

VOLUNTEER

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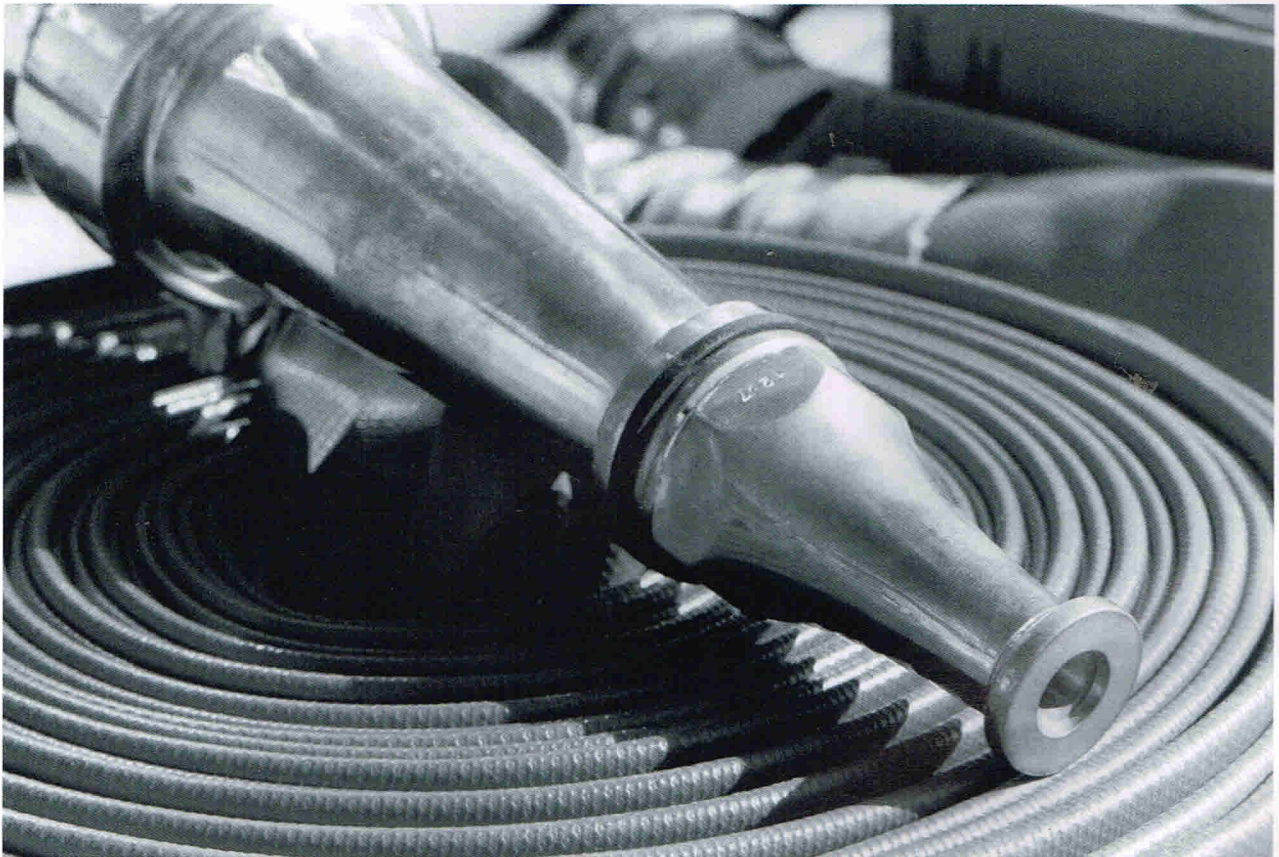
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COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

Stuart Ellis, Graham Ingerson and Cam Stafford at the Volunteers in Emergencies Forum. See Pages 5 & 6.

VOLUNTEER

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES ASSOCIATION
 27 Hamilton Ave, Warradale, SA 5046
 Telephone (08) 8376 3625
 Facsimile (08) 8376 6385
 President – Cam Stafford
 Vice-President – Russell Branson
 Executive – Bill Prideaux, Terry Halford and Tim Cooper
 Executive Officer – Conrad Powell
 SAVFBA representatives on CFS Board –
 Brian Wilson and Laurie Collins

COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE
 Headquarters
 20 Richmond Road
 P.O. Box 758 Marleston SA 5033
 Tel: (08) 8204 3333 Fax: (08) 8204 3410

CFS HOTLINE
 Metropolitan Adelaide (08) 8297 1000
 Country Areas (1800) 188 100

REGIONAL OFFICES
Region 1 Mt. Lofty Ranges/Kangaroo Island
 6 Druids Avenue
 PO Box 197, Stirling SA 5152
 Tel: (08) 8339 6700
Region 2 Mt. Lofty Ranges/Yorke Peninsula/Lower North
 2/29 Adelaide Road
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 PO Box 8, Naracoorte SA 5271
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 25 Washington Street
 PO Box 555, Port Lincoln SA 5606
 Tel: (08) 8682 4266

Training
 State Training Centre, Brukunga (08) 8388 6565
 South Coast Training Centre (08) 8556 7250

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Setting our objectives in a period of major change

This issue of Volunteer magazine heralds many exciting changes in the CFS.

If we demand positive outcomes and work towards them, we will be able to reflect upon these times with pride and a great sense of achievement.

The new CEO, Stuart Ellis, has moved quickly in a number of areas including the appointment of a CFS Media Liaison Officer, Leanne Schmidt.

It appears likely that CFS headquarters will be relocated to Greenhill Road and I understand dedicated volunteer facilities are to be allocated at this site.

I believe the SAVFBA can look forward to a period of close understanding and cooperation with CFS headquarters.

This may surprise a few volunteers, but I want to assure you all that CFS full-time staff work extremely hard and, like you, have immense pride in the service.

CFS staff understand the demands on volunteers and appreciate their dedication. We should also recognise the commitment and expertise of CFS staff.

Farewell John Forster

We farewell our retiring Executive Officer, John Forster, who has played such a significant part in the development of the SAVFBA. We also welcome his replacement, Conrad Powell, a CFS volunteer who gives every indication of thriving on the challenges ahead.

Volunteers in emergencies

In this issue you will read about the Volunteers in Emergencies Forum. I am greatly encouraged by the spirit and constructive attitude that prevailed at this event. Our roles may be different, but all volunteers have a major quality in common – dedication.

