

SA Country Fire Service  
2023 Yearbook



Government  
of South Australia



**10,100**  
incidents responded to

**691,125**  
volunteer hours given

**2,138**  
vehicle-related  
incidents

**373**  
structure fires

**157**  
HAZMAT  
incidents

**1,371**  
rural fires

**3,872**  
special service incidents  
(includes tree downs, flooding, severe weather, Assist SAAS)

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Views and opinions expressed through the contributions in this publication are not necessarily those of CFS or Government of South Australia.

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CFS Media Link (08) 8115 3531

Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation CFS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Contributors

We acknowledge CFS Promotions Unit as the source of many of the photos in this year's publication and thank everyone who shared their photos and stories.

Cover image

Compartment Fire Behaviour Course  
State Training Centre Brukunga,  
August 2022

Pip McGowan -  
CFS Promotions Unit

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# Working together, tackling challenges

No year is ever quiet in CFS, and 2022/23 has been no exception. While the season was relatively kind to us, it was only thanks to the incredible life-saving work of brigades and groups that kept losses to a minimum.

I am now almost a year into the role of Chief Officer and I have been extremely fortunate to have had a generous and well-supported transition into this position. Being able to play a part in leading CFS is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and not a day passes where I am not impressed by the work that is done state-wide at all levels across our agency.

No year is ever quiet in CFS and 2022/23 has been no exception. While the season was relatively kind to us, it was only thanks to the incredible life-saving work of brigades and groups that kept losses to a minimum. I want to acknowledge the efforts of those personnel who supported major events such as the Port Lincoln Fire, Mount Wedge Fire, Adelaide Hills Storm response, River Murray Flooding, and Lincoln Gap Tyre Fire.

These incidents demonstrated the versatility of our agency and once again proved our ability to manage any kind of emergency incident.

Our aerial fleet, along with our highly efficient automatic dispatch system in Primary Response Zones (PRZs), is at the forefront nationally. It should be a source of immense pride for all of us, and we should strive to maintain and expand it whenever feasible. However, I am acutely aware of the fact that fires are fought, extinguished, and blacked out by hard working firefighters on the ground. I know that much of the media and community attention focuses on the aircraft, but I want to stress to you all that we will never lose sight of the fact that we cannot succeed without firefighters and fire trucks.

I have been able to reflect upon my experience and identify the areas where I want to prioritise leading change. One of these key areas is improving our consultative arrangements to ensure we make decisions in a transparent and timely fashion. I know firsthand the current cycle takes far too long and we miss opportunities as a result. I am pleased the Chief Officer's Advisory Council (COAC) has endorsed changes to this framework which we hope will greatly improve this process.

Another key focus of mine is the state of our facilities across South Australia. I have long tried to lead improvement in this area and I passionately believe that you all deserve better. You deserve stations that have toilets, running water, clean space to store uniforms, area to get changed and facilities that enable you to meet to discuss important matters and celebrate together. We have a long way to go to achieve this, but we will start this journey under my tenure by developing a long overdue Facilities Replacement Strategy and working with Government to help them better understand our critical needs.



I am mindful that our current tiers of operational decision-making have existed for decades and we need to explore if we are able to effectively and efficiently manage so many levels of command. Many of you will have stories and experiences from strike team deployments and major incidents where we have, despite our best efforts, let you down. Therefore, I am firmly of the belief that now is the time to aim for better rather than accepting what has become, at times, a questionable standard that you have all tolerated. Efforts are underway to review and invest in improvements to our operational performance through streamlined operational layers and importantly our ability to sustain multiple incidents for longer durations.

We also cannot lose sight of the fact this coming fire season, and indeed the one after that, are already forecast to be much more difficult than we have experienced over previous years.

We must all work together to prepare for these pending challenges, and this may include making changes to how we operate to ensure our sustainability into the future.



Keep up the great work - and most importantly stay safe!

**Brett Loughlin AFSM**  
Chief Officer



# A strong past and bright future

**T**he last year has been punctuated by significant transition for us all, including CFS.

Notably, there has been a significant shift of practice for all South Australians from COVID-driven practices, to a footing of “COVID normal” which has required another operational and business step change, and further agility. Beyond this, there has also been a fundamental leadership change for CFS, specifically in relation to the Chief Officer.

In 2022, we thanked former Chief Officer, Mark Jones QFSM, for his leadership during enormously challenging events including the 2019/2020 fire season, and the initial years of the COVID pandemic. As a state, we will be forever grateful for his stoic leadership during these times.

We are also proud that we have been able to promote a new Chief Officer from within CFS ranks in Brett Loughlin AFSM, to continue the excellent work of the agency.

Operationally, CFS highlighted its best attributes in the last year through leadership as well as support in a number of different and complex scenarios.

There has been the constant daily leadership and excellence in relation to core services provision including fire, HAZMAT, and vehicle-related incidents, but there has also been immense support provided by CFS when South Australia has been in need.

CFS continued to provide support in relation to the rapid antigen test (RAT) program including hundreds of hours via the RAT Distribution and Support Program, setting up COVID Vaccination Hubs, and assisting other agencies including South Australia Police, and South Australian Ambulance Service.

In the later stages of last year, CFS also provided significant support to the State Emergency Service in response to the River Murray flood. Approximately 420 volunteers and staff provided 3,352 response hours, responding to 286 requests for assistance including salvage assistance, swift water rescue, sandbagging, levee inspections and Incident Management Teams.

The emergency service response provided to affected river communities during the worst flood since 1956 would not have been possible without CFS.

It has been a privilege for me to not only see the contribution CFS has made to the state in 2022, but also to be able to visit brigades across the state and thank you for your ongoing dedication and commitment to protecting our communities.

**Joe Szakacs**  
**Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services** 🇺🇲



# Supporting South Australia

Reflecting on the past year, some would consider it a quiet fire season, yet as we know there is no such thing as a quiet season because CFS' 13,500 volunteers deliver 24/7 emergency response all year for South Australians.

This year, CFS volunteers responded to fast moving bushfires, numerous structure fires, and unfortunately, an increased number of road crash rescues involving fatalities. Volunteers supported the State Emergency Service during the recent flood and numerous storm events, and the South Australian Ambulance Service with patient lifts and as first responders.

CFS volunteers should be proud of their achievements and the value they contribute to their communities. The enormous social and economic benefit provided to South Australia by our CFS volunteers is immeasurable, as is the value of lives, assets, structures and the environment saved by our crews.

It is increasingly obvious that CFS is becoming the 'go to' agency as resourcing shortfalls occur across our state. This impacts our volunteers, by reducing their time with their families, and their commitment to their employer. CFS Volunteer Association (CFSVA) is very aware of the vast impacts on our volunteers and is amazed at just how far their resilience and goodwill stretches.

CFSVA will continue to support and represent volunteers welfare and interests. Mental health issues associated with being first responders is significant, as too is presumptive cancer. As scientific evidence becomes increasingly extensive and conclusive, it sheds light on the impact these challenges have on our dedicated volunteers.

CFSVA consistently monitors and benchmarks SA against national standards to ensure best practice, recognising the inherently dangerous and demanding roles of our CFS volunteers. Evidence suggests that SA's staff-to-volunteer ratio and funding is falling behind national benchmarks. These statistics are concerning and CFSVA is working to reverse this trend, implementing strategies to ensure the future growth and success of CFS.

CFSVA represents our CFS volunteers with diligence and pride and seeks volunteer engagement to ensure a frontline perspective can be communicated from a grass roots level through to the very top. This work is significant in crafting CFS' future destiny and securing adequate funding for facilities, training and equipment. It also ensures professional and appropriate support services are available to our volunteers before and after any event.

CFSVA encourages all volunteers, with the support of government, to be part of this journey so we are prepared and ready for whatever the future may bring.

CFSVA congratulates all CFS volunteers for their dedication and commitment and looks forward to their valued input as we work together towards a positive future, and the continued delivery of professional volunteer fire and rescue services to South Australia.

**David Lindner**  
CFS Volunteer Association

“ CFSVA will continue to support and represent volunteers welfare and interests. ”



# Major incidents

CFS members travelled from as far as Kangaroo Island, Naracoorte in the South East and Burra in the Mid North to door knock homes, provide advice, and support people likely to be impacted by the rising floodwaters.

# River Murray Flooding

The River Murray's water levels have returned to normal, signaling the end of the flood crisis of 2022/23 and the start of a recovery phase. However, during the flooding, our communities in Region 3 faced significant challenges. The crisis impacted all aspects of our community, from volunteers and staff to the public. It was confronting to see those working on the front line watching the water encroach on their properties, causing anxiety in our communities.

At its peak, the mighty River Murray saw 185,860 mega litres a day at the South Australian-Victorian border. Approximately 4,000 hectares of prime agricultural land was affected, and around 3,500 homes were inundated, with nearly 10 per cent of them being primary residences. Over 14 constructed levees failed under the river's pressure.

Historically, the River Murray has experienced major flooding in 1931, 1956, 1973, and 1974. However, the flood of 2022/23 has become a defining moment in South Australia's history due to its devastating impacts - labelled the state's worst flooding since 1956. Between October 2022 to January 2023, CFS committed 420 volunteers and staff to assist with the flooding, receiving 286 requests for assistance, totaling 3,352 response hours.

We supported the community and SES with flood salvage assistance, sandbagging, levee inspections, and Incident Management Team members.

As a support agency, CFS was heavily involved in assisting SES, as the control agency, with community sandbagging activities, education drives and cleaning up following several storm fronts over the past months.

CFS members travelled from as far as Kangaroo Island, Naracoorte in the state's South East and Burra in the Mid North to door knock homes, provide advice, and support people likely to be impacted by the rising floodwaters.

One exemplary effort from Region 3 volunteers and staff was deploying approximately 170 metres - the combined length of Adelaide Oval - of sandbags in five hours, to protect Lake Bonney in Barmera from debris caused by the flood. The herculean efforts of CFS members delivered world-class support to our communities. While there is still work to be done for floodplain irrigators, shack owners, and river users, the pace of events has slowed, and there is an end in sight.





## Port Lincoln Fire

**W**eather conditions across the Eastern Eyre and Lower Eyre Peninsula were deteriorating by 9am Thursday, 16 February 2023. Already, Cleve on the Eastern Eyre Peninsula and Port Lincoln airport on Lower Eyre Peninsula had recorded Catastrophic Fire Danger Ratings, prompting conversations across the region to pre-prepare strike teams.

At 12:54pm, the first page came in for a fire moving southeast under high winds of more than 40 kilometres per hour, with gusts of up to 80 kilometres per hour, at Stamford Drive, east of Port Lincoln. The fire was reported to be four kilometres east of the town centre, approximately one kilometre from the Port Lincoln rubbish dump and industrial area and one and a half kilometres south of the Kathai Conservation Park. Three CFS appliances and aircraft arrived on scene at Stamford Drive quickly after being diverted from an incident at Poonindee.

Intel continued to flow from the fireground, with the ignition area confirmed to contain numerous assets including private residences, sheds, farming equipment, and a communications tower, surrounded by significant fuel loads of mallee and scrub. As the fire continued to escalate, resources from around the state were flown in, with CFS and Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) deploying crews from across the state to assist on the fireground and in the Incident Management Team (IMT). This included Region 1 strike teams and ongoing support from the State Command Centre who flew in the Level 3 rapid response IMT, ensuring Region 6 were able to focus on containing the fire. The fire was officially contained by 3:30pm 16 February, with work continuing within the fire scar to protect assets.

