

From the Board...

The President and Vice President this month completed another meeting with the SES Senior Leadership Team. These meetings are now providing a good forum between the SES and the SESVA to discuss matters as they develop, and also to update each organisation on upcoming plans.

Some members have contacted the association regarding feedback on areas such as transformation, fleet and training. This feedback is valuable in the discussions and providing examples back to the SES where things may be occurring. Please also take advantage of the feedback mechanisms that the SES provides such as email, FAQ areas and contacting managers directly.

Recently the Board of Directors held a teleconference meeting with the VA Representatives to update them on the structure of the association. The SESVA had asked for feedback from the reps earlier this year, and this feedback, along with feedback from a member survey will go towards implementing the changes voted upon in the last constitutional change in November 2017.

The constitutional change meant significant changes to what a SESVA Representative

would look like and do in future. Although voting in November 2017 stated that there is no requirement for VA Reps, the Board has decided that they play an important role with the communication and interaction with volunteers.

Volunteers Association Representatives, under the changed constitution, will now be available to many more volunteers to represent both the support the association provides volunteers, and to also represent volunteers.

The association also needed to recognise the changes in the SES. Changes to the SES structures meant that key documents of the association required change and updating.

The Board recognises that we have a changing face of volunteering. There are volunteers who like to represent and support other volunteers, but also volunteers who have specific skills in certain areas. These volunteers may wish to represent the association in just a specific area such as recognition, flowers, mental health, website, magazine, etc. These role are not limited and may be of short or long duration.

The President has been booking in meetings with both the Minister and Shadow Minister to keep them up to date on the workings of the association.

Stay safe!

What's been happening in the Volunteers Association?

Welfare and Drought Support

It has been a busy week with member support. In one week we saw five requests for assistance, and the association is always there to help how we can.

Our drought program continues to move along. The state has had some rain but there are areas that still have not seen anything. Our members tell us that the rain that has fallen, whilst welcomed, has not been enough to make an impact on the dry dams.

The SHQ SOC team has been hard at it raising money for the drought fund. Recently saw another donation. Well done to Helen Newbold and the team at SHQ. Word is that Helen has devised many

more activities to support the drought program, so lets all pitch in where we can.

Don't forget the AGM on November 26th.

Advocacy Support

One of the objectives of the SESVA is to advocate on behalf of NSWSES volunteers and the association does this in many ways. Often volunteers request assistance if they are involved in a disciplinary, investigative or conduct matter. Either themselves directly or requested to provide information.

Our member services areas often assist volunteers

when asked to participate in these matters. This can be anything from a phone call to becoming an advocate or support person. Advice on any matter is confidential, and our team can assist you with moving through the large amount of doctrine that can be presented to volunteers.

Recently we have seen a slight rise again with volunteers under investigation whom are asked to have 'just a chat'. If you are under investigation, there is doctrine both in SES and government surrounding the capture and recording of information, along with the rights a person has during this period. If you are unsure, it is always best to contact the association prior to undergoing any of these procedures.

Not receiving the newsletter?

Things constantly change and for some of us it is emails and/or our address. If you hear of volunteers not receiving the newsletter let them know they can update their details anytime to ensure they get the latest information from the association.

Sydney Northern Meeting

Recently one of our representatives, Graham Kinder, held a meeting with Unit Representatives within his 'old region'. Erin Pogmore, the Managing Director was on hand to answer any questions about updates and changes to the association and to listen to any feedback from the volunteers.

The main issues raised surrounded transformation, policy consultation and rank and insignia. Thank you to the volunteers and Graham for this feedback.

SESVA help SES get qualified

Recently two volunteers, Richard Delany and Steve Cliffe were supported by the SESVA Grants Program to travel to Chamonix France. Richard says;

'NSW State Emergency Service became the first Australian organisation to be admitted to the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR) as a full voting member.

This will provide an excellent opportunity for us to stay in touch with leading technicians from all over

the world and help us continue to improve our work with land search, vertical rescue, alpine search and rescue, first aid, and recognising & managing post traumatic stress.

Thanks to all involved but especially to the NSW SES Volunteers Association for supporting Steve Cliffe and myself in attending this event.' Well done Richard and Steve.

Both Richard and Steve promoted the support of the Volunteers Association heavily on their social media accounts and we will soon be reading about their work in our magazine. This is a great reminder of how the promotion of the association can lead to further support of the association, which in turn, leads to further support of the volunteers.

Magazine

Our latest edition of the magazine has had to be printed in e-version only. The magazine was over time and we are in discussions with our publishers regarding the best way forward for the magazine and their support of the association. We aim to have the September issue of the magazine available on our website shortly.

Mental Health Training

Selina Thomas from Marrickville Unit recently presented our inaugural Mental Health First Aid course to volunteers. This course, run over a two day period, gained excellent reviews from all involved. The Volunteers Association is looking to support Selina, a recognised trainer in MHFA, to run more of these courses both in metro and rural areas. Well done Selina!

Do you want MHFA in your area?

The Mental Health First Aid course is the second series of Mental Health training supported by the Volunteers Association.

If you would like to request a MHFA course for your area please contact Shannon.crofton@sesva.org.au to discuss.