We need to remember that in the eyes of the community at large we are all in the same "business." I ask you to recognise the contribution made by all volunteer services and to nurture mutual respect. There may come a time when larger issues will require cooperation.

Meanwhile, I congratulate Julie Paterson and other participants for holding initial discussions about issues affecting women in the fire service. We look forward to feedback from this essential process.

Strategies for the future

As I reported in the September 96 edition of Volunteer, the SAVFBA Management Committee is developing strategies and objectives for the future. We are determined to meet these objectives.

But, for the moment, I want to take a snapshot of the service and ask every unit and committee to think about these two things:

1. What is your biggest problem at the moment?
2. What would you like to see achieved over the next five years?



Cam Stafford

Please prepare your response and fax or post it to the Executive Officer or your Branch delegate.

Public recognition

As part of efforts to gain greater public recognition of the role and contribution of CFS members, the name of the SAVFBA may be changed to CFS Volunteers Association.

The SAVFBA has formally raised a promotions sub-committee to be chaired by Executive Member Terry Halford. In this issue there is a call for four nominations to serve on that committee.

Occupational health and safety

I have spoken in the past about our need to comply with the OH&S Act and it is good to see progress being made.

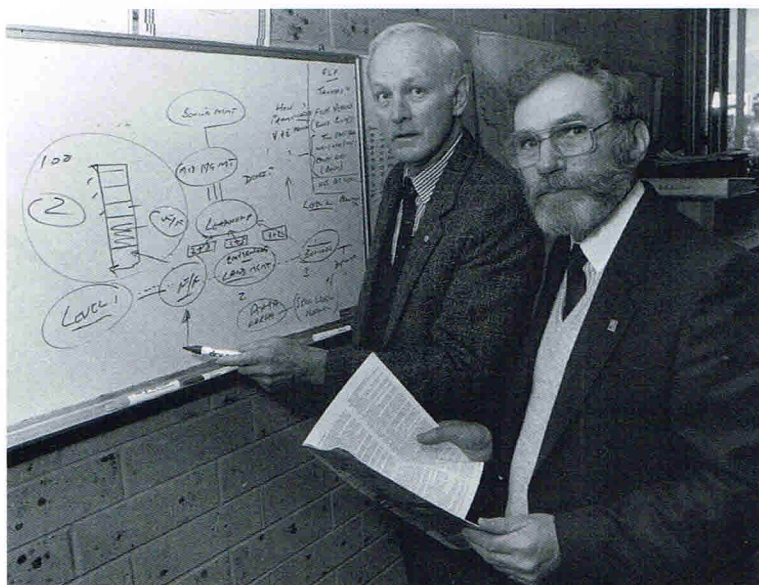
This is demonstrated by the recent achievement of the CFS of level one status under WorkCover.

We receive all the benefits of protection under the Act, equivalent to paid employers, and the expectation is that we will continue to do all that is reasonable to comply with its requirements.

Brigade OH&S liaison personnel do an important job in keeping members informed on OH&S issues and advising OH&S representatives of unresolved issues.

However, brigade OH&S liaisons do not have powers under the Act. These powers are held by the OH&S representatives who are elected at SAVFBA branch level.

Ways are being sought to increase the number of OH&S representatives to gain a more even coverage over the service. The views of volunteers will be sought at branch and regional forums.



The strategic planner ... retiring SAVFBA Executive Officer John Forster with former CFS Chief Executive Officer Alan Ferris. (See Page 7)

Cam Stafford
President

Volunteers in emergencies facing pressure on various fronts

Volunteerism, particularly among people in emergency situations, is under threat potentially exposing governments and communities across Australia to millions of dollars in extra costs each year.

A forum in Adelaide recently identified a number of factors which are having a serious impact on the ability of organisations to recruit and retain volunteers. These factors include:

- rising levels of hazard;
- increasing community expectations;
- levels of legal and financial indemnity and compensation for volunteers and their families;
- complexity of training, particularly with the advent of new technologies;
- lack of public recognition about the sacrifices of people who volunteer their time to save lives and properties; and
- the "down time" for employers who allow volunteers to leave the workplace to attend incidents.

The key speaker at the Volunteers in Emergencies Forum was Mr Alan Hodges, Director General of Emergency Management Australia.

Organisations represented at the forum included:

- Country Fire Service;
- SAVFBA;
- St John Ambulance Australia;
- SA Ambulance Service;
- State Emergency Service Volunteers Association;
- State Emergency Service
- SA Sea Rescue Squadron;
- Surf Life Saving South Australia; and
- Australian Red Cross.



Delegates at the forum for volunteers in emergencies

About 30,000 South Australians each year volunteer their time to training and using their expertise in emergency incidents. About 18,000 are CFS volunteers.

The Emergency Services Minister, Mr Ingerson, told the forum that volunteers saved governments across Australia millions of dollars a year.

"Without volunteers' commitment, dedication and willingness to give freely of their time, emergency services costs in this State would be prohibitive, particularly in country areas."

The convenor of the forum, Mr Paul Arbon, District Superintendent of St John Ambulance Australia, said: "Society is asking more of the people who volunteer in emergency services ... people who give up their time to train and to protect lives and properties, sometimes paying the supreme sacrifice.

"The volunteer ethic is about the willingness of people to devote their time to help others in need.

"However, many volunteers are beginning to question whether their commitment is worth the effort and the worry.

"There is a remarkable level of agreement

among emergency service volunteers about the principal issues of concern.

"There is a genuine threat to the volunteer ethic in Australia with organisations generally experiencing difficulty in attracting and retaining volunteers. The question can also be posed about whether young people are as willing as their parents or grandparents to volunteer to help others."

Mr Arbon said the purpose of the forum was to address the concerns of volunteers, particularly those involved in hazardous or complex working environments.

It was agreed to consolidate the forum concept with a further meeting before October 1997 to promote a unified approach by volunteer organisations to issues of concern. The SAVFBA will convene the next meeting to develop recommendations reached by consensus.

Mr Arbon said the emphasis was on volunteers in emergencies as distinct from "in emergency services".

"This has been done to avoid exclusion of individuals or groups of volunteers associated with organisations not recognised as mainstream emergency services," he said.

