

A Message from the Commissioner

Since the last edition of COMMe^t, several key projects have been unfolding. The sector has launched its Strategic Direction document (see page 3) and we will now be working with all three agencies (CFS, MFS and SES) to develop a sector strategic plan that links to agency plans.

Content for the new websites is steadily being transferred to the new platform, the contract for the Computer Aided Dispatch (SACAD) system has been awarded (see page 5), 18 new recruits completed the intensive 14-week training course to join the MFS, and SAFECOM, in partnership with Emergency Management Australia, successfully administered the Safer Communities Awards (see page 6).

The 2008/09 Fire Danger Season dates were announced at a media briefing on 17 October with five of the 15 districts starting early. Kangaroo Island, Lower and Eastern Eyre Peninsula, West Coast, North West and North East Pastoral, Flinders and the Riverland will start on 1 November, with the Yorke Peninsula, Mid North, Mt Lofty Ranges, Murraylands, Upper and Lower South East and the Adelaide Metropolitan Area commencing on 15 November.

The Bushfire Ready media campaign, which features new television, radio and print advertising as well as an educational DVD, kicked off on regional television on 19 October in regional areas. The campaign focuses on the theme of 'What if', prompting people to ask questions about different scenarios and to take more action to be prepared.

The SES meanwhile, is gearing up for its annual SES Week which will be held from 8 November until 15 November. I encourage you all to support this initiative in any way you can.

We continue to progress implementation of the Wangary Deputy Coroner's recommendations and by November a vast majority of actions will be completed.

As well as managing strategic roles I believe one of the key leadership actions is to keep your finger on the pulse at the sharp end of the business. Recently MFS staff at Golden Grove allowed me to take part in a night-shift to better understand how they do business (see photograph, above right).

It was a great way to get to know what the frontline staff view as key issues.

SAFECOM's Volunteer Management Branch continues to build relationships with volunteers and their employers through its Volunteer and Employer Recognition and Support Program (VERSP). Two VERSP events have been held recently – one at Salisbury and one at Morphett Vale - where the Premier and Emergency Services Minister handed out certificates to volunteers and employers who have selflessly committed their time or resources to the community through the SES and CFS (see page 12).

Our frontline volunteers and staff put their lives at risk every day to protect lives and property in the community. We should always remember this and keep it at the forefront of our planning.

As always, stay safe.



David Place
Commissioner of Fire and Emergencies

Commissioner of Fire and
Emergencies, David Place
joining staff at Golden Grove
MFS for a shift.



Emergency Services Minister, Hon. Michael Wright MP, Commissioner of Fire and Emergencies, David Place and SES, MFS and CFS Chiefs, join other SAFECOM Board members at the Strategic Direction launch in September.



SAFECOM Board Update

The September Board meeting was held on Thursday 25 September.

FINANCE

David Norton, Director Corporate Services attended his first Board meeting with his team to update the Board on the following papers:

- Sector Financial Overview, as at 31 August 2008 – Operating and Capital
- Emergency Services Sector – FBT Review.

2007/08 INTERIM AUDIT RESPONSE

This paper had been tabled at a special Audit & Risk Management Committee meeting the previous week with all areas mentioned having action plans.

DRAFT EMERGENCY SERVICES SECTOR THREE-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

The draft plan was tabled and discussed by the Board. The review has highlighted that in terms of building construction that we compare fairly well to interstate fire services. There are some opportunities for improvement and the report noted the risk of increasing land values. There are comments included that refer to the need to clarify the roles of people involved in asset management across the sector. A recommendation is to be included for a sector-wide review of vehicle/appliance assets, particularly in relation to procurement and service. Board Member Deb Contala will chair a small group to work on this project.

BUILDING REPLACEMENT REVIEW – STAGE ONE AND TWO OVERVIEW

The Board endorsed that a focus group is to be set up for additional consultation which will comprise of people from sites who have had a new building within the last five years.

IMPLEMENTATION OF 'KEEPING OUR MOB SAFE'

David Place reported on the progress of implementing emergency management in remote indigenous communities. The national policy has been endorsed and supported by two Ministerial Councils after being initiated by COAG.

TRAINING COORDINATOR

The Training Coordinator position has been called and was advertised on Saturday 20 September 2008. SES Chief Officer, Stuart Macleod agreed to undertake the role of Board Project Sponsor for the training and development project, with David Norton chairing the reference group.

SAFECOM ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

The latest SAFECOM Advisory Board meeting was held on 12 September 2008.

VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION REVIEW

Suzy Williss from V Lee HRM Consulting provided an overview on the progress of the review, including the hurdles she has encountered.

SACAD UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

SACAD Project Manager Andrew Hoyle provided an overview of the project's progress and discussed the communications plan. Andrew Hoyle informed the Advisory Board it is now included as a key stakeholder and will receive regular reports and briefings.

SHARED SERVICES

SAFECOM's Trevor Pearce provided an overview of the Shared Services Project.

RURAL PROPERTY ADDRESSING PROJECT

The Advisory Board discussed a paper on the Rural Property Addressing project.

CFS VOLUNTEER MEDAL

The CFSVA representative reported that tenders for the CFS Volunteer Medal closed the day of the Advisory Board meeting and that medal delivery timeframes would be determined once tenders had been assessed.

VOLUNTEER RESEARCH FROM AFAC

Following discussion the Advisory Board decided to review all relevant research projects coming out of AFAC and the Bushfire CRC such as recent research on volunteer retrenchment/loss.

REDUCTION OF SPEED LIMIT PAST EMERGENCY SERVICE VEHICLES FROM 40 km/h TO 25 km/h

The Advisory Board was provided with an update on this matter and progress of the cabinet submission.

ADVISORY BOARD EVALUATIONS

As part of the Advisory Board's commitment to continuous improvement, members submitted assessment forms for review at the next meeting.

Strategic Directions

- Community Resilience

In this edition of COMMENT we kick off a series of articles taking a closer look at each of the six priorities of the sector's Strategic Direction which was launched last month, and feature projects that exemplify the spirit of each priority.

The first priority area is **Community Resilience** which aims to focus our efforts on empowering and supporting communities to rapidly and effectively recover from the effects of emergencies by:

- educating communities about the possible risks they face so they are able to make informed decisions to protect themselves.
- assisting communities to gain the skills needed to prevent the avoidable, and to prepare for unavoidable emergencies.
- encouraging and supporting communities to recover rapidly as a result of good communication, preparedness and planning.
- responding quickly to emergencies to minimise damage, working collaboratively to provide the most effective response possible.



Pages from the sector's Strategic Directions.

Within the sector there are many excellent examples of work being carried out to engage and educate communities to enhance their safety. There is the CFS Bushfire Ready Program, the Juvenile Fire Lighters Intervention Program (JFLIP) of the MFS and emergency management activities of the SES involving schools and community groups.

The MFS Road Awareness and Accident Prevention (RAAP) Program is another such initiative. The RAAP program targets year 11 students to educate them about the dangers of excessive speed and the possible consequences of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The program is designed to give students a hard-hitting, realistic insight into road accident trauma. The program consists of two stages; a practical demonstration by firefighters using the 'jaws of life' to conduct a road accident rescue, and a classroom presentation by experienced firefighters and crash victims explaining the realities of what happens at a road accident and how the lasting trauma affects those involved. The program encourages students to make good decisions using the very simple catchphrase 'concentration and commonsense'.

During 2007/08, 69 programs were delivered across the state delivering life-saving road safety advice to more than 9700 students. The RAAP program is a good example of how the sector is working towards achieving the priority area of Community Resilience.

SES speaks to ABC Local Radio

During September SES enjoyed excellent exposure on ABC Local Radio. The story that went to air on Tuesday 23 September involved SES volunteers Peter Larvin, Unit Manager of the Western Adelaide SES and Merise Adamson, from Prospect SES.

Each spoke with Brett Williamson from ABC Local Radio about their experiences as SES volunteers. The story captured the special and rewarding work SES volunteers are involved with day to day and brought attention to some interesting points about the SES that many people wouldn't be aware of.

Peter discussed how the SES would not exist if it wasn't for the support of employers, family and friends, and the pleasure he gets from being a Unit Manager and giving something back to the community.

Merise brought to light the misconception that the SES was a 'male-only' domain, confirming that some units have more women than men. Both Brett and Merise shared many of their 'best of it' stories while also advising that SES volunteers often face the worst of circumstances, including searches for missing people and road crash rescues, but these incidents bring out the best in the SES teams and the experience brings its own rewards.

Exposure such as this is one of the many ways the SES continues to build its profile and attract further recruits.

To listen to the story, 'In case of emergency' please follow this link:

<http://abc.net.au/local/stories/2008/09/22/2371169.htm?site=adelaide>



SES pull up sign.

