

THOSE WHO CUT THE MUSTARD, NOW CUT THE CAKE

Volunteers celebrated the 10th anniversary of the SES State Headquarters Unit at the recent Annual General Meeting.

During the past ten years, volunteer members of the Unit have provided operations staff to SES State Control Centre, State Emergency Operations Centre and Field Command. Current services provided by the State HQ Unit volunteers while operational include:

- assistance to the SES paid staff as required,
- answering telephone calls from the public on the 132500 state-wide telephone number,
- processing, recording, allocating and despatching state-wide taskings to Units,
- liaison with SES Units and other Emergency Services,
- SAGRN radio operations,
- logging and documenting,
- providing intelligence and analysis services to paid staff, before and during high risk storm events.

The State HQ Unit was formed on 23rd March 1995 from members on the old Headquarters Reserve list. This comprised experienced SES members who for various reasons could not continue the commitments of a rescue Unit. Approximately 12 people began training, of which 5 were ex-Controllers of rescue Units. Since the Unit was formed, three recruitment drives

have been held to maintain volunteer membership. Some of the newer members are ex-rescue members, ex-members of

Service Certificates to five members who have a combined length of membership with SES of over 90 years.



Colin Goodrich, Malcolm Bethune, Bruce Reed, Heather Reed and Tricia Goodrich. Celebrating over 90 years of combined service to SES at the State HQ Unit 10th anniversary AGM

“Some of the newer members are ex-rescue members, ex-members of other emergency services or totally new to SES. This gives the current unit membership a great diversity and depth of experience.”

other emergency services or totally new to SES. This gives the current Unit membership a great diversity and depth of experience. The anniversary night was attended by State Headquarters and Regional Headquarters staff. Chief Officer David Place presented Meritorious

During the years, major operations have seen the Unit cope to process over 600 telephone calls from the public in a single storm and flooding event. Members have also travelled to provide Field Command facilities to search, flooding and major public events (eg Clipsal 500 race). The trips include Port Lincoln for the

Tulka Fire Operations in 2001 and Lyndhurst for the Solar Eclipse event in 2002. While increasingly using technology to improve the efficiency of the Call Receipt and Dispatch function of the Unit, the tried and proven skills of pen, paper and telephone must be maintained to enable the Unit to operate in any environment.

The State HQ Unit must maintain sufficient membership to allow the Unit to provide volunteers to staff multiple operations centres at the same time, 24 hours a day for multiple days if required. Like any SES Unit, extra volunteers are always welcome.

If you would like to visit the State HQ Unit volunteers, see the Field Command bus or conduct a combined training exercise, please contact the Unit Manager, Colin Goodrich. Your enquiry will always be welcome.

Andrew Macmichael
Team Leader
(Communications),
State HQ Unit, SASES.



YOUR VOTE

With the state election due in March, Frontline asked both the Premier Mike Rann who is also the Minister for Volunteers and his Liberal counterpart, Duncan McFetridge, the Shadow Minister for Volunteers, to have their say on what they can offer SES volunteers. While both sides will release more information in the coming months, here's what they have to say to you now.



Mike Rann

I would like to congratulate and thank all SES volunteers for their incredible efforts over the last year.

Last year - 2005 - provided many challenges. We had the tragedy of the Eyre Peninsula Bushfires in January, the extreme severity of the Karoonda Storm in June and the Virginia Floods that ironically struck during SES Week in November.

You have attended vehicle accidents, conducted rescues and searches and been called out during numerous storms to help your fellow South Australians in times of crisis and often, danger.

SES volunteers possess such a great range of skills, I am very confident that we are in good hands in times of crisis. And that should not go unrecognised, especially in terms of the time each volunteer gives to weekly training and preparation within the units and the extra training undertaken by specialist groups such as Vertical and Confined Space Rescue, Dog Operations and Marine Rescue.

The State Emergency Service, with 68 units spread right across the State, is an outstanding community volunteer organisation of

which we can be proud. I can assure you that the State Government is committed to making sure that the SES remains adequately resourced into the future. And I commend all of those South Australian businesses and employers who continue their support when volunteers are called to an emergency. The new Federal Industrial Relations laws, based as they are on individual workplace agreements, will soon require a negotiated release from work to attend general emergencies. I am sure that employers in this State will continue to do the right thing by their community. It is important to note that volunteers' release is only guaranteed when a 'State of Disaster' or 'State of Emergency' is declared.

"I am very confident that we are in good hands in times of crisis"

The SES, like the CFS, is an elite group of volunteers that play a vital role at times of greatest community need. I will always remember the looks of utter exhaustion on so many faces of the SES volunteers during the Virginia Floods when I came out to speak following the SES Week parade last November. The efforts made by all volunteers during these and other times of crisis has been nothing short of inspirational.

South Australians are grateful for the efforts of the SES that so often require work above and beyond the call of duty. On behalf of the Government and all South Australians, can I thank you for your dedication and commitment to volunteering and community service.

