



Government of South Australia



# 2021

SA COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

Y E A R B O O K

# A 'quiet year'...

**1,300,000** Volunteer hours

**16,900+** Total Brigade turnouts

**8,900+ incidents, including:**

**2,200+** Vehicle-related incidents

**1,800+** Rural Fire incidents  
(Bushfires and grassfires)

**300+** Structural fires

**175+** HazMat incidents

# Contents

<b>Welcome</b>	04	<b>Preparedness Operations</b>	63
<b>Major Incidents</b>	08	<b>Operational Infrastructure and Logistics</b>	66
<b>COVID-19</b>	12	<b>Operational Capability and Support</b>	69
<b>Region 1</b>	14	<b>Operational Training and Professional Development</b>	73
<b>Region 2</b>	20	<b>Photo pages</b>	77
<b>Region 3</b>	26	<b>Australian Fire Service Medal Recipient's</b>	80
<b>Region 4</b>	32	<b>Partnerships</b>	84
<b>Region 5</b>	38	<b>Youth Advisory Council</b>	88
<b>Region 6</b>	44	<b>CFS Foundation</b>	90
<b>State Operations and Support Brigade</b>	50	<b>Stress Prevention and Management program</b>	92
<b>Reviews, debriefs and lessons learned</b>	53	<b>SA Volunteer Firefighter Museum</b>	94
<b>More than a bushfire service</b>	54	<b>Obituaries</b>	95
<b>From Headquarters</b>	56	<b>Retirements</b>	97
<b>Regional Operations</b>	58		
<b>State Operations</b>	59		



# Chief Officer's welcome

**I am fortunate to have held many senior positions in my career, but I openly state that leading the CFS is my greatest honour, and I feel humbled daily by the love and respect the service gets from our communities. The sacrifice made by our volunteers, who dedicate so much of their lives to support their communities through their service to the CFS, continues to inspire me daily.**

2020/21 has been a year of recovery across the service but has still also been a challenging year for many South Australians. While the bushfire season was far less challenging than the year before, we still endured a few very large and dangerous fires which were expertly handled. I don't discount the continuing impacts of all the incidents that we have attended, but as an emergency service, we must also look forward to our future challenges.

We have seen the Keelty Review, contributed to the Royal Commission, and conducted Operational Improvement processes following the Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island Complex of fires, and this season's Blackford and Cherry Gardens fires. Through these processes we learn and find ways to improve how we all work together to deliver the best outcomes for our communities.

It is testament to the professionalism of our service that all of these operational accomplishments were achieved despite the ever-present hazards of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bushfires only make up such a small percentage of what we do. I want to acknowledge that while we had a quieter fire danger season, we grappled with our fair share of challenges with road crash rescues, house and structure fires, and small grass and scrub fires.

I have been incredibly proud of how resilient our Service has been in responding to the challenges posed by COVID-19 across the state, and how well we adapted our operational capability to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved. It doesn't escape me how complicated COVID-19 has made being able to connect with communities through the cancellation of brigade open days and local events. I hope that, as the threat eases, future events can bring about stronger relationships between you and the towns and areas you serve.

These are exciting times. We will continue our growing engagement with the farming community by working ever closer with FFUs. Our training department has moved swiftly to develop a better range of on-line training opportunities and I intend to continue that trend.

Our stakeholders are as busy as ever:

The Volunteers Association does a good job of presenting volunteer issues to management and is a great advocate for the Service.

The CFS Foundation continues its great work of taking care of CFS firefighters who are personally impacted by the emergencies they attend.

Our new Headquarters is very close now and we will be moving at the end of 2021. The Automatic Vehicle Location technology, currently underway, will add significant advantages for both command purposes and the safety of our crews.

The Service faces significant funding challenges. As we improve and develop, becoming ever more professional in both our equipment and the way we deliver services, the cost of doing so escalates. The CFS has worked on a shoestring budget for decades, but this will not be sustainable in the future. I will work tirelessly to seek better funding for our Service so that we can create a modern fleet with appropriate safety systems, suitable properties from which to operate and the very best safety equipment for our crews.

While the past twelve months have been personally testing for me due to the enforced separation from our home in the UK and our loved ones there, I have been warmed by the kindness and genuine friendship offered to us everywhere I have travelled in SA. The CFS brigades and their officers are truly remarkable and my sense of pride grows with each interaction. Our staff are dedicated and do their best every day to support the volunteers. We don't always get it right and I appreciate the frank and fearless feedback often served to me. I am also grateful for the respectful and welcoming manner with which we engage.

None of us achieve anything without the support of our families, and I want to thank those family members and others who support our service. To the partners, the kids, the parents, those who hold the fort when our volunteers answer their call to duty, the employers who support our firefighters by allowing them to respond during working time my message is: your dedication and support enable our volunteers to support the community and we are indebted to you. Thank you.

**Mark Jones QFSM**  
**Chief Officer, SACFS**

# Minister's welcome

**I have had the honour of being the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services for just over twelve months. Throughout this time, I have been in awe of the work of the CFS, not only during the Fire Danger Season, but all year around - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. From cadets starting out, to brigade stalwarts, volunteers or paid staff, you all play a vital role in protecting and supporting South Australian communities.**

This year has seen CFS volunteers provide an extraordinary level of support to other emergency responders and agencies. It is remarkable to see the training and expertise of the CFS adapting across such a range of incidents, and you should all be so proud of your skills.

Following the 2019/20 Fire Danger Season, the Marshall Liberal Government commissioned an Independent Review of the response to the bushfires that devastated our State (the Keelty Review). Since the Keelty Review was delivered, the Marshall Liberal Government has supported our emergency services agencies to adopt and implement all of the recommendations with a \$97.5 million response package. This investment ensures that you are best placed to respond to incidents as safely as possible, with new trucks, Automatic Vehicle Location technology and increased volunteer support.

Over the past twelve months, it has also been a privilege to see firsthand the results of the Marshall Liberal Government's Project Renew, which saw \$5 million invested across 160 projects to improve facilities across the brigades. In recognising this program's importance and success, the Marshall Liberal Government is proud to be providing a further \$1 million per year to ensure that your stations in which you spend so much of your time volunteering are fit-for-purpose.

This year has also seen significant progress made at the new Emergency Services



Headquarters at Keswick (ESS HQ). As this Yearbook is going to print, the construction of the building is complete, with the fit out and move set to be completed before the end of the year. The build will see CFS co-located with MFS, SES and SAFECOM, with the CFS Foundation and CFS Volunteers Association also taking up residence.

The new ESS HQ will deliver improved collaboration between our emergency services and provide stronger advocacy and support for the volunteers.

I know that COVID-19 has had a major impact on how the CFS has operated. I want to thank you all for continuing to answer the call, despite the unprecedented challenges the pandemic has posed.

On behalf of the South Australian Government, and indeed all South Australians, I thank each and every one of you for your efforts throughout 2020/21, and for your ongoing commitment to protecting South Australian lives and property.

**The Hon. Vincent Tarzia M.P.  
Minister for Police, Emergency  
Services and Corrections**

# CFSVA welcome

**An intense 2019/2020 bushfire season closely followed by COVID-19 put everyone in the CFS to the test. Lockdowns and restrictions over the past eighteen months have been challenging for everyone, but especially for volunteers, who have continued to maintain their commitment to community safety in the face of uncertainty around the potential risks to their own health and that of their families. I was heartened to see the CFS put in a range of precautions and increase the PPE supplied to brigades to help keep our personnel safe during this tumultuous time, and I hope this will continue as we move into the next phase of our society's response to the pandemic.**

COVID-19 restrictions meant substantial delays to the normal processes, debriefs and follow ups to last year's bushfire season, commencing the past season with a large number of matters still outstanding and unresolved. A relatively quieter season has allowed the organisation time to catch its collective breath, implementing Lessons Learned outcomes and review recommendations.

South Australia needs a vibrant emergency services sector so as to provide the best service to our communities. The vast majority of the sector is volunteer-based and therefore, everything that can be done must be done to support and encourage this part of the sector. In order to perform at our best, we need to be enthusiastic about what we do and why we do it. If we accept the concept that enthusiastic volunteering is a necessity to this state, there are some things that require attention including, but not limited to, proper up-to-date facilities, fit for purpose equipment, proper consultation on matters that may affect us, provision of suitable training, sufficient staffing levels to provide support services, recognising and using the skills that volunteers bring to the organisation. On the other side of the ledger, treating volunteers as an unpaid

workforce, or allowing sector or political self-interest to drive policy, is a path to diminishing the enthusiasm of volunteers.

Last year saw a changing of governance, with Minister Tarzia taking over ministerial responsibilities. The CFSVA have had some robust discussions with Minister Tarzia. With an election in March 2022, the volunteer association looks forward to working with the Minister and politicians from all parties so as to achieve the best outcomes for volunteer firefighters in SA.

The association works hard to maintain its credibility by developing healthy relationships with our sector partners and insists on a very high level of integrity in our dealings within the sector. It has been my privilege to represent CFS volunteers and I thank you for your support.

**Andy Wood AFSM  
President CFSVA**





# Major incidents



## Blackford (Lucindale) fire, January 11

**A relatively mild January afternoon, with temperatures and wind speeds in the low 30's, soon produced a raging inferno that left a path of destruction as it burned towards the township of Lucindale.**

At 12:37 on January 11, 2021 several calls reported smoke in three separate locations near the Mount Scott Conservation Park.

As crews scrambled to investigate the reports, the fire creating the smoke, quickly reached into the land around the park's southeast corner.

Within seven minutes of the original calls, aircraft were scrambling from the Lower South East and Parafield airbases. These aircraft became integral, providing intelligence on what was becoming a very fast-moving crop, grass and bushfire, and by directly attacking the fire when it became too dangerous for trucks.

By 1:40pm the fire had been located and mapped by Air Observers as approximately 1,049 hectares burning in an SSE direction towards Lucindale.

Ground crews scrambled to try to get control of the fire, with additional resources being coordinated by DEW, Regions 1, 2 and 3, and the Victorian Country Fire Authority.

The consumption of land and erratic fire behaviour was brought to a head when a large, anvil-shaped pyrocumulus cloud rose from the fireground.

More than 250 firefighters did all they could to slow the fire and protect Lucindale.

Air support ground teams worked feverishly to load 101 drops for the fire bombers, while also relocating their operations from the Lucindale airstrip to the Naracoorte base as the fire approached.

By nightfall the combined efforts had managed to slow the fire and protect the township.

Morning revealed how close the fire had come to Lucindale, with several properties on the outskirts being saved from destruction.

In total, the fire destroyed 14,074 hectares of land, 27 structures, close to 7,000 livestock and kilometres of fencing.

With fire predictions and Watch and Act messaging showing the fire had the potential to reach as far east as Naracoorte, what was already a horrendous fire could have been much, much worse, if not for the combined efforts of all involved.

The fire was classified as contained at 12:30 on January 12, 2021 with crews remaining on site for several days, Fire Danger Indexes falling and local crews patrolling for the following weeks.



# Cherry Gardens fire, January 24

**While most South Australian's were enjoying an extended Australia Day long weekend, the CFS was on high alert on Sunday, January 24 with severe weather forecast across the Mid North, Yorke Peninsula and Lower South East, and the Mount Lofty district tipped to hit an Extreme Fire Danger rating.**

A fire on the Coorong had kept the State Control Centre on its toes during the day, but it was at 4:14pm that the largest series of incidents for the day, and second largest fire for the season, was reported.

An initial report from the Mount Lofty Fire Tower of a smoke column near Orchard Road, Cherry Gardens, was met a short time later with SAPOL reporting a fire just eight kilometres away. As the number of fires and spotting increased, CFS volunteers quickly responded.

Within 30 minutes an Emergency Alert was issued for the Cherry Gardens area, with the surrounding communities of Meadows, Echunga and Macclesfield soon being warned with a Watch and Act message.

Region 1 had a L2 IMT on active standby, providing crucial initial support firefighters on the ground while the Level 3 IMT was activated. Strike Teams from CFS, National Parks and Wildlife, Forestry SA and MFS joined the efforts, and the IMT flexed up to include representatives from across the emergency response, as well as SA Police, SA Ambulance Service, SA Power Networks and Local Government.

By 7:40pm the fire had burnt through 800 hectares, and, despite only a light breeze, showed no signs of letting up as crews fought multiple fire fronts overnight.

As day broke on January 25, the plume of smoke was still growing and ash was

falling across the state's capital. The fire behaviour was erratic, with breakouts pushing the fire front simultaneously to the north and south of the fire scar.

Daylight provided the first chance to assess the carnage, with two houses destroyed and 2,149 hectares of land burnt.

As conditions eased mid-morning, backburning operations got underway, and crews were tasked with securing the fire perimeter and blacking out hotspots within the fireground – tasks that would continue for the better part of the next fortnight.

At around 4pm the heavens opened and rain began to fall on the fireground, allowing crews to get a handle on the incident two-and-a-half hours later. The fire that many feared could go on for weeks, was officially declared contained.

The rain presented its own set of challenges,

with the hilly terrain around Bradbury becoming extremely unsafe. As torrential rain led to flooding across parts of the Hills and the Adelaide Metropolitan area, mopping up efforts were abandoned.

As South Australians awoke on Australia Day, volunteer firefighters returned to the fireground to make it safe. Ensuring that no log was left unturned, they used Thermal Imaging Cameras to track and extinguish hotspots across the area, supported by bucketing from helicopters and remote area fire teams (RAFT) from NPWSSA.

Over 2,100 volunteers attended the fireground, with Strike Teams coming from across the state to assist with firefighting efforts. The CFS maintained a presence in the area for thirteen days, with the Cherry Gardens fire declared controlled on February 3 before being marked as safe and handed back to the landowners on February 6.





# Yumali grassfire, November 19

**Temperatures were reaching 40°C and winds gusting to 60 kilometres per hour when what was believed to be sparks from a fallen power line ignited dry grass and crops near Goodall Road, to the east of Yumali.**

The fire, which started at around 2:23pm on November 19, 2020, quickly became one of the fastest travelling fires the area had seen in some time, consuming around 1000 hectares per hour before conditions began to ease.

At the peak of the response more than 160 firefighters, supported by countless FFUs, struggled to keep alongside of the blaze.

Aircraft tending to the nearby Deepwater fire were re-tasked to Yumali, with an additional two firebombers sent from Hoyleton airbase to carry out 46 drops to help secure the northern edge before a predicted wind direction change.

As the winds eased and the smoke began to clear, a fire scar of 4,865 hectares was revealed.

Remarkably, only two sheds were damaged, one vehicle destroyed and four firefighters required treatment for minor burns.

Over the following hours, Regions 1, 2 and 4, and DEW firefighters filled Strike Teams to assist.

The fire was classified controlled on November 21, 2020 at 6pm.





# COVID-19

## From Stephen Boucher, SACFS Taskforce Coordinator

**COVID-19 made 2020-21 a complicated year, but I'm really proud of the resilience of our CFS personnel.**

I honestly couldn't have imagined how complex the past eighteen months would become when I think back to our first COVID-related teleconference on March 13, 2020. There was no rule book on how to handle the pandemic, with a lot of uncertainty as to how long and how intense that first wave of the virus would be.

Upon reflection, the success of the SACFS's response to the pandemic has been based on two key factors:

- The agility and flexibility of our volunteers and staff, and
- The willingness of the Executive Leadership Team to empower the SACFS Taskforce to make the necessary decisions throughout the pandemic.

While we were fortunate to be guided by the strong leadership of SA Health and SA Police who oversaw the state-wide directions and response, there was still a lot of grey area in how we, as an Emergency Service, should respond to incidents safely and adequately.

In March, 2020, I took over from Sam Quigley as the coordinator for the CFS's COVID-19 response. Since then, the SACFS Taskforce consisting of myself, Robin Marlin, James Honner, Phil Hosking and Mariska Threadgold have met (and continue to meet) regularly to review and update CFS's processes.

We worked collaboratively with the Metropolitan Fire Service, State Emergency Service and South Australian Ambulance Service to ensure consistency across the emergency services, sharing workloads to deliver seven Sector-wide Best Practice Guides for front-line responders.

During the first few weeks of the pandemic the major challenges were the delivery and distribution of extra PPE across the service and the movable feast that was the interpretation and implementation of our operational practices, ensuring we could maintain operational capability. For the first time, flu immunisations were made available across the organisation and were administered to over 1,250 volunteers.

The CFS also had a considerable involvement in the whole-of-government response to COVID-19, with Andrew Stark, Brenton Eden, Yvette Dowling and Sam Quigley, supported by 22 other CFS operational staff, leading the Emergency Management Team within SA Health. The CFS personnel accounted for a quarter of the overall SCC-Health team for the first six weeks of the pandemic, before transitioning key roles back to SA Health.

As the first wave subsided, we returned to a 'new normal' with increased personal hygiene and physical distancing rules across the service and the state.

Then in November, South Australia was confronted with the Parafield Cluster, potential community transmission, and hard state-wide lockdown coinciding with Total Fire Bans and dangerous weather. We worked closely with SA Health to ensure that we had appropriate public messaging around quarantining and isolating in high-risk bushfire areas, and to ensure we had appropriate hygiene practises in place when physical distancing couldn't be maintained.

We were fortunate that our lockdown only lasted three days, and we were able to bounce back, with the Taskforce turning its attention throughout 2021 to our COVID-19 vaccination programs.

Our volunteers at Coober Pedy and on the West Coast were among the first in the state to receive their vaccines, with the rest of the state soon following suit. We are now in a position where most of our personnel have had the opportunity to receive their first vaccine.

I know that this hasn't been an easy eighteen months for so many people, but I want to thank the CFS volunteers and staff, who have been patient and heeded the public health messaging, keeping themselves, their families and their communities safe.

While it's starting to feel like there's a light at the tunnel, we still have a long way to go in this global health pandemic. The scenes of anguish from India and, closer to home, the heartbreak resulting from Victoria's multiple lockdowns should be constant reminders of how lucky we have been in South Australia throughout this health crisis, and how vigilant we need to remain.

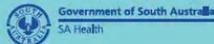
Please continue to monitor the CFS's COVID-19 Volunteer Portal page for any updates to our operational advice. If you have any symptoms please get tested straight away, do not attend your brigade or call outs, and please ensure you're following SA Health's advice to stop the spread of this virus.



**ROLL UP  
EMERGENCY  
SERVICES  
WORKERS.**

It's time to  
get vaccinated.

Visit the website  
for more information.



**Groups:** East Torrens, Heysen, Kangaroo Island, Kyeema, Mawson, Mount Lofty, Mundoo, Onkaparinga, Southern Fleurieu, Strathalbyn, Sturt and Victor Harbor

**Volunteers:** 3,340+      **Brigades:** 85

**Region 1 covers an area of 10,000 square kilometres and includes southern parts of the Adelaide Hills, the Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island, with a population base in excess of 250,000 people.**

The region offers great diversity – urban areas surrounding Adelaide, large communities of the hills and rural activities, including cropping, grazing and viticulture.

The region also includes substantial areas of national parks, local sanctuaries and forestry reserves, which are home to an assorted range of flora and fauna.

Crews respond to the full range of emergencies, including bush and grass fires, structural fires, road crash rescues, and HazMat incidents.

Region 1 has over 3,300 dedicated and highly trained volunteers who staff 85 brigades and respond to thousands of incidents across the region each year. While Region 1 has the smallest geographic area, it has the most volunteers and responds to the largest number of incidents.

“There are always room for improvements, we are aiming to become more inclusive.”

## From the Regional Commander

If there was ever a year to reveal the hero within us, 2020 was it. Just when everyone managed to catch their breath after the catastrophic bushfires in our state, we were faced with restrictions and lockdowns as COVID-19 brought our lives to a standstill. Yet somehow our volunteers and staff managed to focus on recovery and rebuild.

We founded two Ops Brigades and celebrated brigade birthdays and station openings: Ironbank and Nairne Brigade turned 60, Hindmarsh Valley Brigade turned 70 and Piccadilly moved into a new station building.

Our community engagement team has made a tremendous effort in supporting the community through recovery and rebuild awareness. The swift reaction by Jackie Horton in Cherry Gardens meant that affected families received answers and guidance promptly, and Eve Keam has navigated a series of obstacles to deliver a suite of events on KI this year to assist the community post the 2019/20 bushfires.

We were excited to award some of our dedicated and long-standing volunteers for their exceptional efforts and contributions to the service. While celebrations could not take place as they have in previous years, we are no less grateful for the commitment our volunteers continually show.

- Peter Phillips



**The Meadows  
community  
meeting was  
well-attended**

# New brigades

**The past twelve months has seen an expansion of Region 1 with two new brigades – an Air Operations Brigade based out of Cherry Gardens and an Operations Support Brigade at Mount Lofty – taking the total number of Brigades across the area to 87.**

Captain of the Mount Lofty Operations Support Brigade, Rob Conwell, said the creation of the brigade has increased training opportunities and allowed volunteers to receive the recognition they deserve for the service they provide.

“We found that even though volunteers were putting in huge hours doing the behind-the-scenes work, this contribution wasn’t being recorded.”

“An Operational Support Unit had been in place for about 14 years, but the personnel were listed as BSO’s for their local brigade. This made it difficult to put a case forward for them to access the training and development they needed to hone their skills.”

In 2018 Rob brought the Mount Lofty Group Captains together, and they all agreed to create a separate brigade to unlock opportunities for these volunteers.

“Although we’re not a combat brigade, the role we play in fighting fires is crucial. We activate the brigade on Extreme and Catastrophic fire days and have a minimum three-person, on-call roster on other Total Fire Bans and during extreme weather events.”

The brigade provides Radio and Communications Operators, Ground Observers, Staging Managers and other IMT support, as well as drivers and scribes.

“About half of our volunteers are women who have been involved with the CFS for years, but because their roles and hours have never been recorded, they have been overlooked for their incredible contribution. It’s a shame, but we’re now working to right that wrong.”

## Community Engagement

For Region 1 Community Engagement Officer, Jackie Horton, the Cherry Gardens fire provided a rare ‘practise what you preach’ moment, with her home at Prospect Hill falling into the Watch and Act zone.