Great work was undertaken by CFS crews, Farm Fire Units, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment and Water (DEW), MFS, SA Police, SA Ambulance Service, local council and State Emergency Service. CFS' Air Operations should be commended on their efforts, with more than 70 drops and further aerial resources pulled in by state.

The fire burned approximately 140 hectares, impacting 24 assets, 16 of which were destroyed. These structures included residences, sheds, stables, an assortment of out buildings, and the waste depot. Despite this loss, many assets were saved, including two homes where the residents were unable to leave due to fragility and medical conditions. The fire cause was determined to be the failure of critical electrical infrastructure.

Port Lincoln Brigade and DEW provided ongoing patrols across the fireground for days after the fire, to ensure there were no flare-ups. The MFS continued to work on the waste facility for several days to ensure it was fully extinguished and made safe, with the fire officially declared safe on 25 February 2023. No lives were lost, and there were no reports of any major injuries.

The fire was dealt with efficiency, speed, coordination, safety, and effectiveness. The level of collaboration and teamwork between the agencies involved was outstanding, and their efforts prevented the fire from causing more damage than it did.



## Struan Research Facility Fire

In the early hours of Saturday, 5 November 2022, approximately 30 volunteers from the Naracoorte Group responded to reports of a structure fire at the Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) Struan Research Facility. The situation quickly escalated, and the incident was upgraded to a second alarm due to the chemicals stored at the site, with a Hazardous Materials (HazMat) team also dispatched.

Additional crews from the Wattle Range and Mount Gambier Groups were called in to assist with the structure fire. MFS crews from Mount Gambier provided a Combination Aerial Pumping Appliance and additional Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus support.

Firefighters worked tirelessly to contain the fire to the research centre, ensuring that the historic Struan House was unaffected. Once the fire was contained, CFS HazMat crews, with gas detectors, monitored the structure to ensure that the working laboratory was clear of any hazardous materials.

Following their inspection, the site was determined to be safe, allowing staff from PIRSA and fire cause investigators to enter. Unfortunately, the facility incurred an estimated loss of around \$5 million, making it the largest structural loss in Region 5 for quite some time.

The incident highlights the importance of having well-trained and equipped firefighters, who can respond quickly and effectively to emergencies. The dedication of our volunteers who responded to the scene is commendable.



## Lincoln Gap Tyre Fire

On Thursday, 23 February 2023, CFS volunteers from Region 4 responded to a fire at Lincoln Gap on the Eyre Highway, between Port Augusta and Whyalla. Crews arrived to find two large tanks, containing over one million tyres, completely engulfed in flames. Over the course of 12 days, more than 35 CFS and MFS crews from across the state worked around the clock to extinguish the fire.

The tyre fire presented significant challenges for the firefighters, and public. Smoke could be seen in the area, and at times, it drifted across the highway, posing a hazard to drivers and the nearby train line. Frequent atmospheric monitoring was required to assess the contaminants within the smoke, and the potential impact on livestock and the community.

Due to the length and complexity of the fire, CFS collaborated closely with the Department for Infrastructure, SA Water, Australian Rail Transport Corporation, SA Police, Metropolitan Fire Service, State Emergency Service, and Environmental Protection Agency. After many different suppression methods and tactics were tested, the fire was eventually declared safe. Thermal imaging cameras were used to ensure that no hot spots remained during mop-up, and the site could be handed back to the owners safely.

In total, more than 150 volunteers worked on the fireground and within the Incident Management Team, with support coming from across the state to assist with firefighting efforts. Despite the trying circumstances, the dedication of the volunteers was evident as they went above and beyond the call of duty.





## Mount Wedge Fire

**M**any families were recovering from festive celebrations on Boxing Day when, just after 5:30pm, a plume of smoke was spotted at Mount Wedge, 25 kilometres northeast of Elliston on the Eyre Peninsula. CFS crews and Farm Fire Units (FFU), supported by aerial resources and local contractors, managed to initially halt the forward rate of spread. Crews worked tirelessly into the evening constructing control lines, ahead of forecasted unfavourable weather in the coming days.

Despite best efforts, the fire broke containment lines during the early afternoon of the following day. High temperatures above 40 degrees supported the fires, intensity as it increased rapidly in size. This resulted in the formation of a pyrocumulus cloud that impacted the fireground with erratic winds.

16 CFS appliances and seven aircraft were supported by National Parks and Wildlife Service crews and FFUs. Crews managed to halt the forward rate of spread before reinforcements arrived

the following day in the form of strike teams from Regions 1 and 4.

The scrub and grass fire, believed to have been started by lightning, burnt through 2,470 hectares in total. Supported by a Level 2 Incident Management Team stationed in nearby town of Lock, crews remained on the scene, mopping up, blacking out and attending to flare-ups into the new year. The fireground was officially declared safe on Tuesday, 3 January, a week after it started.



## Price Salt Production Facility Fire

**O**n Thursday, 23 February 2023, CFS was alerted to a fire in a salt production facility on Yorke Peninsula, in the small coastal town of Price. Approximately 80 firefighters worked tirelessly to contain the fire, which destroyed a 60x40 metre building containing commercial quantities of assorted packaging materials, production plant spare parts and other general items.

Thirteen CFS appliances, including specialist HazMat crews conducting atmospheric monitoring, remained on scene until the fire was extinguished, with support from Metropolitan Fire Service, SA Police and SA Ambulance Service. Despite a loss of approximately \$3 million, the prompt response of CFS volunteers ensured the \$20 million production hall was protected.

The incident occurred on a Total Fire Ban day, with temperatures forecast to reach 40 degrees and strong winds expected. These weather conditions had a significant impact on crew welfare, with four firefighters sustaining minor heat-related illnesses during the response.

This incident is a great example of the quick response by our volunteers, inter-agency teamwork, and a huge save for the local community.



## Victorian Flooding Deployment

In late October 2022, CFS provided Incident Management support to the Victorian State Emergency Services as part of a national request for assistance. Two Incident Management Team (IMT) contingents were sent away for a 7 day deployment. The first IMT was tasked initially to work out of both the Bendigo and Swan Hill Incident Control Centres. Due to the change in incident conditions the second IMT was based out of the Swan Hill ICC.

As part of this arrangement CFS also sent teams of two staff to the Interstate /International Liaison Unit at Emergency Management Victoria in Melbourne. In week one, Deputy Commander Heidi Davis was our Jurisdiction Liaison Officer (JLO) supported by James Honner. In week two, Deputy Commander Steve Schneider was the JLO supported by Jas Muller.

Right from the initial travel arrangements this deployment was a challenge. Access to large parts of country Victoria were already impacted by flooding resulting in significant delays, particularly in road transport.

This event provided the IMTs with considerable learnings well ahead of the SA flooding event. The ways Victorian emergency services were managing their flooding was reported on regularly, with lots of good preparation work being put in place. These learnings were passed onto the SA State Emergency Service in anticipation of the work that was to come once waters reached SA.

“ This event provided the IMTs with considerable learnings well ahead of the SA flooding event ”

# Major Projects

CFS' latest safety upgrades are a significant step forward in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its volunteers and positioning the agency as a national leader in safety features.



# Road Crash Rescue Capability Expands with Heavy Rescue Equipment

Every second counts when responding to a road crash incident, which is why CFS has introduced a Heavy Rescue Vehicle to its fleet, enabling volunteers to provide a specialised response to regional South Australia, which was previously limited to metropolitan areas.

The introduction of the Heavy Rescue Vehicle into CFS' fleet will revolutionise the response of our all-hazard agency and will be lifesaving for the SA community. Having the ability to relocate a vehicle to increase access points, rather than only having the ability to use tools to extricate a person who might be trapped, will enable a person to receive medical treatment sooner.

Located at Lobethal CFS Brigade, the vehicle will respond to complex vehicle accidents including specialist and heavy vehicle incidents (e.g. agricultural machinery), industrial and general rescue incidents. This will enable a specialist response to be provided across the Adelaide Hills.

It also includes vehicle relocation capability, which is via a purpose-built winch that will be used to drag vehicles off or away from obstacles following a road crash, enabling an injured person to receive medical treatment in the fastest possible time.

New technologies and built-in safety systems have helped to increase protection for occupants in a car before a crash. However, they create hazards and challenges to CFS volunteers when responding to extricate anyone trapped. Therefore, the relocation ability will be operated in conjunction with crash recovery system Moditech. Moditech is run from a tablet and provides volunteers with in-depth information on potential hazards. It also provides the ability to search specific car models to understand where potential dangers such as airbags, fuel tanks, batteries or SRS control units may be hidden within the car.

As the largest provider of road crash rescue (RCR) in South Australia, with 66 specialist brigades across the state, CFS responds to incidents along the major highways and freight routes connecting SA to other states. Therefore, additional locations for the rollout of further Heavy Rescue vehicles are being identified through research into CFS response and road network data.

Key features of the Heavy Rescue Vehicle:

- Standard RCR capability
- Heavy lifting – 60 & 90 tonne airbags, 50t Heavy Lift Jacks
- Heavy stabilisation – Stabfast XL, significant cribbing, truck cabin restraint system
- Relocation – vehicle mounting winching, tiorfor, go jacks
- Rescue platform
- Industrial rescue options - battery combi tool, tag out lock out kit
- General rescue - dremel, ring cutter, larger assortment of battery power tools, quick cut saw, chainsaw.

The Heavy Rescue Vehicle is quite literally built by firefighters for firefighters.

CFS worked with several agencies around Australia, as well as Lobethal Brigade, to determine the most beneficial equipment and capability to include on the truck to ensure it is fit for purpose.



## Smoke Management Policy and Guidelines

CFS and Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) launched a new Smoke Management Policy and Broadacre Burn-Off Smoke Management Guidelines in March 2023 ahead of the grape harvest season. The launch was the result of a lengthy collaborative process with PIRSA and industry over several years and is an excellent example of industry and government working together to reach an agreed position.

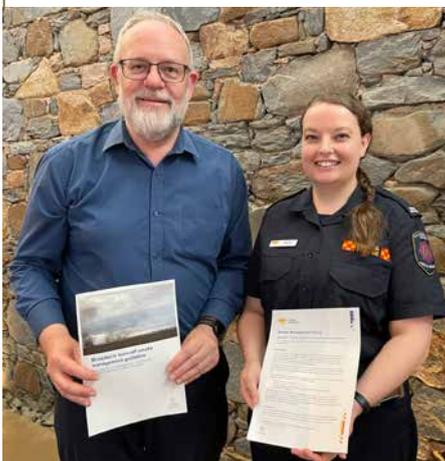
The launch was attended by senior representation from PIRSA, CFS, The University of Adelaide, various wine industry groups, Grain Producers SA, Primary Producers SA, and the Department of Environment and Water, who all expressed their support for the policies. This new set of guidelines will help South Australian grain and wine grape growers manage smoke from broadacre stubble burns to reduce risk of damage to smoke-sensitive unharvested wine grapes and has been received positively by the grain and wine grape industries.

When wine grapes are exposed to smoke, the smoke binds to compounds in the grapes, giving the wine a smoky and undesirable characteristic that can make the wine unsaleable. However, broadacre burning is also an important tool in the management of stubble, disease, weeds and pests.

The launch was strategically timed ahead of the grape harvest season. Smoke management was expected to be a more significant concern than usual in 2023, due to the wet and cool start to the summer resulting in a late harvest causing overlap between broadacre burning and grape harvest activities. Several incidents of smoke affecting wine grape crops were reported in the weeks following the launch of these policies.