Addressing the major causes of concern

Key issues to be addressed in the proposed South Australian Volunteers in Emergencies Forum this year include:

Protection

- minimum standards for insurance/compensation/income protection;
- development of best practice standards;
- review of OH&S standards; and
- review of personal liability

Training

- recognition of prior learning;
- flexible learning materials;

- training at regional and local levels;
- generic competencies;
- competency-based approaches to training; and
- accreditation of courses.

Recognition

- joint media campaign (s) to promote public awareness and volunteerism;
- collaboration in recruiting;
- greater involvement with Local Government;
- joint services/agencies promotional day; and
- school-based education and recruitment.

Costs

- resourcing;
- use of shared resources/equipment;
- cost savings attributable to volunteers;
- review of funding arrangements and sources of funding; and
- possible taxation initiatives to support employers of volunteers

Other

- promotion of local level inter-service collaboration; and
- conduct regional Volunteers in Emergencies Forums.

Volunteer agencies not a high priority for government funding

While there is a strong recognition at the political level of the value of emergency service volunteer agencies, they are not a high priority for government funding, according to the Director General of Emergency Management Australia, Mr Alan Hodges.

In presenting the opening address at the Volunteers In Emergencies Forum in January, Mr Hodges said governments recognised that without volunteers they would have to reduce other services in order to pay for the level of protection which the public currently receives.

"Politicians generally recognise that there are volunteers in every electorate and they could have political impact if they so desired," he said.

"On the other hand, it needs to be recognised that it may require a major disaster to effect real change in legislation and funding. This has certainly been the historic pattern around Australia.

"On a daily basis, disaster issues are not high on the political agenda, are not the subject of frequent community debate and, more often than not, will be considered as not urgent enough for funding and resources at a Local Government level."

Mr Hodges said the trend was towards the amalgamation of services or the sharing of facilities to cut costs and increase effectiveness.

In some States and Territories, single Local Government departments embrace all or some of the public safety agencies and, in other instances, buildings and training programs are being shared between agencies.

In addition, a recent report on the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade identified the potential for contracting out traditional fire services.

"Just because these various actions may not have occurred in South Australia, does not mean they are unlikely," Mr Hodges said.

Mr Hodges said South Australia was fortunate in having a very close relationship between the CFS, SES and St John Ambulance, adding that the difficulty in attracting and retaining the right kind of volunteer across the services raised issues of the possible need for multi-skilling.

Applauding the organisation of the Volunteers In Emergencies Forum, Mr Hodges said recommendations from a workshop organised by the Australian Assembly of Volunteer Fire Brigades' Associations last August had been well

Volunteers under threat

By MICHAEL OWEN

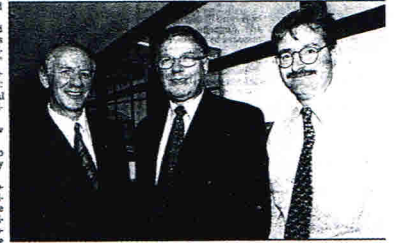
Emergency services volunteers have been told their future is under "serious threat", he warned at the first Volunteers In Emergencies Forum at St Beach yesterday. With about 30,000 emergency services volunteers in SA, the forum is designed to develop strategies to deal with concerns about volunteer recruitment and commitment. "There has been a sharp decline in the number of people donating their time to organisations such as the Country Fire Service, St John Ambulance, Red Cross, State Emergency Services, Sea Rescue Squadron and Surf Life Saving. Emergency Services Minister, Mr

Ingerson, told the forum - attended by Emergency Management Australia - that volunteers saved Australian governments millions of dollars every year. Mr Ingerson said without the State's volunteers emergency service costs would be prohibitive, especially in country areas. But forum convenor, Mr Paul Arbon, district superintendent of St John Ambulance Australia, said many volunteers were questioning whether it was worth the effort and stress. "Society is asking more of people who volunteer in emergency services," he said. "People who give up their time to train and protect lives and properties sometimes pay the supreme sacrifice." Mr Arbon said there was also a serious threat to Australia's volunteer ethic of devoting time to help others.

ing difficulty in attracting and retaining volunteers," he said. "The question can also be posed about whether young people are as willing as their parents or grandparents to volunteer to help others." He said other factors affecting recruitment and commitment included:

- Levels of legal and financial indemnity and compensation for volunteers and their families
- Complexity of training and new technology
- Less willingness by employers to allow volunteers to attend emergency situations.

 While there are no moves to introduce psychological screening for volunteers to organisations such as the CFS, a draft policy to introduce criminal checks is expected to be introduced within weeks because of the



The Sunday Mail, January 19, 1997

received by the National Emergency Management Committee (NEMC).

While the August workshop report was to be further considered by the NEMC - together with issues of national significance arising from the Volunteers In Emergencies Forum - it made several initial comments, including:

- agreement to promote the level of recognition of the commitment and efforts of volunteers;
- agreement that competencies would be applied to permanent and volunteer members under agency arrangements;
- agreement that it would not be appropriate to develop uniform legislation, but that it saw merit in comparing legislative approaches with a view to improvements;

Minister praises role of volunteers

Since taking over the Emergency Services portfolio in December last year, I have gained a greater appreciation and understanding of the massive tasks undertaken by South Australia's emergency service organisations and their volunteers.

Already this year I have taken the opportunity to visit some of the emergency services in the State's South-East, and on each occasion I was impressed by the dedication and commitment of those involved.

This Government recognises and pays tribute to the State's 30,000 volunteers, who make sacrifices and put themselves in risky situations as a matter of course.

I believe that the general community also admires and values the work done by our volunteers, whether it be in the role of protecting life and property in a fire situation, cleaning up after storms and floods, or search and rescue.

Without volunteers' dedication and

- notation that EMA will facilitate a review which will consider legislation in relation to volunteers within emergency management; and
- support for the concept of further national meetings of emergency service volunteers.

Mr Hodges also highlighted a 1996 research project undertaken by the New Zealand Fire Service in which 400 volunteers were interviewed.

"One of the issues identified in that study is the preference of volunteers for practical response activities over planning and prevention," he said.

"There is no doubt that an efficient and effective response capability is required. However, the challenge I see for volunteers is to determine how best you can contribute to community safety."



Graham Ingerson

willingness to give freely of their time, emergency service costings in this State would be prohibitive, particularly in country areas.

As Minister, one of my priorities is to maintain a strong and effective range of emergency services and to continue to support the men and women who are the backbone of these crucially important services.