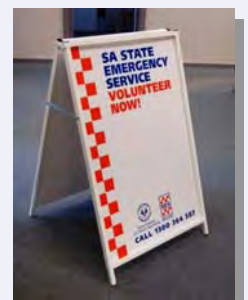
New recruitment materials available from VMB

The Volunteer Management Branch (VMB) is happy to announce that a number of new display materials have been produced to assist SES units and CFS brigades with recruitment campaigns.

The new materials, including A-frame signs, canvas banners and pull up signs, place a much greater emphasis on the volunteers within each organisation and include an area for local information to be added.

The new display materials were developed thanks to a grant awarded to the VMB from Emergency Management Australia.

To hire the material contact your local Volunteer Support Officer through your regional headquarters.



SES A-frame sign.

Royal Adelaide Show



The public enjoys the CFS stand at the Royal Adelaide Show.

Their role was two-fold during the show's nine days, firstly providing reconnaissance, search and rescue, and immediate assistance within the disaster and major emergency area. Secondly, the SES provided daily assistance to SA Police in the search for lost persons and to St Johns with first aid response.

Preparation, planning and dealing with a bushfire were the central themes of the CFS presence at the show. CFS Community Education Officer, Natasha Huber said the CFS marquee was an area for fun activities with free give-aways for children, a colouring-in competition and regular appearances by the CFS mascot, 'Smokey'.

"Bushfires are part of our lives every summer and this is an opportunity for us to engage with the community and provide people with information to help them prepare for a bushfire," she said.



The fire and emergency services sector once again supported one of the state's largest community events, the Royal Adelaide Show in September.

Representatives from South Australia's three emergency service organisations; the State Emergency Service (SES), the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and the Country Fire Service (CFS), attended throughout the show.

The SES had a strong team of 68 volunteers and staff in attendance to support the Adelaide Showground Emergency Response Plan.



SES volunteers and staff on hand at the show.



The MFS display at the Royal Adelaide Show.

By: Tom Hoey, SAMFS Community Education Officer

The MFS once again had a very successful stand at the Royal Adelaide Show. An estimated 16,000 people went through the stand which had something for all age groups.

The aim was to capture the families long enough so that a survey could be conducted on one of the parents while the children had fun. We had the 'Stop, Cover, Drop and Roll' competition where the children wore jackets with Velcro 'flames' attached and they had to roll on a mat to put the fire out (the 'flames' stuck to the mat). The fastest time for the day won a prize.

The old favourite 'Livelonga Lane' was once again very popular.

A quiz after they went through the lane put the children in line for another prize. The miniature fire truck '000' was there again for the kids to be filmed in a fire safety video. Lion Apparel supplied kid sized versions of firefighter turnout gear to make it even more authentic.

In the months leading up to the show, a school fire safety education lesson is provided to all South Australian primary and junior primary schools. Following this lesson the students were encouraged to create a poster and send it to the Community Education Section. Many of the posters, including the winning entries were displayed on the stand. Many children looked at this display searching for their posters or those of friends. This competition was generously supported by Dymocks Books who provided gift vouchers for all winners.

To catch the eye of those passing, all available spaces on the outside of the stand were filled with fire safety information and pictures of the MFS in action. The annual success of the MFS show stand is mainly due to the people staffing it from Community Safety and day working personnel, on shift crews, volunteers from our retained firefighters and a very dedicated group of retired firefighters.

Road Safety Demonstration

Tuesday 23 September saw the MFS, CFS and SES, in partnership with the South Australian Police, participate in a special event targeting youth drivers at the Adelaide International Raceway. The bi-annual event, **'Make a difference – Make a choice'**, aims to educate young drivers about responsible driving behaviour and the consequences associated with irresponsible driving.

It is hoped that students will go away from the event with the ability to make appropriate choices when travelling in a vehicle as a driver or a passenger.

The event included a scenario involving inappropriate driving which resulted in a serious road crash, a detailed rescue exercise involving response from each emergency service organisation (ESO) and static displays associated with road safety.

The thousands of students who attended were able to speak with representatives from each of the ESOs about drugs, alcohol and other contributing factors to poor driving.



Emergency service crews participate in the road crash rescue exercise as part of the event.
PHOTO: 'The Advertiser'.

computer AIDED dispatch

A \$36 million state-of-the-art Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) solution has been approved to be installed and accessed by all of the state's emergency service organisations including the MFS, CFS, SES, SAPOL and SA Ambulance Service.