Mike Rann
Premier of South Australia



Duncan McFetridge

Dear SES Volunteer, I would like to thank you all for your outstanding efforts over the last 12 months. Your dedication and hard work assisting the police in search and rescue, with storm damage and with the recent devastating floods is greatly appreciated, not only by members of the Liberal Party but, I can confidently say, by all South Australians.

The Liberal Party has a strong history of assisting and protecting volunteers in all areas, particularly in the emergency services.

The introduction of the Good Samaritan legislation and the Volunteer Protection Act was initiated by the former Liberal Government and is still strongly supported by the Liberal Party.

"The Liberal Party has a strong history of assisting and protecting volunteers...in the emergency services"

The need to protect volunteers from both civil and criminal liability while undertaking their tasks is one issue that the Liberal Party is ensuring will be enshrined in legislation. Giving all emergency services volunteers access to workers compensation, should they be injured, is another area that the Liberal Party is examining.

The increasing focus on occupational health and safety issues requires governments of all persuasions to ensure that our volunteers are not only competently trained but also equipped with the latest personal protection gear and equipment that enables them to perform their tasks.

Having been a CFS volunteer for over 12 years and worked alongside SES volunteers, I have seen first hand the outstanding efforts of SES volunteers, particularly during the 2003 floods in my own electorate, at Glenelg North.

"Having been a CFS volunteer for over 12 years... I have seen first hand the outstanding efforts of SES"

It goes without saying that I will do everything within my power as a Member of Parliament to ensure that the SES is given the recognition and support that it rightly deserves.

I trust you and your families will have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.
Yours sincerely

Dr Duncan McFetridge
BSc BVMS DipT MP JP
Member for Morphett
Shadow Minister for Volunteers

MINISTERIAL AWARDS

Four members of the SES were recently presented with special Ministerial Awards.

The function was held at the Radisson with the Minister for Emergency Services, Carmel Zollo. The SES also jointly received a Ministerial award for work done during the Port Lincoln fires last January which was accepted by the CEO David Place.

One SES member, Trevor Fuss, was unable to attend. He was represented at the function by colleague, Gordon Hartley.

Trevor Ronald Fuss

Training Officer – State Emergency Services

Trevor has been a member of the SES since 14 May 1987, handling the RAPID mapping system as a Volunteer, teaching and installing RAPID systems himself, thereby saving SES Units many dollars over the years. Trevor wrote the computer program to support the RAPID system and has provided assistance to all Units in the West Region for many years with computer and radio problems. His SES experience includes Radio Officer for the Port Lincoln and Cummins Units and he has been the West Region Occupational Health and Safety Officer for two years. Trevor is known as 'Mr Fix It'. He often works out all the expenses and the savings he provides to the SES is a credit to him.

Over the years of his membership, Trevor has contributed heavily with rescue and training activities.

Trevor Ronald Fuss has demonstrated meritorious effort and is awarded a Ministerial Commendation.

Stuart Lambert

Unit Manager – State Emergency Service

Stuart has shown an exceptional commitment to his community for over 25 years. He has, in recent years, delivered training in road crash rescue to Units across the entire State, from Ceduna to Coober Pedy to Mount Gambier. His dedication to mitigating community risk from road crashes has included undertaking a review of the operational capability of all Units in East regions, being a very active member of RCR subject matter advisory group and working to assist in the developing of the SES new training resource kit. He has done this at great personal expense to his business as a cabinet maker.

Stuart Lambert has demonstrated meritorious effort and is awarded a Ministerial Commendation.

Trevor Fuss with his award. Picture courtesy of Lincoln Times





Recipients and their certificates. L-R: David Ward, Garry Kenneth Smith, Stuart Lambert, David Place (for SA State Emergency Services) & Gordon Hartley (for Trevor Ronald Fuss)

Garry Kenneth Smith

Radio Operator - State Emergency Service

Garry, a Radio Operator Volunteer Marine Rescue, has been a member of the SES since February 1997. Several years earlier, he commenced as a volunteer Coast Guard and established his own Volunteer Marine Rescue station in his own shed at home, with Garry meeting much of the costs. As the local Tumby Bay SES Unit became an accredited marine rescue unit, Garry's station and marine rescue resources were combined to provide a more efficient operational system.

He has personally put in many long hours on a voluntary basis over many years and is a valuable member of the Tumby Bay Unit. Garry wrote the submission regarding the request for a Rescue Boat at Tumby Bay as well as assisting in the set up of three other Volunteer Marine Rescue stations. He was also the instigator of the upgrade to the Marine Repeater 81 at Greenpatch, adjacent to Port Lincoln, which was severely damaged in the recent bushfires. Garry Kenneth Smith has demonstrated meritorious effort and is awarded a Ministerial Commendation.

David Ward

Administration Officer - State Emergency Service

David has worked largely single handed to review all policies and procedures of the SES to bring them into one single, coherent and readily accessible framework.

His work is invaluable to the implementation plan currently guiding the development of the SASES.

David Ward has demonstrated meritorious effort and is awarded a Ministerial Commendation.