Hon Graham Ingerson, MP
Minister for Emergency Services



John Forster a driving influence on the CFS landscape

John Forster has resigned as Executive Officer of the SAVFBA after six years of outstanding service.

Former Andamooka CFS member, Conrad Powell, will succeed John, who has stepped down to focus on his business interests as an insurance broker.

John, 62, who has been involved in the CFS for more than 20 years ago, will continue to be a member of the Echunga CFS Brigade.

With former SAVFBA President, Brian Wilson, John became one of the State's most travelled and influential CFS volunteers. That role has continued with the current President, Cam Stafford.

There have been many achievements during John's term, both at State and national level. He also served as Acting Honorary Secretary of the Australian Assembly of Volunteer Fire Brigades' Associations.

With Brian Wilson, John was instrumental in establishing the credibility and influence of the SAVFBA from the time of the drafting of the Country Fires Act and the Standards of Fire Cover in the late 1980s.

Major achievements of the SAVFBA over the past six years have included:

- the development of physical and psychological guidelines for CFS volunteers;
- introduction of a progressive program of stress management;
- ensuring equal opportunity guidelines throughout the service;
- successfully resisting moves by the former Labor Government to merge the



John Forster



Conrad Powell

CFS and MFS; and

- helping establish recognised performance standards for CFS volunteers under the WorkCover legislation.

As his former travelling companion for many years, Brian Wilson said: "John has always been totally dedicated to the volunteer ethic and the welfare of CFS members.

"He was there with me when the SAVFBA really found its feet in meetings of volunteers all over the State.

"The SAVFBA also had a great deal of support from former Chief Executive Officers Donald Macarthur and Alan Ferris and Director Corporate Services Tony Crichton. They joined us in efforts to ensure fair and equitable treatment for volunteers.

"John and I were so different in many ways, but also so alike. If I was the head of the SAVFBA, John has been the heart.

"It was a privilege to work with John in a

period of great change. We could not have achieved so much without him."

CFS Chief Executive Officer, Stuart Ellis acknowledged John's exceptional efforts and dedication to the CFS both as a local volunteer and as Executive Officer of the SAVFBA.

"His depth of knowledge, broad vision and preparedness to work through the necessary processes to progress the organisation for volunteers is particularly noteworthy," Mr Ellis said.

"He has made a particular contribution to the Stress Prevention and Management Program.

"I thank him on behalf of all CFS for his tremendous on-going contribution and trust he will appreciate having a little more control of his time once retired from the Executive Officer position."

Footnote: John Forster can be contacted on his business telephone number (08) 8388 8396

Conrad stakes his claim to keep up the good work

Conrad Powell is the new SAVFBA Executive Officer.

A former Regular Army officer and opal miner, Conrad, 47, has been a member of the Andamooka CFS brigade for the past 15 years.

A Justice of the Peace and Churchill Fellow, Conrad also served two years as the pastoral zone delegate on the SAVFBA Management Committee.

Together with his wife, Lynn and daughter Rachel, Conrad is adjusting to city life and is planning to join an Adelaide Hills Brigade. Conrad and Lynn have two older sons in Roxby Downs and Geelong.

"I am greatly looking forward to the challenges ahead and thank John Forster

for the sound foundation he has helped to build for the SAVFBA," Conrad said.

"I am personally aware of the pressures on CFS members, particularly in the leadership area arising from increasing demands for professionalism and compliance.

"One of my priorities will be to identify ways to ease these pressures within the chain of command."

Conrad plans to travel extensively around SA with SAVFBA President, Cam Stafford.

"Volunteers and the volunteer ethic are the great strengths of our organisation and I am committed to providing our members with the support they need," he said.

Effective promotion of the CFS and

marketing the volunteer ethic will be among Conrad's early priorities.

"I am very keen to ensure increasing recognition of the efforts of volunteers and creating greater pride in service. In that context, embracing new technology such as the Internet will be important in keeping people informed about CFS developments.

"Ultimately, I would also like to see a facsimile machine in every brigade to help volunteers disseminate current information.

"I welcome comments from volunteers about these issues and assure them of a warm welcome in Adelaide."

The new SAVFBA office is at 27 Hamilton Ave, Warradale 5046. Tel: (08) 8376 3625 Fax: (08) 8376 6385

Tony Wiedeman supports the 'building blocks of our organisation'

Improving the safety of volunteers across the State, particularly while attending road incidents, is one of the key priorities for Tony Wiedeman.

As CFS Manager Operations, Tony is responsible for the coordination of all CFS regions, supporting their needs and efforts, as well as managing the appliance building program and the communications technology for the State.

He is also responsible for providing information about CFS activities and needs to the Minister for Emergency Services and other relevant government agencies.

"Essentially, my role is to support the efforts of volunteers in delivering an important community service," Tony said.

"Volunteers are a key building block in our organisation. They can coordinate and self-manage most of our incidents and interface with local councils where they obtain some funding and support."

Tony was a CFS volunteer for 20 years before

becoming a staff member nine years ago.

"In road safety, we are trying to increase the visibility of markings or stripes on the side of fire appliances," he said.

"We are also working to improve visibility of our firefighters when on the road day and night by changes to overalls and turnout coats, and the addition of reflective vests.

"We hope to provide road cones for every fire appliance and to advise on the use of roadway signage and road cones, from a technical and legislative viewpoint."

Working closely with regional commanders, Tony said improvements to the group coordination and resources for firefighting, training and administration were being made.

"We want to ensure groups have similar equipment and standards across the State, so that we are all operating at a similar level and able to operate in a common manner," he said.

"Over the next couple of months, we will be assessing the whole-of-government radio system which has been proposed to

connect all emergency services and government departments, including police, ambulance service, hospitals, Department of Agriculture, Road Transport and so on.

"We need to assess how the CFS can get the best solution for our firefighting service from such a radio network.

"Already we have made major improvements to communications through the adoption of auto-tune antennas on HF radios, which enable remote brigades to use the radios as they would mobile telephones – a valuable option in the case of breakdown or injury."

Tony – who has been a CFS volunteer firefighter, fire control officer, lieutenant, Group Officer and administration officer – believes there are a number of challenges facing the CFS.

"We are having to deal with the corporatisation and break-up of many utilities such as ETSA, SA Water, Highways Department and local government, which have traditionally assisted our firefighting activities, but whose resources and ability to help our service is being reduced," Tony said.