With the fire affecting so many people in her community, she saw first-hand the anxiety that many people felt.

“I was seeing on community forums people panicking about what roads were open and closed, whether they should be leaving, and what to do with their livestock and horses.”

“Many people had little understanding of basic messaging, and there were quite a few households that clearly had no Bushfire Plan.”

Armed with an acute awareness of where the community’s weaknesses were, Jackie has taken the opportunity to turn the incident into a positive.

“We know that people become more aware and are more willing to be engaged after fires, so I decided to strike while the iron was hot.”

Jackie has now run three meetings at Meadows, Echunga and Kangarilla, reaching over 200 people with a tailored Be Bushfire Ready presentation that focused on those areas she observed as short falls in the communities’ knowledge.

“The locals have really embraced the opportunity to learn more. We have 44 people now enrolled in future programs, and many people are looking to how they can prepare over winter, in the lead up to the next Fire Danger Season.”

## Region 1 Ops Brigade

Every Wednesday night during Fire Danger Season, around 55 volunteers from across Region 1’s Operations Brigade converge on their headquarters to train and plan for the week ahead.

The team are on passive standby for days of Total Fire Ban, stepping up to active standby when the FDI’s are forecast to hit 65 or higher, rostering a Level 2 IMT and providing crucial radio operation and logistical support, as well as incident-based support and the coordination of staging.

Filling an operational roster for every Total Fire Ban day means they are prepared and ready for any kind of incident, proving invaluable when the Cherry Gardens fire kicked off on January 24.

“We had the team in the office and ready to implement a Level 2 IMT as soon as the fire hit that level, then as it became apparent that we would need to increase it to a Level 3. Having so much knowledge and expertise in the room made the transition seamless,” Regional Commander, Peter Philips reflected.

The team also provides broader CFS support, positioning themselves as the default Operations Brigade for intrastate Strike Teams during campaign fire events and supporting deployments last season.

## Eden Hills women fire up

When Ellen Painter fronted-up to go out to the Cherry Garden’s fireground on January 28, she had no idea that she would be a part of a historic moment for the brigade, nor the viral social media story about to unfold.

With the day’s plan involving extinguishing hotspots and securing the fire’s edge, Ellen found herself on the brigade’s first all-woman crew.

The captain took a photo of the women to capture and share the occasion. Consequently, the post was picked up by multiple state and national media outlets and shared over 600 times.

“We absolutely did not expect our photo to get that much traction. We were capturing a moment for the Eden Hills Brigade, and were well aware that other brigades have had all-woman teams.

“That being said, we were completely blown away by the response. It felt surreal to have our photo that widely shared.”

The group paid tribute to all the women across the organisation who respond on a daily basis to incidents around the state,

“We all agree that CFS is absolutely something young women should have a go at. It is challenging and fun, and you make some great friends along the way. The CFS has become much more inclusive over time, and with hard work anything is achievable. It is great to see more women present in roles such as driver, officer in charge, and other leadership roles. We hope to see much more of this in the future!”



# Hannah Chipman Cadet, Yankalilla Brigade



## **I joined the CFS because:**

My parents were in the RFS before I was born and I wanted to follow in their footsteps. Dad was a Deputy Fire Control Officer – Community Safety in the RFS and I aspire to be like him. After we moved from NSW, my dad joined the local CFS Brigade in Yankalilla and came home from training nights with stories about drills and the friends he had made. Hearing these stories was all the help I needed to join up.

## **The highlight of my involvement so far has been:**

The friendships I've made within the cadet program.

## **Something you might not know about my Brigade/part of the world is:**

We have really good beaches. The views are amazing too. Sometimes when doing exercises such as map reading, we get to go out and learn near the beaches.

## **During my time with the CFS I hope to:**

Learn the many skills the CFS offers, such as teamwork, communication, camaraderie and practical skills: road crash rescue, breathing apparatus, incident command and control, pump operation and bushfire control.

## **My hero is:**

My dad. He has been helping me prepare for my BF1 course and gives me feedback after each Cadet session. Another mentor is Kylie Ewins. She had encouraged me through my struggle with the radio component of my learning and for that I am grateful. She is a big role model to me as a woman in the CFS and I hope to grow up to be much like her.



# Sue Leslie Captain, Clarendon Brigade

## **How long have you been in the CFS?**

I've been in the CFS for 16 years, holding the roles of SFF, Lieutenant and Cadet Coordinator. At the moment I'm Captain of Clarendon, Trainer and Assessor with Rural Training and a member of SPAM's Peer Support team.

## **What has been the biggest change you've seen over your time with CFS?**

The updating of equipment, appliances and technology, and the changes to PPE and Doctrine. Sometimes it's hard to keep up! I've also seen an increase in paperwork. It's all for the better (well, except the paperwork!), but it's all changed how we function.

## **What has been the biggest challenge?**

Taking on the role of Captain. The challenge has been believing that I could take on the role and be successful in it. But it's also been a reward. The team and the people that support me and the Brigade. The members of the community, our Group and Region 1 make it so worthwhile.

## **What's a positive experience that has stayed with you?**

Going out on Strike Teams is always a great experience. The incidents are so varied and often challenging, which I enjoy. Particularly night-time Strike Teams – seeing a sea of red and blue lights scattered across the fireground. It never ceases to amaze me how proud I feel to see that!

# Ingrid Richards **Group Catering Coordinator,** Brigade Operational Support, **Stirling**



## **How long have you been in the CFS and what keeps you involved?**

47 years and counting. I thought the last two years would see out my involvement, but after Cudlee Creek and seeing the firefighters come back exhausted and dirty, I thought if they can do that there's no excuse for me not to stay involved. Plus, who else will organise the Mount Lofty group's Sunday scones, jam and cream?

## **What roles have you held?**

I do a lot of catering with the Stirling Operational Support Brigade. My late husband was a member at Bridgwater, so being involved was something we could do together. With two small children getting on the back of a truck wasn't of interest to me, but in the CFS there's always a way to give back.

## **What has been the biggest change you've seen over your time with CFS?**

Ash Wednesday was a day that changed me and my family's life completely. My husband was on the Bridgwater truck that they lost and to be honest, he wasn't the same after that. An experience like that has to have an impact. In those days there was no SPAM or mental health support, so they battled on alone. It's so much better now. They used to

go to a fatality and then just go home. But now they are encouraged to talk about it.

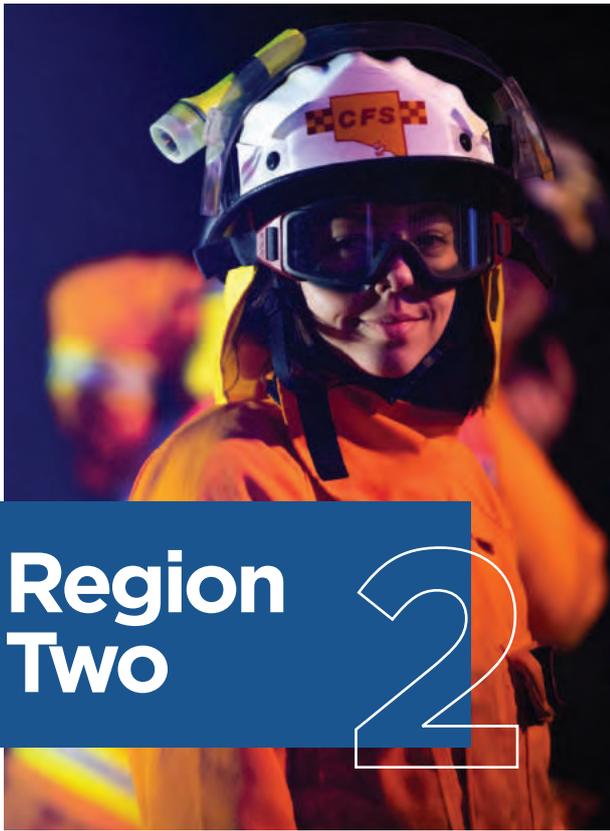
The Group system itself has also been a big change. Every brigade used to do its own thing, but I think the group system has made things more coordinated and easier.

## **What has been the biggest challenge?**

In the past year catering in COVID-19 conditions has been quite a challenge. In some ways it's easier, but it was an adjustment. It's also far more expensive to come up with single-serve food – generally working out to be three or four times the cost than before COVID-19.

## **What is a positive experience that has stayed with you?**

I get a lot out of catering for the training courses. It's so lovely watching those on the BF1 trying to take in so much of the course. They are strangers on Friday, but by Sunday they are all best mates. They bond together so when they meet on the fireground they know each other and have built camaraderie.



**Groups:** Barossa, Gilbert, Gumeracha, Horrocks, Light, North Barossa, Northern Yorke, Para, Southern Yorke, Wakefield Plains and Yorke Valley

**Volunteers:** 2,700+ **Brigades:** 84



**Region 2 covers an area of 17,000 square kilometres and includes the northern parts of the Mount Lofty Ranges, the Mid North and Clare Valley, and Yorke Peninsula.**

The region services a population base of around 125,000 with a strong mix of agriculture and viticulture, as well as manufacturing, commercial forestry, and some urban/rural living on the northern fringe of metropolitan Adelaide, and Gawler/Barossa areas.

Apart from its agricultural contribution to the State, the region boasts some of the most visited tourist areas. Its proximity to Adelaide, and the boasting of iconic wine regions, such as the Barossa and Clare Valley, make parts of the region popular throughout the year, with the Yorke Peninsula experiencing heavy traffic during the summer months and on long weekends. Crews respond to many road crash rescues and HazMat incidents, as well as the standard fire activity.

The region has responded to several recent high-profile fires, with Cudlee Creek, Pinery and Sampson Flat situated within the region.

Servicing a population of around 125,000 with a broad mix of industries and landscapes.

## From the Regional Commander

What a year it's been. I am immensely proud of the efforts of the volunteers and staff who continued to deliver a first-class service to communities regardless of the challenges. While the 2020/21 Fire Danger Season was quieter than 2019/20, everyone in Region 2 has demonstrated their tremendous ability to resolve even the most extreme incidents: rural, structural and technical.

Region 2 was successful in piloting and then sponsoring a state-wide project to improve coordination with FFUs to better ensure their safety. In the last twelve months, groups have done an excellent job liaising with farms, and we'll continue to build on this. We were also pleased to open the new Tarlee CFS station, a fantastic facility for the community, and a big improvement on their previous facility.

I'd like to thank the efforts of all Region 2 members with a particular focus on the unsung heroes who often don't get the accolades they deserve. Those in support roles are rarely seen, but keep things moving, those in leadership roles, who deal with both the bureaucracy and the challenges of leadership and, finally, to the members of the RCC and IMTs who open themselves up to criticism from many when performing management roles in support of crews on the ground. Thank you one and all.

- Brenton Hastie



# Engaging with Farm Firefighting Units (FFUs)

**During 2020, despite the challenges of COVID-19 lockdowns, Region 2 embarked on a review of FFU interactions and operations. The project sought to improve coordination and consistency across the Region in recognising and involving FFU operators in CFS operations. The project was based on the processes developed and implemented in Region 4.**

Presentations to farmers across the region by staff, Group Officers and, in some cases, Brigades ensured information was spread far and wide.

The key information provided included FFU registration, basic fire behaviour and safety on the fireground.

The response by groups, brigades and farmers has been very positive, with many groups establishing accurate data bases, clear communication standards and, in some cases, inclusion in fireground operations.

At the end of the fire season the success of the trial across the region was highlighted with the acceptance of a common UHF channel for communication, improved personal safety for FFU operators, and the identification of FFU coordinators and fireground liaisons.

The success of the trial is attributed to groups and farmers recognising the importance of working together. Our project has been pivotal in shaping the state FFU project which will see improvements in registration and coordination thanks to system refinements suggested by the Region.

## Point Pearce

Located on the west coast of the Yorke Peninsula, the Aboriginal Community of Point Pearce have identified the need to extend their knowledge of fire behaviour and preparedness, to increase their resilience, empowerment, and sustainability.

After reaching out to the CFS, the community have set out several priorities, including the whole of Community Fire Safe Plan, the acquisition of a FFU, and information workshops in prevention and suppression activities.

This whole-of-community initiative by the Point Pearce Aboriginal community has led to information sessions, including everyone from the young people through to leaders and Elders. Staff from Region 2, including the Regional Prevention Officer and the Regional Commander Brenton Hastie, have visited the community.

Brenton Hastie believes the community engagement work will lead to better community outcomes. "We place great importance on empowering and creating sustainable relationships with communities as it is key to helping keep all our communities safe across the Region."

Regional Community Engagement staff have

attended the community's leadership day and recently held a Bushfire Prevention workshop with young people from the community. Further workshops are planned to better inform the community about bushfire behaviour and prevention activities to ensure that they are better placed to develop their own comprehensive and appropriate whole-of-community fire safe plan.

## A-Risk Class Planning

The Staff at Region 2 have been working diligently over the past twelve months to improve volunteer access to information when attending incidents at A-Class risk sites.

Operational Response Pre-Plans provide first arrival crews one source of truth, including vital information that ensures a safe and appropriate response to incidents. Where an incident may escalate, it will also provide the information required to establish a Common Operating Picture for all emergency responders in attendance.

The Response Pre-Plans include information such as occupancy hours, maps and entry points and emergency response infrastructure such as fire hydrants, fire indicator panels and booster cabinets.

Where necessary, the plans also include any hazardous materials stored onsite, and any other unique dangers or considerations that emergency responders may need to consider when attending a particular location.

The sites which have had plans completed include:

- Tarac Technologies at Nuriootpa
- Klein Point Mine – considered a Dangerous Goods Facility, and
- The Gould Creek Interconnector – the main electricity link between SA and Victoria.

The silos and jetty bulk loading sites at Port Giles, Ardrossan and Klien Point were also identified and profiled due to the increased risk of ship fires.

Region 2 have worked closely with a range of internal and external stakeholders in forming each individual Response Pre-

Plan, including companies and landowners, Tim McNeilly, Manager, Technical Operations and Darren Chapman from Development Assessment Services.

## Region 2 Training Seminar

On April 11, around 50 of Region 2's Group and Brigade Training Coordinators and volunteer Trainers converged on Roseworthy campus for a day-long training seminar. While the day focused on the significant changes to Training and Management Systems, qualifications and courses, time was also allocated for general discussion and the sharing of ideas, opinions and feedback for the Region.

A significant aspect of the seminar was examining how projects and emerging developments in the SACFS might impact upon the training environment and the delivery of courses within the Service.

The whole group was addressed by Director, Brenton Eden and Regional Commander, Brenton Hastie, with a range of breakout groups during the day, including:

- Emerald / Volunteer Portal – Yvette Dowling
- Trainer Hints and Tips – Serena Eales
- A Day in a Life of a BTC – Roseworthy BTC Arran O'Leary
- Relay Pumping Exercise – Scott Haynes with Steve West (Op Pumps Trainer/ Wakefield Plains GTC) and Nick Pettigrew (Op Pumps Trainer/Light GTC)
- Advanced Online Learning – Mitchell Fitzgerald and Adam Shearer, and
- Design a Training Session / Program – Tanya Kuiper.

Feedback was provided from a range of attendees. Generally, they gained a great deal from the seminar and comments on individual sessions were very positive. The only criticisms were regarding the day and/or sessions being too short, a sentiment echoed by some of the presenters as well.

# David Williams Saddleworth Brigade



## **When did you join the CFS?**

I joined CFS (EFS) in February 1967, and have held a lot of roles including Brigade Captain at Saddleworth for 23 years. I am currently Deputy Group Officer, Brigade Administration Officer, CFS Trainer and Assessor, Brigade and Group Cadet Co-ordinator and sit on the Region 2 Cadet Committee. I'm also broom pusher and appliance washer – it's marvelous how many people do not know how to use a broom!

## **What has been a significant change during your involvement?**

The introduction of the Emergency Services Levy which has enabled CFS to progress to the state it is in today with the equipment and staff support to the volunteer.

## **What do you think the biggest hurdle facing the CFS?**

The recruitment of new volunteers, especially in the smaller country communities. There are more and more organisations trying to capture volunteers with less and less people putting their hands up to help.

## **The incident I won't forget is:**

When I was a new volunteer, I was involved in an incident at Mt. Bold reservoir which frightened me. Although I knew I was safe with the experienced people around me at the time, the equipment and training were nothing like what we have today.

## **What keeps you involved?**

The challenge of dealing with incidents as they crop up and the 'behind the scenes' work that happens without the general knowledge of the public. CFS members need to be ready, willing and freely giving of their time and effort to keep the service viable. Otherwise, there would be a lot of communities without the protection they have become used to, but overall, not willing to contribute to its future security.



# Alyssa Daly Cadet, Gumeracha Brigade

## **I joined CFS because:**

The Cudlee Creek fire came really close to my community at Gumeracha. Also, I suffer from anxiety, and this was a really good opportunity to build my confidence. Before joining the cadets, I helped with a training exercise including the CFS & SES at the local rocking horse, organised by my dad, Simon, who is heavily involved in the Gumeracha Group.

## **When I'm not volunteering with CFS you'll find me:**

Playing netball or working my casual job at our local hotel.

## **The highlight of my involvement so far has been:**

Overcoming my fears about live-fire training and being involved with mock car accident training recently.

## **While I'm in the CFS I hope to:**

Overcome my fears, gain more confidence and prove to myself that I can do anything if I set my mind to it.

## **In CFS I really look up to:**

My dad, Simon Worwood, Group and Cadet Coordinator and Kylie Holt, Cadet Supervisor, who both have provided me with guidance on entering the CFS. They are two people that I look up to in my CFS family.

# Rosemary McDonnell Captain, Dublin Brigade

## When and why did you join the CFS?

In November 2002 my husband and I and our eighteen month old son moved to the Dublin area. One of our neighbours was the Brigade Captain, Terry Halford, who invited me to come along. I joined in December and have been involved ever since. I like to help anyone that needs it, and I enjoy the experiences, challenges and opportunities that arise.

## What roles have you held?

I've been Admin and Finance Officer, senior firefighter, held various Lieutenant positions and am now Captain (for the past 6 years). I've also been trained in Road Crash Rescue, Breathing Apparatus, Chainsaw, First Aid, Strike Team leader, Sector Commander and IMT L2 Ops Officer.

## One of the biggest changes I have seen is:

The move from the military style running of brigades to a more inclusive style. There is still a way to go in this area but the change so far has been noticed.

## My biggest challenge has been:

To step up and be a leader. I was quiet and shy when I joined. With the support and encouragement of the Dublin members I made my way through training courses, gaining the experience and confidence to now be Captain.



## An incident I'll never forget is:

Pinery. It was my first big incident as Captain, but that aside, it's still a fire I will never forget. I'd never felt fear like I did that day. We had to pick our battles and lost communication during the day.

There have been many incidents that have stuck with me for different reasons. And I have learned, grown and improved from every single one.

## What's an experience you value from your time with the CFS?

In 2018 I was very privileged to attend the Women and Firefighting Australasia conference in New Zealand. This conference had many inspirational speeches by firefighters from many diverse backgrounds and tutorials that have helped me with leadership at incidents I attend.

The conference taught me to take opportunities that are offered to you. Don't be afraid.



**Groups:** Chaffey, Coorong, Mallee, Mid-Murray, Ridley and Swanport

**Volunteers:** 1,380+ **Brigades:** 56



**Region 3 covers an area of 54,000 square kilometre and includes the Murraylands and Riverland in the State's east. Servicing a population base of 72,000, the Region's agricultural activities vary from dry land cropping and grazing to large areas of irrigated fruit, grapes and vegetables.**

As well as tending to fires, the number of vehicles passing through and visiting the region contributes to a high proportion of road crash incidents, particularly on the Dukes Highway. There is an increasing commercial risk to these regions with a large number of facilities being built adjacent to major centres. There has also been some significant investment in renewable energy across the region with a large number of solar panel farms in construction.

The region also co-shares (with Region 5) responsibility for the Ngarkat Conservation Park, a 270,000 hectare national park, which is often a magnet for lightning.

An increase in tourism, in particular the large number of houseboats along the Murray means the Region deals with some unique challenges when it comes to keeping the community safe.

## From the Regional Commander

2020/21 was a year that made me proud to lead Region 3 as Regional Commander.

We were challenged early in the season with the Pike River almond husk fire, and Yumali grass fire really putting us to the test. There were also significant fires caused by lightning in the Riverland where, at one point, we actually ran out of trucks to send out. As always, the volunteers have excelled themselves in their work keeping their communities safe.

COVID-19 made our roads and border communities extremely busy with restrictions impacting our Riverland and Murraylands areas.

A huge feat for our staff was the move to new Headquarters on Kennett Road, Murray Bridge. I am really proud that we were able to find a place that will be so accommodating for the volunteers while also providing an adaptable space for the management of incidents. If you're in Murray Bridge, we'd love for you to stop by for a look and to say g'day!

This year we have put a lot of emphasis on Community Engagement, with Yvette Rathjen working in conjunction with the team at Region 5 to deliver Firey Women programs in the wake of the Yumali fire. We have also started to focus on how we can increase the participation of young people through the strengthening of our Youth Advisory Council (YAC) programs and supporting Cadet programs.

Thank you to all the Regions that provided support during some large and protracted incidents throughout the year. To all the volunteers, staff and their families, thank you for the time you give so selflessly to keep the community safe!

- Ray Jackson

# The Bend support

**The opening of The Bend Motorsport Complex near Tailem Bend has seen motor enthusiasts flock to the new racetrack over the past few years, with volunteers from the Swanport Group providing regular onsite emergency response capability.**

During May's Super Sprint Series, the local group staffed a Quick Response Vehicle (QRV) and 34P tanker for the event, filling a three day roster with 36 volunteers engaged to respond to fires or incidents at the complex.

Our Regional Operations Planning Officer, Shane Clinch, works closely with The Bend management at each event, providing advice on their Emergency Management Plan. He assesses the risks and attendee numbers before deciding if a CFS presence is required or handled by a standard local response.