The integrated solution will offer significant advantages including:

- increased reliability, resilience and support to emergency crews on the ground
- an improvement in public and officer safety through greater ability to capture and share information
- versatile call taking and dispatch processes
- increased agency command and coordination and more efficient information sharing
- substantial capacity for growth and ability to take advantage of emerging mobile computing technologies.

A contract has recently been signed with one of the world's leading software providers to install the innovative software, which is set to significantly enhance communication between agencies.

"This is an exciting step forward for our state's emergency response teams. This new software will enable greater access to critical information, providing tremendous benefits to the men and women on the frontline," said Minister for Emergency Services, Hon. Michael Wright MP.

When emergency 000 calls are received, officers in any of the state's three communications centres will be able to more accurately pinpoint the location of an incident.

Statewide spatial and mapping information will be available to assist crews and will be shared seamlessly across all emergency service organisations.

"The five agencies have enthusiastically supported the new CAD, and it is hoped after a thorough implementation and testing process, the solution will be up and running by mid to late 2010," Minister Wright said.

Shake the Boot



Volunteers and staff enjoy a past 'Shake the Boot' campaign.

Firefighters and volunteers will be hitting pubs across the state during November to raise money for both the Newland Ward at the Women's and Children's Hospital, and local hospitals and charities in regional areas.

'Shake the Boot' is organised by the Australian Professional Firefighters Foundation (APFF), but anyone across the sector is welcome to join the event to help raise money. Last year approximately \$20,000 was raised in Adelaide alone.

The date set for this year's 'Shake the Boot' is Friday 14 November 2008.

For more information please contact Kevin Eckerman on 0419 836 027 or Peta Hudson on 0408 081 332.



Volunteer Support

A review of support for volunteering in SES and CFS has recommended some changes to clarify and focus the services provided by the SAFECOM Volunteer Management Branch (VMB).

The aim of the review was to benchmark the services provided to SES and CFS volunteers against the National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit Organisations (NS).

The main recommendations are that the branch:

- continue to offer field support staff to volunteers
- have an increased focus on providing strategic advice to agencies on current trends, issues and impacts on volunteering
- develop Service Level Agreements with the SES and CFS to agree service priorities
- change its name to the Volunteer Strategy and Support Branch move from the SAFECOM Human Resources Branch to SAFECOM Strategic Services Division.

The review also recommended greater training in rights and responsibilities of volunteers and volunteer managers throughout the agencies and the implementation of the NS in the CFS and SES.

The manager's role, which has been filled on an acting basis by Adaire Palmer, will be advertised in coming weeks. The branch will now be known as the Volunteer Strategy and Support Branch from 1 November 2008 and has begun reporting to the Director, Strategic Services, Cathie Brown.

A full copy of the review is available from the SAFECOM website at:
www.safecom.sa.gov.au/content/volunteers/v_charter.asp

2008 SAFER COMMUNITIES Awards

Congratulations to CFS Region Six, the Volunteer Marine Rescue (VMR) and the SES Sturt Unit who were amongst a group of organisations and individuals presented with commendations in the 2008 Safer Communities Awards by the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Michael Wright MP on Wednesday 1 October at the Adelaide Oval.

The awards recognised the groups for their extraordinary initiative and achievement in managing emergencies using a whole of community approach.

The CFS won a high commendation for its collaborative project with Rural Solutions SA. *Fiery Women* is a pilot bushfire safety training program for women living in the Lower Eyre Peninsula.

VMR in collaboration with the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure and the Australian Volunteer Coastguard (SA Squadron) were commended for their project *VMR VHF Radio Network* which improved the current service and raised marine emergency management awareness.

SES Sturt's project *Living Safely in a Flood Area* developed a flood package kit that increased local residents' understanding of the risks from flood.

The Safer Communities Awards, sponsored by Emergency Management Australia, and administered by SAFECOM, recognise best practice and innovation by organisations and individuals in building safer communities across Australia.



Winners of the South Australian Safer Communities Awards, along with the Hon Michael Wright MP and David Place, Commissioner of Fire and Emergencies.



Some of the 'Exercise Team Spirit' participants working hard in the CFS State Coordination Centre.

Exercise Team Spirit

On Tuesday 7 October, staff and volunteers from several agencies including CFS, MFS, SES, SAPOL and SA Ambulance took part in 'Exercise Team Spirit'. The exercise tested the preparedness of all agencies ahead of the fire danger season and allowed staff and volunteers to brush up on their skills.

Several mock bushfires were responded to and the exercise was a good example that when bushfire hits, the CFS is greatly assisted by the teamwork of many emergency service organisations across the sector.