CFS Smoke Management Policy provides high-level direction acknowledging the impact smoke may have on a range of sensitive sites. Although the initial launch of these policies is focused on the impact of smoke taint on wine grapes, the intent is to continue to develop supporting guidelines in consultation with industries to reduce the impact of smoke on other sensitive sites.

CFS Smoke Management Policy is available under 'Farm Fire Safety and Prevention' on CFS website and the Broadacre Burn-Off Smoke Management Guidelines are available under 'reducing smoke taint in grapes' on the PIRSA website.





## New Structural Helmet to Provide Increased Protection for Firefighters

CFS has introduced the Rosenbauer HEROS-titan AS to the structural ensemble following a tender review process and a rigorous trial by female and male firefighters across CFS and MFS.

As an all-hazards agency, CFS strives to provide all members with the greatest level of protection and highest quality equipment when responding to incidents. Weighing approximately 1.5 kilograms, the Rosenbauer HEROS-titan AS is one of the lightest structural helmets on the market, is ergonomically designed for better neck stability and can be adjusted from the outside whilst wearing gloves. CFS will be providing its firefighters with the streamlined design incorporating an integrated torch as standard.

Firefighting is inherently a dangerous profession, with a multitude of hazards and risks when responding. One of the less obvious risks is the longer-term threat from carcinogens present in the smoke and debris at an incident, therefore, by selecting helmets which have inner harnesses that are removable, it allows a firefighter to launder all of their PPE/C.

These helmets are currently used world-wide, with firefighters in 140 different countries wearing them, including other agencies in Australia. All current Skill Maintenance Drill 3 certified members will receive a Rosenbauer HEROS-titan AS.

The new helmets will be released in two stages, with priority being given in line with amount of structural-related call outs the brigade attends. It is expected all eligible volunteers will have a new structural helmet by 2024. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus and Compartment Fire Behaviour trainers will also receive the new helmets during the first stage of the roll out to ensure they have the most up-to-date equipment.

The safety of our members is our number one priority and not only are these helmets some of the most advanced in the market, but they have also been tried, tested and selected by South Australia's firefighters. During the trial, firefighters wore the helmet for several drills including using road crash rescue tools, crawling through smoke-filled tunnels and buildings conducting searches, dressing and wearing HazMat suits, and general firefighter skill drills. Throughout the two days, the participants were asked to evaluate the helmets across a broad range of criteria including its fit for purpose, functionality, flexibility, ergonomics, comfort and sizing.

The change of helmet style has also provided CFS an opportunity to review the colour of helmets and how they represent the differing ranks. Rank markings will retain the same format as they have historically, for example a Senior firefighter will wear the helmet with their rank distinguished by a coloured bar across the side of the helmet. A new addition to this rank marking will also include a script /text above it, providing a title of the rank held.

The following colours will be introduced as standard for CFS:

- White: Firefighter rank (senior ranks etc. identified by markings)**
- Yellow: Lieutenant and Captain**
- Red: Deputy Group Officer, Group Officer, Staff Officer, Deputy Commander and Commander**
- Blue: Assistant Chief Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer**
- Black: Chief Officer.**

Where possible, CFS will be donating the current Pacific F3D helmets to partner agencies. This includes our Pacific neighbour, the Republic of Kiribati, where CFS has participated in a mentoring program to upskill the resources and develop a highly coordinated emergency service for the remote community of 120,000 people.

**When did you join as a volunteer, what was it that made you join, and what roles have you had?**

I joined in 2015 with Morphett Vale Brigade. After collaborating with the Red Cross in disaster recovery during the Sampson Flat fire, I was motivated to become more involved with CFS. I started in Operational Support as a Radio Operator and have taken on additional roles since. In 2016 I joined the Mawson Operations Brigade where I now hold position of Captain. Being a member of two brigades, providing a dual response is quite common and can be advantageous in bringing a wealth of knowledge about fireground operations into an Incident Management Team but also brings an understanding of Incident Management onto the fireground.

**What has been your biggest highlight/achievement as a volunteer with the service?**

Successfully fulfilling a leadership role as a Captain and proving myself wrong; I didn't believe I could do this when I first started volunteering. In this role

I've been able raise awareness of CFS and local brigades with our community, discuss fire prevention, improve our volunteer recruitment and upskill existing members. The chance to continue to make a difference, grow as a person and hopefully continue to share something that is such a large part of myself and what I believe in, is something I am truly grateful for the opportunity.

**Why do you believe people should volunteer with CFS?**

Friendships, a sense of community and personal growth are just a few of the things that make volunteering with CFS great. Having moved from interstate, being a single parent, and not knowing anyone here at the time, CFS has now become part of who I am. They are like my family, and I know I can rely on them in times of need. Joining CFS has provided me with skills, knowledge, and purpose; to be not just a mum of three kids with disabilities. I have grown so much as a person and have worked hard to achieve things that felt out of reach at the time, whilst also giving back to my local community.



**Profile:**

# Kate Howard

## Airbase Combination Mixers and Portable Airbase Retardant Plants

CFS currently uses a network of 43 airbases across South Australia to support reloading of fixed wing Single Engine Air Tanker firefighting aircraft. These airbases are resourced with either fixed or mobile infrastructure to support Aviation Operations Brigades to mix and deliver suppressant (foam and water enhancer) or long-term retardant as required when responding to rural incidents.

Recent innovation by CFS State Aviation Operations, in partnership with current aviation contractor Aerotech First Response, has initiated the development of upgraded fixed airbase infrastructure alternatives. Specifically, an Airbase Combination Mixer and a Portable Airbase Retardant Plant will now be used to facilitate wider availability across all three aerial firefighting product options.

These new infrastructure alternatives, by design, also reduce manual handling and exposure issues associated with antiquated 'bucket' induction systems still currently operated at some CFS airbases.

The Airbase Combination Mixer provides a single fixed infrastructure solution to the 'on-demand' proportioning and loading of firefighting aircraft with either Class A foam, water enhancer or liquid concentrate retardant directly from Intermediate Bulk Container (IBC) supplies and a static water source. The mixer is mounted on a wheeled frame, which allows for ease of manoeuvring the unit in and out of an airbase storage container/shed onto a loading area. The Airbase Combination Mixers can provide an aerial firefighting drop capability output of approximately 110 drops of Class A foam or 80 drops of water enhancer per IBC.

The Portable Airbase Retardant Plant provides an infrastructure solution to 'on-demand' proportioning and loading of firefighting aircraft with liquid concentrate retardant only, directly from an IBC supply and a static water source.



This plant is designed to supplement existing mobile or fixed airbase infrastructure used for the loading of Class A foam or water enhancers.

If operated in conjunction with a concentrate supply of 6 IBCs of long-term retardant, this plant can also provide a similar 13-drop capability output to that of current CFS Strategic Bulk Retardant Installations.

Having the ability to deliver aerial firefighting products from the one piece of equipment has reduced manual handling and fatigue risks due to a more streamlined process, with less physical demands.

## Fire Trucks Safety System project

CFS completed one of its most significant vehicle upgrades in forty years with new safety systems installed in more than 390 trucks. The Fire Truck Safety Systems (FTSS) project was funded by the State Government and has enabled CFS to retrofit burn-over protection features to enhance firefighter safety and minimize the risk of exposure to death or injury from burn overs.

The FTSS project has seen the installation of in-cabin breathing systems, radiant heat shield window curtains, deluge systems for cabin glass protection and tyre spray protection systems in the trucks, including tankers, pumpers, and bulk water carriers. The standardisation of features across all response vehicles positions CFS as a national leader in safety features afforded to firefighter crews on operational fleet vehicles.

CFS Chief Officer, Brett Loughlin AFSM, said that the safety and wellbeing of CFS volunteers are always of utmost importance, and this project is the single most significant upgrade that has been undertaken on operational fleet since the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983.

The safety enhancements and the employment of dedicated Regional Fleet Officers across the state have helped develop strong partnerships with SA industries and businesses. CFS has ensured all trucks are fitted with a standard set of safety features, with all CFS trucks requiring a safety retrofit, placed back into service at the end of 2022.

Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Joe Szakacs, said these changes mean South Australia has some of the best safety features in the nation.

CFS's latest safety upgrades are a significant step forward in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its volunteers and positioning the agency as a national leader in safety features.



## Hardcat – Asset Fleet Management System

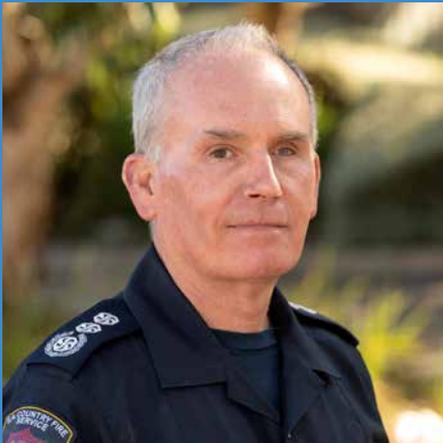
In July 2022 CFS launched the first Asset and Fleet Management System (Hardcat) to improve the governance, recording, reporting and management of CFS Assets. Significant work, led by the Asset Manager and Project Officer, was undertaken by Regional Fleet Officers, Regional Operations and Contract Management and Delivery personnel to deliver a system which would not only support SA Government requirements and International Organization for Standardisation (ISO standards) but also meet the needs of CFS.

Over the last year, more than 17,000 assets have been incorporated within Hardcat, including heavy appliances, light fleet, facilities, telecommunications and a range of specialist equipment.

More than 18,000 jobs have been added, showing the maintenance and repairs of assets during their lifetime. Over one million data points have been added on these assets, creating a single validated source of truth of asset information for the first time in CFS history.

The assistance of the Hardcat system has enabled the Contract Management and Delivery team to provide the Chief Officer with a report on how many automated external defibrillators we have across CFS in a matter of minutes. Previously this would have taken days or weeks and involved regional staff and Group Officers providing their own lists or counts.

Hardcat, now embedded in our agency, provides us with the opportunity to learn, grow and explore within the Asset Management space.



# Region 1

While the 2022/23 Fire Danger Season has been benign compared to previous years, we need to remind ourselves that rural fires are around a third of the incidents in Region 1 and that next year is likely to see a higher bushfire risk, but I am sure we will be prepared to meet the challenge.

Personally, a highlight over the last year has been the opportunity to present over 1,000 awards across seven ceremonies that recognised the commitment of our members in providing a professional service to our communities.

Region 1 has experienced some significant staffing changes, which have presented challenges in supporting our volunteers, but it is great to see that finalised now.

As we continue to build the service, I look forward to the upcoming year which will again see significant change and growth for CFS.

I would like to thank all the Region 1 members, staff and volunteers for their tireless efforts and the support they provide to the community every day.

**Peter Phillips**  
Regional Commander 

## Montacute Fire

On Friday, 13 January 2023, South Australia experienced extreme fire weather, prompting CFS to issue a Total Fire Ban for several areas, including the Mount Lofty Ranges. The following day, at approximately 11am, CFS was alerted to a fire on the side of Gorge Road at Montacute. The fire had quickly spread to 20 hectares within ten minutes.

Firefighters and aircraft immediately responded to the scene, battling the blaze in challenging terrain and hot temperatures. High voltage powerlines on the western edge of the fire also added to the complexity of aerial operations. Around 70 fire trucks and nine aircraft, including firebombers, two Helitak, and two observation helicopters, supported the firefighting efforts.