The Sprint Series is the biggest event on The Bend's calendar, with up to 10,000 people in attendance on any given day. On top of that, the camping and accommodation facilities increase the risk of incidents occurring.

I'm really conscious of volunteers giving up their time, so we weigh up the likelihood of being called out. We work closely with the management on an event-by-event basis and support them where we can. It's a great chance for the volunteers to gain new skills and experience, and most of them appreciate being able to watch the race and take part in such a huge community activity.



## New HQ

Leaving behind what could only be described as a 'rabbit warren', Region 3 has a new place to call home after relocating their headquarters in November 2020.

The move to their new premises on Kennett Road, Murray Bridge was relatively seamless, despite the universe throwing a COVID-19 lockdown and numerous incidents their way over the course of their three-month transition.

Regional staff worked tirelessly to ensure that the support to volunteers and response to the community were not affected. This success was showcased through how effectively we responded to the Pike River fire.

The new building boasts a state-of-the-art Regional Command Centre (RCC) with the ability to scale up in a multi-agency response. There is even enough space for a second, separate RCC as an infection control measure.

**Left: Crews watch the fireworks at the Bend Complex  
Right: New Region 3 HQ.**



Along with a new space, the Region has invested heavily in technology to support volunteers with real-time tactical intelligence, helping personnel in the RCC, Incident Management Team (IMT) and in the field, to make fast, accurate and effective decisions.

In one of the state's largest centres and a significant satellite city, the new headquarters provides a prime location not only for emergency capability, but also a space out of which Local and State Government organisations can operate, if and when required.

The new space also has new training areas which have already been put to good use by volunteers across the region, as well as meeting and conference facilities that may be accessed by other community groups.

## **Nippy's expansion**

Iconic South Australian company, Nippy's, recently underwent a significant upgrade, increasing its production capacity at Moorook in the Riverland. As one of the largest employers in the region and an important economic contributor for the state, the new factory required a robust safety system to minimise any impact caused by fires or emergencies onsite.

Nippy's has worked with the CFS Development Assessment Service (DAS) team to bring the expansion area online and reach compliance with building codes. Since the site was commissioned,

Nippy's has continued to work with Region 3 to undertake data collection and produce a Pre-Incident Plan identifying all fire service requirements, particularly Hazardous Materials (HazMat) risk.

The factory poses a significant HazMat risk with its bulk production and storage of chemicals for flavoured milk. The site also has a range of pressure vessels and boilers, with large, fast moving, plant and machinery.

On one of the visits, volunteers from the first responding brigades, Moorook and Barmera, toured the facility with site management and discussed the risks and key points of isolation. They also identified how to access parts of the site and familiarised themselves with alarm panels.

After a desktop response discussion for multiple incidents ranging from response to alarm, structure fires and HazMat leak, the volunteers conducted a dry run onsite of how to connect the fire systems and boost the sprinklers and hydrants.

## **Pike River**

Fire Danger Season kicked off early for Region 3, with the Almondco fire at Pike River in the Riverland proving a complicated incident for CFS personnel.

Almondco, a national cooperative company that processes around 80% of Australia's almond supplies, is a major local employer with around \$35m of assets and \$15m in stock onsite.



The fire was started by spontaneous combustion and burned through multiple piles of almond by-product, some around 10 metres high and 50 metres long.

Because of the shape and weight of the almond by-product, it was easily picked up and carried by wind, creating multiple fires in the area.

The fire was declared a Level 2 incident with an IMT set up, with multiple strike teams from across the Region and MFS firefighters called in to provide additional capability. With so many orchards nearby, there was a race against time to extinguish the fire and reduce the amount of fresh produce affected by smoke taint.

Utilising ten earth movers, unburnt product had to be moved to a safe area away from the fire, and around 10,000 tonnes of smouldering materials had to be separated to prevent further outbreaks.

With State Border Restrictions in place, the fire was logistically complicated, with a lot of the standard operational accommodation occupied by ADF personnel supporting COVID-19 efforts.

After a mammoth effort over eight days, crews were able to hand the fireground back to the owners on September 16, saving around \$25 million in assets. Almondco staff continued to monitor the site, aerating mounds of almond husks and checking for hotspots using thermal imaging cameras.



## Chloe Adams Cadet, Waikerie CFS

### **I joined the CFS because:**

I grew up around the CFS and when my dad had to go to the station and do duty checks I would always ask if I could go with him. I loved being around the trucks and I was always happy just being in that CFS space.

### **When I'm not volunteering, you'll find me:**

Either outside training or playing basketball, hanging out with family and friends, or listening to music.

### **The highlight of my time as cadet has been:**

Representing the CFS Cadets on ANZAC Day by laying the wreath with one of my senior firefighters.

### **Something you might not know about my brigade/part of this world is:**

Waikerie's original QRV was won in competitions and was the only truck to ever be given as a prize at competitions.

### **During my time in CFS I hope to:**

Help people when help is needed, build up my communication skills, and to challenge myself and my skills with anything that might happen.

### **My CFS heroes are:**

My dad Neil Adams, and the leadership at the brigade – Lieutenant 1 Raymond Davis, Group Officer Graham Ward and Captain Shaun Arnold.

# Garrie Negus

## Operations Brigade



### **How long have you been in the CFS?**

I've been involved for just over 10 years. Over that time, I've served in the Jervois Brigade, Swanport Group and Region 3 Operations Brigade.

### **What roles have you held?**

At Jervois I was the Brigade WHS Co-ordinator for 8 years, SF for 2 years and Lt3 for 2 years.

Since co-responding with Region 3 Operations Brigade, I have been Lt1 and Equipment and Logistics Officer for 4 years, with a short spell as the Communications Officer, and was recently voted in as the Brigade Captain.

### **What has been the biggest change you've seen over your time with CFS?**

Definitely the investment in crew protection to our truck fleet.

### **What has been the biggest challenge?**

Recruiting new people in rural areas, especially into non-firefighting roles. We are so much more than fire trucks and firemen/women. There are so many other roles a volunteer can get involved with that do not require getting on a fire truck. I think as an organisation we are very poor at getting that message out there, along with letting people know how their 'day job' skill sets are transferable skills into so many of those roles.

### **What's a positive experience that has stayed with you?**

The resolve and resolution of those who have experienced devastating fires, to pick themselves up, dust themselves down, and rebuild and carry on with their lives.

### **What makes your brigade/community/area different to the others?**

We all think we are more special than any other brigade or group. At the end of the day, we have to respond to what is in our own area, be that running grass fires in crops, fighting fires in difficult terrain in the hills, dealing with RCR on major transport corridors or providing support to a community event. We are there for the benefit of our community and its needs. So, I don't think we are more special than others.

The Operations Brigade by default is different to a normal Brigade as we don't put wet stuff on red stuff, but support the Region in various other roles, such as Ground Observers, Radio Operators, Staging Area Management and Operation, Situations Officers, Planning Officers, Logistics Officers and general support to the RCC when it is active. All roles that are behind the scenes, but vitally important for the management of a large 'going' fire or event.

### **What's an incident you'll never forget?**

I was a Ground Observer for a 7 day shift on Kangaroo Island in 2020. We ended up working alongside Natural Values and learnt a lot about other 'Risks and Threatened Assets' within the environment.

### **What keeps you involved in the Service?**

I enjoy the challenges thrown at us and believe in supporting those who protect our communities.



Region  
Four



**Groups:** Black Rock, Blyth/Snowtown, Bundaleer, Burra, Flinders, Hallett, Mount Remarkable and Spencer

**Volunteers:** 2,000+ **Brigades:** 66



**Region 4 is the largest of the six Regions and covers 809,592 square kilometres (approximately 66%) of the State.**

With a population of approximately 71,000 people, the Region takes in the Mid North, Flinders, and North East and North West Pastoral areas. The dominant feature of the Region is the Flinders Ranges, and the combined area is well known for farming, sheep and cattle grazing, grain production and is the gateway to the Outback and mining areas of the State.

The size and sparse nature of the population means the region faces its own unique challenges in keeping its communities and travellers safe.

Traditional brigades affiliated with groups are established in the Mid North and Flinders districts. Due to the vast distances between communities in the North Western and North Eastern Pastoral districts, out-of-area brigades, collectively known as Pastoral Brigades, operate. Our brigades are supported by approximately 2,000 highly trained volunteers.

There are a total of 66 brigades in this region, including 17 Pastoral Brigades!

## From the Regional Commander

There have been some interesting times over the past twelve months. We have had some huge challenges thrown our way: an extremely busy and early fire season on the APY Lands, COVID-19 restrictions limiting access to the region, then the quietest year I have ever experienced in my time as Regional Commander.

We have such a diverse region, with by far the largest footprint, some of the most important Indigenous and ecological sites in the state, and some of Australia's most isolated communities. We also host a major thoroughfare connecting the north and south of the country. While these factors throw up some big challenges, they also give us opportunities to show how strong and resilient CFS volunteers can be.

Region 4 volunteers never stop amazing me with their commitment to CFS. This year our focus has been on the growth and development of our brigades and groups as a way of building a strong Region. The embrace of new ideas by our volunteers has been commendable. I continue to believe that Region 4 is the best Region in South Australia because of its fantastic volunteers and staff, and relationships built on trust and respect. Thank you.

-Sindy McCourt



## APY Lands firebreaks

**As Regional Officer for Outback Areas, Peter Ikonmopoulos has one of the more interesting roles within the CFS. This takes him to some of the most remote parts of the state, as he works with communities to ensure their preparedness and resilience in approaching fires and other natural hazards.**

Communities in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands have experienced a significant increase in large bushfires over the past five years. This has included over 150 grass fires, to which the CFS has responded, with five of those fires burning over 100,000 hectares of land. It is well accepted that climate change is leading to more frequent and severe bushfires, droughts, heatwaves and intensification of storm events. This, coupled with La Niña, has resulted in above average

spring rainfall which has spurred the vast growth of grass, a source of combustible material that will pose a significant fire risk in the next Fire Danger Season.

In response to this, CFS has forged a collaborative working relationship with APY Anthropology and the Regional Anangu Services Aboriginal Council (RASAC) in order to undertake and maintain thirteen newer firebreaks around their communities. CFS and RASAC will lead and implement the project prior to the Fire Danger Season. RASAC will maintain the firebreaks on an annual basis to ensure the project has sustained long-term benefits. Ongoing and successful collaboration between CFS, APY Anthropology and RASAC will ensure greater protection to the APY Lands and Anangu people.

**Left: Grader  
Fire Break  
Right:  
Road Crash  
Wirraminna**



## Captains Seminar at Jamestown, March 13-14

Captains and leaders from across Region 4 descended on Jamestown in the mid-north on March 13 and 14 for the Region's biennial Captains Seminar.

Around 44 representatives from as far away as Fregon on the APY Lands and Farrell Flat attended the one-and-a-half-day seminar where the topics of discussion centred around succession planning and support for Group Officers, Deputy Group Officers and Captains - acknowledging that the operational and administrative sides of their role require different skills and abilities.

A highlight for many who attended was a 'speed dating' style networking session, which saw volunteers come face-to-face with the likes of Chief Officer Jones, Assistant Chief Officer Hall and Gloria Berni from the CFS Foundation.

While the formal aspect of the seminar was important, it was also just a good opportunity to get together with other R4 volunteers, to meet each other, network and chew the fat over some of our common CFS experiences.

With the seminar now cemented as a two-yearly affair, the region is now looking to develop a mentoring program to help support brigade and group leaders between events.

## Road crash at Wirraminna

On Sunday, March 6, volunteers from across the remote brigades in Region 4 responded to reports of a vehicle fire on a bridge on the Sturt Highway at Wirraminna, 30 kilometres west of Woomera.

Crews arrived to find a fatality involving a truck and a ute, with the impact of the crash creating an explosion so intense it melted the road and caused part of the bridge to collapse.

Nicoli Ackland, Regional Duty Officer during the incident, commended the work of the crews in attendance.

"It was such a complex incident for the personnel responding. We had to simultaneously contend with an intense explosion and subsequent fire, a road crash and the deteriorating infrastructure, in one of the most remote parts of the state.

The communication and coordination not only between the responding brigades, but also up the chain-of-command was flawless, given everything they were contending with.

For Woomera Captain, Justin Bradbury, this was one of his first incidents, having only joined the CFS some eight months earlier, quickly assuming the role of Captain and, for this incident, the role of Forward Commander."

It was not your typical road crash.

We arrived to a scene of absolute devastation, and I would be surprised if I saw anything like it again.

But in the situation, everyone did their job and really did the CFS and the state proud.

## Response and recovery in remote areas

For brigades in remote parts of the state, fires can be few and far between, with back-up and additional support often hundreds of kilometres away. This makes our CFS volunteers in these parts invaluable, as they often work autonomously across a huge cross section of emergency responses.

A house fire in the back streets of Oodnadatta last August saw the one-truck brigade tackle the fire solo with the nearest support, Coober Pedy, over three hours away.

The six-member brigade, more adept at being first responders for road crash rescue along the Oodnadatta Track, quickly jumped into action, preventing the fire from affecting neighbouring properties.

This fire really showcased just how much these remote volunteers are required to be 'jacks-of-all-trades', Regional Commander, Sindy McCourt explained.

While they have only had a handful of house fires over the past decade, the understanding of how to safely and appropriately extinguish a structure fire is just as important as every other facet of their emergency response capability.

When the fire is complete and the damage assessed, the next obstacle for regional communities becomes how to rebuild, with the cost of resources often pushing the prices two or three times higher than the costs incurred in more densely populated areas.

While a property may be valued at \$100,000, the cost of rebuilding, i.e. getting tradespeople, building supplies and equipment often sees the overall estimated damages from the fire closer to \$300,000 – as was the case with the fire at Oodnadatta.



## Vaughan Yates Cadet, Stirling North Brigade

### **The main reason I joined CFS was:**

To gain new experiences outside of what I would normally endure. CFS looked perfect as it looked like a fun and enjoyable experience that I wanted to be a part of.

### **When I'm not volunteering, I'm:**

Often playing football and cricket for my local clubs, enjoying playing with mates.

### **The biggest highlight of my involvement in CFS so far has been:**

The competitions and camps held by the cadet leaders with the other brigades in our region. The CFS leaders have produced many fun and enjoyable highlights over the years I have been involved.

### **Something I'm hoping to gain from the CFS is:**

Knowledge and new life skills that I'll be able to use in later life, while also meeting new people and making new friends.

### **My mentor is:**

Dad. He has encouraged and supported me throughout, encouraging me to try new things like CFS. He has helped to make me who I am today. Much of this wouldn't be possible without the amazing help and support of the Stirling North cadet leaders who make it the fun and enjoyable experience it is.

# Ken Campbell

## AFSM

### Yongala Brigade



#### **I've been involved with the CFS for:**

42 and a bit years – I joined the Yongala CFS Brigade in March, 1978.

#### **I am currently:**

A Group Officer, Trainer and Assessor, and sit on many committees to support our Region's volunteers, including the Flinders, Mid North, Yorke Peninsula Bushfire Management Committee, the Region 4 Operational Infrastructure and Logistics Committee, Regional Volunteer Management Committee and COAC.

#### **The biggest change I've seen during my time with the CFS has been:**

The growth. When I started out, community members fundraised and built their own trucks and stations, but now the CFS is an organisation where most resources are provided by a government funded budget. As a result, there's a significantly increased expectation from society that the CFS will respond to everything, as opposed to just grass and structure fires at the beginning. Nowadays sometimes we fight fires!

In addition, the progress and improvement of IT resources such as phones, iPads, computers and the SAGRN Radio, etc., and the introduction of new technology across the Service.

#### **The biggest challenge has been:**

Diminishing brigade member numbers and a more demanding society

that is less community minded and increasingly time poor.

#### **Something that makes my part of the world unique is:**

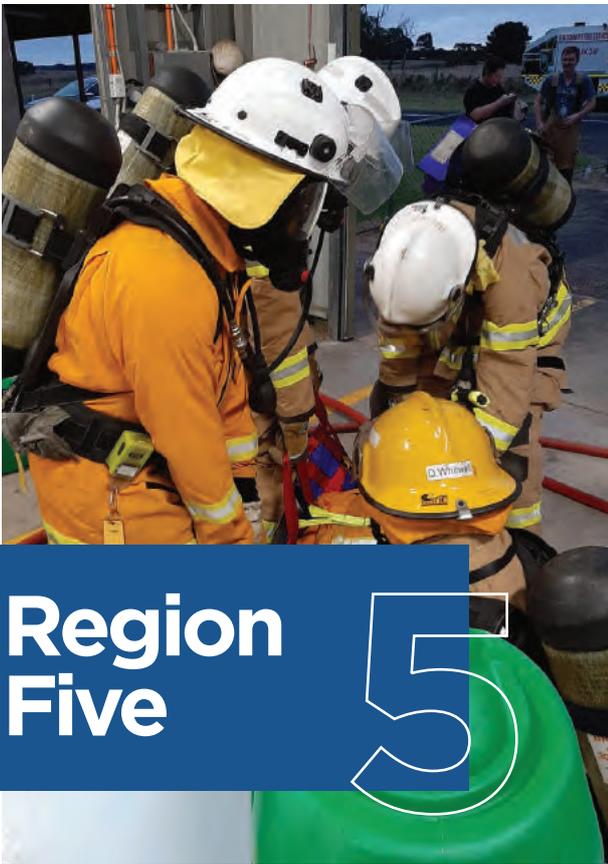
The pastoral/remote area laidback mindset of members and that community that achieves goals with challenges of time and distance, along with the ability to apply initiative when facing barriers in getting the job done.

#### **Incidents I'll never forget are:**

The Black Saturday Victorian fires in 2009, the KI fires in 2007 and 2020, and the Bangor fire are all significant to me in a physical and psychological way, and will always be remembered. But one incident that made me sit back and take stock of what I do as a volunteer, was a 03:30hrs RCR incident where, after aiding the sole occupant, we then had to physically restrain him for quite some time after two of us were physically assaulted.

#### **I stay involved because of:**

The camaraderie of fellow volunteers and staff members along with the lasting friendships and relationships developed under sometimes less than ideal situations. In addition, the opportunity for personal development and achievement that would be difficult to gain elsewhere. The sense of achievement in community support is also a significant factor.



Region Five 5



**Groups:** Kingsley, Lacepede, Lucindale, Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, Robe, Tatiara and Wattle Range

**Volunteers:** 1,900+ **Brigades:** 81



**Region 5 covers about 20,000 square kilometres of the state, co-sharing responsibility for the Ngarkat Conservatation Park with Region 3. With the Dukes and Riddoch Highways running through the region and acting as the main thoroughfare for Victorian traffic, local volunteers are kept busy with many road crash rescues and HazMat incidents.**

With reliable rainfall and abundant underground water, the region has a strong history as a wealthy agricultural area. The grape growing districts between Penola and Padthaway produce some of Australia's best wine due to a favourable combination of soils and climate.

The South East of South Australia represents 85% of the state's forests and is a \$1.7 billion dollar industry with an annual growth rate of two per cent each year.

## From the Regional Commander

This Fire Danger Season, Region 5 was put on the map for all the wrong reasons, with the biggest fire for the season coming dangerously close to the township of Lucindale. To halt the fire before it hit town was an incredible feat by volunteers from across Region 5. The Tatiara, Lacapede and Lucindale Groups were there from the start, with Strike Teams from Wattle Range, Mount Gambier and Kingsley arriving just before the fire was about to enter the Lucindale township.

It is a testament to the strong relationships across the whole of the region with assistance in firefighting and mopping-up from the Forest Industry. I wish to acknowledge those volunteers in the Lacepede and Lucindale Groups, many of whom were fighting the fire while their own properties were under threat and many suffered extensive losses. I also acknowledge the communities who are still recovering from the Keilera Fire in 2019/20. The CFS Foundation, with the support of the Country Fire Service Volunteers Association (CFSVA), were able to provide assistance after the fire, and it was heartening to see them in action.

The Region has not only been involved in firefighting but has had a horrendous year with road crash rescue along the Dukes and Riddoch Highways. Crews worked closely with SES volunteers, SAAS and SAPOL to provide the best outcomes possible in dire and dangerous circumstances.

Australia Day saw honours conferred on so many of our CFS volunteers, and I want to congratulate the Mount Gambier and Kingsley Groups who were awarded the Grant District Council's Australia Day Active Citizens Award for their service to the communities in the Lower South East. It was so great to see our volunteers recognised with such an honour.

As the region with the largest border to our neighbours in Victoria, our communities were really quite adversely affected by the lengthy COVID-19 border controls, and I want to acknowledge the resilience our volunteers have shown over the past twelve months.

-John Probert

# Mount Gambier gas outage

**On September 9 around 9,000 residents in Mount Gambier found themselves without hot water after a supply interruption saw Australian Gas Networks (AGN) disconnect the main gas gate that supplies the city.**

As the initial shock and response to the emergency died down, AGN turned its attention to the growing concerns around community safety, as they worked to restore the gas to the city.

CFS volunteers were engaged, along with SES and MFS personnel, to go house-to-house, ensuring that each affected property had their gas turned off. Captain of the Wandilo Brigade, Matthew Byrne, was one of the volunteers who assisted with the incident and explained that while the work may have seemed basic, it was vital to get right.

Without turning off the 9,000 plus customers at their gas meters, there was the risk of gas flowing uncontrolled and unknowingly when supply was reconnected to the network. Customers had appliances operating when the gas flow stopped, but the risk was these may not have been properly turned off.

Crews were tasked with working in smaller groups or pairs and assigned a number of streets and address numbers to systematically shutoff gas meter valves and record this for each property on the allocated list. The accessibility and safe approach of some meters was a challenge for the crews that was overcome.

All up, CFS volunteers were engaged for three days on the project, with Matthew reflecting that it was a good experience for the CFS Volunteers to be a part of.

“Although this wasn’t our usual role, it was good exposure for our emergency services and came with a positive response from the majority of the community.”



