vsb@safecom.sa.gov.au

Country Fire Service Volunteer Association (CFS VA)

Suite 3, Transport Training Centre, 17 Wirriga Street, Regency Park SA 5010

Phone 08 8244 6500

Postal PO Box 2359, Regency Park SA 5942

Email admin@cfsva.org.au

Web cfsva.org.au

Community Engagement

Phone 08 8115 3319

Email CFS.community.engagement.support@eso.sa.gov.au

Stress Prevention and Management (SPAM)

SPAM Helpline on **08 8115 3950**

CFS Foundation

Phone 1300 270 278

Email admin@cfsfoundation.org.au

Postal CFS Foundation Inc, GPO PO Box 2468, Adelaide SA 5001

Web cfsfoundation.org.au

Facebook facebook.com/CFSFoundation



CFS State Headquarters

37 Richmond Road, Keswick SA 5035

Phone 08 8115 3300

Postal GPO Box 2468 Adelaide SA 5001

Email CFS.Enquiries@eso.sa.gov.au