By 1:30pm, CFS had issued a request for people in Montacute and surrounding areas near Athelstone to evacuate as the fire had spread uncontrollably in steep and inaccessible terrain in the nearby Black Hill Conservation Park. A strong wind surge was expected in the late afternoon, with wind gusts up to 70 kilometres an hour, which increased the risk of the fire blowing back onto itself.

As of Saturday evening, the fire had spread to at least 50 hectares, with crews facing changing conditions on the ground as the weather change came through. Fortunately, as the day progressed, the previous Emergency Warning Message was downgraded to an Advice Message, asking the community to take care in the area, with reduced visibility due to smoke and the risk of falling trees and branches. The fire burnt a total of 53 hectares, with fire crews continuing to patrol the area for several days to ensure the fire was declared safe on 18 January.

## Region 1 Medal Presentation Days

In the past year, Region 1 held seven award ceremonies at Victor Harbor, Hahndorf, Stirling, Kangaroo Island, Willunga, Lobethal and Strathalbyn.

In this time, we presented a total of **1,125** medals to our Region 1 volunteers.

It was a huge honor to be part of these ceremonies, which celebrated the amazing members we have within the region, and the lengths they will go as a volunteer group to provide services to South Australians. Well done!



## Profile:

# Nicholas Svetec



### When did you join as a volunteer?

I joined Barmera CFS in 2013 when I was in year nine and became a young firefighter when I got to year ten. It was tricky having to go to school and miss strike teams or callouts. The first call out I ever went to was for a magpie stuck in a tree. When I look back at it now, I was full of adrenaline for something so minor but after that I was hooked with helping the community no matter how big or small the job.

### What development opportunities has CFS provided you through volunteering?

I have been through the ranks in CFS at a brigade level, starting out as a Senior which made me feel like I had more responsibilities. I was then elected as a Lieutenant and now am the Captain. One of my brigade's previous Captains also let me know that I'm the youngest Captain Barmera has had, and he and the brigade have helped me out a lot.

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

Going to the Kangaroo Island bushfires where the crew I was with was cut off from the other CFS trucks and we were on the fireground for 16 straight hours while we waited for a relief crew. I will never forget the friendship that was formed from those two days and the impact we had on helping the community there.

### What keeps you involved as a volunteer?

I often get asked by friends why I volunteer and do not get paid for the job, but I suppose I enjoy CFS and what it has to offer, the friends you meet and places you get to see. But to sum it up, I just enjoy it.

### What's your advice to others looking to go into leadership roles?

I would recommend they ask questions, take notes and watch how your officer's lead. Don't be afraid to take on a leadership position as you will have your brigade to help you out.

## Operational Support Development in Region 1

Over the past year Operational Support Brigades have worked with various brigades across the region to build stronger relationships and enhance our ability to support incidents as a team.

This year started with a meeting of the Operations Support Leaders and Trainers at Strathalbyn, where they identified common themes across all brigades. This included discussions surrounding training, engagement and pathways.

As a group, they committed to providing four opportunities across the year for members to come together to focus on a topic and to network and build relationships.

The first session was hosted by the Victor Harbor Operations Support Brigade with the topic of recruitment and retention.

It was a great turn out with representation from groups including Kangaroo Island, Mawson, Sturt, Southern Fleurieu, Mt Lofty, Strathalbyn, Victor Harbor, State Operations, Region 1 Operations and East Torrens brigades.

The day allowed participants to unpack some ideas that will be adopted as a whole group, in order to support recruitment across the entire region. Ideas were shared about training for our members, continuous engagement of volunteers and the exploration of the new initiatives that are being developed on the Online Learning Hub, which will allow our members to access shared resources.

Future sessions will include topics such as roles and pathways associated with an IMT, training for scribes, and skill development in ROSE and CRIIMSON.

“ It was a great turn out with representation from groups including Kangaroo Island, Mawson, Sturt, Southern Fleurieu, Mt Lofty, Strathalbyn, Victor Harbor, State Operations, Region 1 Operations and East Torrens brigades. ”



## Regional Fleet Annual Servicing Contract

In 2022, Region 1 introduced the state's first formal Regional Fleet Annual Servicing Contract, with guidance from State Headquarters and SAFECOM procurement team. This initiative involved consulting 17 service agents and 12 groups to increase transparency and information sharing between Region 1 and its volunteers. Random auditing against the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) was also introduced, allowing for clearer visibility to focus on timelines, workmanship, and costings related to vehicle servicing.

Over 220 appliances were captured as part of this pilot, with service providers asked to provide quotes for individual appliances and information showcasing their experience, qualifications, staff, and workshop capacities.

The success of this project can be attributed to the hard work and support of Region 1 volunteers, particularly the project group advisors and Group Equipment Officers, with support from their respective Group Officers. Regions 1 and 2 have already adopted a similar process for 2023 and 2024 servicing, and all regions in the state are expected to follow suit in the coming year. Well done to Region 1 members for their efforts!

## CFS and SAPOL Unite to Mitigate Bushfire Hazards

During October 2022, the first group of local SA Police officers joined forces with CFS at Region 1 Headquarters to participate in a joint training session, which has been expanded this year to provide more comprehensive information on fire safety. During 2022, 10 sessions had been held in Mt Barker and Victor Harbor.

Adelaide Hills police officers collaborated with CFS in small group sessions, covering topics such as identifying the signs of changing weather conditions, burnover techniques, and maintaining situational awareness. This training has enhanced the annual bushfire training provided to both agencies.

The sessions provided an opportunity for local experiences to be shared and allowed for discussions on resources, equipment, and information that partner agencies rely on to provide support. CFS officers shared their roles during an incident, facilitating strengthening relationships amongst all participants. SAPOL highlighted their role as the interface for the community, coordinating road closures, people's movements within and around the fire group, and participating in community briefings. They remain on the fireground for the entirety of the bushfire.

The joint training session proved to be a positive experience for both agencies, providing a great opportunity to work closely together to assist the community.





# Region 2

As Region 2 transitions to the new normal, having been through the challenges of the last few years with COVID and the impact it has had on everyday life, we are focusing on the future. However, it's important to reflect on our achievements and triumphs over adversity. I would like to take the opportunity to thank and recognise the work of Acting Regional Commander, Garth Hogarth. Garth made vast improvements to the Regional Headquarters facility at Roseworthy, including the "void" which is now fully airconditioned. I'm sure anyone attending would struggle to disagree that the facility is a far more usable space on hot days.

The changes in regional staff over recent years have seen a level of unsettlement in Region 2. However, with the recent appointments, the focus for the next year will be on strengthening the team and supporting our 2,674 volunteers in preparation for the next big incident.

The last 12 months has seen many of our volunteers recognised for

their dedication and service to the community and their brigades through numerous medal presentations. Special mention goes to Neville Kies AFSM from Lyndoch for the announcement of his recently awarded Australian Fire Service Medal. Without his knowledge, dedication and support, the region would be at a loss and our spare fleet would not be what it is today.

Even with a lack of large rural fire incidents in the region this year, you have all faced many challenges, from the vastly increased road toll to some rather challenging structure fires and calls for support to neighbouring regions. In my short time in Region 2, since starting on 20 December, 2022, I have been very impressed with the response from all of you. Every time the call for assistance went out it was answered. Thank you for your ongoing support and importantly the support of your families. I look forward to meeting and working with all of you.

**Steve Salamon**  
Regional Commander

## Nine Fires on the Adelaide Plains

**O**n the afternoon of 24 February 2023, a series of nine grass fires were lit across the Adelaide Plains on a Total Fire Ban Day. The fires were reported in Lower Light, Korunye, Reeves Plains and Two Wells, with the first fire reported at 2:21pm and the last at 7:02pm. Despite the adverse weather conditions, the fires were kept relatively small and no significant damage caused.

The Light Group responded quickly to the fires, recognising the potential for suspicious activity. As a result, the group's resources were quickly depleted due to the rapid succession of fires. The 125 square kilometre area contained all nine fires, with the furthest fire being just over 13 kilometres apart north to south. The Group Duty Officer coordinated the response to ensure that each officer in charge preserved the scene and captured relevant information.

The Regional Command Centre provided oversight in capturing, collating and providing information to SA Police and fire cause investigators. The Light Group placed a high priority on completing first arrival officer forms, which were quickly available, providing valuable information to investigators. Five investigators worked in two teams, providing an initial response and undertaking follow-up site visits over several days to comprehensively capture each individual scene.

The group provided exceptional leadership, coordinating resources to combat the fires and maintaining scene preservation to preserve the chain of evidence wherever possible. The skills and actions of everyone involved are to be commended, resulting in a coordinated and planned response early in the event. The quick and efficient response from the Light Group and brigades prevented any significant damage or injuries from occurring.



## Conflict Management Coaching

**D**uring July 2022, ten volunteers from across the region participated in a four-day cutting-edge course aimed at successfully negotiating low level conflict, a concept initiated by Region 1 last year. Utilising the same facilitators and delivering the same content provided support to volunteers across both regions, with consistency and the added benefit of a cost reduction to run upskill sessions in the future.

In the spirit of inclusion, Regional Volunteer Officers Damon Whitwell from Region 5 and Nicoli Ackland from Region 1 nestled in with our members for this workshop, with their participation and camaraderie being noted and greatly appreciated.

The topics covered during the workshop provided participants with the ability to identify the unique principles, framework and methods of conflict management coaching. It empowered participants to apply their own solutions to conflict management.

At the conclusion of the course, participants clearly identified that the subject matter and delivery of this training was exceptional.

Extending accolades to both Lynora Brooke and Franca Petrone for their professionalism and knowledge as the facilitators.

The workshop was held at Region 2, and we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the participating volunteers, regional staff Michelle Kruger and Amy Tezacker for their support and Acting Commander Garth Hogarth for his support to facilitate the course.

## Tour Down Under 2023

**B**etween 15 and 22 January, Region 2 played a significant role in the Tour Down Under. The cycling race saw around 200 professional cyclists compete in grueling conditions on the streets of Adelaide and its surrounding areas.

A Quick Response Vehicle (QRV) from Neales Flat, crewed with volunteers from both Regions 1 and 2, and the State Operations Support Brigade, were involved in this year's edition of the tour. Region 2 crews also volunteered as fire cover in case of roadside fires and road crash rescue coverage on public roads.

The Barossa Valley's picturesque landscape was on display to the world, with a stage taking place in the wine-growing regions of Tanunda and Nuriootpa, along with multiple stages through the winding bends of the Adelaide Hills around Gumeracha, Kangaroo Creek Reservoir and Paracombe.

Over 2,000 community cyclists navigated the region for the 'Challenge' tour, where cyclists of varying capabilities completed the same course as the professionals on completely closed roads. This presented a challenge for crews, as their roles became that of road workers, who assisted with traffic and pothole filling at a moment's notice. Volunteers' prompt action ensured that the largest cycling race in Australia was not negatively impacted.

A massive thank you goes to the Neales Flat Brigade and the Gilbert Group for lending their QRV for the event's duration, as well as all the volunteers who completed standby shifts at numerous stations along the route.



## Region 2 Cadet Field Day

**P**ara Group hosted the Region 2 Cadet Field Day on 25 September 2022.

The Cadet Field Day was an opportunity for cadets to meet and train with members from other CFS brigades and groups in Region 2 and provide increased knowledge and skills. Teams comprised of cadets and leadership from across the region.

The Cadet Field Day was undertaken at Trinity College in Evanston South, with 29 teams of over 170 cadets in attendance and the closing address given by the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Joe Szakacs MP.