## HazMat on the border

On May 27, 2020, South East HazMat crews were called to a peculiar incident, with a van travelling from Melbourne to Adelaide stirring the interest of SAPOL officers at the SA/Victoria COVID-19 border checkpoint.

Officers discovered five 44 gallon drums with unidentified contents in the rear of the van, one of which had moved in transit and was showing signs of damage.

When it was suggested that the drums contained possible radioactive material, SAPOL acted fast implementing a 30 metre isolation zone, calling in the Naracoorte HazMat Technician appliance, notifying the EPA, and requesting CFS’s Manager, Technical Operations, Tim McNeilly to attend.

When Naracoorte HazMat arrived on scene, they used their dosimeters to survey around the outside of the 30 metre isolation area to determine the dose rate, informing the



**Left: Gas outage  
Right: HazMat stop/trucks on the border**

crews of the risk they were facing. The initial highest dose rate around the outside of the 30 metre isolation area was 0.35uSv/h.

The crew then progressed towards the van holding the dosimeters in front with instructions to stop at a dose rate of 30uSv/h.

The recordings indicated:

- Rear door of van from 2 metres – 19.7uSv/h
- Rear doors opened – 37.8uSv/h, and
- Passenger side sliding door, open at 1metre – 58.8uSv/h.

Tim then undertook a sweep with the Rotem RAM R-200 in contamination meter mode, before confirming and reassuring those first responders in attendance that the radiation exposure was minimal and they were safe, with no readings above 0.30cps on all persons.

With the area declared safe, crews were able to locate the documentation on the contents of the van, finding the product within the drums to be sealed neutron sources of Californium-252.

Tim reflected on the volunteers' efforts, "I was really impressed to see the Naracoorte HazMat team put their experience into practise. While we were lucky that the materials were emitting a safe level of radiation, the situation could have very easily been quite different, and it's good to know that, if we ever get called to an incident where these skills are required, crews around the state are ready to respond."

## **Governor Hieu Van Le visits bushfire affected community**

In the aftermath of the Blackford Fire, His Excellency the Governor, Hieu Van Le and Mrs Le visited Lucindale, meeting locals who had been affected by the fire and supporting the recovery efforts in the community.

His Excellency said he thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to thank the CFS volunteers.

"In February 2021, my wife and I visited Lucindale and Naracoorte to see with our own eyes the damage caused by the fires and to meet with people affected by the devastation."

"During this visit we were pleased to meet with volunteers from the CFS, Blaze Aid, Red Cross, Lucindale Lions and many other groups at a community gathering organised by the Rapid Response Team."

"We were very impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of the highly skilled volunteers that we met. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of them for their devoted service to the community."

"Members of the CFS and other organisations play a vital role in keeping our regional and remote areas safe, while strengthening community spirit."



## **CFS Volunteers provide cross-border emergency response**

While the global pandemic may have seen Australians separated for much of 2020, our emergency cross-border responses remained strong as CFS volunteers attended incidents in NSW and Victoria.

On the morning of February 11, a COVID-19 outbreak in Victoria saw many South Australians rushing to get home, leading to the checkpoint at Serviceton, east of the border, being inundated with cars and travellers awaiting temperature checks and permit approvals.

At around 2am, a three-truck pile up at the checkpoint led to a single fatality.

While the crash occurred in Victoria, our Bordertown crew was the first on the scene, responding to the initial truck fire wearing Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus (CABA) while also working to access vehicle manifests to ascertain any HazMat response requirements.

As other crews from the Tatiara Group and our CFA counterparts arrived on the scene, they were put to work extinguishing a grass and scrub fire caused by the crash. SES volunteers also attended the incident, assisting with the rescue operation and providing crucial lighting for the crews on the scene.

This difficult job was handled well by the CFS, drawing the praise from the CFA for the professional way it was handled by SA crews.



## **Philip Nash Lacepede Group Officer**

### **What has your CFS involvement been?**

I have been involved in CFS for 45 years. I started off as a firefighter, stepping up to be Reedy Creek captain for 17 years before becoming the Group Officer for Lacepede Group.

### **What has been the biggest change or challenge for you in your role?**

The improvement in trucks and safety procedures making sure we're getting the members home safe to their families after every job.

### **What has been the biggest challenge?**

The workload. It's hard keep up as a volunteer, implementing new systems into each brigade in my group and making sure members are trained to share the workload.

### **What's been inspiring for you?**

Seeing future firefighters coming through. I have 2 grandchildren that are proud to be a part of CFS and it's nice to know that there will be members to take over from us when we step down.

### **What something people might not know about your part of the world?**

We are a friendly community area and we all come together when in need, like in the recent Keilera and Blackford fires. Also, we have great beaches to go fishing!

# Charley (13) & Delta (12) Robinson Cadets of the Kingston Brigade



## **We joined CFS because:**

All of our family are a part of CFS and we wanted to follow their footsteps and learn some life skills.

## **When I'm not volunteering with CFS you'll find me:**

### **Charley**

At the golf course playing golf or at the skate park on my scooter and hanging out with my mates. When the weather is good, I'll be down fishing.

### **Delta**

Roller-skating down the skate park with my brother and at the golf course practising, as I'm trying to get my handicap down to 30. I really enjoy hanging out with my friends.

## **The Highlight of my involvement so far has been:**

### **Charley**

Going to Adelaide for the ANZAC Eve Youth Vigil 2021, meeting new friends while doing our duty which I felt so proud to be a part of. It's something I will never forget as it was so enjoyable.

### **Delta**

Getting chosen to be cadet captain as I'm the smallest in our cadet brigade, but I do have the loudest voice. So, it was great to be in charge and feel a part of a team who supported me in my time as the captain.

## **While I'm in the CFS I hope to:**

### **Charley**

Continue my CFS volunteering and become an active member of the Kingston Brigade and work alongside my family members.

### **Delta**

I hope to become an active member, but I really want to become a CFS trainer and teach new members of CFS.

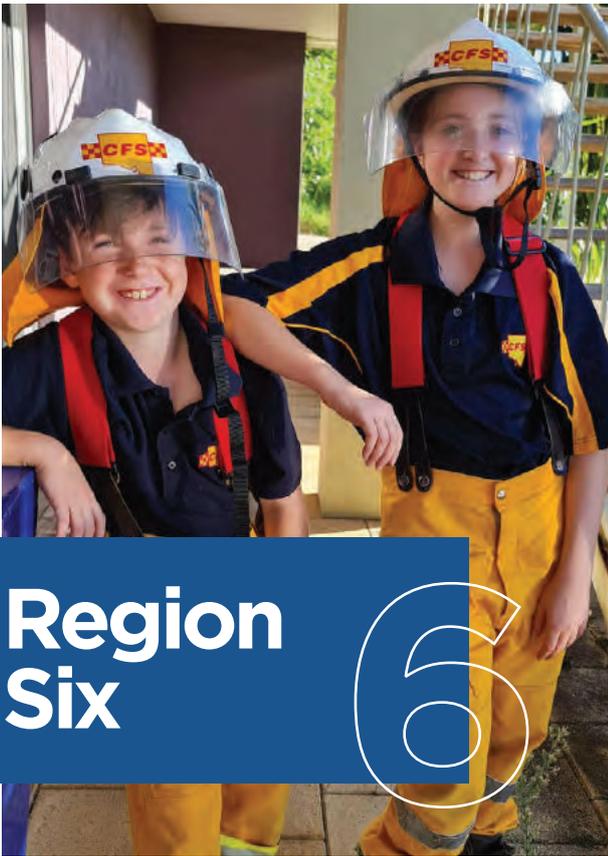
## **In CFS I really look up to:**

### **Charley**

My Pa who is the Group Officer for Lacepede Group. He helps me and tells me all sort of stories about CFS, and always making me laugh.

### **Delta**

My Mum who is very active member and does many roles, but most of all enjoy working with my mum while she is teaching training. I just want to be like her and hope to get as much enjoyment out of CFS as she does.



# Region Six



**Groups:** Caralue, Eastern Eyre, Elliston, Lower Eyre Peninsula, Tumby Bay and Western Eyre

**Volunteers:** 1,650+

**Brigades:** 60



**Region 6 covers about 188,000 square kilometres or 20% of the State, servicing a population of about 33,000 people living on the West Coast and Eyre Peninsula.**

The major road network in the region is National Highway One, which runs east-west across the north of the region.

The Eyre Highway is the main corridor for heavy freight vehicles, passenger coaches, tourists towing caravans and single light vehicles linking the eastern states and Western Australia.

At present, more than 140,000 vehicles travel along the highway each year.

The region relies heavily on primary industry for its economic viability. The bulk of their income comes from agriculture, principally cropping, wool and aquaculture (tuna and oyster farming).

## From the Regional Commander

The Region 6 team are extremely proud of the work that the volunteers have undertaken this year with the challenges of COVID-19, working with staff changes, and days of severe fire danger at the end of the season.

There have been some significant staff changes, with Regional Commander Gavin Wornes moving into a Project Manager role at CFS HQ. Gavin's work in the region

was phenomenal and I appreciate his commitment to the betterment of Region 6.

Two staff members – Kylie Kleinig (RTDO) and Kailee Ingham (A/ROPO) received their Staff Officer Rank. Region 6 takes a proactive approach to developing Regional Duty Officer training and mentoring for all those wishing to undertake these roles. I look forward to increasing our operational capacity moving forward.

The region had a number of our members recognised with citizen and community awards over the last year. I'd like to especially note:

- Streaky Bay firefighter Hamish Hackett awarded Young Citizen of the Year by the Streaky Bay District Council
- Poochera firefighter Joel Lynch awarded Citizen of the Year by the Streaky Bay District Council
- Kimba Brigade Captain Trevor Clifford awarded Citizen of the Year by the Kimba District Council
- Murdinga Brigade firefighter Lisa Kammerman awarded the Citizen of the Year from the District Council of Elliston, and
- Port Lincoln Brigade Cadet Tyrene Gardiner finalist in the 7 News Young Achiever Awards for SA.

I also would like to acknowledge the volunteers taking on new responsibilities, stepping up to help their mates as leaders in Region 6 and supporting those who are facing hard times.

- Brendan Saers

# Regional outlook

The region is still dry and had two days of severe fire danger in mid-April resulting in the flare up of the Cockaleechee fire. Beginning on April 8, 2021, the fire broke control lines on April 13. With support from Aviation, 80 CFS firefighters, DEW crews and FFUs, the forward rate of spread was halted quickly, with 1320 hectares burnt. The quick response from crews, great communication by volunteer leaders and fantastic teamwork got the job done.

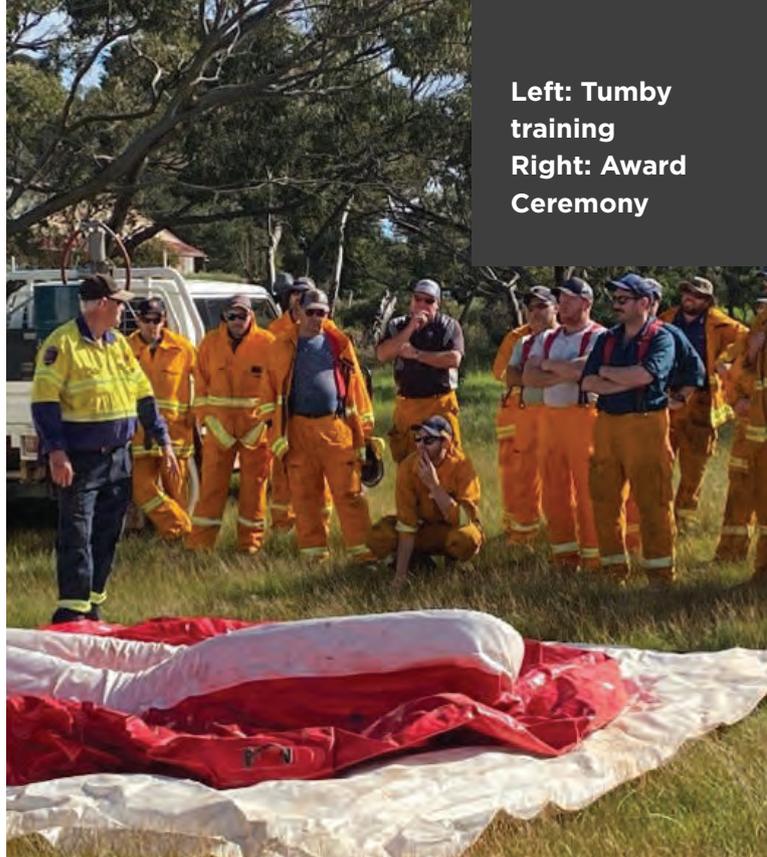
Below average rainfall paired with unseasonably warm weather in May put Region 6 crews on high alert, with locals responding to multiple small fire incidents across the region. While the Bureau of Meteorology is forecasting a wet winter, we're expecting that our winter will be short lived and to be back into the Fire Danger Season before we know it.

## More than a bushfire service

Volunteers in Region 6 have completed rescues that required them to think outside the square and exposed them to some different experiences and problem-solving challenges.

Tumby Bay were called to extract a person who managed to get trapped between rocks along the coastline. Using the tools at hand, in this case lifting slings, the team was able to safely extract the person. It was a complicated operation, but well managed by the team, showing professionalism, care and flexibility.

The Koonibba Test Range, located on Aboriginal land about 40 kilometres north-west of Ceduna, launched two sub-orbital rockets in September 2020. As the Control Agency with respect to a hazardous materials incident, nine CFS members from Streaky Bay and Ceduna attended for fire cover, and the Port Lincoln Brigade for HAZMAT.



Left: Tumby training  
Right: Award Ceremony

Greg Napier, Captain of Lincoln Brigade said it was a “Fantastic experience, and a great opportunity for crews across the region to work towards a common goal that wasn’t a fire.”

## Remote Training and community outreach

Throughout 2020-2021 the region has undertaken Basic Firefighting 1 courses for new volunteers at Cummins, Ceduna and Port Lincoln. The region has also welcomed in new Cadets, increasing their numbers across the region.

Tumby Bay Group hosted ten Brigades for pre-season training and truck preparation, bringing together over twenty volunteers from across the brigades for a day of drafting, pumping, skills maintenance and general preparations.

Coffin Bay Brigade visited the Wangary School and Elliston Brigade the local Elliston Kindy with SAPOL – taking the opportunity to engage with the next generation of cadets and firefighters, increase the awareness of CFS in the community and encourage positive relationships.

## From Kym Eagle, Region 6 delegate, Chief Officer's Advisory Committee

Region 6 has its own set of challenges. We go about our work with a fair bit of independence, knowing that any backup or assistance may be hours away, and there is a great 'can do' attitude amongst our volunteers.

Through COAC, I appreciate the ability to influence the decision-making process of the CFS, raising issues on behalf of volunteers with the Chief Officer and members of the Executive. I always think you can complain from the sidelines, or you can be proactive about solving the issues that affect us.

A frustration of mine is the 'one size fits all' approach that gets adopted by different parts of the organisation at different times. What works in any one region is not necessarily the best system for everyone else. Although it's now been rectified, an example of this was the centralising of PPE cleaning, when we have a local business that can provide the same service with a faster turnaround for our volunteers.

I'm becoming increasingly concerned about the expectations placed on our volunteers, outside of attending emergencies, from both the community and the organisation. We are treated as a resource that will keep on giving because we so regularly go above and beyond, creating difficult and unrealistic expectations on what we can deliver.

At the end of the day, most of our volunteers in Region 6 just want to get on the trucks, do the job and go home. If we can help them do this without getting bogged down in bureaucracy, while still meeting the legislative obligations of the CFS then, for me, we have done our job in COAC.

## Decades of service acknowledged

In March, the region hosted Chief Officer, Mark Jones, and Director of Regional Operations, Ken Hall, for the Eastern Eyre Group medal presentations.

During the event, Chief Officer Jones and Group Officer Bryan Trigg presented a 60-year Service Medal to Des Ottens and a 50-year Service Medal to Bev Millard.

Four volunteers – Graeme Christian, Linda Smith, Paul Brieese and Craig Brieese – also received 40-year Service Medals.

Regional Commander, Brendon Saers, said the event was a great chance to acknowledge the incredible work of the volunteers.

In total, the volunteers recognised have racked up 270 years of commitment and experience to the CFS between them.

"It was a genuine privilege to be invited and to hear the stories and passion of our volunteers, and it was a real honour to have the Chief Officer able to attend and present the recipients with their medals for their service."



# Jessica Rosenzweig Captain, Streaky Bay Brigade

## How long have you been in the CFS?

I have been in the CFS for 15 years, with a break over a couple years when we had Jaylee and Ashley.

## What roles have you held?

I have been Brigade Training Coordinator, Brigade Logistics Coordinator for Streaky Bay, and Group Training Coordinator for Western Eyre. I have also held a Lieutenant's role before becoming Captain 3 years ago.

## What's the biggest challenge in your brigade?

Working through the daytime availability of our members and resources, due to the distance from our neighbouring brigades. Also attracting new members, though I know this is an issue for most brigades.

## What's a positive experience that has stayed with you?

Just the camaraderie between brigade members over the feeling of a job well done at the end of an incident.

## What makes your brigade/community/area different to the others?

I think that what makes the Streaky Bay area different is our close working partnership with the Streaky Bay SES unit.

## What's an incident you'll never forget?

You never forget your 'firsts' but if I had to name one incident, it would have to be my first strike team which was to Coonalpyn with the Greenock (R2) Brigade, in a nutshell, we had lightning all around us, real close.

## What keeps you involved in the Service?

It feels good to help the community in its time of need, and the team I get to work with, it's not the captain that makes the brigade, it's the brigade that makes the captain.



# Nick Kleinig Cadet, Port Lincoln Brigade

## What made you join the CFS?

Mum put me on to it, as she is part of the CFS. I was looking for something different as a hobby, and really liked the idea of learning new things, learning about fire trucks and what happens in the CFS

## When I'm not volunteering, I'm:

In year 10 at school. I play hockey and cricket, and hang out with friends and family.

## What has been the highlight of your involvement so far?

Probably all the formal services that I have attended, such as the ANZAC Day service, and Tunarama parades. I really like going on the Cadet camps, and having the chance to see scrub and paddocks that I normally wouldn't.

## Something you might not know about my brigade/part of the world is:

Lincoln has some really cool kids and great people. It's been really easy to make friends, learn people's different styles, and how to work with other people and go about things pretty quickly.

## What do you hope to get out of your time with the CFS?

Along with being able to help the community, you gain some really cool life skills, as well as the people you meet. You make some pretty good friends for life through it, not just locally. I've met people in Ceduna that I know I can call on if I need it.

# Rhonda Russ

## Stalwart, Tumby Bay Group

### How long have you been in the CFS?

Officially for 28 years, but like a lot of people I have been helping out for years before that because of my family.

### What roles have you held?

Group Communications, Brigade Lieutenant and administration, but I've done a lot of Logistics as well. Coordinating trucks servicing and getting them home from deployments. Organising strike teams to the many interstate deployments our group have been involved in over the years, and just making sure crews are fed and looked after.

### What has been the biggest change you have seen over your time with CFS?

28 or so years ago we received a call on the fire phone. We had a house fire and as I didn't know how to use the base radio, I had to ring someone at the caravan park to ask them to notify the fire crew who were training near the caravan park that day to get them to go to the job. Things have definitely changed with pagers, text and Facebook messaging.

### What is a positive experience that has stayed with you?

The best thing has always been the sense of community in the SACFS. During Regional Training Days we got to know people outside of our brigades and groups, they brought all the families and kids together making friends for life. The women who work with me in the radio room are also amazing - Susanne Cave, Ann Bawden and Michelle Gerrie. I have many fond memories over the years of handling stressful events with these women and others, knowing that our families and friends are out on the fireline, handling the radio and communications, hearing some intense radio communications and knowing that we have each other. We hear the good and bad in the radio room, and it's the community we have in CFS that helps us all to deal with it.



### What makes your brigade/community/area different to the others?

A lot of brigades and groups in Region 6 need to be self-reliant for at least 24 hours before we can expect help to arrive from across the state when there's a big incident.

### What's an incident you'll never forget?

Like for a lot of people, Wangary was a major incident for me. My husband was out fighting the fire for days, we had a tent city at the Tumby footy oval and a division being run out of the base. We were seeing off trucks, listening, recording, and doing all that we could to make sure that people were looked after, while also worrying about loved ones and our own safety. Everyone pulled together, especially in the community. They realised they had to, or it wouldn't work.

### What keeps you involved in the Service?

My family. My husband plays an active leading role, and for as long as he does, I'll keep being there for him. My daughter did her BF1 when she was 17. She recently came back to Tumby from her work in London, did her re-accreditation and went on several jobs while she was here.

### Any other comments or messages you'd like to put forward?

Remember the support people in your brigades and groups. The men and women in the radio room hear all the information, and that often includes the bad stuff, they may be impacted just as much by a tough job.



# State Operations and Support Brigade

**The State Operations and Support Brigade (SOSB) is a 24-member group based out of George Street in Hindmarsh.**

Originally established to operate the CFS Bushfire Information Hotline, it has since expanded its scope to perform a variety of tasks, working the hotline in conjunction with SES volunteers (in turn helping SES with their hotline), as well as managing the deployment and set-up of two communication trailers to service a group base/IMT when telephone lines/data cables fail, and a Rapid Deployment Communications trailer used to fill communications blackspots on the fireground.

Members of the SOSB who have operational capacity are also involved in IMTs, and are placed in composite teams with Region 1 when required. They also undertake other tasks as directed by the SDC, including PAX transport, supporting SA Health by filling shifts as COVID-19 Hotline Operators and the transport and set-up of equipment for the COVID-19 Command Centre.

Much of the brigade's training focuses on the communications trailers, including the selection of deployment sites. They also focus on hotline operation (bushfire and storm/flood), radio communications and map reading/GPS. When the opportunity arises, the operational members undertake training in accordance with SMD1 and SMD2.

Captain of the brigade, Aaron Casey, says they are excited about having a space in the new CFS Headquarters in Keswick.