"For example, we need to manage the operational changes to groups that may occur due to council amalgamations under the Local Government Boundary Reform process.

"Multiple demands and pressures on volunteers means we are asking more of them, but with less resources.

"The service is having to adapt quicker to meet the community's demands.

"Against this background, we need to ensure that volunteers can do their valuable work as safely and effectively as possible."

Nominations for Promotions Committee

The SAVFBA State Management Committee and CFS headquarters are committed to raising the public image of the Country Fire Service.

SAVFBA executive member, Terry Halford, has been appointed to chair a Promotions Sub-Committee and nominations are being sought for four members.

The committee will have responsibility for promotion and recognition of CFS volunteers, including management of the

mobile display (pantechicon).

The SAVFBA State Management Committee recognises the great contribution of all volunteers who have given so much time and talent to the mobile display until now.

Nominations for the Promotions Sub-Committee are to be forwarded by March 28, 1997 to: Executive Officer, SAVFBA, 27 Hamilton Avenue, Warradale SA 5046

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Effective communication is critical in the chain of command

Since taking up my position as Chief Executive Officer in December last year, I have had the opportunity to visit each of the Regions.

I have also begun visiting brigades and attending Group Operations meetings. I have been most impressed with the commitment and dedication of all involved in the CFS.

This is very evident and something that would make many other organisations envious.

I believe the job we do at brigade level is first class and, although it can always be improved, we are achieving a high standard. There are some concerns along the chain of command and at State headquarters, and I will be focussing on this area.

I am very comfortable with the concept of control at the lowest level and information at the highest level. We have in place control at the lowest level, but need to commit more resources to passing information up the chain of command.

Without that information, headquarters cannot represent CFS accurately and, in an operational sense, will be unable to conduct that critical planning which is essential to counter the unpredictability of wildfires.

Technology

I am keen to promote technology wherever possible to assist in this process. I am aware that many brigades and Groups are



Stuart Ellis

already doing this and I intend, in the next six months, to ensure that information technology solutions are put in place to make it easier for all of us to do what we have to do.

As such a reliance is placed on volunteer commitment, I hope to support the concept that volunteer time is spent on the job, not filling out paperwork.

Volunteers in emergencies

Last month I had the pleasure of attending a forum in Adelaide addressing the issues and concerns of volunteers in emergency services.

Some very clear messages came out of the forum, including the need to recognise the commitment and dedication of volunteers.

Although I believe that CFS has good community support, I am not sure there is great recognition of the variety and extent of volunteer efforts.

I am committed to ensuring that the public understanding of the tasks you do is clear.

Occupational health, safety and welfare and WorkCover issues were also addressed at the forum.

I am aware of the concerns many volunteers have regarding the impact of these issues. However, our commitment to OH&S issues provides good cover for volunteers and we should be proud of our achievements in this area.

CFS is the only volunteer organisation in the State to be listed under WorkCover.

It is to our advantage to comply wherever possible and continue to work towards meeting the requirements.

Media relations

I trust you have noted the effect of improved media liaison with the appointment of a full time public relations officer during the fire season.

There has been a considerable increase in Press coverage of incidents and I would encourage you to keep providing information to headquarters for this to continue.

Not only does it provide the public with information, but also ensures they are aware of the range and scope of activities in which CFS is involved.

Relationships with DENR

Recent fires in Kangaroo Island raised a number of ongoing issues regarding the responsibilities and relationships between CFS and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

We are currently looking at these issues and are optimistic that we can progress them as a result of these most recent fires.

Finally, thank you all for your ongoing efforts and contribution during the summer. Your work is not going unnoticed.

Stuart Ellis

Chief Executive Officer

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Tactical programs specifically for middle management ranks

A decade ago debriefing notes from CFS regions often referred to mechanical problems in appliances and equipment or inadequate clothing.

These days such reports are rare. However, headquarters is becoming increasingly aware of concerns about fireground management.

Between the strike team leader, sector commander and the divisional commander – the so-called middle-management of the CFS – there are some reported concerns about Incident Control System roles and responsibilities in operations, planning and logistics.

The underlying strength of the CFS is the volunteer commitment. However, many volunteers are finding it increasingly difficult to leave their workplaces, homes and families to attend incidents. The less time they are on the fireground, the better.

Efficiency on the fireground is paramount if we are to reduce the time that volunteers need to spend in extinguishing and mopping up fires.

It is vital that the right decisions are made and communicated up and down the chain of command if we are to truly put our hands up as a first class emergency service. Typical examples of incident management concerns include:

- strike teams being sent into a staging area and not doing anything for long periods of time;

- inadequate food, cool drinks or toilet facilities; and
- poor flow of information on which effective logistical planning and operational decisions can be made.

To address this emerging problem, CFS is initiating tactical and strategic training in middle-management ranks.

This has already started at the sector command level – the people who control up to five strike teams involving 70 or 80 firefighters. Strike team leaders will soon be involved in the training program.

A Sector Commander workshop, a one day training course, has been trialled twice – at Riverton and the South Coast Training Centre.

The course materials have been fully revised and are being prepared for publication. The regions will supervise delivery of the workshop.

Too often in the past, people – particularly at middle-management level – have tended to look down the chain of command. Increasingly, we will ensure that communications flow clearly and efficiently up and down the chain of command.

People at the top can only gain a clear vision of what is occurring and how efficiently a problem is being addressed if information reaches them effectively.

The results of the middle-management training will be monitored from incident reports.



Tony Wege. Picture courtesy of The Leader, Angaston

All of our efforts are directed to winning every fire “war” while working to ensure the welfare of firefighters involved.

With a more logistic, tactical and strategic approach, we should win them quicker and more efficiently while maximising the limited time commitment of volunteers.

Tony Wege
Project Officer, Training

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Australia Day Honours

Congratulations to Group Officer Ronald Bowden and Lieutenant Cheryl May, recipients of the Australian Fire Service Medal in the 1997 Australia Day Honours.



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Leanne Schmidt to help raise our media profile

The word is out in Adelaide's media. Leanne Schmidt is the person to call if they want the low-down on fires and other incidents attended by the CFS around South Australia.

In the newly-created position of Media Officer for Operational Incidents, Leanne will be the main liaison point between the media and CFS officers.