Cadet teams had the opportunity to participate in drills including draughting, simulated response and hydrant, burnover and elephant walk, hose lay and soccer, and 5-person advancement.

The event provided demonstrations and displays of equipment and various types of vehicles used in other skill sets in CFS, including HazMat, CAFS, Breathing Apparatus Support Pod, the new regional cadet trailer, Urban Search and Rescue dogs and more.

Most regions across South Australia will host a Cadet Field Day or Cadet Championship event in 2023 to prepare two representative teams of CFS cadets to attend the National Fire Cadet Championships in September 2023.

## Region 2 Medal Presentation Days

**T**hroughout the months of June through to October 2022, Region 2 held thirteen award ceremonies at Starplex in Gawler, the Clare Country Club, Paskeville Community Hall, Barley Stacks Wines on the Yorke Peninsula and Region 2 Headquarters.

During this time, we presented a total of 465 National Emergency Medals, two National Medals and nine CFS clasps, all combining 745 years of service.

It was a huge honour and privilege to hold these award ceremonies to congratulate and thank our many dedicated volunteers who, together with their families, have given so many years of service to CFS.

## Profile:

# Michelle Kruger



### What drew you to volunteering?

I have always been community-minded and involved with local groups within the community. Prior to CFS I participated in the SA Police Rangers Crawford Unit-Leader and helped with the running of the unit, assisting with training, camps and activities.

### How long have you been a volunteer?

I have been a volunteer for CFS for 14 years in the Region 2 Operations Brigade. I am also a staff member in Region 2 as a Regional Administration Officer and have held that role for 13 years.

### Over your time both as a volunteer and staff member, what are some of the highlights you have experienced?

I have worked as regional management support through Sampson Flat, Pinery, Yorketown, Cuddlee Creek and many other fires within Region 2 and I'm trained as a staging area manager and resource officer. I enjoy organising Region 2 Biggest Morning teas, awards ceremonies and administration assistance to the Regional Volunteer Management Committee of Region 2. Another highlight was in 2022 when I received a Staff Award for my commitment to the region.

### Outside of CFS, what do you enjoy the most?

Family is my focus; I have grandchildren and I adore looking after them.





# Region 3

This year has seen Region 3 focus on the ongoing development of our region's leaders: building our capability and capacity ahead of future challenging years, not only operationally, but as rural decline and retraction continues to impact our communities. The regional team has purposely focused on leadership development, hosting a very successful Group Officer Forum at the beginning of the year. Our leaders undertook professional development, particularly around pre-incident planning and responding to specific large scale facilities. Two Officers' Forums were then held later in the year, focusing on our first arriving officers at incidents, refreshing key skills and knowledge in managing Level 1 Incidents, as well as building further skills to be an effective officer within a CFS brigade.

This development has then continued with the ongoing exercising of our Level 2 Incident Management personnel, Region 3 Operations Brigade, and regional staff.

After a very successful Incident Management exercise was held, the regional staff have implemented weekly exercising to ensure the team remain at their best to effectively serve the Region 3 volunteers. This program of exercising and development will continue into 2023/24, and effectively become business as usual for the region.

As always, I was very proud of the way the whole region came together to support our communities during the Murray River Floods. This flood event impacted upon every group within Region 3, and unfortunately a number of our members properties were impacted. It was incredible to see the level of support our members provided to one another. Support was provided through sandbagging, DefenCell construction, and pumping operations. This work does not go unnoticed, and further highlights the immeasurable value of CFS volunteers to the South Australian community.

**Shane Clinch**  
Regional Commander

“ Our efforts are about preparedness and care to our team who ultimately support our frontline peers. ”

## Weekly RCC Exercising

The enthusiastic team within Region 3 are eager to provide meaningful support to our peers at the front line. We have instigated a weekly exercising program within the Region’s headquarters to build on our knowledge, skills, confidence and support of each other when the operational ‘hammer’ falls.

The full team practices mock scenarios occurring within the region, utilising our operational systems environment to prepare our staff for the real thing, which can occur at the most unpredictable times. This program has included exercises involving the warnings and emergency alert systems together with the region’s Business Continuity Plan.

To keep things fluid, we have worked through some of our ‘pre-plans’ for larger industrial sites as well as proactively aligning our responses with the relevant Standard Operating Procedures. Our efforts provide us with comprehensive and realistic ways to evaluate our plans, actions and learning. The learning environment is supportive and moves at a positive pace to encourage development, with the ongoing efforts providing a sense of calm to team members facing challenging environments. Our program is set in an ongoing cycle that will not stop, regardless of the time of year or other pressing matters, as we highly value operations within the region.

After we have conducted our exercises, we discuss and evaluate our efforts as the debrief often provides a vital part of the overall learning process. We have also found these activities support mental health within the team. Our efforts are about preparedness and care to our team who ultimately support our front-line peers. During incidents, we strive to demonstrate our commitment to the organisation and the safety of our people in the community.



## IMT/Group Exercising

Region 3 has recently reinvigorated our Incident Management Reference Group, with each of the groups represented to help guide the region forward with our Incident Management capability.

In April 2023, Region 3 commenced group-based exercises for all six groups within the region. The intent of these exercises is to test the capability and capacity of each facility, but also provide an opportunity to exercise in a safe and supportive environment. They have also allowed for the mentoring and further development of upcoming leaders within Incident Management throughout the region.

These exercises will continue to ramp up throughout the year, starting with the initial facility setup, then onto operational testing of the facility, finally moving on to a successful handover to an incoming team.

## Succession Planning

Volunteer sustainability is one of the key areas that the region intends to focus on into the future, specifically in relation to succession planning. By focusing on succession planning, it will allow brigades to continue to run effectively whilst also going through the process of change. It is a contingency plan, not a one-time event, and it is a strategy that is reevaluated and updated each year or as changes dictate within the brigade. It considers each leader's skills, identifying potential opportunities within the brigade and group, providing support and training to those members so they're prepared to assume leadership roles into the future.

The region is in the process of implementing a Leadership and Succession Planning Program, informed by a Country Fire Authority program that has had good success. The initial trial commenced within the Coorong Group and will soon be implemented with the other groups within the region. This will support the brigades and groups so command opportunities can be afforded in a natural progression as opposed to a rushed or hurried manner.



## Profile: Waikerie CFS Home to Three Generations of the Arnold Family

**V**olunteering for CFS is often described as being part of a big family, and for the Arnolds that statement certainly rings true. Currently the Arnold family has four active members across three generations volunteering in Waikerie CFS Brigade including Shaun Arnold, his father Michael Arnold, his youngest brother David Arnold, and his daughter Sam Whittington.

CFS pull was entrenched in the Arnold family 63 years ago when Michael Arnold walked through the door of his local CFS brigade. His volunteering efforts and passion doesn't just shine through in his family's legacy, it's also reflected in his 24 years as Waikerie's Captain, Mid Murray's Group Officer and his current commitment as an auxiliary member. Michael's passion and love for CFS was passed down to his sons; his eldest, Shaun has already committed 46 years to volunteering for CFS however his involvement in CFS spans almost 60 – his entire life – given the number of years he joined his father at CFS events and competitions.

Shaun said he was one of the first who wanted to become a cadet in Waikerie, so at 13 years of age, with the assistance of the brigade, he kicked off cadets – even introducing competitions in the mid-70s. Shaun's youngest brother David Arnold also followed suit at age 11, joining CFS as a cadet and continuing to actively volunteer for the past 30 years. Similarly, Shaun's daughter Sam, joined at 11 years of age and hasn't stopped for the past 15 years.

“ The Arnolds attribute the generational pull of CFS to being able to do something meaningful for their communities. ”

The Arnolds attribute the generational pull of CFS to being able to do something meaningful for their communities. Shaun said it's quite an achievement to know he's gone from a cadet to serving as Captain for nearly nine years. He said it's likely he'll follow in his father's footsteps and pursue a role as a Group Officer or Deputy. He said he enjoys work as a team with his brigade and while there are challenging times, the camaraderie is great.

The Waikerie Brigade is called to many road crashes, HazMat and other traumatic incidents, however Shaun said it's these incidents that bring the brigade together as they'll sit down and chat it out as a team, with the assistance of SPAM where required. While Shaun has several blood relatives in CFS, he said the entire Waikerie Brigade is his family, with 15 – 18 people who have been there for a similar length of time as him; people he grew up with, went to school with and trusts.

The Arnolds have responded to numerous incidents with their relatives but when the brigade is seen as family, no one ever responds without family.





# Region 4

Over the past year, I have witnessed an exceptional level of commitment from the volunteers and staff of Region 4, and I am grateful for their unwavering professionalism and dedication. Despite facing some significant and demanding incidents, including the Baldina, Gladstone and Lincoln Gap Fires, as well as multiple vehicle accidents, our volunteers and staff have demonstrated their resilience in protecting our regional and pastoral communities.

CFS volunteers in Region 4 have shown their strong ethos of supporting other regions during their time of need, while maintaining the protection of their own communities. This shows us that the spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in the region. The display of loyalty by volunteers towards their community, and their passion for CFS is truly inspiring. I am grateful for their service and commitment to protecting our communities.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the invaluable support by all families of our volunteers, it makes all the difference in ensuring our volunteers can function at their best during callouts or campaign fires.

Finally, a special thank you to my incredible staff at the Region 4 office. Their continuous support and dedication to our volunteers is vital and has helped us to achieve great things together.

**Sindy McCourt**  
Regional Commander 

## Baldina Fire

**O**n Tuesday, 17 January 2023, a fire was reported in the steep terrain of Baldina, located approximately 11 kilometres northeast of the Burra township. Volunteers from the Burra Group and aircraft were immediately dispatched to the scene. Upon arrival it was evident more crew were required.

100 firefighters on 20 appliances with crews from Region 2 and 4 worked tirelessly on the fire that was rapidly burning across steep and hilly terrain. Department of Environment and Water firefighters and Incident Management Teams personnel supported the efforts, with heavy machinery and 15 Farm Fire Units also in attendance.

Thanks to the hard work of all, the fire was soon under control, with firefighters able to save a couple of farming sheds from being destroyed. Overnight and throughout the next day, crews continued to actively patrol the fire ground to ensure any hot spots were extinguished and the property could be handed back.

## Gladstone Fire

**O**n Thursday 2 March, 2023, 20 CFS volunteers on four appliances from Gladstone, Laura and Crystal Brook Brigades and multiple Farm Fire Units responded to a fire on the outskirts of the Gladstone township, near Hole 17 at the Gladstone Golf Course.

Travelling in a northerly direction across private farming land, consisting predominately of post-harvest stubble, the fire was quickly burning towards the Gladstone Viterra Storage Facility. CFS crews, with support from the aviation team, were able to contain the forward rate of spread at the railway line and prevented the fire from entering the grain storage facility, inhibiting a significant loss to the community and the economy.

It is estimated that without the quick intervention and actions of the responding aerial and ground crews, the damage to the stored grain at Viterra could have been in excess of \$150 million.

“ I have witnessed an exceptional level of commitment from the volunteers and staff of Region 4, and I am grateful for their unwavering professionalism and dedication ”





## Profile:

# Graham Sims

### When did you join as a volunteer, and what roles have you had?

I joined the Jamestown Brigade 25 years ago, in 1997. In that time, I have held the positions of Senior Firefighter, Lieutenant, Training Coordinator, DGO and Captain.