Anniversary Celebrations

Serving Lobethal for 80 years

Past and present CFS volunteers took part in a community celebration to mark the 80th anniversary of the Lobethal CFS Fire Station on Sunday 14 September.

In its early days, the Lobethal CFS Brigade was run by farmers on the outskirts of the town. Gradually, the town's people donated and raised funds for equipment. In 1984, the brigade was relocated to its current site on Post Office Road and new extensions were added two years ago. These days, the station is also shared with local SES volunteers.

CFS Brigade Captain Geoff Weidenhofer said the Lobethal Station has a long, proud history.

"In the last 12 months our volunteers have responded to more than 145 calls in the district.

"The majority of our work involves road crash rescues and we've no doubt come a long way since the early days of this brigade," Geoff said.



Lobethal CFS Life Members and service award recipients.



Past and present CFS volunteers gather to celebrate CFS Milang's 60th anniversary.

CFS Milang 60th Anniversary

The CFS Milang Brigade was founded in 1948 and recently marked its 60th anniversary with a community event. CFS volunteers, past members and local residents attended the brigade's headquarters on Sunday 14 September to celebrate the brigade's history.

CFS Deputy Chief, Andrew Lawson presented a commemorative plaque. Service and life membership awards were also handed out.

Historical photos and several old vehicles were on display, including retired appliances that had been rebuilt by brigade members.

Willunga CFS Celebrates

A rich history spanning half a century was marked on Sunday 28 September at the Willunga CFS Station.

The Willunga Brigade in the Adelaide Hills formed in 1958 as a result of significant fires in the area. The town committee met to discuss the potential for a devastating fire to hit the Willunga area and decided a CFS brigade should be formed to give the community adequate fire protection.

Fifty years on, the Willunga community is still benefiting from this foresight. This was none more evident than during the **Willunga bushfire** in March last year.

CFS Chief Officer, Euan Ferguson attended the 50-year celebrations, and said members of the Willunga Brigade have always been willing to help people beyond their local community.

"Their willingness to constantly put others before themselves epitomises the spirit of a CFS volunteer," Euan said.



Smokey the Koala celebrates at Willunga CFS.

PHOTO: Steve Schueler.



The new 34 appliance for Penola CFS.

New Appliance

The Penola CFS Brigade has received a new \$250,000 truck to assist volunteers with fire fighting and other emergency incidents.

Penola CFS Brigade Captain, John Rymill says the new 34 truck has a 3,000 litre water capacity and a halo system, meaning when it gets hot outside the truck's roof sprinkler system will activate.

The new truck replaces a four-year-old vehicle that will be refurbished and supplied to another CFS brigade in the region.

MFS face dangerous HAZMAT at Salisbury

By: Paul Fletcher, District Officer, MFS



A MFS firefighter is decontaminated at the scene of the HAZMAT incident in Salisbury South.
PHOTO: 'The Advertiser'.

Staff arriving to work at the Michell wool processing plant in Salisbury South got quite a surprise on Monday 15 September. They found a considerable amount of damage and a large quantity of chemicals released across various parts of the plant.

The staff quickly realised this was a dangerous situation, withdrew and called 000 reporting a hazardous material (Hazmat) situation, and at 6.30 am an MFS/CFS dual response was despatched to the incident.

Upon arrival an immediate exclusion zone was put in place and all personnel were accounted for before crews set out to identify the chemicals involved and the extent of the damage. With information supplied from Michell's management, crews from MFS and CFS wearing protective clothing entered the site and confirmed that several thousands of litres of chemicals and solvents were involved.

Crews worked together to prevent further leakage of chemicals and to clean up the spilled chemicals.

As further sections of the complex were investigated, high flammable readings were detected and an immediate evacuation was ordered. Due to the prevailing weather conditions a precautionary evacuation was coordinated of several local factories.

Following the standard isolation of utilities (water, gas and electricity) crews re-entered the complex to carry out ventilation and further atmospheric monitoring and at 12.20 pm declared the flammable risk negligible.

The incident reached a third alarm and at its height there were 20 appliances from various agencies, with more than 80 personnel involved. The incident saw all agencies work together over a prolonged period, achieving many positive outcomes while also highlighting some challenges.

A scaled down response saw crews busy until 6.30 pm cleaning up and attending to further smaller spills.

The MFS Incident Command Vehicle served as an ideal location for the incident controller with its modern technology providing invaluable information to assist throughout the incident planning.