The job was created to help lift the profile of the CFS within the community. It is also expected to overcome the previous problems with media liaison, which was often intrusive and disruptive as incident control units found themselves fielding numerous journalistic inquiries when they were busy managing firefighting strategies.

An information sheet providing details of Leanne's position and contact numbers was recently issued to the media.

"I knew the media was aware of my position when calls poured in for information about the 16 fires which raged around the State on 20 January," Leanne said.

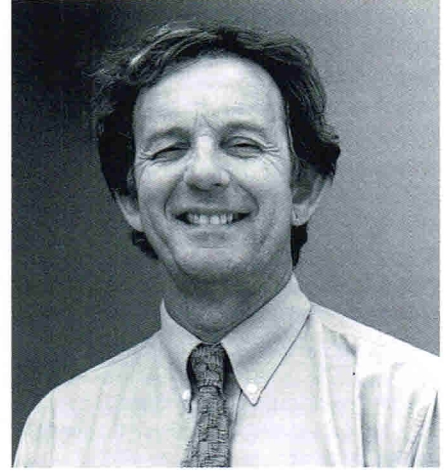
"Mostly, the media want to know about the size of the fire, if it is threatening any homes or property, how many CFS volunteers are involved, how long they have been fighting and if there are any injuries or losses.



Leanne Schmidt

"I deal through the Regional Commanders and Regional Officers to obtain information. However, I will rely on all volunteers to pass newsworthy material on through their Group Officers, so that I can then communicate it to the media.

"Regional Commanders and Officers will still be required to speak to the media on some occasions, particularly to local media representatives who may be at the scene.



Peter Mills

"In addition to facilitating a better flow of information to the media, I aim to widen the community's recognition of the outstanding contribution made by volunteers, highlighting the variety of incidents they attend.

"In doing so, I hope also to encourage more people to join the CFS."

Leanne, 25, lives at Lobethal and she is a volunteer for the Lobethal CFS Brigade. She joined the CFS in 1993 and has worked spasmodically for the Upper Sturt and Tea Tree Gully brigades since then.

For the past year, she has been Regional Officer for the CFS and has a broad understanding of the service's operations. Working closely with Media Coordinator, Peter Mills, Leanne will be on 24 hour call for the remainder of the fire danger season.

Wall chart a valuable fundraiser

The SAVFBA is producing a quality 12 month wall chart planner (Jan 98 - Dec 98) for sale by CFS Brigades. It is anticipated that this will be a successful fundraiser for brigades with wide community distribution. The initial run of 10,000 will be distributed on September 1997.

To defray production costs, the SAVFBA is seeking four advertisers for the 1998 production at \$1500 total per insertion. Advertisers will receive first option in following years.

Delivery cost will be \$1.50 and recommended sale price is \$4.50. The planner includes a listing of all brigades in SA. For further information, please contact Conrad Powell, Executive Officer, SAVFBA.

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Total		

CFS achieves new benchmark in injury prevention

The CFS has gained a level one rating in injury prevention under the Occupational Health & Safety legislation.

This is a major achievement for the CFS, which has undergone a preliminary OH&S evaluation by a WorkCover consultant.

Twenty seven brigades, CFS headquarters and each of the regional offices were evaluated for basic compliance under OH&S standards.

OH&S Coordinator, Judy Arthur, said the preliminary evaluation and level one rating had set a benchmark for the entire organisation.

A further evaluation will be conducted in July this year involving another 46 brigades around the State.

Ms Arthur said the OH&S procedures and standards had been established and the task now would be to help other brigades understand the benefits.

Brigade and Group Captains and OH&S liaison representatives will play key roles in implementing OH&S systems and ensuring basic compliance.

We are in a changing climate as more people come to accept that OH&S standards are a fundamental requirement. There have already been some positive outcomes with the number of accident incident and hazard reports increasing significantly.

This is a sure sign that awareness levels are being raised.

WorkCover has supported OH&S performance measures being designed specifically for CFS volunteers.

These performance measures will be applied according to the Standards of Fire and Emergency Cover affecting urban, rural/urban and rural brigades and recognised brigade procedures.

WorkCover Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr Garry McDonald, said the CFS was to be commended for developing a comprehensive OH&S procedure manual and OH&S safety induction video package.

In a letter to CFS Chief Executive Officer, Stuart Ellis, Mr McDonald said: "The advancement of OH&S throughout the entire service of 18,000 volunteer firefighters, together with the abovementioned initiatives, is applauded".

To comply with OH&S regulations, the CFS has also had to complete an analysis of its appliances for potential hazards.

This was carried out by a special team comprising:

- Barry Burdon, project officer in charge of appliances;
- Michael Kelly, Department of Industrial Affairs;
- Carolyn Dingle, Department of Industrial Affairs;
- Judy Arthur, CFS OH&S Coordinator;
- regional representatives of the Vehicle and Equipment Committee; and
- members of the selected brigades.



Judy Arthur

The project included inspections in each region of two appliances, which had been built in the past two years.

A draft report is being prepared and recommendations are expected to go to the CFS Board before the end of the financial year.

Future of Hills tower secure

The Mt. Lofty fire spotting tower is now fully operational and staffed daily by volunteer CFS personal.

The tower's future had been in doubt, but efforts by the East Torrens CFS Group, Friends of Cleland and local residents have assured the continued operation of the facility.

In the 1995-96 fire season, the tower was operated by about 50 volunteers who recorded 68 smoke sightings.

The future of the tower was questioned during the Mt. Lofty redevelopment and a belief in some quarters that modern technology could replace human fire spotting techniques. However, last season proved the tower could assist ground crews and aerial support in quickly and accurately pinpointing the location of a bush or scrub fire.

East Torrens Chairman, Garry Casey, said the Group had been overwhelmed by the numbers of people wanting to become spotters.

Mr Casey said the tower gave Adelaide Hills residents greater protection from bushfires because crews could be despatched at the first sign of smoke before major bushfires developed.

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Region 1

Mount Lofty Ranges,
Fleurieu Peninsula
and Kangaroo Island

Mount Barker

Mount Barker CFS will receive additional funding of \$45,000 following a decision by the Mount Barker Council to divert extra profits from the Monarto Quarry to the service.

The move brings Council's overall CFS budget to \$230,000 for the 1996-97 year, which is less than the expected level of funding.

The reduction in funds will force the brigade to drop or self-fund several of its projects, including the upgrading of the Mt Barker station surrounds, extensions to the Littlehampton station, replacement of pagers and maintenance of brigade-owned vehicles.