Over the duration of Project HQ, we have been included and briefed on aspects of the project that apply to us. Not only are we excited about the fit-for-purpose site, but the move will bring us into more regular contact with the staff at HQ, making organisation and tasking significantly easier.

While the brigade currently has a waitlist, Aaron is hoping that when the move to the new HQ is complete, they will be able to increase their membership.

Anyone who is interested in getting involved can get in contact with me, through the CFS HQ.

# Aaron Casey Volunteer

## **How long have you been in the CFS?**

I've been involved for over 23 years, starting as a cadet. I've held rank positions including BOS, BF, Lieutenant and Captain, and have held the roles of Scribe, Hotline Supervisor, Hotline Operator, Communications Operator (RDCT deployment), IRIS operator (L3 IMT), Planning Support (L3 IMT), Crew Member, Crew Leader and Sector Commander.

## **What has been the biggest change you've seen over your time with CFS?**

The emphasis on public information allowing the community to make decisions about what they need to do during an emergency. There is now significantly more information on the radio, CFS website, social media and via the CFS Bushfire Information Hotline.

## **What's a positive experience that has stayed with you?**

I think it would be how, during the fires, and without hesitation, a couple in KI opened their home to two of us when there was no accommodation available in the area.

## **What makes your Brigade/community/area different to the others?**

We are a State resource, tasked directly by HQ staff (generally the SDC). We have a breadth of roles and don't have specific recruitment criteria around our member's physical address. Much of our activation is pre-planned, giving members time to get to whichever location required.

## **What keeps you involved in the Service?**

The roles we undertake are crucial to the community, whether it be on the end of a phone or a hose. The community are always extremely grateful for the services we provide, and they will always need us (even more so in the future as climate change impacts on fire frequency and intensity). I also enjoy the interactions with the people I work with (within the brigade, Region 1 HQ and State HQ).

# Benjamin Pearce Volunteer

## **What made you join the CFS and how did you end up in State Ops?**

I have been involved with the CFS since I was a child, and when I moved to Adelaide to study Emergency Management and Terrorism, I wanted to stay involved. The Brigade was welcoming, and I've gained a huge understanding of non-firefighting work, including IMT functions and public information. While studying, I continued to volunteer with State Ops, recently becoming Training Coordinator.

## **What has been the highlight of your involvement?**

Helping callers to the Bushfire Hotline during the 2020 bushfires. People ring in with questions on everything from clarity over warning messages to whether they can use chainsaws during a Total Fire Bans. Guiding people in their decision-making when they are at their most vulnerable is humbling, and I love being able to help.

## **Something you might not know about my brigade is:**

The State Operations and Support Brigade supports on-the-ground fire crews by establishing and creating effective

communications through the Rapid Deployment Communications trailer – a CFS asset that assists in SAGRN and VHF communications by acting either as a stand-alone tower or boosting one of the existing towers within or near an incident, minimising dead zones and creating more licenses so that additional personnel can talk on the radios without trunking.

## **Who is mentor of yours?**

David Parson. He's one of my lecturers at university, and has made an amazing contribution to the Emergency Management Sector within Australia and New Zealand. I admire his determination to provide support and community resilience. I hope to have a career in the EMG sector, and I want to use David's passion and guidance to help me achieve my goals.

## **Who is an unsung CFS hero?**

All our current members – frontline and support. We get caught up 'putting cold stuff on hot stuff', but we can't do it without support. Your contribution never goes unnoticed, whether you're managing or operating in the radio room or volunteering your time as a staging manager. All of these roles are important and valuable in the coordination and management of firefighting. Extinguishing fires effectively and efficiently preserves the communities we hold dear.



# Reviews, debriefs and lessons learned

## **The last twelve months has seen a number of operational reviews and debriefs at the national, state and agency level.**

It started with the release of the independent review into the 2019/20 fire season (the Keelty Review) in June 2020. Following this, in October, the final report from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements was tabled in Parliament.

Both of these reports have and will continue to result in significant outcomes that will impact the frontline experiences of CFS volunteers.

In early 2021, operational debriefs were held for the Cherry Gardens and Blackford/Lucindale bushfires which both occurred in January 2021.

There will be significant enhancements and changes in the areas of equipment, planning, ICT and information sharing to allow for a more prepared response for future events and better prepared communities.

### **To date we've seen, amongst others:**

- The allocation of thermal imaging cameras for all CFS Groups across the state
- The commencement of the Automatic Vehicle Location project which will result in real-time tracking of vehicles no matter their location
- The establishment of a new CFS project team to lead the South

Australian implementation of the new Australian Fire Danger Ratings System to better inform the community during extreme fire weather

- Initial changes to CFS warnings and warning messages as we take a step closer to an all-hazard Australian Warning System
- Final development of CRIIMSON Mobile which will allow for remote access to CRIIMSON for volunteers, and
- Updates to SMDs to reinforce volunteer firefighter safety from heat, fluid loss and fatigue.

The recommendations, observations and themes from debriefs, as well as broader reports such as the Keelty Review and the Royal Commission, will be streamlined into a single list of recommendations that will be actioned by CFS.

As a fire service, every incident should be reviewed tactically, and sometimes strategically to improve knowledge and systems. These processes always provide an opportunity to learn from mistakes or missed opportunities and also provide an opportunity to recognise the successes - as there were many.

CFS continues to protect life, property and the environment with a care and professionalism that is recognised across Australia and indeed around the globe.



# More than a bushfire service

## Haystacks cause headaches

The State's western regions were kept busy in the second half of 2020 with late winter rain leading to an unusually high number of haystack fires.

The CFS responded to 57 haystack fires in October and November – with 23 sheds either partially or completely destroyed – compared to less than 5 reported fires over the same time in 2019.

Too much moisture in the stored bales causes a chain reaction in haystacks, leading to spontaneous combustion, with fires

spreading quickly through the drier fuels, often impacting on buildings and equipment.

Haystack fires cause headaches for local crews, requiring heavy machinery to pull the stacks apart, and continuous monitoring for days after the initial fire due to flare-ups and smoke.



## Advanced Detection training for CFS HazMat Technician Brigades

CFS has six HazMat Technician-level brigades located across the state at Burnside, Nuriootpa, Murray Bridge, Stirling North, Naracoorte and Port Lincoln.

These Technician-level HazMat Brigades carry an additional array of advanced detection and monitoring equipment compared to a standard HazMat Brigade, including equipment for incidents involving toxic gases and vapours in extremely small concentrations, radiation and explosives. They are also equipped with Thermal Imaging Cameras (TICs).

In late 2019, following the debriefing of a number of HazMat incidents, and to support the rollout of additional detection and monitoring equipment to the Technician Brigades, CFS Technical Operations identified the need for the development of a CFS specific HazMat Advanced Detection training course.

In-conjunction with CFS Training, Technical Operations developed a brand new, service-level course called 'CFS HazMat Advanced Detection' to provide relevant and targeted training to HazMat Operators in Technician Brigades on the specific operation of the MultiRAE Toxic detector, parts per billion detector, radiation dosimeter and radioactivity detector, explosive properties test kit and the Draeger UCF9000 TIC.

The training includes a mixture of theoretical equipment-specific training and practical equipment operation, followed by case study assessments from actual HazMat incidents attended by CFS in the past two years.

The HazMat Advanced Detection training forms part of the ongoing work by CFS Technical Operations to increase the capability and skillset of our HazMat Technician Brigades across the state.



## Atmospheric monitoring for Bordertown and Coonalpyn

Technical Operations has continued to travel the state rolling out new MultiRAE Lite Multi-Gas Detectors to CFS HazMat Brigades during 2020.

As the rollout draws to a close, it has provided the opportunity to get Atmospheric Monitoring devices into HazMat Brigades that have never previously had an atmospheric monitoring capability, including Coonalpyn (R3) and Bordertown (R5). These brigades cover a large area in the Murraylands and South East from a HazMat perspective that includes extensive agriculture and major transport routes.

The delivery of new MultiRAE Lite detectors to Bordertown and Coonalpyn coincided with refresher course training in HazMat stowage in both brigades. These brigades are now fully equipped and their training current.

This also provided an opportunity ensure HazMat Operators in both brigades, who regularly respond to HazMat incidents together, have refreshed skills in chemical protective clothing procedures, and also new skills in establishing work zones and undertaking initial analysis of the atmosphere at HazMat incidents using atmospheric monitoring.

The provision of Atmospheric Monitoring training at Coonalpyn and Bordertown, along with a number of other HazMat Brigades during the year saw the number of CFS volunteers trained in Atmospheric Monitoring and the MultiRAE Lite Multi-Gas Detector reach over 250!

# From HQ



## About HQ

**The CFS has around 200 staff filling approximately 160 full-time positions.**

With about 75 staff across our six Regional Offices, the question is often asked “what do the rest of the people in HQ do, and why, when volunteers need new equipment, is the Chief calling on the Government for more staff?”

Based on Chief Officer, Mark Jones’ experience from overseas, staffing numbers in the CFS are very low and easily stretched when operational duties require extra staffing resources.

“While the core business of the CFS is always supporting our volunteers, we are a government department, and we need the personnel to fulfil departmental functions as well as operational support.”

“When major fires, such as those we experienced in the 2019/20 Fire Danger Season occur, the day-to-day running of the organisation gets put on hold, with most staff holding operational and IMT roles on top of their nine-to-five job.”

The Chief concedes that this can hamstring other parts of the organisation.

“Our Aviation personnel, as an example, work

across the state and hold day jobs across different directorates within the organisation. When we have dangerous fire weather, they are moved around the state, meaning their regular work gets dropped. We rarely have people to backfill, meaning their work piles up until they have a chance to come back to it.”

“The busier the season, the more paperwork we have to fill out, with lessons learned and review processes, invoices and other paperwork increasing exponentially.”

While the CFS’s job first and foremost is to support the volunteers, this doesn’t always involve volunteer-facing work, and a fair proportion of our officers undertake important management functions, such as training, finance and equipment, facilities and buildings, general administration, and managing the legislative framework that we work within.

“An important part of the CFS’s Preparedness Operations is the Development Assessment Service, a core team of 10, who assess every new residential and commercial build in bushfire areas and provide ‘sign off’ that the structure is appropriate to the level of threat it may face.

In the Community Engagement space, we have roles that go and speak directly to interested groups, such as industry bodies,

schools and community groups, to ensure that our preparedness and resilience messaging can be tailored in a way that makes it accessible across the state.”

“These are vital roles – prevention is always better than a cure, and the more prepared communities are, the easier it is for our volunteers to get in and put the fires out.”

“When I was a firey, I wondered why we needed all those administrative and managerial staff at head office. Now I realise that it is a global phenomenon. Fire services are dreadfully understaffed given governmental and public expectations”.

## **From the Deputy Chief Officer, Andrew Stark AFSM**

2020/21 provided new and unique challenges and opportunities for CFS. With the onset of COVID-19 many training and station-based activities were interrupted, but Brigades across South Australia continued to respond swiftly and safely to communities and people in need. We managed the balance between keeping all members safe from the risk of infection while maintaining our response capabilities.

While with much relief we saw a significant decrease in wildfire emergencies across our state and the country, brigades responded to life saving incidents, including some major fires in Lucindale, Cherry Gardens and Tarlee.

Over the last twelve months we have had more than 1,800 new members join our CFS brigades and we welcome you, knowing that while learning new skills and gaining knowledge, you assist our communities and add to the vibrancy that is the CFS.

In January and February field trials of the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system were undertaken in all six CFS regions to test its suitability. Installation of equipment is scheduled to commence before the end of this year. AVL will improve firefighter safety by providing Incident Commanders and other key personnel with the location of our fire trucks, other emergency service vehicles and our crews.

**After five years as the CFS’s Deputy Chief Officer, Andrew Stark left the Service on June 11, 2021. We thank “Starky” for his time with the CFS and wish him all the best with his future endeavours.**

## **Welcome back, Georgie Cornish!**

The CFS is excited to welcome Georgie Cornish back into the fold, following two years at State Recovery. Stepping into the role of Executive Director of Frontline Services, (held by Ann Di Piaz until her retirement in late 2020) Georgie oversees the directorates of Operational Infrastructure and Logistics, Operational Capability and Planning and Operational Training and Professional Development.

Georgie is well known and well-respected, having previously held the position of Director, Operational Capability and Planning for three years until February 2019, achieving the rank of Assistant Chief Officer, and acting in many operational roles, including State Emergency Centre Forward Liaison and State Intelligence Officer.

After leaping into the recovery space, working with communities after the Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island fires, Georgie is bringing an increased knowledge and understanding to the CFS. Her experiences and new perspectives are already informing the leadership and direction she is bringing to the Executive Director role.

Since returning to the CFS, Georgie has been impressed by the ongoing level of professionalism and commitment by the volunteers, as she makes her way around the state meeting with regions and our personnel across some of the most remote parts of the state.

As a starting point, Georgie is focusing on our members’ health, safety and welfare, implementing improved governance, processes, and strengthening communication across the agency, reinforcing the expertise and proud traditions of CFS to build a contemporary, inclusive, and thriving fire service.

# Regional Operations

## From the Director, Ken Hall AFSM

**There have been some monumental changes in the regions and the Regional Operations Directorate this past year.**

COVID-19 limited our face-to-face meetings sending many RVMC, COAC and group meetings online. While we have been fortunate to return to normal, some regions have continued to use video conferencing to alleviate the travel in our larger, more remote, regions.

Boosting operational capacity has also been a major focus. This has come in the form of two new regional offices in Regions Three and Four. Transitioning into these new premises without interrupting service delivery required significant planning from our staff and they should be credited for their outstanding work.

We welcomed news in October 2020 that nine extra positions would be created across the regions, resulting in a slight structural change with a Regional Operations Manager introduced to manage operational staff. We have also introduced a Regional Volunteer Officers to support groups and brigades moving forward. These positions will increase operational capacity and expand the skills and understanding of our staff and volunteers in areas such as people management, code of conduct and policies.

Our focus has been on how we can continue



to support our volunteers. Despite a quieter than usual fire season, there were several days and incidents that still had significant potential and impact on our people. These incidents included the lightning strikes across multiple regions in November, the Blackford fire that impacted Lucindale in Region 5, the Cherry Gardens fire in the Adelaide Hills and the Yumali fire in Region 3.

We've also been involved in several reviews into the 2019/20 fire season and continue to support larger projects such as the Bushfire Management Committees, BMAPs review and the rollout of the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System. There's significant work happening as part of the FFU Review, implementing systems to support the formation of industrial brigades, establishment of a three-year rollout of the GRN terminal replacement program (mobile and handheld radios), ongoing involvement in the AVL project and improvements to Level 2 Incident Control Centres.

# State Operations

## From the Director, Rob Sandford ASFM

**Over the past twelve months State Operations has been involved in a range of key business activities across CFS - a few of these are outlined here.**

Many staff within State Operations provided responses to the various Notice to Give (NTG) and Notice to Produce (NTP) served on CFS as part of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

Despite the impacts from COVID-19, State Operations focused on the pre-season preparedness with particular emphasis on Operational Systems Training and the Volunteer Portal training. State Aviation Operations held a very successful Air Attack Supervisors course whilst also delivering the pre-season Skills Maintenance program across the state.

Information Operations again delivered the Be Bushfire Ready campaign, which is one of our key communications activities to help the community prepare and plan for the coming fire season (this even featured one of our staff and his family - thanks Ray Jackson).

Due to the restrictions associated with COVID-19, a different approach was implemented for the State incident management teams pre-season briefings



and preparedness activities, allowing the teams to meet via MS Teams.

Technical Operations has worked closely with Operational training in developing and delivering the CFS Advanced Detection program as well as Atmospheric Monitoring & Multi-Gas Detector training. Tech Ops has also partnered with SA Water in the development of site-specific emergency plans for treatment plants across the state.

One project which has been a key focus for State Operations is the new Headquarters precinct development, with several staff involved in various working groups and workshops associated with the development and preparation for the transition to the new facility later this year.

## Aviation

Last August the CFS launched its first Air Attack Supervisor course meaning that South Australia now has the capability to train and fill this crucial Air Operations role.

Air Attack Supervisors are pivotal in ensuring that our air response can safely and efficiently support our volunteers in their firefighting efforts on the ground.

Prior to the development of the week-long local course, individuals would have to travel interstate for training, with only one or two positions open to South Australians each year.

Instead, for the first time, locals took to the skies over Telowie Gorge Conservation Park, north of Port Pirie, with six personnel undergoing intensive training in simulated bushfire conditions.

Due to the unique and complex training that our Air Operations personnel require, our crews currently spend weeks on end during the Fire Danger Season separated from their loved ones, on call in different parts of the state.

Increasing the number of accredited Air Attack Supervisors means that this role can be rotated throughout the season, managing fatigue and non-operational workloads.

CFS Manager of Aviation, Nik Stanley, paid tribute to State Aviation Operations Officer, Commander Corey Dunn, who worked tirelessly to pull the program together.

“Pulling together training courses is a thankless task and takes a lot of hard work. I know the work that Corey has done will be really beneficial for all of our personnel for years to come.”

## South Australia takes the lead on warnings changes

Since 2017, the CFS has been pivotal in developing nationally consistent warning icons across a range of hazards and emergency services.

From 1 December 2020, the colours and icons associated with the three warning levels changed to:

- Advice – yellow (formerly blue)
- Watch and Act – orange (formerly yellow)
- Emergency Warning – red.

Manager of Information Operations, Fiona Dunstan, said this work is crucial in keeping a variety of communities safe.

Different hazards have similar actions – whether your emergency is a flood, a cyclone or a fire, that Emergency Warning means danger is imminent, the Watch and Act means you need to start putting a survival plan into action, and the Advice message is to let you know an incident is occurring, and to stay informed.





These changes will help border communities and travellers to understand the risk they face in a range of emergency situations and any actions they should be encouraged to take.

Over the coming years, the icons will become consistent across the country for:

- Bushfire
- Flood
- Cyclone
- Extreme heat, and
- Extreme weather.

The CFS is also taking the lead in the implementation of a new National Fire Danger Ratings System.

There are two factors to consider in this work – the science around Fire Danger Indexes and how we determine fire risk, and the social impact and messaging – ensuring consistent, agreed language and interpretations across states.

## 2020/2021 Be Bushfire Ready campaign

In planning the annual summer preparedness campaign for 2020/2021, it was critical that the severity of the previous bushfire season and associated community sensitivities were acknowledged. It was also important to consider the additional impacts of COVID-19, not only in regard to a community's bushfire recovery, but also to the overarching impact on day-to-day life and the way it has restricted opportunities for community connectedness post fire.

The 2020/2021 Be Bushfire Ready campaign shared real stories of bushfire victims from the Cudlee Creek, Kangaroo Island and Pinery fires who encouraged the audience to learn from their experiences.

The commercials and advertisements also included Region 3 Commander Ray Jackson

and his family who spoke about the Cudlee Creek fire that threatened their home in Harrogate. The involvement of Ray's children, Lainie and Archer, was also a tactical move to remind the community about the importance of involving children in bushfire planning and they, it's fair to say, did an outstanding job.

The campaign was delivered across multiple channels including:

- Television, Radio and Press
- Digital and Online
- Social Media
- Print
- Outdoor billboards – South East Freeway and Port Lincoln, and
- Internal channels including the Volunteer Portal.

Planning has already commenced for the 2021/2022 Be Bushfire Ready campaign.

## Bringing a young focus to community engagement

CFS has enhanced the way it engages young people in disaster resilience with Belinda Dunbar joining the CFS as the organisation's Child and Youth Project Officer.

Working part-time, Belinda is already making valuable connections with youth-focused organisations, running workshops in schools about how to include bushfire

and disaster resilience into their everyday learning and how to improve their emergency preparedness capabilities on-site.

We need to reduce disaster risk by empowering young people to prepare, respond and recover from bushfires and other emergencies. A big challenge in this area is that people think you can just 'get a program for kids in schools.' The reality is, to make a real difference in this area, learning and skills development need to be integrated with school curriculum. It also needs a bit of a mind-set change, in that it's not what adults think kids should know, but what kids want to know and how they can take action and make a contribution.

The Child and Youth Project also involves partnering with other organisations to support relevant disaster resilience initiatives. For example, this year CFS is joint sponsoring the Oliphant Science Awards with the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience with the inclusion of a bushfire and community safety topic, encouraging students to research and understand bushfire behaviour and how to stay safe in an emergency.

We know that young people can be positive influences on the adults in their lives. Through having them proactively research fires and understanding what to do in the event of an emergency, there is a flow on to increased preparedness and planning for fires in their communities.



# Preparedness Operations

## From the Director, Brett Loughlin

**2020/2021 has been a year of reform for the directorate of Preparedness Operations. Preparedness Operations is split between the Development Assessment Service, Bushfire Management Planning team and the Strategy and Compliance team.**

Across these areas the following major reforms and projects have occurred in the last twelve months:

- Development of a State Bushfire Management Plan 2021-2025
- Significant legislative amendments to the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 and Regulations, including major changes to permits, regulated activities and industry brigades
- Implementation of the major state-wide Planning Reforms by the DAS team
- Support to the Royal Commission, Keelty Review implementation, and other reviews and inquiries



- Reconstitution of the State Bushfire Coordination Committee
- Commencement of major reforms to the bushfire management framework
- Commencement of new staff in additional roles across the directorate
- Implementation of a new Customer Service Charter
- Delivery of Training courses to Local Government Fire Prevention Officers.

In addition, Preparedness Operations has seen significant increases in development assessments, native vegetation applications, and rewrites of important policy and Codes of Practice.

The work of Preparedness Operations is fundamental to ensuring that South Australia has resilient infrastructure and prepared people and communities so that we can lessen the impact of future emergencies and create safer operational environments for our frontline personnel.



## Development Assessment successes

Following the Cherry Gardens bushfire in January 2021, CFS Development Assessment Services (DAS) staff undertook post-bushfire surveys of homes and property owners involved in the fire. This is similar to work undertaken by the DAS team in February 2020, after both the Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island fires.