The other agencies that assisted with the incident included the SES, SAFECOM, SAPOL, ETSA and the EPA.

Firefighter Wilson makes AFL history

A uniquely special event took place on Saturday 28 September, it was not only the AFL Grand Final but it was a milestone for MFS Brooklyn Park Firefighter Darren Wilson who took part in the game as a boundary umpire.

The day marked a remarkable achievement for Darren as it was the 11th consecutive year he has been chosen to umpire an AFL Grand Final.

During his career as an AFL boundary umpire Darren has officiated 242 games including 36 finals, which is the most of any boundary umpire in the history of the game.



Darren's achievements as an AFL boundary umpire and as an MFS firefighter were captured in an interview with Simon Royal from ABC Stasteline on Friday 27 September. To see the interview please [click here](#).

Well done to Darren for the dedication and commitment he has shown in maintaining his long term involvement at the highest level of AFL umpiring and to his career as a firefighter.

MFS Brooklyn Park Firefighter Darren Wilson in action as an AFL boundary umpire.
PHOTO: 'www.afl.com.au'

Letter of thanks...

The following letter was recently received by the MFS.

Dear Grant

I would like to convey my heartfelt thanks to the firefighters who attended our property about 11.00 am yesterday, 3 September.

I called 000, something I was very wary about doing, but I was in the situation that my two year old grandson had shut the back door while I was attending to the clothes line, leaving him locked inside the house and me outside. I telephoned 000 from a neighbour's property, and within not more than 5-10 minutes the fire truck arrived.

The gentlemen were most helpful and polite. My comment to them was to do what ever it takes to get inside the house. After surveying our property, they decided to try to force the front security door open. This they did, without damaging the lock. I was very grateful to them.

The firefighters came from the St Marys station, can you please pass on my sincere thanks to them for assisting me in this trying situation.

Yours sincerely,

Marion Paterson, Lockleys

MFS welcomes the state's newest fire fighting recruits

After 14-weeks of gruelling training, many physical challenges and a stringent selection process, 18 of the MFS's newest recruits graduated at a ceremony on Friday 19 September. Welcomed aboard by the Minister for Emergency Services, Hon. Michael Wright MP at the MFS headquarters, the new recruits are destined for the brand new fire station currently under construction at Paradise.

The group, which included 17 men and one woman, brings the total number of serving officers in the MFS to 806 with further graduates scheduled to complete their training at the end of October.

This latest round of graduates saw MFS history made with one of the successful participants, Nobuyuki Fukuda, becoming the first MFS firefighter to be born and raised in Japan.



Nobuyuki Fukuda, the first Japanese MFS firefighter.

Nobuyuki, who came to Adelaide in 1999 and worked in various jobs before signing up to become a firefighter, says that he is very proud to be the first Japanese firefighter but also feels some pressure.

"I am ready to work hard and become the best firefighter I can be."

Nobuyuki hopes other culturally and linguistically diverse people consider a career with the MFS, "For me joining the MFS was about breaking the mould and proving myself a success in this country. Being a part of a minority group is not easy, however becoming part of a team, such as the MFS, helps you to acquire the skills necessary to succeed. Persistence and dedication are the keys to success."

Nobuyuki is currently located at the MFS Prospect Station.



Congratulations to the 18 recruits who graduated on 19 September.

MFS joins forces with Burns SA and the Julian Burton Burns Trust at Vibe Alive

By: Francie Tonkin, MFS Community Education Advisor

More than 700 students from across South Australia came together in Port Augusta at the beginning of September to celebrate the Vibe Alive Festival. Young people from as far afield as Adelaide, Ceduna and Leigh Creek joined hundreds of local students to take part in the festival.

The Vibe Alive Festival is all about young, vibrant Australians celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in a friendly atmosphere. The nationally-funded festival takes place across Australia in five states and encourages tolerance and teamwork.

The festival was a riot of colour, creativity and competition, as teams of eight competed in categories ranging from singing and dancing to painting and spelling, and participated in a diverse range of activities.

The MFS, Burns SA and the Julian Burton Burns Trust joined forces to present the Hot Topics Cool Quiz. The quiz, modelled on a TV quiz show, complete with buzzers and flashing lights, kept the children engaged, was interactive and provided a format for the fire safety, burns prevention and first aid education. The children participated in the quiz enthusiastically and wholeheartedly for wristband prizes.

The festival also provided an excellent opportunity for secondary school students to explore potential career prospects with representatives from a wide range of industries, including the emergency services sector, participating in a careers expo. Included with the industry displays was a showcase on a career as a firefighter.