Kangaroo Island

Lightning strikes were blamed for a rash of fires which recently kept Kangaroo firefighting resources stretched to the limit.

Two separate fires burned for days in the Seal Bay Conservation Park and Flinders Chase National Park, blanketing most of Kangaroo Island with smoke.

Witnesses said the Seal Bay fire resembled a nuclear explosion as a huge plume of smoke rose high into the sky. CFS crews kept watch on the fires, which burnt out of control through hundreds of hectares of inaccessible scrub.

Meanwhile, American River CFS attended a fire which caused \$50,000 damage to an unoccupied home.

The fire was deliberately lit with the aid of petrol. Adelaide fire investigators and South Coast CIB personnel flew to the Island after the blaze.

Morphett Vale

Morphett Vale CFS volunteer, Nicki Harris, is being touted as a 'supergirl' following the recognition of her outstanding commitment to community service.

Nicki was presented with an award recognising her contribution to the Girl Guides, CFS and St John Ambulance.

She started at Morphett Vale CFS as the brigade's mascot while her mother took part in CFS off-season competitions. Her mother and father are both CFS volunteers and Nicki recently helped them fight fires at Palmer and Mt Compass.

Apart from her firefighting commitments, Nicki has given 130 hours of service to St John as a cadet and was recently awarded

the Queen's Guide Award for 10 years membership.

With a long term plan to "just help others," Nicki says she does not understand why more young people are not community-oriented.



Region 2

Lower North,
Adelaide Plains and
Yorke Peninsula

Gumeracha

Adelaide Hills CFS member Don Johnson is Gumeracha's joint winner of the Citizen of the Year title.

A member of the Kersbrook brigade, Don has devoted many years of service to the CFS.

Originally a firefighter at Edithburgh, his major contribution to the CFS these days is managing the Kersbrook air base with its ground crew of six.

On days of extreme fire danger, he is on alert with the rest of the brigade.

Don's major responsibility is to ensure that CFS bomber aircraft, based at Woodside, can land at Kersbrook and be refilled as quickly as possible.

Avon

Five CFS units and 90 volunteers fought a grassland fire on a property near Avon in late January.

At one stage there were fears the fire would threaten the town of Avon, but the blaze – thought to have been started by a spark from a slasher – was brought under control with CFS crews on standby all night.

Fast action by CFS crews has also saved the historic Werocata homestead north of Balaklava. Fire fanned by strong northerly winds threatened the 125 year old homestead, but firefighters brought it under control within an hour.

Salisbury

Salisbury CFS will hand over some of its territory following a deal struck with the MFS.

Areas at Cavan, the Levels, Parafield Gardens, Paralowie, Greenfields and Salisbury DSTO will be switched to the MFS.

Angaston

The local CFS group has extended its thanks to people who willingly came together to fight fires which raged in the Truro/Moculta areas in December.

Many businesses opened their doors so that necessary items, especially food, could be obtained for the hundreds of personnel involved in the incident.

Trucks, some carrying water, others fuel, worked to supply the fire fighting appliances.

Local farmers rallied with private appliances, knapsacks and other equipment.

Strike teams from Para, Ridley, Gumeracha, Crawford and Gilbert groups came to the assistance of the Angaston group.

Riverton

When Riverton's Kevin Behn joined the CFS 40 years ago, it was called the EFS – Emergency Fire Service – and second world war army blitz trucks were the mainstay of the operation.

His service to the CFS was recognised when he was awarded a national CFS medal and a life membership certificate, medal and plaque.

One of Kevin's memories is of a call out in the Blitz with its Rex pump which started five fires on the side of the road on the way to the main fire. The most memorable is his involvement in the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires when his unit saved the Seven Hills Hotel.



Region 3

Riverland and
Murrayland.

Renmark

Two blazes near Renmark recently burnt 1500 hectares of scrubland before being brought under control by more than 100 firefighters.

Strong winds threatened to push the fires toward a number of homes on the fringe of Renmark's northern fruit growing district, forcing householders to prepare for evacuation. However, a drop in the wind enabled firefighters to control the flames before they reached the homes.

The CFS Group Control Centre at Baramera controlled the firefighting operations, with Colin Barnett directing the crews and formulating strategies.

Thought to have been started by lightning strikes, the fires were fought by 23 CFS units, seven MFS units and four CFA units from Victoria. CFS crews worked until 3am to extinguish the fires with three shift changes through the night to enable volunteers to get to work the following day.

Mr Barnett said the operation was made more difficult by the large number of sightseers who drove to witness the fires, clogging roads and making it difficult for firefighting vehicles.



Region 4

Mid North and Far North

The Region 4 Communications Brigade recently experienced the most hectic five week period since its formation in 1991.

During the period from November 16 to December 23, the Brigade was involved in six incidents and was operational for a total period of 223 hours.

On November 16 and 17 it provided a forward control point for a fire in the Hawker/Carrieton area.

November 23 saw the Brigade set up a forward command point for a train collision at Iron Baron while on November 27 the Brigade set up a forward control point for a fire at Quorn.

After arriving back at Region 4 headquarters at 1am on November 28, members had barely got to bed when they were called out to set up a forward control point for a fatal MVA involving Hazchem on Highway One just out of Port Augusta.

Sunday, December 1 was a day nobody in the Brigade will forget for a long time. Responding to a call out from the Region 4 Commander, crews arrived at headquarters to find no fewer than 35 fires were burning in the region.

As the day progressed, the Brigade's regional communications van was sent to Carrieton to provide communications. At that stage, there were 10 fires burning in the Carrieton area alone.

On their way home to Port Augusta after being relieved, the crew drove through Horrock's Pass to see the Mount Brown fire burning along the top of the hills. The fire extended from north of Horrock's Pass to the back of Stirling North.

The Mount Brown fire saw the brigade operate non-stop with support from Region 1 Comms, Region 6 Comms, and the SES right up until the afternoon of Friday, December 6.

When stood down on December 6, the Brigade had been operational for a period of 131 hours, the longest stint put in at any incident.

The last incident during a period of intense activity occurred on the weekend of December 22 and 23 when the brigade was called to provide a control point at a fire at Mambray Creek.



Kristy Cooke

In most of the incidents, brigade members also provided support staff at Region 4 headquarters. These people did everything from answering telephones and radios to ICS logistics and aerial observer duties.