Post-bushfire surveys, or Building Impact Assessments (BIA), differ from the initial Rapid Damage Assessment, as these BIA surveys look at understanding fire behaviour and its impact on both the landscape and structures. Some fire services such as the New South Wales Rural Fire Service have a well-developed capability to undertake these BIAs. Whilst the CFS's BIA capability is still being established, it is something that the DAS team hopes will become a more developed capability as time goes on.

In terms of the Cherry Gardens surveys, it was noted that there was a mix of old and new housing in the impacted area. This provided a great opportunity to see how contemporary bushfire protection measures performed, and to what extent they improved chances of defence and survival. In some cases, there was evidence of fire service intervention and it was apparent that without intervention, the property losses would have been greater. There were also examples where good construction or sprinklers played a role in the home's survivability where fire services were not present. These opportunities allow the DAS team to build on their first-hand experience while also gathering evidence to validate or empower improvements to relevant standards and building codes within the state and nationally.

## State Bushfire Management Plan 2021-2025

Following an action from the government's response to the Independent Review into South Australia's 2019-20 Bushfire Season, as the agency tasked to support the State

Bushfire Coordination Committee (SBCC), the SACFS commenced preparation of the State Bushfire Management Plan. An interim state plan was prepared following the introduction of amendments to the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 (SA) ('the FES Act') in 2009, but it was never finalised. This was identified in the independent review and prompted the recommendation to fully implement the bushfire management arrangements identified under the FES Act.

External consultants Emerg Group Pty Ltd were contracted to develop and undertake engagement with stakeholders, review relevant documentation and prepare an initial draft plan. This work commenced in October 2020, and a draft plan was presented to the SBCC in December 2020. The Committee then resolved to review and further develop the draft through a workshop in late January. A second draft was then prepared and internal consultation among SBCC member agencies undertaken, before the SBCC endorsed the draft for public consultation on 19 March 2021, for a period of six weeks. It is anticipated that the final draft will be reviewed and endorsed for submission to the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services for final sign off, as required under the FES ACT, by the SBCC in mid-May 2021.

The plan is structured with key objectives driven by the requirements of the FES Act, and actions to be delivered through the SBCC. It also commences the process of documenting a wide range of 'coordination actions' undertaken by agencies and organisations with regulatory responsibilities for bushfire management across the emergency management - Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery - spectrum.

The Plan:

- Helps to create the foundations for government, non-government organisations and the community to work together to manage bushfire risk in South Australia.
- Aims to provide guidance to the



SBCC, regional Bushfire Management Committees, and other relevant agencies and organisations, regarding bushfire management within South Australia.

- Helps guide the implementation of the reforms identified in the Independent Review into South Australia's 2019-20 Bushfire Season.
- Aims to improve existing processes to better support those organisations responsible for bushfire management.

The plan has been developed for a four-year period, as required under the FES Act, but will be subject to an interim review following the first two years, to assess progress.

## Medals and awards

The hard-working team at Volunteer Support Branch (SAFECOM) produced the current Honours and Awards paper which was, after many years, no longer current and up to date with the latest rules, requirements and awards for which our members are eligible.

SACFS has undertaken a complete rewrite and modernisation of this paper, with the creation of a CFS Honours and Awards booklet. The booklet includes an overview of all the different honours and

awards that CFS members may receive, includes detailed information on how and when to wear the various medals and awards, and a section providing advice for brigades, groups, and regions regarding how to organise and present the awards in a respectful and dignified manner.

In addition, the booklet details the creation of several new honours and awards which the SACFS is proposing to manage internally to ensure that the commendable and courageous actions of volunteers and staff do not go unrecognised. This is something the CFS is very excited about and we will have more information very soon as the booklet is undergoing some final edits before being sent to COAC and the RVMCs for feedback.

Until then, don't forget to nominate worthy members for the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) and the Minister's Commendation Medal - check the portal for more information on these current awards.

# Operational Infrastructure and Logistics

## From the Director, Lee Watson AFSM

2020 has provided a range of successes, opportunities and challenges for the Operational Infrastructure & Logistics team (OI&L).

Despite the additional demands on operational fleet following the 2019/20 Fire Danger Season, a continuing number of high-quality, new, Light Fleet (Command Vehicles), Tankers and Bulk Water Carriers (BWCs) have been brought into service and various mid-life refurbishments are continuing. COVID-19 has delayed some supply chains and slowed the installation of new Compressed Air Foam Systems (CAFS) into Tankers and BWCs.

Several new Operational Facilities were completed, while Project Renew successfully delivered on-budget outcomes for more than 200 brigades/groups. Significant initial planning has resulted in a vision and priorities being established for the progression of replacement or new build Operational Facilities over the next five years.

To improve and complement Operational Capability, a CFS standard Rural Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC) was supplied to each group.



A technical solution was finalised to enable existing Fire Station Interface units to function. To maintain and enhance Command and Control telecommunications, SACFS has invited tenders for the replacement of portable, mobile and station SAGRNs. Details and specifications released late in 2020 will enable the replacement of SAGRNs to commence in 2021.

In the support of strategic COVID-19 operational requirements, OI&L was able to procure, warehouse and distribute a range of consumables which enabled volunteers to safely respond to incidents.

## TICs boost operational arsenal

As an immediate response to the Keelty Review, each CFS group received a TIC to assist with identifying hotspots on firegrounds and during structure fires.

Operational Specialist Equipment Officer, Stephen Boucher, said that while many brigades have previously purchased their own cameras through fundraising, having one in each Group Command car means that they will be readily available at most incidents.

TICs have become an integral piece of equipment in our operational capability. By improving our crew's ability to mop-up and identify any problem areas at an incident, we can suppress flare-ups, reduce waste and increase efficiencies on the fireground – the faster the fires are declared safe, the sooner our volunteers can clock-off.

The rollout meant that TICs were widely available for use on the Cherry Gardens and Backford firegrounds in January.

## New stations

Over the 2020/21 financial year eight new Operational Facilities were completed. CFS Manager, Operational Facilities, Sandy Pope, said that despite the complications of COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns, the construction of these new stations continued to push ahead.

“We were constantly worried about what restrictions might be put in place, and what it might mean for those brigades waiting on their new buildings. Fortunately, we were relatively unscathed, and actually provided a crucial lifeline in some communities through economic activity.”

“The builds were all funded from the CFS's Capital Program, which identifies and prioritises infrastructure investment based on need.

There's a range of things we take into consideration when deciding on new builds, such as the condition of the current facility and the needs of the brigade. As an



example, Tarlee was in such a dire state that the concrete floor would rock when trucks drove into the station. It was identified in the 2017 review of all stations as needing to be a highest priority. Mount Burr, on the other hand, didn't have terrible facilities, they were just too small to fit our new trucks, so we had to push it up the list, to ensure their infrastructure met the brigade's needs.”

The new builds for 20/21 were located at:

- Tarlee
- Cambrai
- Willalooka
- Mount Burr
- Coonawarra
- Padthaway
- Morphett Vale, and
- Roxby Downs.

## SA Government Radio Network (SAGRN) radio replacement

The SAGRN mobile, fixed and portable radios currently in use by the SACFS for command and control are at the end of their life span. As a consequence, SACFS released an Invitation to Supply (ITS) to the market in August 2020 for the replacement of this equipment. The tenders have been evaluated and the outcome is the signing of a ten-year contract with CSE Crosscom Pty Ltd for the supply, installation and ongoing support and maintenance of the new equipment.

The equipment to be supplied is the Motorola APX6500 mobile and fixed radio

and the Motorola APX6000 portable radio. The installation will be undertaken on a region-by-region basis with discussions being held with each Region to establish an agreed installation schedule. Installation is to be undertaken over three years.

The support being provided includes:

1. The provision of Asset Management and Helpdesk Services
2. The implementation and operation of Radio Manager to provide remote updating and programming, and
3. Three-yearly radio checks of not just the new SAGRNs radios, but VHF Tactical radios and UHF CB radios.

## New trucks

At any one time, CFS is normally working with three Operational Response Vehicle replacement programs. Notwithstanding COVID-19, there are 85 new vehicles in various stages of delivery or build and 65 refurbishments either in the works or upcoming.

During 2021 CFS will procure two Quick Response Vehicles (QRVs) based on the NSW RFS Cat 9 Ultra-Light design. In partnership with Onkaparinga Group, one of these vehicles will be fitted with a Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) for evaluation. A short regional roadshow is planned prior to delivery of the standard QRV version.

The next program (2021/22), beginning in July 2021, will be the last of this contract

and also the biggest for some time with 60 new and 28 refurbished vehicles allocated, including type 14, 34, 44 and the enhanced 34P tanker, BWCs, QRVs, plus a Technical Response vehicle.

CAFS will feature across all models except type 14. CFS has three BW10s, one 34P, three 34s and two 44 tankers at different stages of build with various designs on offer. For the first time, all of these deliveries will coincide with a Class A Foam training course currently being developed by CFS State Training.

A new batch of 12 type 14 tankers will, like its bigger cousins 34 and 44, feature double stack hose reels to enhance similarity across the fleet making it easier to transition between vehicles working different incident types.

The Fire Truck Safety Systems (FTSS) project has recently reached a significant milestone with the last identified 'Heavy Tanker' returned from having its Cabin Deluge, In-Cab Breathing System and other safety upgrades installed. The focus will now turn to In-Cab pump start controls for the last twelve months of the project.

Some 200 operational response vehicles (nearly one quarter of the fleet) have been through the FTSS project and have had safety enhancements installed in one form or another.

With the prioritised phase-out of single cab tankers in capital budgets, CFS isn't far away from having the whole of its operational fleet fitted with some of the most advanced crew safety features in the country!



# Operational Capability and Support

## From the Director, Tammy Moffat

Operational Capability and Planning is a key enabling directorate for our members, with highly trained, experienced, and qualified personnel who are committed to supporting our members and providing them with the essential tools, frameworks, controls and supports that enable them to respond appropriately, safely and effectively to local community needs.

The Directorate continues to evolve and develop, so that it can align itself to the current needs and future sustainability of our service.

The recent twelve months has seen a significant focus on:

- Reviewing and enhancing our operational document
- Driving enhancements in the use and application of geospatial information systems for improved decision-making



- Focusing on capturing our learnings and seizing opportunities for improvements from the 2020/21 and 2021/22 fire danger seasons
- Developing the future strategic direction of the SACFS 2021-2025
- Building and promoting an evidence-based decision-making and improvements approach
- Developing initiatives to support the workforce, e.g., the CFS Casual Admin Pool, recruitment principles procedures and supporting documentation

- Reviewing and updating the existing CFS Business Continuity Plan as a result of COVID-19 to ensure that the delivery of services to the community is sustained
- Developing SACFS Code of Conduct and Respectful Behaviours policies and procedures
- Developing the foundations for asset management within the SACFS, including undertaking SACFS asset data cleansing, developing an asset management framework supported by procedures and information, and progressing the sourcing of a robust and supportive asset management system
- Assisting SAFECOM with the implementation of MySafety across SACFS.

I acknowledge and pay tribute to the OCP team, many of whom contribute significantly to the operational requirements of the agency as well as the competing government and corporate responsibilities. Their dedication and commitment to supporting CFS members in delivering emergency services to the community is to be praised and I thank them immensely. Knowing that these are the people who are working hard behind the scenes to make things happen today and for the sustainability of our service into the future is encouraging.

## Operational Doctrine gets a revamp

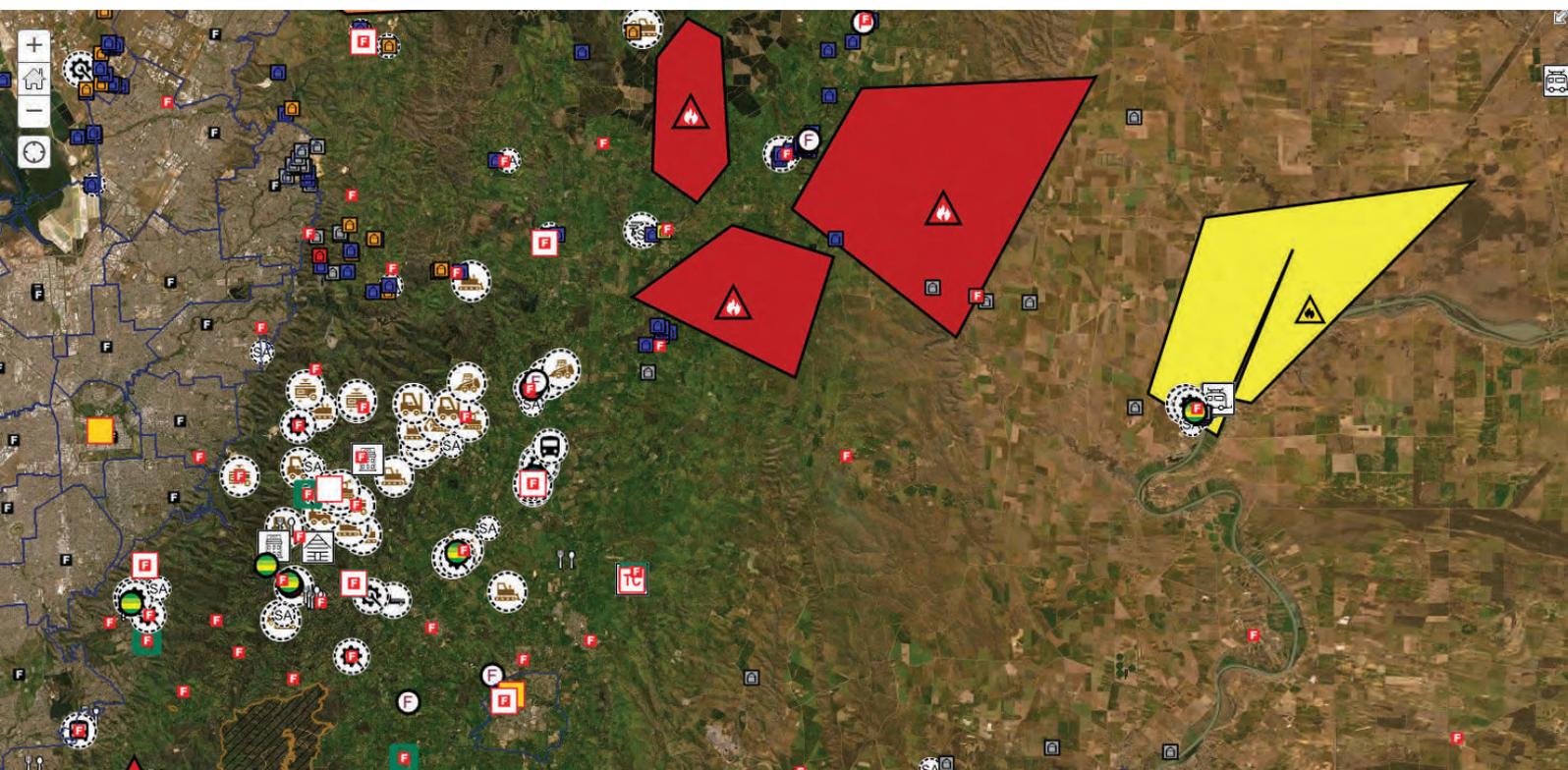
Operational Doctrine is vital to supporting CFS operations and members, providing the set rules and best practice procedures that underpin our capability and the delivery of services to the community. For the past few years, the OCP Directorate have been looking at how they can improve members access to this key information and ensuring it remains robust and relevant.

In the past twelve months the Rural Operations, Operational Communications and Urban and Special Risk Fires sections have been released for consultation and review, with further work to be undertaken to modernise Rescue Special Services, HazMat and Pre-incident Planning and Response.

Within the work being undertaken, there has been a focus on reducing the stagnant nature of the Doctrine, making it more of a best practice document with legislative obligations translated into accessible language.

The Operational Doctrine team are also looking at how the Library can be retrieved and referenced by members across a range of field-based scenarios, through the creation of a downloadable app with information that can be accessed offline.

“This is something that volunteers have been requesting for many years now,”



Manager, Operational Policy, Capability and Improvement, Sam Quigley reflected.

“While it’s now in the works, we’re conscious of ensuring that the doctrine is modernised and relevant for all our volunteers and staff.”

## Changes to CRIIMSON Mapping (Geospatial Information Services initiatives)

If you’ve been on CRIIMSON Secure lately you may have noticed an increase in the number of layers available.

The GIS team have spent the past few months migrating all mapping information into one single source of truth, pulling together all the data sets to create one consistent information system across the agency. This will provide consistent and accurate information that can be accessed by decision-makers on the fireground, in IMTs and across the state.

This data is also shared nationally with the Commonwealth’s Common Alert Protocol and state agencies, including Department for Environment and Water and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The new maps layers include weather observations captured from the Bureau of Meteorology, allowing up to date wind, temperature, and humidity information across the state.

SACFS Bushfire Current Season is also a new layer that will show all the significant plotted fires for a Fire Danger Season, helping both volunteers and the broader community to understand where fires have previously occurred.

Members are encouraged to view and familiarise themselves with the improved system ahead of the upcoming Fire Danger Season.

## Learnings from fires past

Disasters and significant events provide us with an opportunity to learn. Identifying causes, through the sharing of experiences of what contributed to those disasters or events, providing evidence or unpacking what

occurred, all provide important opportunities for us to learn and improve for next time. Reflecting on those actions and decisions that worked well and to ensure they are acknowledged and maintained into the future is as equally important to the SACFS as taking measures to reduce the chance of the same mistakes happening again.

The SACFS subscribes to a nationally recognised framework for lessons management, which has been adopted and presented within the South Australian Emergency Management Arrangements as an annex to the South Australian State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP). This process of managing lessons is vital to the continuous improvement of our agency capability and individual learning.

This method involves the collection of Observations which are grouped into themes. The themes are used to form Insights, which assist with the identification of Lessons that inform the recommendations made in our review reports. This process culminates in determining if our organisation has Learned the Identified Lessons in a cyclic process, referred to as OILL.

Currently the SACFS Operational Improvement system is being reviewed to identify:

- opportunities for procedural clarity and improvement
- where historical recommendations have informed the SACFS Strategic Plan, and
- the areas where organisational investment is required.

Examples of how the SACFS is approaching Operational Improvement can be seen in recently published reports regarding the review of the Pike River Incident, Region 2 Lightning Strikes and Lessons from the Island. The reports can be found on the Volunteer Portal in the Operational Improvement tab.

To find out more please do not hesitate to contact the Operational Improvement Coordinator at [CFS.operationalimprovement@eso.sa.gov.au](mailto:CFS.operationalimprovement@eso.sa.gov.au) or by calling (08) 8115 3343 during business hours.

## **Strategy & Governance team: enhancing transparency and accountability for CFS**

Central to strategic governance are the concepts of leadership, authority, accountability, transparency and stewardship. The Strategy & Governance team have been busy throughout the year developing and reviewing SACFS's frameworks, policies, procedures and processes with the aim to direct and lead SACFS to new heights as well as ensuring compliance and consistency with SA Government requirements and regulations.

The newly created structure of S&G, with a team of experienced and capable professionals, will align roles and functions to the key corporate deliverables for today and the future.

Significant work has been done throughout the year to develop a relevant, achievable and encouraging SACFS 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, with a key focus on supporting our members and being the 'best volunteer fire service in the world'. The team were successful in the quality and timely delivery of the Annual Report, Workforce Plan and monthly board reports throughout the year, and continue to focus on ensuring all of the key reporting and planning responsibilities of the agency are met.

Work continues on the suite of corporate procedures required to support the business, administrative and corporate requirements of the agency, with specific focus in 2020/2021 on SACFS Code of Conduct and Respectful Behaviours, Recruitment Principles and Work Health Safety.

Key governance and quality assurance projects and programs commenced during the year, most importantly Asset Management and Risk Management, will provide solid frameworks and processes for enhanced decision-making regarding the allocation of resources and, ultimately, effective delivery of services to the communities throughout SA.

## **Business Services: A key to delivery**

Supporting the members (workforce) of the agency has and will continue to be a key focus for the Business Services Team at SHQ.

The development and implementation of the CFS Casual Admin Pool has enabled the continuous delivery of administrative support across the agency and has provided a means of employment for many of those impacted by COVID-19 restrictions in the community, including our volunteers, in addition to a key succession plan initiative.

The implementation of the SACFS online induction in 2020/21 saw the passion and dedication from the Digital Learning Team (Operational Training and Professional Development Directorate) and OCP come together in support of our new members. This program of work provides our members with a solid foundation and understanding of our service, our values and our purpose, for their journey with SACFS.

Enabling the application and implementation of key SA Government systems, such as BaswareNG and Service Now within the agency has only been successful, and will continue to be, through the dedication and support of the Business Services team within SHQ. This team provide a much-needed CFS perspective and understanding on how corporate/business systems will operate within our agency.

SACFS 2021-2025 Strategic Plan key focus, being the 'best volunteer fire service in the world'.

# Operational training and professional development





## From the Director, Brenton Edén AFSM

The CFS's training team have worked tirelessly over the past eighteen months and it is a credit to every member that we were able to not only maintain, but increase, our output during an incredibly trying time.

The 2019/20 bushfires created a higher-than-usual demand for training with an influx of new members adding to the demand for BF1 courses. Then, of course, COVID-19 hit, shutting down our training facilities, delaying practical courses and pushing those that we could deliver online.

I am proud of the resilience and agility of the team, not only in moving to the online workspace, but also, when face-to-face training resumed, working around the clock to ensure our volunteers and staff were trained and ready ahead of the 2020/21 Fire Danger Season.

I also want to thank all of the volunteers for your tenacity in adapting and taking up online learning opportunities and, as a team, we look forward to continuing to ensure that everyone within the CFS and across the Emergency Services are appropriately equipped to deal with all the obstacles Mother Nature throws at us.

### State training moves online

Many brigades and groups conducted their training and meetings online through the Microsoft Teams platform, while using the Online Learning Hub to increase knowledge and skills. Last year the Digital Learning Team released a range of new courses, including the Trainer Presenter Skills, Thermal Imaging Camera, COVID-19 Awareness Training, Driver Safety, Bullying and Harassment, Office Ergonomics, Manual Handling and Alcohol and other Drugs, online.