Over 700 students from around the state attended the Vibe Alive Festival in Pt Augusta.



L-R Deb Bates, from the Julian Burton Burns Trust, Francie Tonkin, from MFS Community Education, Kurt Towers, from Burns SA and John Webb, also from the Julian Burton Burns Trust assisted on the day.

SA USAR Taskforce Capability

By: Colin Lindsay, District Officer, Special Operations - Technical Rescue

The South Australian Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Taskforce achieved a milestone in July with the completion of its building and development phase. The USAR Taskforce has moved into operational capability and the commencement of the skills maintenance program which will coincide with the ability to deploy a full taskforce anywhere in the state or in support of interstate jurisdictions.

Four category two rescue technician courses have been completed to date with another course currently in the planning phase.

The taskforce will have approximately 140 rescuers plus specialists, including doctors, engineers and police specialists as part of the deployment register.

Skills maintenance is another important development area, with a number of courses planned for later this year. Fortunately attendance at incidents of this type is not required often, however it is imperative that all USAR technicians are provided with the opportunity to maintain their existing skills and become familiar with new rescue techniques. Courses will include a number of 48-hour exercises incorporating new equipment training and technical search exercises. Team leader development courses have also taken place this year.

Equipment Cache

The Commonwealth USAR Equipment Acquisition Program has provided funding for the South Australian USAR team to purchase equipment that will enable them to respond with a full operational taskforce. The equipment acquisition program will occur in two stages. Initially basic rescue tools are to be purchased followed by vehicles to be used to transport large amounts of rescue and support equipment. This will ensure the team is able to efficiently operate before, during and after a deployment.

Training Site

The USAR Taskforce training site is once again undergoing a metamorphosis from a pile of concrete rubble into a collapsed building complete with persons trapped and in need of rescue. Station Officer Lawry Williams and USAR Project Officer Ray Arbon (SES) are responsible for the development of the training site for the upcoming Cat 2 technician course and have a great range of "challenges" in store for course participants. The site is always being modified with new developments and has come a long way from its inception just two years ago.



Left: 2004 – Preparation for construction of our structural collapse training site

The materials and site ready for construction to begin. This began with the onsite construction of the tower (tilt up) complete with sloping floors. Once this was completed, the rest of the 'collapsed building' was placed onsite and surrounded by approximately 500 tonne of rubble (damaged pavers). The site is based on a multiplex structure with commercial, residential, car park and office areas.

Below: 2007 - Twilight at a USAR 48 hour exercise

The finished site during a 48-hour exercise lit by two lunar lights. These lights provide enough lighting to illuminate the entire site, or as a comparison enough light to light up all of AAMI Stadium. The exercise is the culmination of the three-week training course.



VERSP Breakfasts

Employers who allow their staff to regularly down tools to volunteer for emergency service organisations were recognised in September at a Volunteer and Employer Recognition and Support Program (VERSP) breakfast at Salisbury.

The Premier, Hon. Mike Rann MP, Emergency Services Minister Hon. Michael Wright MP and Member for Light, Tony Piccolo MP joined the CFS Chief Officer, Euan Ferguson, SES Chief Officer, Stuart Macleod and Commissioner of Fire and Emergencies, David Place at the event.

Both Premier Rann and Minister Wright presented awards at the breakfast ahead of Community Cabinet at the Salisbury CFS Station.

Minister Wright said, "This year's community cabinet presents a perfect opportunity to extend the Government's enormous gratitude to these selfless members of our community who volunteer so much of their own time purely to help others. South Australia simply could not do without such a wonderful group of giving and willing individuals."

Euan Ferguson, Chief Officer, CFS said, "Volunteers are unsung heroes and the backbone of our community. They give countless hours of their time each year without reward, for the sheer pleasure of helping others.

"Without the support of employers, emergency service volunteers wouldn't be as readily able to fight bushfires or assist with other emergencies," Euan said.

Stuart MacLeod, Chief Officer, SES says, "Emergency service volunteers in particular are required to drop everything at short notice in order to fight fire, rescue others or prevent flood.

"It takes a special kind of employer to allow a staff member to do this. The VERSP breakfast is about applauding these employers for patiently understanding that the work of CFS and SES volunteers benefits everyone," Stuart said.

Self-employed volunteers were also recognised at the breakfast.