### What was it that made you join?

I decided to join the brigade when I moved to Jamestown. Due to my work commitments, I couldn't be involved in sport on weekends, so joining the brigade was a good way to get involved in the community.

### How have you been involved with training volunteers?

I have delivered training in several areas over the years, but now concentrate on delivering Breathing Apparatus training around the state.

### What development opportunities has CFS provided you through volunteering?

Since becoming involved in training, I have had the opportunity to develop my training delivery skills. I have gained my Cert IV in Training and Assessment, going on to become a Lead Assessor and now Course Coordinator.

## Miniature CFS Fire Trucks a Hit with Local Communities

**G**raham Sims, Veteran CFS volunteer of 25 years and now Jamestown Brigade Captain, debuted his mini water-powered fire trucks at the Jamestown Christmas Pageant late last year. Inspired by a similar initiative undertaken by the Rowville CFA in Victoria, Graham used his electrician skills to build the trucks, with the support of CFS Region 4 headquarters.

Like many other regional CFS brigades, Jamestown, approximately 200 kilometres north of Adelaide in the Mid North region of South Australia, desperately needs new volunteers. Graham hoped the mini fire trucks would act as a conversation starter for locals to learn more about CFS and perhaps ignite their interest in volunteering.

A hit with kids and adults alike, the mini fire trucks were booked for Region 4 and 6 Cadet Championships, and have been used in community engagement events and by other brigades.

CFS Region 4 Regional Volunteer Officer, Ben Pettman, said community engagement initiatives like Graham's not only help with volunteer recruitment efforts; they also help build community confidence in the vital services provided by CFS.

He said it's fantastic to see volunteers use their initiative to highlight what their brigade does to help their community. Initiatives like this get the community talking and sparks interest in what CFS does, which in turn creates a positive image and builds rapport with the community.

At a local level, it is incredibly important to maintain and build CFS' reputation and confidence in our services. We work side-by-side with the community to help them stay safe and protect life and property. Ben encouraged other volunteers who would like support for community engagement activities to approach their regional headquarters to share their ideas.



## Three Brand New Rural 44 Appliances Delivered

The Spencer CFS Group was the first in the agency to receive three brand new rural 44 appliances delivered to three separate brigades within the group in November 2022.

Koolunga, Wandearah and Warnertown Brigades received the new appliances, which have become invaluable resource for the Spencer Group and local communities. Built by Fraser Fire and Rescue, each of the new 44s come fitted with LED driving lightbars, a fridge and are all equipped with a chainsaw. The new 44 appliances, which are based on a 2020 Isuzu FTS 139-260 chassis, replaced the group's old single cab 24 and 34 appliances.

Crystal Brook Brigade hosted crews from each brigade to learn about the functions and capabilities of the new appliances and to receive handover. The Spencer Group and Region 4 would like to thank the team from Contract Management and Delivery for making this happen prior to harvest in the area.



## School Education in the APY Lands

In December 2022, Community Engagement Officer Kylee McNamee and Acting Regional Commander Peter Ikonomopoulos embarked on an educational visit to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, visiting eight schools across the area.

Their visit provided an opportunity to speak to more than 250 children, teachers and community members to raise awareness about Bushfire Safer Places, Australian Fire Danger Rating System and general fire safety practices. The presentations were aimed at enhancing community resilience before the 2022/23 fire season, with Kylee and Peter utilising maps to identify places of relative safety in case of a fire. The brigade members and local translators provided invaluable support in ensuring that the sessions were presented in participants languages, making the information accessible to all.

Qualitative feedback from the presentations indicated they were extremely well received, and the community members appreciated the efforts of Kylee, Peter and the brigade members to increase general fire awareness across the APY Lands.

The presentations were an essential step in improving community safety and resilience and the visit was a testament to CFS' dedication to serving and protecting all communities in South Australia.



# Region 5

Region 5 continues to see praise from our communities for the services we provide to the South East in times of need, which is fantastic. At times, I believe there is little understanding of the true commitment you and your family provide. For this, I thank you. The deeply entrenched spirit of commitment and community value makes me immensely proud to be the Regional Commander of Region 5.

2022/23 was a significantly different year when compared to the seasons between 2019 and 2022. The overall number of rural responses across the South East was down, which highlighted volunteer response to other types of incidents, including road crash rescue, structure fire, and the assistance provided to other emergency services agencies, to name a few. Two incidents of note were the Struan Research Facility Fire and Naracoorte Motorcycles and Mowers Structure Fire.

I had the privilege of attending medal presentations across the region to award the National Emergency Medal, National Medal and CFS Service Medal.

Overall, we awarded 130 medals and recognised a combined 3,700 years of service. Without the support of loved ones, family and friends, your abilities to provide this level of service to CFS and communities of SA is reduced. Please pass on my sincere thanks to those who support your volunteering within CFS.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the significant contribution of former Regional Commander John Probert. John commenced working in Region 5 in 1999, then moved across to Region 6 shortly after the Wangary Fire to work closely with then Regional Commander Kevin May, in assisting the Eyre Peninsula to rebuild. In 2012 John returned to Region 5 where he served as Regional Commander until early 2022. On behalf of CFS Region 5, thank you John for your support and dedication to our region.

In closing, the dedication and professionalism of you, our volunteers and staff, are what lead me to believe Region 5 is the best region in South Australia.

**Jason Druwitt**  
Regional Commander

## Naracoorte Motorcycles and Mowers Structure Fire

While the people of Naracoorte were relaxing during the evening of Christmas, a large structure fire began at the Naracoorte Motorcycles and Mowers business. CFS crews were called to the premises at about 7:50pm where they found thick smoke billowing from the rear of the business. The incident was soon upgraded to a second alarm response, with third alarm sent by 9:30pm that evening.

15 CFS appliances carrying 75 volunteer firefighters from as far away as Bordertown and Mount Gambier, were called in to assist with the fire. Metropolitan Fire Service crews from Mount Gambier were requested to supply their aerial appliance to assist. In the end, appliances and volunteers from

Naracoorte, Lucindale, Tatiara, Wattle Range and Mount Gambier Groups supported the response, with the fire being classed as controlled by the early hours of Boxing Day. Unfortunately, the structure was a total loss, with an estimated loss of \$3.5 million.

The debrief process highlighted how lessons learnt from the Struan Research Facility Fire the previous month were positively implemented by crews in the initial response. It also identified how well crews from different brigades, groups, and agencies worked together throughout the incident.



Profile:

# Hayley Pass

### When did you join as a volunteer, and what roles have you had?

I joined the Lacedpede Brigade in February 2019 as a cadet at the age of 11. Since then, I have had the roles as crew member and the opportunity to be a Cadet Captain for a year.

### What makes your group different from others?

I would say our cadet group is different to others because we are not only a team, but we are also a family.

### What was it that made you join?

There are many reasons why I wanted to become a CFS volunteer, but I have always had a dream to be a person who can help someone else in need. I know that becoming that person can have a massive impact to someone's life.

### What keeps you involved as a volunteer?

I've always had a strong interest in volunteering in CFS as my father and both my grandfathers have all been involved in CFS. I have watched and grown alongside them and have enjoyed listening to their experiences and the opportunities they have had to help our community when in need. This inspired me to join and be a part of such a great volunteer organisation. While there are many challenges to face becoming a volunteer, it makes you a stronger person and challenge yourself.

### What is your advice to others looking to go into a leadership role?

Leaders need to have effective communication skills to inform their crew members with correct information, but importantly need to be willing to learn along the way. One thing I found as a Captain is not to be scared to ask questions, and to not be afraid to get in and help any crew members who are struggling or not understanding. A leader isn't about knowing everything, it is about showing an understanding of basic firefighting, and being there and looking out for one another's safety. I always say, remember you're a team and there is no "I" in team.



“ It was estimated that approximately 1,000 people were spoken to on Friday and 1,500 on Saturday. ”



## South East Field Days

The 2023 South East Field Days were held in Lucindale on 17 and 18 March.

This year, Region 5 staff were supported by staff and volunteers from Regions 1, 2, 4, 6, State Training Centre and State Headquarters as well as staff from Gramac Training Solutions and Alert SA.

The site displayed an indoor and outdoor fire safety theme, with the marquee set up to look like a lounge room, kitchen and backyard to highlight scenarios that could become a potential fire hazard.

The site felt more interactive this year with the introduction of an electronic fire extinguisher, stove top fire blanket and virtual reality exercises.

CFS Field Days site was consistently busy, with many great conversations held between the community and Community Engagement Officers and regional staff. It was estimated that approximately 1,000 people were spoken to on Friday and 1,500 on Saturday. It was also great to see so many CFS families come through to see the display and chat with staff.

## Medal Presentation Days

Presentations of the National Emergency Medal to volunteers of Region 5 were held across nine events at group level between July and November 2022. Groups took the opportunity to also present the National Medal, CFS Medal and CFS Life Memberships to volunteers with their family and friends present.

The Wattle Range Group and the Robe Group incorporated the official opening of newer stations as part of their award ceremonies.

Overall, the Region awarded 119 National Emergency Medals, 67 National Medals, 120 SA CFS Medals and 28 CFS Life Memberships. These awards represented an astounding total of 3,440 years of service by members across Region 5.



## National Military Vehicle Museum 'Emergency Services Day'

**O**n 23 October 2022, the National Military Vehicle Museum held an 'Emergency Services Day' to honour the employees and volunteers who serve our country during times of crisis. Proceeds from ticket sales and donations were given to the museum to aid in the restoration and preservation of their historical vehicles and artifacts. Numerous agencies attended the event, including SA Police, Metropolitan Fire Service, State Emergency Service, Ventia, SA Ambulance Service, Volunteer Marine Rescue, Alert SA, CFS Foundation and Forestry SA.

The event allowed CFS and other emergency service agencies to showcase their vehicles and emergency capabilities while engaging with the public, military veterans and other personnel in attendance. CFS showcased the Compressed Air Foam system appliance, a running grass fire simulator (Mad Rabbit), Gas Prop, and road crash rescue demonstrations. Other demonstrations from emergency service agencies included Volunteer Marine Rescue displaying their hovercraft's capabilities and SES personnel abseiling from a water tower. The National Military Museum also had the opportunity to showcase their restored tanks and armoured vehicles, allowing spectators to take rides on their testing course. A gun salute was also performed.

Despite the rainy weather forecast and conditions, a fantastic turnout of people showed their commitment and admiration for the emergency services.

On behalf of CFS team, Region 5 would like to thank all of the volunteers who gave their time to make this day a huge success. The event demonstrated the strength and commitment of our volunteers and team members to showcase their work to the public.



## Cadet Challenge Day

**O**ver 60 cadets from every eligible brigade in the region attended a Challenge Day held in Naracoorte, where cadets had to complete a mix of skill-based drills and team building exercises. To make things a little more interesting on the day, the cadets were put into teams made up from members of different brigades. The makeup of the teams added an extra element to the exercises, but each team found they were able to overcome the challenge of working with people they had only just met and still achieve the desired outcome.

The day was well supported by the Naracoorte Brigade that not only supplied an appliance to run the drills, but also catering for the day. Naracoorte members also showed cadets the Naracoorte HazMat appliance and ran through some of the equipment carried on it. Overall, it was a very positive day with cadets thoroughly enjoying the experience.



## Padthaway Cadet Appliance

**I**n a first for any region, the Padthaway Cadet Brigade has been fortunate to receive a dedicated training appliance. This was an initiative of former Chief Officer, Mark Jones, based on discussions in 2020 during the opening of the Padthaway Station. The appliance was officially handed over to the brigade on 11 September by the Chief Officer at an event attended by cadets from around the region.