– Bill Cole (Communications Officer)

Terowie

On January 18, Kristy Cooke, a firefighter from Terowie brigade, flew out of Adelaide for Canada.

Kristy, 16, joined Terowie CFS three ago as a cadet.

In 1996 she passed a CFS Level 1 course, served as a student representative councillor, played in the Peterborough High School Band, was a member of the Terowie netball team and attended various Rotary functions.

Late last year, Kristy was chosen as a Rotary exchange student and chose Canada for a 12 month exchange visit.

Kristy was recently farewelled by brigade members.



Region 5

Upper and Lower South East

Kingston

CFS volunteers last month joined State Emergency Service, police, Coastguard and National Parks and Wildlife Service personnel and local fishermen in an extensive search for a missing fisherman.

They searched a wide area for clues to the disappearance of Kingston fisherman, Mr Alexander Garwood, 76.

A body, believed to be that of the missing man, was eventually found by a Kingston fisherman about one nautical mile offshore.

Police held grave fears for the man's safety after his boat capsizes in Wright's Bay north west of Robe.

Mr garwood had left Kingston at 7.50 am in his four metre half cabin vessel to check his cray pots.

Adelaide Star Division Water Response Section divers found his overturned vessel and inside Mr Garwood's dead dog.

Millicent

Millicent CFS, SES and ambulance personnel assisted in the search for a 43 year old amateur fisherman who is believed to have drowned in the Southern Ocean near Carpenter's Rocks.

The man's dinghy capsized off Pelican Point and, despite an alert being raised, he had disappeared by the time rescuers arrived.

Police established a forward command post at Pelican Point and coordinated a sea and shore search involving 40 personnel, the Rescue One helicopter from Adelaide, a local fixed wing aircraft and five fishing vessels.

The helicopter was supplied with around 1000 litres of aviation fuel by Millicent CFS.



Millicent volunteers fuel the Rescue One helicopter. Picture courtesy South East Times



CFS CEO Stuart Ellis, Minister Graham Ingerson, Allan Marshall (CFS), Peter Little (SA Ambulance Service) and Cleve Brisbane (Naracoorte Police). Picture courtesy Naracoorte Herald



Region 6
Eyre Peninsula and
West Coast

Calca

A backfiring utility exhaust is believed to have set alight stubble in a Calca paddock, which led to a scrub fire.

CFS volunteers from Streaky Bay and Calca attended the fire, bringing it under control after it had burnt about 10 hectares.

In what was recently a busy time for Eyre Peninsula firefighters, separate fires also burnt about 60 hectares of scrub at Charlton Gully and 40 hectares of stubble and scrub, 20 km west of Cowell. The Cowell fire was attended by three appliances and 15 personnel from Cowell and Cleve brigades. Twenty six private units also attended.

Two appliances and 10 personnel from the Kimba CFS were called to a fire in an ATCO transportable building on the outskirts of the town. The fire caused \$6,000 damage.

The Kimba crew also attended a semi-trailer roll-over 24 km west of Kimba.

Volunteers spent more than six hours cleaning up leaking fuel and reloading eight damaged vehicles which were being transported at the time of the accident.

One appliance from Buckleboo CFS joined two from the Kimba brigade to fight a crop, stubble and scrub fire about 25 km north of Kimba. Together with local farmers with their own fire-fighting equipment, they put out the fire, which had been started by a bearing overheating on a harvester.

Minnipa and Wudinna crews responded to a grass and scrub fire at Paney Station about 60 km north of Wudinna.

Sparks from an angle grinder set alight dry grass between Yeelanna and Port Neill, destroying 12 hectares of stubble and six hectares of crop before being extinguished by Butler CFS.

The incident prompted the CFS to remind the public of the risks and penalties of using angle grinders and welders during the fire danger season.

Naracoorte

The Emergency Services Minister, Mr Graham Ingerson, has praised the Naracoorte Trauma Response Group saying it provides an excellent example of how different emergency services work together.

He said the group was acting as a trial unit for the rest of the State.

The Naracoorte Trauma Response Group involves local doctors, CFS, ambulance service, police and the local hospital.

It enables doctors to be brought to the scene of an accident where people have suffered severe trauma allowing them to be treated as soon as possible.

Mr Ingerson met with South East emergency service personnel in January.

During his visit to Naracoorte, Mr Ingerson thanked CFS volunteers who fought a large fire at Glencoe on January 5.

Volunteers from Naracoorte and Hynam brigades were among 300 firefighters from six CFS groups who attended the fire.

Mr Ingerson said: "These men and women, who give freely of their time and energy, not only do a great job protecting the State, they make the provision of top level emergency services in country areas possible.

"Without volunteers, emergency service costings would be prohibitive."

Millicent-Beachport

Volunteers with the Millicent-Beachport CFS have voted to merge with their Penola counterparts.

The merger will follow the amalgamation of Millicent, Beachport and Penola District Councils, which is expected to be implemented around the middle of this year.

The merger will be the biggest structural change to local CFS operations since Millicent and Beachport brigades joined about a decade ago. It will bring to 22 the number of trucks in the combined group, together with two command vehicles.

Millicent-Beachport CFS Group Officer, Mike Kemp, said the amalgamation would provide a more coordinated approach to fire-fighting services.

"At present, the three councils meet the maintenance and running expenses of local brigades, which amounts to about \$150,000 per year, as well as vehicle replacement costs," he said.

"The administration of the merged fire group has been discussed and we propose to retain one Group Officer and split the area into two divisions, each of which would have two Deputy Group Officers."

The Millicent-Beachport group comprises 14 brigades and the Penola group seven brigades.

Penola

Two Penola CFS units were called to the scene of an accident which occurred when a truck collided with a car doing a U-turn in Penola's main street.

The 81 year old driver of the car – a Penola man – was killed in the accident.

Kalangadoo

A fire at Kalangadoo, 25 km north of Mount Gambier, recently caused \$65,000 damage to a hay shed, tractor and boat.

There were no suspicious circumstances surrounding the fire which took 35 CFS firefighters one hour to contain.

Obituary

Dale Dwayne Lloyd

On February 7, 1997. Suddenly

Aged 26 years

Beloved husband of Bronwyn

Loving father of Taylor and Lachlan

12th November 1970 to 7th February 1997

Joined Lyrup CFS 29.8.90

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