Minister Wright said, "In the case of self-employed volunteers, whenever they're called out to an emergency, these dedicated individuals are helping out two-fold. They put their entire businesses on hold to follow their passion of helping the community in trying times."

At the breakfast the Premier, Mike Rann presented eight 'Premiers Certificates of Appreciation' in recognition of outstanding volunteer service. The recipients were CFS and SES volunteers who have shown great dedication and commitment to volunteering with emergency services over many years.

More recently, 21 'Premiers Certificates of Appreciation' were presented to 11 CFS and 10 SES volunteers at a VERSP breakfast on Monday 20 October at the Morphett Vale CFS Station. Sixteen self-employed volunteers and eight employers also received 'Employer Recognition Certificates'.



SA Fire Services Bowls Club Lawn Bowls Day

Time/date: 9:30 am Sunday 23 November 2008

Location: Langhorne Creek Bowling Club

\$15 includes
Bowls & Lunch

John Edmonds (President) - 8537 3139, 0438 373 138
Greg Edmonds (Secretary) - 8388 3745, 0409 883 745

The Premier, Mike Rann, Emergency Services Minister, Hon. Michael Wright MP and the Member for Light, Tony Piccolo MP help to recognise CFS and SES volunteers and their employers.

Electronic document management system for the sector

By: Peter Acres, Principal Project Manager, Information Management Services, SAFECOM

Objective is the name of the software that has been procured to manage the fire and emergency services sector records, including all of its physical and electronic records. These electronic records will include all of the obvious records regularly created by sector personnel in forms such as MS Word documents, Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations as well as email, Visio and MS Project. Importantly, the system will also allow for the capture of emails and attachments.

The system also stores scanned documents in searchable PDF formats and other objects such as photos and videos which can be viewed online using the *Objective* advanced search engine.

Capturing electronic records in the system will not only ensure they are safely stored but it will make them accessible to authorised users across the sector.

Pilot production trials of the new *Objective* system are scheduled to begin mid to late November 2008. Local record coordinators in the three pilot areas, Information Management Services (IMS), Volunteer Management Branch (VMB) and the Commissioner's Office, have received training in the system. General training for users will be scheduled within the next few weeks.

The purpose of the pilots is to bed in the new system and the procedures for migrating and managing electronic records ahead of progressively implementing it across the entire sector. The SAFECOM Record Management team will be the primary drivers of the implementation program and will deliver training and provide support to users during the implementation phase of the project. The IMS Helpdesk and the *Objective* Helpdesk will also provide technical support.

Following the pilot a whole sector implementation schedule will be progressively developed.

Any queries regarding the project and the implementation program can be directed to Peter Acres or Donna Di Nardi.

Events Calendar

To make it easier for everyone to keep up to date, an **Events Calendar** combining planned events for all three ESO's and SAFECOM has been created.

If you'd like to notify us of an event or would like viewing access to the calendar, please contact: events@safecom.sa.gov.au

Each month, a list of future events will be published in COMMENT.

FUTURE EVENTS	
Sunday 26 October	Mannum Emergency Services Expo CFS Heritage Committee Parade at 10.30 am
Tuesday 28 October	CFS Interview on Radio Adelaide at 2.00 pm
Thursday 30 October	Strategic Plan quarterly update meeting SAFECOM Board meeting
Friday 31 October	MFS Firefighter Graduation Ceremony
8 November – 15 November	SES Week activities
Friday 14 November	SAFECOM Advisory Board Meeting 'Shake the Boot' event

New Faces at SAFECOM

Cathie Brown

Director, Strategic Services, SAFECOM

Cathie Brown joined SAFECOM as the Director of Strategic Services on 15 September 2008. Cathie's role will see her lead, develop and coordinate the strategic planning work of the emergency services sector, including risk and resource planning.

Her area is also responsible for Public Affairs, the Volunteer Management Branch, Internal Audit and Risk, Community Resilience and Emergency Management.



Cathie is well acquainted with the emergency services sector having worked in the Department of Justice's Justice Business Services for the last 10 years. Cathie has been highly involved with a number of projects and initiatives including leading the implementation of a new Adelaide Bank Rescue Helicopter Service contract, the SA Computer Aided Dispatch (SACAD) project and managing major changes to the Emergency Services Levy.

Holding a Masters in Business Administration Cathie's well developed planning, management and business skills will significantly contribute to the future direction of the fire and emergency services sector.

Cathie, who is a mother of two and a keen gardener, says, "I believe SAFECOM has a valuable role to play in supporting the emergency service organisations and I look forward to collaboratively working with the sector."