Since handover, the appliance has been used by the Padthaway cadets and to support the Lacepede Cadets at the Kingston Show as well as Mount Gambier and Kingsley Cadets at the Mount Gambier Family Truck Show.

## Cadet Training Day

**I**n February 2023, the region hosted a Cadet Training Day centred around team building, communication, and acceptable behaviours. The day included a series of presentations and team building exercises run by Georgia and Gina from the Volunteer Services Branch (VSB). Regional Commander Jason Druwitt also facilitated a discussion based around the skills cadets are developing and the potential opportunities for their futures in firefighting.

This was the first time the VSB had run a session like this purely focussed on cadets. The feedback from cadets was extremely positive, with many wanting to know when similar future events were going to be held.



# Region 6

Region 6 started the Fire Danger Season 2022/23 by celebrating the fantastic efforts of those during the 2019/20 Fire Danger Season, holding its first National Emergency Medal awards in Port Lincoln. This was a chance to recognise the commitment of our volunteers as well as their friends and family who are often the silent supporters that enable our volunteers to do what they do.

Throughout the cooler months Region 6 volunteers were still very active, attending multiple structure fires and an increasing number of road train accidents along our major highways. The 880km stretch of the Eyre Highway within the region continues to keep crews busy. The Ceduna Brigade out west is responsible for road crash rescue for over 617 kilometers to the north east of the region, and the Kimba Brigade is supporting the SES by responding to RCR on their behalf for the past 5 years. The Eastern Eyre Group have faced their fair share of incidents along the Lincoln Highway, as well as challenges in crewing due to illness within the brigades, but are managing well.

The region experienced a mild start to the Fire Danger Season due to the

weather, which proved to be convenient as there was record crop growth across the region this year. As the weather began to turn, a band of lightning started the Mt Wedge Fire on 26 December. The fire proved challenging to bring under control due to the time of the year and the remote location and limited resources available. The fire ended up burning just under 2,500 hectares of scrub.

The region remained busy with smaller fires into the new year as there was still plenty of fuel on the ground after harvest. On 16 February a weather event that wasn't forecast in the Lower Eyre Fire Ban District provided the elevated conditions that drove the Port Lincoln Fire to burn 143 hectares, impacting multiple structures on the south eastern boundary of the township of Port Lincoln.

Thank you to all the volunteers and support staff who continue to respond at all hours of the night to provide this vital service to our road users. Your efforts promote trust within our rural communities that CFS will be there in their time of need.

**Brendan Saers**  
Regional Commander



## Region 6 National Emergency Medal Presentation

**O**n Sunday 17 July 2022, Region 6 held a National Emergency Medal Awards ceremony at the Port Lincoln Hotel ballroom.

Joe Tilley returned to the Eyre Peninsula to be our Master of Ceremonies and gave a heartfelt opening and welcome, with the theme carried throughout the event.

Acting Chief Officer Georgie Cornish presented medals on stage to 48 volunteers and staff, taking time to personally thank each recipient.

Following the formal medal presentations, a cocktail luncheon was enjoyed, including a lifelike firetruck cake that was a hit with the children and adults alike.

Volunteers and their families travelled from right across the Eyre Peninsula to attend. This gave the rare opportunity for volunteers to share stories and laughs with firefighters and friends from other areas of the Peninsula.

We would like to add thanks to all our volunteers across the Eyre Peninsula for their continued service to CFS and their commitment to their communities.

## Group Training Day

**T**umby Bay and Elliston Groups organised and delivered a training day for their brigades to cover off pre-season requirements. This included skills and maintenance drills, truck familiarisation, and PPE & PPC audits. This was also a great opportunity for the local farmers to register their Farm Fire Units.

Regional staff attended the training day to deliver the annual tactical brief, which covered new systems and procedures for the upcoming fire season.

Following this, a well-deserved BBQ was had, where everyone gathered to enjoy some of the finest meats the Eyre Peninsula has to offer.

It was a great chance for the Region and the groups to meet and greet new members and staff.



“ All up, Mt Damper & Districts Brigade members have served 385 years of voluntary service which continues today. ”

## Mt Damper and Districts AGM – Life Memberships

**O**n Thursday 29 September 2022, Mt Damper and District Brigade held their Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Wudinna Hotel. It was a great time to reflect on the year that had passed but also a time to present several Life Memberships to both past and present members.

Chairperson Darrell Tree presented certificates and badges to the following members, with Peter Williams, Brigade Captain, presenting one to Darrell. Neville Jericho and Peter Schmucker were unable to attend. We would like to congratulate all recipients.

**Bill Brands**  
29 years

**Darrell Tree**  
46 years

**Neville Jericho**  
35 years

**Josie Tree**  
22 years

**Heather Michael**  
40 years

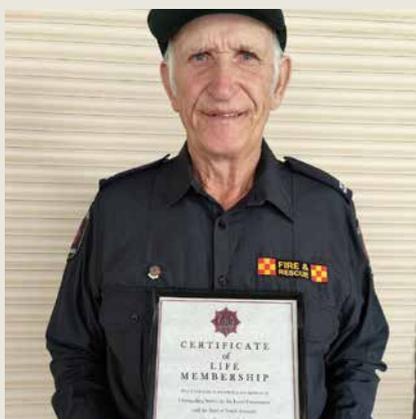
**Kym Tree**  
24 years

**John Michael**  
46 years

**Peter Williams**  
22 years

**Peter Schmucker**  
41 years

The combined years served by the Tree family is 104 years, and the Michael family is 99 years. All up, Mt Damper & Districts Brigade members have served 385 years of voluntary service which continues today.



**Tell us about which brigade you volunteer with and the positions you hold?**

I am the Brigade Captain of Rudall Brigade. I am Eastern Eyre CFS Group Equipment and Logistics Officer, the EE representative in Region 6, in the Infrastructure and Logistics committee and authorised officer for permits.

**What attracted you to join CFS?**

A member of the Appila Brigade approached me asking me to join the brigade back when it was EFS. As I didn't play sports, I thought it was an opportunity to do something for the community.

**What do you enjoy about CFS?**

Helping people in their time of need is very satisfying.

**Do you have any family members in CFS?**

I have one brother-in-law who is a Captain and another brother-in-law who is a First Lieutenant. Between us, we have completed close to 150 years of service. My two nephews are active CFS

members, and my two sisters are also involved! One of my sisters operated the Appila radio base and my other sister is an associate member of the Riverton Brigade.

**What was the most memorable incident you have attended?**

It would have to be the 2003 Australia Day fires in Beachworth. I will always remember seeing the residents lining the streets as we drove past and yelling out, "we are safe, we are safe, the South Aussies are here!"

**What does your life outside of CFS involve?**

I spend a lot of time in my workshop, making and fixing things as I have a love of restoring and fixing old motors and machinery. Being a retired farmer, I help my neighbours out with their properties, lending a hand to one during seeding and another over harvest. I also enjoy being involved with the Eyre Peninsula Field Days. Life could look different soon too, as we have just purchased a small caravan and are hoping to travel around a bit at some stage.



**Profile:**

# Mel Wegener



**Profile:**

# Tyrone Cummings

**What is your current role within CFS?**

I am the Captain of the Wudinna Brigade, in Region 6.

**Why did you join CFS and do you have other family members that are also CFS volunteers?**

I joined CFS so I can help the community when they need it. Plus, the skills and training that I learn through CFS helps me in my occupation and everyday life. I have several family members in CFS, my father, mother, brother and close mates whom I consider my family.

**What do you enjoy the most?**

I enjoy helping people and the community. I also enjoy the versatility we have. We are no longer just a fire agency, with some brigades helping in search and rescues, HazMat, Road Crash Rescue, fires or even just assisting other agencies.

A wonderful thing about CFS is the comradery between volunteers and staff when the community needs us. I still enjoy when the community comes up and thanks us for an incident that we helped them out at, people remembering something so small and still being appreciative after several years.

I also like being able to have flexible strategies to achieve the ultimate goal during any incident – a skill that I have learnt mostly through CFS. Things don't always work the first time, so you need to be able to change strategies on the fly.

**What is the most memorable incident you have been involved in?**

I can't say I have one stand-out incident, but strike teams interstate or even locally within South Australia are always memorable incidents for me. Travelling interstate for fires is an eye opener, there are different vehicles, different strategies, different crews but all are still trying to achieve the same goal and just make it work with what you have.

**What do you get up to outside of volunteering for CFS?**

Life outside of CFS is busy, I am a heavy vehicle diesel mechanic for an agricultural dealership. The only sports that I participate in now would be car racing - dirt circuit, dry lake racing and anything to do with motorsports. A lot of my family are within CFS as well so strangely enough it always pops up regardless of where I am.



# State projects

Often in the thick of it, it can be easy to focus on what still needs to be done and forget to look back at all that we've achieved.



# A strong past and bright future

**T**he opportunity to review the year is a great chance to step back and look at what we've achieved as an agency. Often in the thick of it, it can be easy to focus on what still needs to be done and forget to look back at all that we've achieved.

Since its inception, volunteers have been the heart and soul of CFS; that remains as true today as ever and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of you. This year, CFS volunteers responded to 10,100 incidents, of which 1,744 were fire related, 2,138 were road crash related, 157 were HazMat incidents, 3,872 were supporting other agencies and 912 were under the ever-increasing broad category of 'other'. Your professional response to these incidents provides confidence, reassurance, and trust for our South Australian community, so thank you for your dedication and commitment, day-in and day-out. Your actions shape the trusted service that is CFS.

Excitingly, our retrofit program that ensures every truck has Halo and other protection systems in place is close to completion, and the last single cab trucks without Halo will be removed from service over the coming months. This project has been a long process but is critical to the safety of our workforce and it's great to see it nearly complete.

This year has also seen the rollout of the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) across the country - a huge national undertaking. Any brand-new

system seeking to support eight different jurisdictions, several different climates and eight fuel types was always going to be complex and have its challenges. I am confident that by working with all our national and local partners, we will see increased operational benefit for communities, industry and our bushfire management practitioners over coming months and years.

Over the last nine months, we have been committed to mental health support and training across our workforce. In collaboration with CFS Foundation, Jana Wurriehausen, as CFS Wellbeing Officer, is delivering Mental Health First Aid training to CFS members as well as supporting our SAFECOM Mental Health and Wellbeing team to deliver our Suicide and Trauma Prevention training. We're committed to both programs because we know two in five Australians are experiencing a mental health problem in any given year and we know our first responders are more regularly exposed to traumatic events.

Our emergency management world is changing all the time, from the development of new technologies, to increased industry and community interest in disasters and emergency response. It is an exciting time to consider how we solve some of the risks and challenges. Looking forward, amongst other things, we are excited to investigate what opportunities might exist as we commence the early stages of a new heavy truck purchasing program. Watch this space.

CFS has a proud tradition and encompasses values that shape how we invest and prioritise in the future across operations and beyond. Brett Loughlin, as incoming Chief, is passionate about being true to ourselves in what we prioritise and we have got some exciting projects earmarked that, while in their infancy, will help modernise CFS to be the South Australian powerhouse it always has been. These projects include supporting our cadet leaders and cadets, streamlining our incident and emergency management arrangements and increasing our transparency on asset management and development.