The increases in Digital Learning opportunities paired with the challenges of COVID-19 saw a 50 per cent increase in course uptake.

### New kitchen and dining facilities now open

When COVID-19 forced 'face-to-face' training at the State Training Centre to shut down for several months, it coincided with two separate storm damage/flooding incidents in the dining room providing the opportunity to revamp the catering facilities to support the post COVID-19 training environment.

With substantial improvements to the design of the kitchen, major enhancements to the food serving and bar areas, a refreshed, efficient and modernised facility has created a more user-friendly environment. Gone are the days of the self-serve bain-marie. Guests are now served plated meals and provided with individually packed refreshments for morning and afternoon teas. Together with a new menu option across all meals, dedicated breakfast serveries and the creation of a coffee lounge, the facilities have generated positive feedback from all who have used them.

# STC responds to Brukunga PFAS concerns

In 2019, the State Training Centre was identified by the EPA as a site with residual contamination of PFAS. This chemical is well known as a component of early firefighting foams and, although use of such foams was discontinued at the Training Centre two decades ago, the impact is still being recorded.

The State Training Centre acted quickly upon learning of the PFAS contamination, and is now equipped with a PFAS Filtration Plant. This plant is currently treating all stored firefighting water used on the site, in addition to the treated water discharged from the Brukunga Remediation Plant. As a result, the State Training Centre now uses filtered water for all firefighting activities which is discharged into the Dawesley Creek. The Centre will work with the EPA and researchers to investigate remediation options for the flammable liquid hot pads.

CFS has engaged global engineering and scientific firm GHD to investigate and analyse soil and water contamination across the Dawesley Creek catchment areas and the township of Brukunga. On May 19, a community information session was held, with around 30 locals dropping in to learn about the impacts on their community, with representatives from GHD, the EPA and SA Health on hand to answer any questions.



## Online Induction packages launched

In April 2021, the CFS launched two new Online Induction packages, one for volunteers and one for staff.

Available via the CFS Online Learning Hub, the package has been designed to provide new volunteers and staff with a solid foundation and understanding of the CFS through a suite of videos and information slides.

It provides information on the different directorates of the organisation, plus information about supporting and related organisations associated with the CFS, including the SA Fire and Emergency Commission (SAFECOM), the Volunteers Association, the CFS Foundation, South Australian Volunteer Firefighters Museum and the CFS Promotions Unit.

The package has been worked on over the past twelve months with a high level of stakeholder engagement to ensure everything that should be included, has been. Throughout the development, more than 1,000 comments or pieces of feedback were received from all levels of the agency including both volunteers and staff.

We encourage all members whether they are brand new to the agency or have been with the agency for a considerable amount of time to complete the induction. If you start the induction you can, at any point in time, leave and come back to it - your progress will be saved. You can also refer back to the induction at any time to refresh yourself on a particular topic or use it as a reference tool.



## Virtual Reality training embraced

The CFS Digital Learning Team has been working with other areas within the State Training Centre to enhance their training delivery, embracing new technologies with a range of immersive Virtual Reality experiences.

Working with Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, VR experiences in Road Crash Rescue (RCR) and Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) now provide our members with a life-like experience in the safety of a training room, mitigating any risk of injury or exposure to hazards.

All participants of the Road Crash Rescue (RCR) course don headsets and experience a 360-degree video of an extraction from the perspective of a casualty.

The footage is intended to give learners an understanding of the restricted space and noisy environment a casualty will experience. The video, narrated by SACFS RCR State Training Officer David Zakrzewski, covers the importance of communication with

casualties and highlights how fire and rescue and paramedic agencies work together.

After successfully launching the RCR and CFBT VR experiences, the team is exploring other areas of training where this new technology can be embraced and embedded.

## New multi-story training facility

After extensive planning and construction, the STC officially opened its new live-fire multi-story BA training facility in 2020, with a compartmentalised structure designed to allow volunteers to understand and train in an urban fire scenario.

The building, a mock winery complex, supports the delivery of breathing apparatus training, as well as hazardous material response and atmospheric monitoring, while continuing to support live-fire and vertical rescue.

The development included the installation of a camera system, with the ability to control and modify the environment from a central point, ensuring safety and flexibility in how training can be delivered.

The Canadian High Commissioner visited HQ in March



## Day Dress Uniform



### Jacket

The same soft shell jacket as the field uniform, it provides the wearer protection against the elements. The jacket has a minimal water resistance, with cuff ribbing giving the garment a more formal appearance. It features shoulder patches with epaulettes to be worn on shoulders.

### Shirt

The Day Dress shirt is a professional look with shoulder patches and Fire and Rescue on the left breast. It is made from breathable fabric with wash and wear providing the wearer with extra convenience. The fabric is durable and won't fade in colour.

### Pants

### Kilt

There was such a huge response to our April Fools prank... We might actually need to adopt a tartan!



6 SA Country Fire Service Uniform Rollout

CFS Personnel took part in the Hutt Street Centre walk, raising \$1,000 for the homeless charity



The Chief Officer hosted a reception for International Women's Day



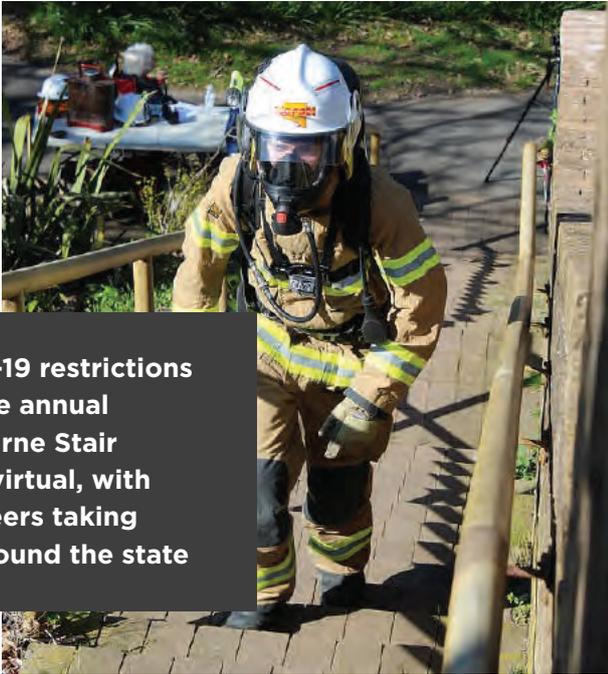


The CFS had a stall at the Homeshow, talking to the public about preparedness and the Development Assessment process

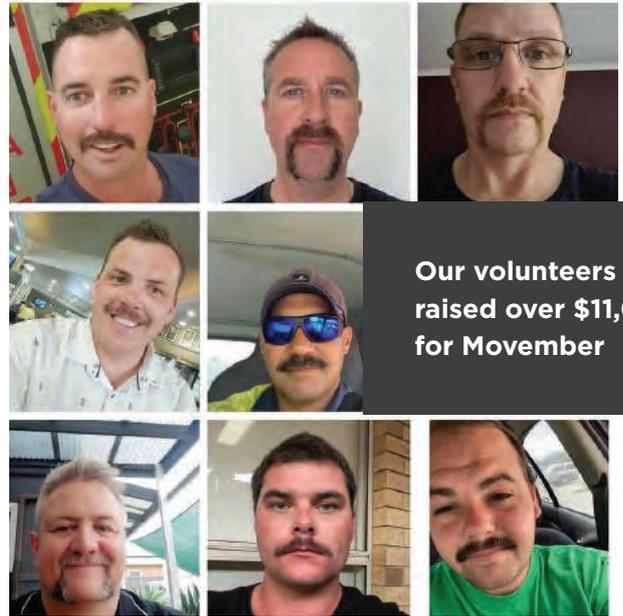




Chief Officer, Mark Jones and Regional Commander, Ray Jackson, were on hand to present Syd Villis with his 60th Year of Service Medal



COVID-19 restrictions sent the annual Melbourne Stair Climb virtual, with volunteers taking part around the state



Our volunteers raised over \$11,000 for November





# AFSMs

Andy with Kirsti  
and Sonia from  
the CFSVA

**The Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) recognises distinguished service by individual members across all Australian fire services and are announced on January 26, and the Queen’s Birthday each year.**

**The Australian Fire Service Medal is awarded by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the responsible Commonwealth, state and territory ministers, and may be awarded based on the number of personnel in each Service, with the CFS traditionally receiving four AFSMs each calendar year.**

**In 2021, the CFS had one additional recipient, with Assistant Chief Ken Hall receiving an AFSM for his contribution to the NSW RFS, prior to his transfer to our Service.**

## Andy Wood AFSM

Andy joined the Kingscote CFS in 2006 as a brigade firefighter, before transferring to the Wisanger Brigade in 2009, where he was elected Lieutenant in 2010. In 2012 he took on the role as Brigade Captain until 2015, transferring to American River Brigade where he was also elected Captain, his

current role. He is an operational firefighter and recently deployed to the devastating fires in his community of Kangaroo Island.

He has provided outstanding leadership in the encouragement and development of all CFS brigade members he has led, including fostering youth involved with the CFS. He undertook Training and Assessment qualifications so that he was best placed to deliver training to his peers and youth.

Andy is well known around the traps for his membership and bold leadership in the CFS Volunteers Association (CFSVA), being elected President in 2016. As President he has demonstrated exceptional performance and leadership, specifically when it was proposed to amalgamate the CFS with other emergency service organisations into a single organisation. He led the CFSVA with exceptional dignity and courage through this period providing significant support to volunteers.

“Receiving an AFSM was an unexpected honour I’m proud to share with the team at the Volunteer Association. It fills me with pride to be able to represent our CFS Volunteers, working to improve conditions for those who serve our communities.”

In 2018 he was elected to the position of President of the Council of Australia Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA), which is the peak representative body of all volunteer fire associations, representing approximately 250,000 volunteer firefighters. In this role he has again shown leadership representing and advocating at a national level with governments and other key stakeholders for volunteer rights and support. He also provided direct support to many volunteers who suffered personal losses during the recent serious fire season.

## Matt Davis AFSM

Matt has served with the CFS for over 30 years, starting as a volunteer with the Woodside and Nairne Country Fire Service Brigades, before becoming a staff member working with the SACFS training department. He currently works in State Operations, across Hazardous Materials and Aviation, and assisted with the development of training in fire investigation.

In 2017 he was appointed to the role of Pacific Islands Liaison Officer - Republic of Kiribati, a role that he says is a career highlight.

“My work in Kiribati developing a fire and emergency response capability was really rewarding. Taking what I’ve learnt from so many others here in South Australia to assist a country that had very little was something that I would never have thought I would have done as part of CFS. They are the most welcoming and friendly people who have taught me so much about what to appreciate in life and what is important.”

Matt worked to build their inaugural fire service - consisting of 50 trained firefighters and four firefighting trucks - developing procedures, training pathways and sourcing equipment. This has increased the safety and emergency response capability within the island of Tarawa.

The success of this project has seen him undertake a second mission to another of Kiribati’s atolls - Kiritimati Island. His continued work in Kiribati will ensure



**Matt Davis and his wife, Heidi**

those trained under his direction receive national accredited training and hold a certificate-based qualification.

Matt has provided dedicated and committed service to the SACFS, to the community of South Australia, and to the international community, but is humbled by this recognition.

Being awarded the AFSM by my peers is something that I never expected either in a staff or volunteer capacity. I thank those that I have worked with over the years for setting the standard for me to follow.

## John Mudge AFSM

“I was on the roof cleaning the gutters when I got the call from Canberra. I was so surprised- I actually thought it was a prank! I know how much work goes into the application process, so I was humbled and almost a bit embarrassed that people had spent so much time going into my background to nominate me.”

John joined the CFS in November 1981 as a firefighter in the Eden Hills CFS Brigade. He trained in all facets of firefighting, including Breathing Apparatus Operation, Road Crash Rescue and Hazardous Materials. In recognition of his service, he was awarded Life Membership of the Eden Hills Country Fire Service.



**Ken received his AFSM from the Governor General**

He attended his first Australian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) course in the mid-1980s leading him to the Region One Communications Brigade (now the Region 1 Operations Brigade) which he joined in 1995. He was instrumental in establishing Level 2 Incident Management Teams at Region 1. He held a range of positions in the Eden Hills Brigade, and at Region 1 Operations Brigade his roles have included Training Coordinator and Captain.

Since 2008, he has focused on Incident Management and assisted in setting up the procedures to be used when formal Incident Management Teams were established in South Australia. He continues to focus on better training, improved practices and the recording and processing of fire information.

He continually makes himself available to assist on Total Fire Ban Days and at incidents across South Australia and has attended more than 80 deployments. He has been a valued Incident Management Team member across five other states during major fire, cyclone and flood events.

Mr Mudge has provided exemplary service to the SACFS, and to the community of South Australia, for almost 40 years.

### **Mr Ken Hall AFSM**

“Sometimes we forget the sacrifices our families make for us to do these jobs. Heading to the Governor General’s House in Canberra with my family and receiving my AFSM with those special people in my life with me was important to me-they share in this award.”

Ken joined the CFS as the Regional Operations Director in 2020, after a distinguished career with the RFS. He joined as a volunteer of the Condobolin Bush Fire Brigade and became the Honorary Fire Control Officer (FCO) for Lachlan Shire



**John Mudge**

before being appointed as FCO for the Southwest Slopes Zone. He relocated to Batemans Bay in 2002 as the Regional Operations Manager before being promoted to Regional Manager South in 2010.

Throughout his period of service as both a volunteer and staff member, Ken has demonstrated exceptional leadership, commitment and achievement in many areas.

His extensive experience in Operations saw him appointed as the State Operations Controller and Major Incident Coordinator for large and complex incidents. His significant knowledge and expertise in Incident Management saw Ken selected to undertake the Incident Controller Major Incidents (ICMI) development program and he continues to mentor candidates.

Ken was committed to the development and upskilling of staff, and played an integral role in the development of the Advanced Diploma of Management course established in 2016. He worked closely with TAFE NSW to develop a course that matched the competency requirements of a tertiary qualification with the unique service delivery requirements of a response agency. He introduced a significant volunteer component into the annual Incident Management exercises by including volunteer personnel in all functional areas as well as introducing Divisional Commander roles, thus facilitating increased skill levels prior to fire season and ensuring IMT personnel and fire line command personnel have a comprehensive understanding of situational awareness, intelligence gathering and reporting processes.

## Lee Watson AFSM

“Yes, it’s an individual award, but something like this can’t be achieved unless you’re supported by a good body of people around you, so I’m very lucky in that regard.”

Lee Watson was flat out as Logistics Officer in the Cherry Gardens IMT when news broke of his AFSM award, stating without

fanfare that, “Right now I am just trying to get the firefighters out there fed.”

Lee has served in the SACFS for more than 39 years, attending more than 1,000 incidents in a range of roles with the Basket Range and Norton Summit-Ashton CFS Brigades and the East Torrens CFS Group, including at the rank of Commander. He has also undertaken more than 200 training courses to equip him with, and maintain, his fireground skills.

He has also been a staff member for over 20 years, where he has been instrumental in establishing and maintaining the ongoing compliance of the SACFS as a Registered Training Organisation, enabling thousands of SACFS volunteers and staff to be awarded nationally accredited competency and qualifications.

In 2007, in his role as the East Torrens Group Logistics Support Officer, he developed the East Torrens CFS Group Operation and Information Manual, and his work on the Group Operational Management Plan saw it being used in a range of Incident Management training.

As Director, Operational Infrastructure and Logistics, he has developed improved procurement strategies, introducing longer term supply contracts that have provided significant improved products/supplies to personnel, along with significant cost savings to the CFS. Additionally, with the support of the Chief Officer, he established a review of operational uniforms which had not significantly changed in more than 30 years.



Lee with his father and Chief Officer Jones



# Partnerships

## Fire Weather in 2020/21: Shaped by La Niña?

**During the Fire Danger Season, an embedded meteorologist from the Bureau of Meteorology provides twice-weekly briefings for operational staff, as well as regular updates during days of Fire Danger weather. One of our regular meteorologists, Jon Fischer, explains how this year's La Niña phenomenon impacted on the season that was.**

Each bushfire season is unique and presents its own challenging weather situations; however, the fire weather experienced during the 2020/21 season was unquestionably at the lower end of the spectrum. The season was a little shorter than usual – November 10 to April 13 – with only 33 days of observed severe or higher fire danger compared to an average of around 45 days.

The lower number of significant fire weather days is largely due to the climate phenomenon known as La Niña. Well ahead of the fire season a La Niña was forecast and expected to have some impact on the fire weather, but it was hard to know just how much.

La Niña is defined as the positive phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation. It is associated with cooler than average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. This phase is normally associated with higher-than-average winter, spring and early summer rainfall over much of Australia, but the influence is typically greatest over northern and eastern parts of the continent.

For southern South Australia the influence of La Niña on rainfall is more uncertain and, in fact, for the nine months from early winter 2020 through to the end of summer 2021, rainfall was near or below average across the south of SA. However, it was the feedback from the rainfall over inland and northern Australia which had the largest impact on the conditions over southern SA. Above average soil moisture and cloud cover across these inland areas limited the ability for extreme heat to develop and be drawn south across the southern bushfire districts by northerly winds.

Conditions were quite hot in November, with maximum temperatures well above average, but near or below average for the other months. Importantly, there were some unusually long stretches of milder conditions and, therefore, relatively benign fire weather, particularly during late summer and autumn.

There is no doubt that La Niña played a big role in how the bushfire season played out, but as is the case with weather, there is a random component too. Something as simple as the precise timing of a front or trough crossing the State can have a big impact on the fire danger. During the 2020/21 season there were many occasions when a change arrived overnight or in the early morning, when conditions were milder and calmer. If these changes had been delayed by even a few hours, the resulting fire danger would have been much higher. This is just one example of the random elements of bushfire risk that we will never be able to predict leading into a fire season.



## IMT personnel join the fruit fly fight

While for most of us 2020 felt like we were one plague of locusts away from apocalypse, the past eighteen months has posed a very real threat to our \$1.3 billion horticulture industry with the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) dealing with outbreaks of fruit fly.

Since December 2019 there have been ten Mediterranean fruit fly outbreaks, one Queensland fruit fly outbreak across Adelaide and multiple Queensland fruit fly outbreaks in the Riverland.

To combat the outbreaks, PIRSA established an Incident Management Team (IMT) in accordance with Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) structures, and subsequently engaged CFS volunteers Gerry Thomson and Dave Heard, as well as Scott Haynes from Region Two, to assist in the response.

Gerry, Incident Controller and Operations Officer, said the job was quite different to his usual Fire Danger Season IMT role.

“It was quite demanding compared to a fire because, basically, we didn’t know where the fruit fly was or how far it had spread from each detection. The operation involved going tree-by-tree to look for evidence of the insects, before either baiting or releasing sterile insects into the area.”

The State Coordinator of the Fruit Fly Response, Nathan Rhodes, said the involvement of the CFS volunteers was really appreciated.

“We are very grateful for the support from CFS with the fruit fly response. They played critical roles and made a great contribution to the team, bringing significant experience in emergency operational response.”

The eradication program is expected to continue across metropolitan Adelaide and the Riverland until at least December 2021, with PIRSA urging everyone across the state to help halt the threat of fruit fly across the state by:

- Being vigilant in your garden with a regular check for bruised or stung fruit on fruit trees and other fruiting vegetables that are at risk from fruit fly
- Maintaining a tidy garden by picking up any fallen or ripe fruit to stop the fruit fly cycle, and
- Placing fruit and vegetable waste in your kerbside green bin instead of composting.

**For more information, or if you find evidence of fruit fly, contact the Fruit Fly Hotline on 1300 666 010 and/or visit [fruitfly.sa.gov.au](http://fruitfly.sa.gov.au)**

## **CFS volunteers trained to support the South Australian Ambulance Service (SAAS) during COVID-19**

Ten volunteers from across the state were trained to support regional SAAS roster vacancies if COVID-19 workloads escalated.

The volunteers undertook a condensed SAAS training course in ambulance driving and paramedic support.

CFS COVID-19 Taskforce member and State Training Officer, James Honner, said the course was a great success for both agencies.

“Our volunteers were highly commended for their existing standards of CPR and their enthusiasm in offering help to their communities through a different avenue.”

“Just like at incidents, both agencies worked well together, and this course may open more opportunities for joint training.”

Mr Honner said the CFS volunteers would continue to provide back-up to SAAS in their local area if local resources were overwhelmed by future COVID-19 responses.





## Supporting New South Wales' State Emergency Service (NSW SES)

Throughout the year the CFS had deployed to support other agencies in their response to COVID-19 and fruit fly outbreaks, and towards the end of our Fire Danger Season came a Sunday night request to support IMTs in NSW during the state's widespread flooding.

By mid-Monday morning four CFS and Department for Environment and Water (DEW) IMT specialists had joined the SA SES deployment to Wollongong SES HQ.

The CFS specialists provided support to Public Information and Media Liaison teams, with DEW specialists providing support with flood mapping and planning.

The teams were deployed for seven days, arriving during the peak of the flood.

Although systems were different, a local face was the same with ex CFS Director for Regional Operations now

NSW SES Deputy Commissioner Daniel Austin greeting the teams.

The IMT team was able to assist NSW SES during times of peak flooding and mass evacuations, dealing with the complexities of a capsized rescue boat, a fatality and sensitive remote community evacuations.

With five nightshifts of 18:30 till 07:30 completed, the team returned home to a much drier SA.





# YAC

**The CFS Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is a group of volunteers aged between 16 and 30, who work to improve opportunities and advocate on behalf of younger members.**

The YAC provides a different perspective to a range of committees, including the Chief Officer's Advisory Committee, ensuring that the views and interests of our next generation of volunteers are taken into account when decisions are being made.

As the team adjusted to meeting over Zoom, they focused their attention on youth-specific training opportunities, working closely with the State Training Centre to deliver Urban Skills Week in October 2020.