SA Ambulance Service

SA Country Fire Service

SA State Emergency Service

SA Metropolitan Fire Service

Both volunteer and career staff of the SA Ambulance Service, SA Country Fire Service, SA State Emergency Service and SA Metropolitan Fire Service were all involved in the response to the tragic fires that occurred in and around Port Lincoln on 11 January 2005.

All of the Emergency Service Agencies are worthy recipients of this award due to the severity of the disaster and extreme conditions they were required to work in. Many of those who responded were working in not only their capacity as agency personnel but also as members of their community with some personally affected by the devastation.

Those who responded to the disaster on the day literally put their lives on the line to help others in need and worked extremely well in conjunction with the other emergency services.

SA Ambulance, SA Country Fire Service, SA State Emergency Service and SA Metropolitan Fire Service have demonstrated meritorious effort and are awarded a Ministerial Commendation.

JOINT EXERCISE

A joint exercise on bus rescue was conducted during SES Week.

The bus was donated by Port Augusta Bus Service earlier in the year and since then Port Augusta Unit have used it a number of times for training and problem solving, e.g. how to get someone in a litter when they don't fit down the aisle.

Other Units were invited to come play as part of a regional training exercise.

Units represented included Laura, Whyalla, Pt Pirie, Hawker, Quorn and Booleroo Centre.

And the real thing...

Meanwhile, the Sturt Unit faced this real life threatening situation in November when a truck ran through a business building at Seacombe Gardens.

It's miraculous nobody was killed.



letters

Ross McKenzie
87 Henley Beach Road
Henley Beach South
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Ron Thompson
Unit Manager Millicent
State Emergency Services
PO Box 841
Millicent, South Australia 5280

Dear Ron,

I would like to bring your attention to the professional and effective actions that the Millicent SES Unit members undertook recently in assisting me from a very difficult situation.

Let me explain...

On Friday morning of the 18th November, I was driving north on the 4WD track in Canunda National Park, approximately 30 kilometres north of Carpenter Rocks. A combination of curiosity, poor judgement and lack of experience led me to driving onto the beach, on which I ended up getting bogged.

Initially I worked to dig myself out, but to no avail, and conscious of the fact that the vehicle was situated within the high tide mark, I decided to undertake an alternate recovery strategy.

First, I scanned the UHF channels but did not pick up any signals and as my mobile phone was also out of range, the only option was to hike up to higher ground with the hope that I would get a signal. Fortunately, it was only about a 2 kilometre walk inland to where I had line of sight to Millicent 20 kilometres to the north west. At this point I was able to call "000" which then connected me to I believe Millicent Police, who then contacted Grandma at the SES Millicent Unit who triggered recovery efforts.

The Police advised me to return to my vehicle having confirmed that the SES was on its way to assist. I also took the opportunity to mark the turn off on the main 4WD track to aid the search and recovery efforts.

After a couple of hours with no contact with the SES crew, I walked back to the high point where I was able to retrieve a voice message from Grandma asking for further instructions. I was then able to call her and advise that the beach access was "number 2" and I had placed some reflective markers at the turn off and confirmed that I was 30 kilometres north on the 4WD track from Carpenter Rocks as I had been using my GPS setting way points as a safety measure as I went along.

I waited for the SES on a sand dune that gave me visibility of the main 4WD track also my vehicle back on the beach and the encroaching tide. However, within 10 minutes, the first SES crew from the north arrived and shortly after the SES crew from the south appeared.

With the crew sizing up my situation it then took only a very short period of time before they were able to pull my vehicle out and drive it off the beach and back onto the 4WD track, leaving myself very, very relieved indeed!

No doubt this was just a typical sort of day that occurs across the SES community in Australia. I am also sure many of these stories go unnoticed and not recognised.

Nevertheless, I thought I would write to you and provide you with some of my observations of this experience, specifically around leadership and team work, because in my own field of work I run leadership development programs. In my view, your crew demonstrated the characteristics of a high performing team that many businesses aspire to but fail in achieving.

For example some of the things I observed included:

- Aspects of clarity of the "mission" - dropping everything else for the call
- Definition of roles and responsibilities
- Effective communication
- Sound interpersonal relationships
- Welfare of others not just in safety but initiating opportunities for inexperienced team members to learn and grow on the job
- Respect and concern of others including not condoning my actions for being stuck in the first place and then inviting me back to the operations at Millicent for a coffee
- Undertaking a formal debrief with members after the event to determine how things could have been done better next time

At work when I run the leadership development programs, I identify three areas that effective leadership needs to achieve to result in a high performing team - whether it is on the sporting field, in business or in your case, a volunteer organisation and they are...

Commitment to the mission

Commitment to the team

Commitment to high performance

As I said, not many teams achieve this, but in my view on that Friday, all three were clearly evident and I wanted to let you know this. All the team members should be proud of their individual efforts that contributed towards making this happen.

So with that, please pass my warmest appreciation once again to the crew in question and your members. It certainly meant a lot to me.

I wish you all a very successful and safe summer.

Sincerely yours,

Ross McKenzie