This five-day intensive training week provided 12 members a range of training, including:

- Operate Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus, Open Circuit
- Thermal Imaging Camera – Specialist, and
- Compartment Fire Behaviour.

In April and May 2021, the YAC also delivered a Youth Frontline Leadership course and a Presentation Skills course & Leadership Workshop, with young volunteers travelling from across the state.

The youth-focused training gave members the chance to come together, learn and network with peers, in a safe and comfortable space.

## Meet Your YAC!

**Region 1 Representative / Chairperson, Corey Littler, 25, Morphett Vale Brigade**

Corey joined Morphett Vale in 2016. His favourite operational training courses have been in Compartment Fire Behaviour and Flammable Liquids and Gasses. He has also enjoyed the Trainer-Presenter skill set courses, where he has been able to build his communication skills and confidence addressing large groups.

Corey's most embarrassing moment in the CFS was during a Skills Maintenance Drill when he accidentally lent on the GRN radio whilst giving a 'mayday' message, which was received loud and clear by Adelaide Fire.



**Katie Freak, 20, Lincoln Brigade**

Katie, following in her dad's footsteps, joined the CFS as a cadet when she was 14. When she's not volunteering, Katie keeps herself very busy studying Early Childhood Education at uni, working at a childcare centre, attending church, playing hockey and participating in the local parkrun.

Katie's favourite training course was the Open Circuit course, because it was challenging, and she learnt a lot from it. She completed the course with a great group and had some great trainer/assessors.



## Sarah Metcalf, 25, Roseworthy Brigade

During the Pinery fire Sarah's workplace was surrounded and she felt helpless. This provided the catalyst for her to join the CFS. While she enjoys firefighting and being able to help people, she is still yet to live down losing her pager on a fireground early in her involvement and having it found by a fellow volunteer during mopping up.

Sarah's favourite training course was the BF1, but she's always looking to increase her knowledge, keeping an eye on the training guides for activities and courses on the Volunteer Portal.

## Kimberly Day, 19, Tea Tree Gully Brigade

Kimberly signed up as a cadet when she was 16 and says her favourite training course has been the Trainer-Presenter course, which improved her communications at incidents and made her a more confident public speaker and instructor.

Kimberly suggests that a book everyone should read is *Bulletproof* by Evy Poupouras, as it illustrates the importance of mental resilience in dynamic situations and provides tips on situational awareness and personal safety - vital skills for a firefighter.



## Michael Amos, 25, Mylor Brigade

The Sampson Flat bushfires inspired Michael to sign up to his local brigade. "I didn't want to experience another event like that, just sitting by and watching."

His volunteering has led to paid employment supporting the prescribed burns program and responding to fires as a seasonal firefighter with National Parks and Wildlife.

Michael's most embarrassing moment in the CFS was at a callout when he opened a bale without properly bracing, the pressure pushing him off his feet and drenching his fellow volunteers.

## Sonia Mittelstadt, 30, Coffin Bay Brigade

Hailing from the UK, Sonia joined the Coffin Bay CFS in 2016, fulfilling her life's ambition in becoming a firefighter. She loves helping her local community and is motivated by the huge difference the CFS makes to people's lives.

Outside her involvement with the YAC, Sonia is an advocate for supporting women in the CFS, attending International Women's Day events in Adelaide on behalf of Region 6 in 2020 and 2021.

When she's not volunteering, Sonia works as the Bar Manager at the Coffin Bay Yacht Club and takes care of her two young kids.



# CFS Foundation

## A word from the CFS Foundation Team

The main focus of the CFS Foundation over the last fourteen months has been to provide financial support to our CFS volunteers who incurred property losses in the aftermath of the 2019/2020/2021 bushfires in the Adelaide Hills, South East and Kangaroo Island.

Last bushfire season (2019/20) the CFS Foundation made payments of over \$2.7m (in the form of direct financial assistance) to 75 CFS volunteers. So far this fire season (2020/21) payments totalling \$370,000 have been made to 15 CFS volunteers from the Lucindale area with more support in the pipeline for volunteers impacted by

the Cherry Gardens fires. The Foundation has also supported two CFS volunteers for other events, including financial support to a volunteer whose vehicle was written off as a result of a collision with a CFS appliance whilst on duty.

**Our aim is to ensure no CFS volunteer firefighter, who was actively engaged in protecting lives, property and communities and who has suffered a loss, goes without assistance.**

The generosity of the community was amazing during the 2019/20 bushfire season and the CFS Foundation team continues its efforts to raise funds in order to maintain this level of support for our CFS volunteers in their time of need, now and into the future.

**Gloria Berni**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Police Credit Union Nespresso coffee machine rollout

The CFS Foundation team are facilitating the rollout of Nespresso Coffee Machines to CFS brigades. Our new major sponsor, Police Credit Union (PCU), has committed to donate twenty Nespresso machines each year for 5 years. The first twenty brigades to receive these machines were from regions across South Australia, and the competition we ran proved to be a huge hit, creating some fun banter between brigades.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to see when the next rollout is due, and enter the competition to WIN a machine for your local brigade.

Also, please keep an eye out for other great offers and promotions for our CFS volunteers from our friends at PCU and other sponsors. We thank PCU for their incredible support.

## ElectraNet thermal imaging camera rollout

ElectraNet proudly supports the CFS Foundation through the allocation of Small Equipment Grants, which have been used this year to purchase new thermal imaging cameras for several brigades.

Their sponsorship of the CFS Foundation has seen brigades receive a variety of valuable equipment over the years, and we thank them for their ongoing support.

## OTR 'The Show Goes On'

Some lucky CFS volunteers and their families had the opportunity to enjoy a 'mini show' VIP event last August thanks to our amazing sponsors OTR! It was a thoughtful initiative by OTR and a great alternative to the Adelaide Show which unfortunately didn't go ahead in 2020.

OTR is a big supporter of the CFS Foundation and our CFS volunteers. They support us through their in-store OTR Give program and, last year, they also donated some passes to the Super Sprint at The Bend event.

## Christmas drinks sponsored by SA Power Networks

Thank you to SA Power Networks for organising the beautiful Adelaide Botanic Gardens as a venue for our Christmas drinks to recognise our sponsors and supporters.

Minister Tarzia and members of the CFS Foundation Board were in attendance along with various sponsors and members of the CFS leadership team.

The support we have received from SA Power Networks over the years has been invaluable, and has allowed the Foundation to continue to do the work that we do.



## Thanks to our corporate sponsors and public support

The CFS Foundation would not be able to assist our CFS volunteers without the ongoing support from our major sponsors, local businesses and individuals in the community, through fundraising and donations.

We cannot thank our supporters enough and ask that, wherever possible, we all try to support those who support us.

### We encourage all CFS volunteers to follow us online!

#CFSFoundation  
cfsfoundation.org.au

# SPAM



## From Jane Abdilla

I've been a Health and Wellbeing consultant with South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) for 11 years now. Over that time, I have been heartened by the increase in people reaching out for support during some of the more difficult moments during their time with the Emergency Services.

I'd like to use this space to clarify information about our service, in the hope that it will help more people come forward and talk through what's on their mind and affecting them in their lives.

### **About the Stress Prevention and Management program (SPAM)**

SPAM brings together a range of services to help members navigate their mental health and wellbeing.

We do this through:

- Group sessions after critical incidents – with crews who have experienced a potentially traumatic incident
- Peer Support – with officers trained to be good listeners
- Awareness training sessions – held on training nights for members and members' families
- Referrals to confidential mental health counselling services.

The best way to help reduce trauma or other challenging issues is to talk to someone. If talking through your experiences and emotions isn't enough, we can also provide a referral for appropriate professional support.

### **SPAM is only for major incidents**

Counselling is available for all aspects of your volunteering not just incidents. If there's disagreement or tension in your brigade or workplace, we can provide strategies to help you cope or simply listen while you get it off your chest.

### **It isn't really confidential**

The SPAM helpline acts as an intermediary between you and a counsellor. We get identifying information from you only to ensure the referral is accurate. You can divulge as much or as little information about what's going on. The information is then completely de-identified.

### **SPAM is only available for volunteers**

We know that the emotional toll on your loved ones can be immense. The SPAM helpline and counselling service – available through an Employee Assistance Program – is available for volunteers, staff and their families, providing up to six hours of counselling each year.

We help people every day with the stresses caused by their emergency service experiences. Please call if you need us – we are here to help you.

## SPAM testimonials

We invited personnel from across the Emergency Services to talk about their experiences with SPAM.

### Person A

#### **What was the trigger that made you call SPAM?**

I was having some domestic violence issues in my marriage and needed help.

#### **How did SPAM help you?**

Jane is an excellent counsellor. She connected me to the EAP so my issues could be dealt with hands-on and appropriately, but also regularly touches base to ensure that I am okay.

#### **How have things changed since interacting with SPAM?**

The past couple of months has been the best part of my married life. I'm happier and in control of my emotions.

### Person B

#### **What was the trigger that made you call SPAM?**

I'm regularly exposed to confronting and upsetting circumstances. While you remain professional at the time, the pressure, stress and images weigh on you and it's important not to take it home.

#### **How did SPAM help you?**

My calls to SPAM are normally to organise support for others, but I find myself opening up to SPAM operators. It feels better for having spoken to a friendly person who can help you process what you've seen or gone through.

#### **Would you recommend the SPAM helpline for other personnel?**

Absolutely. I can't emphasise enough how important it is to just talk to someone, and SPAM provides a friendly ear separated from the situation making it easier to be open and honest about what you are going through.

#### **How are you feeling now in terms of your mental health and wellbeing?**

I have tough days and easy days. When the tough days start to pile up, I know where to look for support and understanding. I'm very grateful for the support for both myself and the volunteers that SPAM offers.

### Person C

#### **What was the trigger that made you call SPAM?**

I was experiencing behavioural issues in my brigade which took a toll on my mental health. Until I was encouraged to call SPAM, I just thought of it as a service for people after fatalities.

Volunteering was a part of my identity, but my core values were conflicting with the brigade's. SPAM validated my concerns and freed me from my spinning thoughts. From the first chat I could see a path forward, and in time I've rebuilt confidence and identity.

#### **How did your first call go?**

I was just so afraid to call, but we spoke for 40 minutes. After the initial emotional avalanche, we talked through different options which resulted in a referral to a free psychology service and a strategy for me to handle the behaviour in the brigade.

#### **Would you recommend the SPAM helpline for other personnel?**

Definitely. Making the call is hard – it's a nasty trick of both depression and anxiety that we are made to feel alone or not valid. SPAM is like a voice in the fog that helps guide you to the other side.

#### **How are you feeling now in terms of your mental health and wellbeing?**

I'm in a very different place now. I am far better at recognising when I'm heading into a mental bind, and I'm more honest with myself and those around me when this is the case.

Please call if you need us – we are here to help. **SPAM Helpline 8115 3950**

# SA Volunteer Firefighter Museum

**Eighteen months after it first opened, the SA Volunteer Firefighter Museum on the outskirts Naracoorte is continuing its work in researching, conserving and promoting the valuable role that volunteers play in serving and protecting our state.**

COVID-19 restrictions meant the museum has only opened by appointment over the past year, with curious current and retired firefighters stopping in to reminisce over the historical collection stored and displayed.

In November, SA Power Networks subsidiary, Enerven, donated \$15,000 worth of solar panels to the Museum, reducing the costs of running the facility, which already operates on the 'smell of an oily rag'.

With historical artifacts and memorabilia continually being donated to the Museum, they are already looking to expand their facility, with plans drawn up that include a new interpretation centre.

Despite CFS icon and Museum President, Rex Hall, suffering some health setbacks over the past twelve months, the museum's work has rolled on, with his son Alan stepping in to lobby for the new facilities.

"The current shed is already full, and we have a spillover of trucks and equipment stored offsite. A new building adjacent to the current shed and memorial would give us space to better display some of those static items like



the pumps and communications equipment. We've also included a theatrette in our plans, so we can show old photos and some of the important historical content we house.

The Museum is always seeking more members and donations - it'd be great to have more people involved."

For more information on the museum, or to book a time to take a trip down memory lane, visit [www.savffm.net.au](http://www.savffm.net.au)



# Obituaries

**We remember all members of the CFS family who passed away over the past twelve months, and we hold those members of the service who grieve in our thoughts.**

We simply cannot capture every member who has died in our tributes, but we want you to know that every contribution and every sacrifice by those members is valued by the Service.

We acknowledge a handful of personnel who have made an extraordinary contribution or whose passing will leave a significant hole in our service's heart.

## **Murray Sherwell AOM AFSM** 25/02/1930-30/09/2020

After volunteering with the Nhill Fire Service in Victoria, Murray moved to Bordertown where he was a volunteer before winning the first Regional Officer's role in the South East in 1979. Working a one-person operation from a small storeroom at the Naracoorte Council Offices, Murray eventually established a transportable office on Crown Land next to a drain at the five ways intersection on Caves Road.



**Region 5 Commander,  
John Probert, with  
Murray Sherwell**

Murray was a key player in the formation of the modern CFS, working as a staff member for 14 years, before retiring to a volunteer role with Brigade Auxiliary and Brigade Operation Support until his passing in September 2020.

## **David Ghezzi** 04/01/1963-11/09/2020

David Ambrose Ghezzi (Gez) passed away after a long illness.

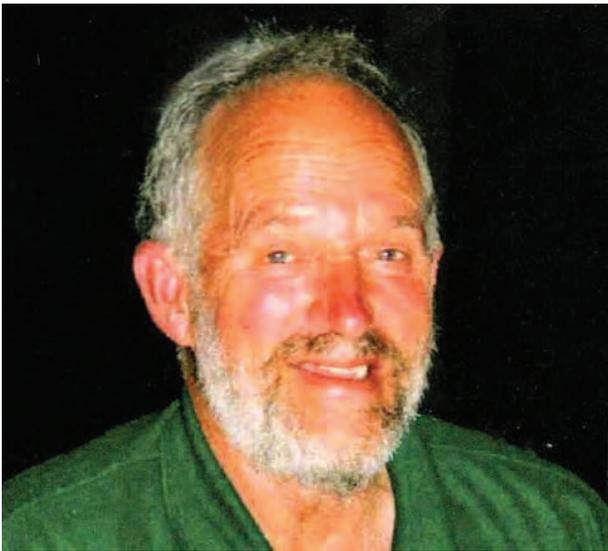
Gez was a well-known firefighter in Naracoorte, joining the CFS in February 1981 and serving the Naracoorte community as a first responder for 39 years and 6 months. As a member of the Naracoorte CFS Brigade, Gez held every brigade officer position except Captain, and had just been re-elected as a Deputy Group Officer of the Naracoorte CFS.

On top of his local work, Gez deployed to the NSW fires in 1994 and 2001, and was also involved with the formation and building of the SA Volunteer Firefighters Museum in Naracoorte.

## **Len Brooks** 14/07/1941-21/10/2021

Len joined Meadows Emergency Fire Service (EFS) in 1962. In a time before Government funding, Len was instrumental in the Meadows Community fundraising for new trucks and equipment, a role that would see him recognised posthumously with a rural fire truck named in his honour.

Len was a member of the Meadows Management team, elected as President from 1979-1980, Brigade Captain from 1980-1986, before moving into the role of Deputy Group Officer for the then Mt Barker CFS Group, now known as the Heysen CFS Group.



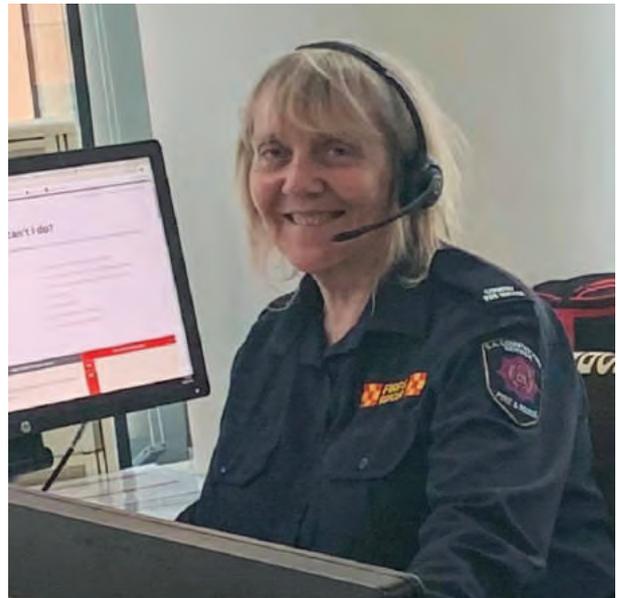
Len remained a Brigade Operational Support member and still attended functions and meetings from time to time.

**Brian Menadue**  
19/10/1940-8/10/2020

As a career police officer, Brian was instrumental in establishing the Emergency Fire Service under the Commissioner of Police, before joining the CFS as a Regional Officer in 1966.

He was heavily involved in the Fire Prevention Parades in Adelaide and helped with many promotional events, including the State Firefighting Competitions and Australia Day Parades.

Brian served as a volunteer and staff member during both Ash Wednesday events, spurring him to help develop hazard reduction promotional opportunities in their aftermath. This work evolved into roles as a Fire Prevention Officer and a member of the Development Assessment Team until his retirement in 2010.



**Patricia (Trish) Dempsey**  
10/02/1949-14/04/2021

While Trish was only a member for four years, she made an incredible contribution in the State Operations and Support Brigade, where she held the role of administration and finance co-ordinator.

Trish was renowned for her willingness to support the CFS as a member of the Bushfire Hotline, always putting her hand up to take on multiple shifts over some of our recent big fire events. Always tackling difficulty questions and concerns from the public with a smile on her face, Trish provided valuable support to the other operators when they needed it.

**Fred Holtmann**  
15/2/1947-10/05/2021

Fred was a very well-known and well-loved member of the Hamley Bridge CFS Brigade, serving as Captain, Brigade Lieutenant, Cadet Coordinator and Training Coordinator over his 16-year involvement.

With a passion for supporting young people, Fred is credited with building the local Cadet unit from less than 10 to more than 60 in only a few short years,

Outside of his CFS involvement, Fred served as a member of the Royal Australian Air Force serving in Malaysia and Vietnam where he was posthumously awarded the Cross of Gallantry by the Republic of Vietnam.

# Retirements



## Ann Di Piaz

In November 2020, after a distinguished 36-year Public Service career, including a decade with the CFS, Ann De Piaz retired from her role as Executive Director, Frontline Services Support.

Always on hand with sage advice and spurred on by her passion for volunteering, Ann spent her time with the CFS fighting for better rights for volunteers and was pivotal in improving outcomes for those adversely affected during their time serving the state.

In her farewell, Mark credited Ann with being a strong role model for women in the service, with her intellect and professional thinking rising above the misogyny that she would have experienced across the CFS and in her previous role at Corrections.

**You are strongly driven by values such as probity, accountability and guided by a powerful ‘moral compass’ – you have helped many of us to stay on the straight and narrow.**

## Owen Glover AFSM

Owen joined the Emergency Fire Service (now CFS) on November 1, 1970 as a cadet and devoted the bulk of his working life to volunteer and staff service – becoming a staff officer in 1986. As one of the earliest trainers in ICS and Incident Management, many staff and volunteers credit him for the knowledge and skills they now hold in these vital roles.

In 1997, with 24 hours’ notice, Owen was responsible for deploying SACFS to Indonesia to combat forest fires, and he subsequently became a member of the Incident Management Team there. As a result of that deployment, Owen presented a paper on behalf of the CFS to the UN in Geneva.

In delivering the news of his retirement, AC Eden paid tribute to Owen’s devotion to the organisation.

**Throughout his career he served in most regions, held the rank of Regional Commander, Manager Operations, Manager Training Facilities, a State Training Officer, Senior Curriculum Development Officer and Zone Training Officer, as well as one of our early Air Observers and Air Attack Supervisors.**



## Wayne Richardson

Richo, as he's known, volunteered with the CFS for almost 30 years, before joining the Region 5 staff 8 years ago as a member of the State Rural Training Team. Since then, he has been a familiar face, delivering a range of courses across the Region and State.

Prior to joining the CFS staff, he worked with Forestry SA, bringing a wealth of knowledge about forests in the South East to his training delivery.

While Wayne has retired from paid employment, he is still a familiar face around the Compton Brigade, with the local volunteers indebted to him for the skills and expertise he brings to the brigade.



## Wayne Atkins

It was with great reluctance that Assistant Chief Officer Rob Sandford accepted Wayne's retirement notice, after a distinguished, and at times, infamous, 34 years as a staff member with the CFS.

It's hard to find a part of the CFS where Wayne hasn't played a role during his time in the Service, developing the contemporary HazMat capability and PPE, laying the framework for the current

Operational Doctrine, implementing the BA Compartment Fire Behaviour Training, and, during summer, serving as a member of the state's Aviation team.

ACO Sandford reflected on Wayne's time with the CFS.

**I have personally gained from Wayne's training delivery skills and mentorship. It was always impressive to watch as he took personnel from the unknown to the known, while making training interesting and relevant to the capabilities he was delivering.**



## Evelyn Dunicliff

Commencing with the CFS in 2002, Evelyn was always a safe and reliable pair of hands for the organisation, in her later years acting as a fount of knowledge and source for historical contexts for the processes and procedures that guide the organisation.

As the Executive Coordinator and SCC Manager, Evelyn kept abreast of most facets of the organisation, providing a sounding board and source of support for junior staff coming through the ranks. Evelyn was also the Executive Officer to the CFS Board where she managed all aspects of Board meetings and actions from these, further enriching her knowledge of CFS and its volunteers.

Her work in managing Freedom of Information requests and providing administrative support to the Executive, and across the Executive, has helped the CFS to maintain its reputation as a professional and efficient organisation.

**The CFS Yearbook has been compiled by the  
CFS Media and Communications Team.**

**We would like to acknowledge the CFS  
Promotions Unit as the source of many of the  
photos in this year's publication.**

**We would also like to thank all those who  
shared their stories, and to everyone involved  
in the SACFS for your amazing contribution  
to our organisation and your communities.**





Government  
of South Australia