Over this last year, I have been fortunate enough to catch up with many incredible CFS members, whether that be at National Emergency Medal ceremonies, visits to stations, or group meetings. On every occasion, I am struck by everyone's sheer commitment to your communities, your pride in the work you do and in CFS. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and your ever-professional service.

**Georgie Cornish**  
**Deputy Chief Officer** 

## Bushfire Resilience Day

**O**n 16 February 2023, the inaugural 'Bushfire Resilience Day' was held at State Headquarters. This was an occasion to honour those who lost their lives in a South Australian bushfire and recognise the strength of those who recovered from a disaster experience and adapted and changed their lives. It was also a time to be inspired by the positive actions of others that build on greater bushfire resilience.

As a fire and rescue agency, 16 February was chosen due to the great significance of the Ash Wednesday fire in 1983, a pivotal moment for many and one that helped shape CFS as it stands today.

The service was led by Jim Keatch, and we heard Chief Officer Brett Loughlin AFSM reflect on the impact bushfires have had on our community and how far we, as a state and as an agency, have come following Ash Wednesday. He also affirmed that CFS volunteers are the backbone of our agency, and ensuring their safety and wellbeing will always be of the utmost importance so they are prepared to overcome adversity and can emerge stronger and ready for the next challenges in protecting their community.

CFS Group Officer of Para Group, Rob Styling AFSM OAM, shared insights on the remarkable differences in safety, communications, equipment, and resources that volunteers are afforded today, as compared to the past, enabling CFS to be far more strategic in fighting fires as opposed to the defend and chase of Ash Wednesday. Rob also highlighted the significant impact bushfires have on mental health and the support needed to develop strength and resiliency for our current and future firefighters as well as communities.

Charleston Emergency Relief and Recovery Group Emergency Coordinator, Chris Cotton ASM, spoke about his experience living in Charleston and being actively involved in the build of a community hub - the Charleston Community Centre. Chris reflected on the stand-alone facility that will look after the community in the event of a future major emergency, and shared how the facility has already built the community's confidence, preparedness, and resilience.

Rachel Ireland, a Pinery Fire survivor, shared how her family had their lives turned upside down after discovering their home and irreplaceable mementos were destroyed in the 2015 fire. Rachel spoke about how the journey to rebuild was one of the most taxing and exhausting things she had ever attempted. So many things needed her attention all at once. However, as hard as the journey was, she still had so much to be grateful for.



The final guest speaker was Manager of Health and Wellbeing Jane Abdilla, who highlighted the conception and journey of the Stress Prevention and Management (SPAM) service and the importance of looking after yourself and one another.

Bushfire Resilience Day supports CFS' commitment to building bushfire resilient communities by empowering people to prepare for, respond to and recover from bushfire and other emergencies.



## Website Redesign Project

CFS website (cfs.sa.gov.au) continues to provide South Australians with the most immediate and reliable source of CFS information, receiving approximately 8.7 million page views during the Fire Danger Season.

It had been several years since the overall look of the website had been reviewed and updated, with the new design successfully launching on 23 November 2022. The redesign improves the way we deliver information to the public by adapting to changes in how the community is accessing online information.

Essential to the success of the website redesign project was consultation and workshops with the public, volunteers, and staff.

This ensured that we considered the wide range of backgrounds of people who visit our website. Visitors to our website participated in surveys asking them where they expected different information, aiming to improve the “corporate structure” that was previously used.

The design of the website displays that we are a strong, reliable and trusted authority.

The colours used are adapted from the bright yellow and red of our logo and the strong blue of our uniforms. Simplification and reduction of pages on the website places relevant information in the right location.

The online space is somewhere that continuous improvement can be made rapidly, and ensuring we deliver the best solution for public safety is essential as CFS website continues to be a key source of reliable information for South Australians.

## Australian Fire Danger Rating System

The nationally consistent Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) went live on 1 September 2022, bringing with it a range of new and improved products to support operational decision-making. This included the Fire Behaviour Index to support internal decision making, Fuel State Editor for fuel data collection, Fire Danger Viewer for displaying and interrogation of fire danger information and the Bureau of Meteorology products for public and registered users.

Two online courses related to the revised AFDRS are accessible via CFS Online Learning Hub. These include an introductory course to raise awareness about the AFDRS and what has changed from the previous system, and an intermediate course that contains technical details for land and fire management professionals, operational staff, commanders and planners to understand how to apply AFDRS to their work.

With the release of the AFDRS, CFS had the opportunity to employ six extra Community Engagement Officers to specifically deliver the AFDRS. AFDRS Officers have attended many shows and Field Days around the state including the Riverland Field Day, Balaklava Show, National Motor Museum, Parndana Show, Mt Gambier Truck Show, Roxby Downs BHP Health Expo and many more. It has been a pleasure to work alongside our volunteers and other agencies.

A Business-as-Usual Plan is being developed to ensure AFDRS ongoing requirements are smoothly transitioned into normal business operations. Feedback from staff, volunteers and external partners is being used to form a plan of continual improvement of the system and products. As the project transitions, CFS staff and volunteers will continue to be updated on its progress.

The AFDRS team would like to thank all involved in providing information or input during the implementation of this project, including Gavin Wornes and Farhana Fadjar who worked closely on the project from implementation.



## Bushfire Planning Knowledge Trip

**B**ushfire Management Team member Ali Walsh had the privilege to join fellow CFS staff members from Region 6 and the Chief Executive Officer of South Australian Fire and Emergency Commission (SAFECOM) on an educational trip through the outback area of western South Australia.

Led by experienced Group Officer Mark Hewitson, this outback trip has been held for numerous years prior to COVID and was once again re-established to help expose a new group of staff members to the challenges and wonders of the outback that the locals experience daily.

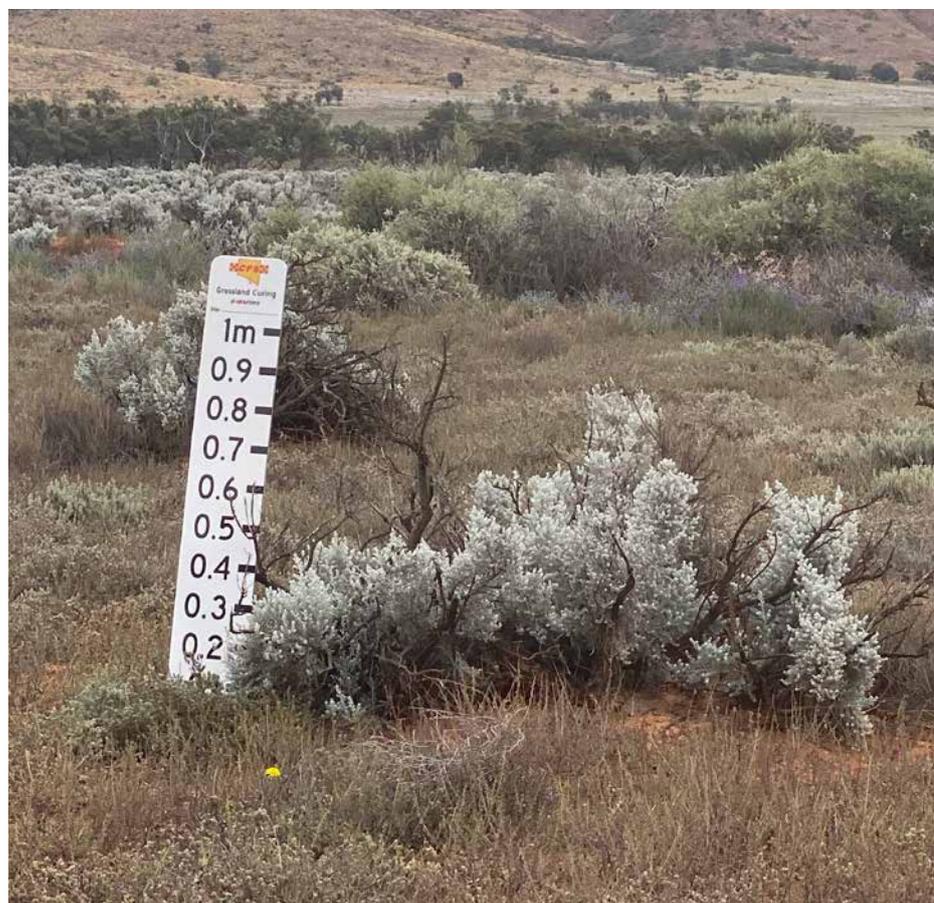
The trip entailed a drive through station country, meeting and chatting to station owners near Lake Gairdner and Kingoonya, as well as looking for and assessing fuel curing levels along the journey. Mark was accommodating in providing a detour to allow two inspection points of the Dog Fence in this part of the state for Bushfire Management Planning Unit interests.

Following along the rail line to the west, the group were granted special permission to enter the area of Maralinga. They were given an exceptional tour of the area and shown the work that has been undertaken to decontaminate the site.

Continuing the tour, the group travelled through Oak Valley and Yalata communities and then headed out to Eucla, where they were able to meet with counterparts from Eucla Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service as well as Western Australian Police.

The trip highlights included the major infrastructure and, although remote, how it has created major links to the east/west via rail and road. Another highlight was the bipartisan support between South Australian and Western Australia. The discussion surrounded the management of emergency response across borders as well as the diversity of the vegetation and the risks associated with the remoteness of the area for all incident response.

A big thanks goes to Group Officer Mark Hewitson who arranged the entire trip, from accommodation and catering to the permits required to enter these areas. We also thank Mark for taking time out of his busy work schedule to ensure that staff were able to learn about this vast part of our state.





## Profile:

# From Small Beginnings come Great Outcomes

Kirstie McGarrity,  
Haylee and Cody  
Campbell

**T**he Morgan CFS Brigade has a history of having an extraordinarily successful cadet program. This success is measured not only in the considerable proportion of the brigade members who have been cadets but also in the development of future leaders within the service. Kirstie McGarrity, Regional Operations Planning Officer at Region 3 Headquarters; Haylee Campbell, Region 3 Cadet Representative; and Cody Campbell, Region 3 Youth Advisory Council representative (YAC) are such examples.

Kirstie McGarrity joined as a cadet in 2005, not long after her family moved to Morgan. Kirstie always had a strong interest in helping people, so volunteering in her local community seemed natural.

Haylee Campbell joined as a cadet in 2009. At the time, the local netball club had ceased and she was looking for other social activities in which she could participate. A friend from school had recently joined and encouraged Haylee to do the same, so she attended her first training and hasn't looked back.

Cody Campbell, Haylee's brother, joined as a cadet in 2012. Cody joined to socialise with other young people in his town who also had a passion for helping their community.

Kirstie, Haylee, and Cody have all learnt so much about themselves by volunteering.

Each of them has had many amazing experiences, turning something they did in their spare time into their passion. In Kirstie's case, it became a career.

Kirstie has moved from a cadet to Senior Firefighter, Lieutenant 2, Cadet Coordinator, Region 3 Youth Advisory Council representative and the Youth Advisory Council chair. During Kirstie's time as a Cadet Coordinator for the Morgan Brigade, she mentored both Haylee and Cody. Kirstie currently volunteers with the Mount Barker Brigade and is also currently acting as the Group Administration Coordinator for Heysen Group.

In addition to her volunteering, Kirstie has been a staff member for almost five years. During this time she has worked in several positions including Regional Administration Officer in Region 1, State Operations Officer Incident Management and as a State Operations Planning Officer for CFS Covid Taskforce. Currently, Kirstie is the Regional Operations Planning Officer for Region 3.

During Haylee's time as a volunteer, she has held various positions including Senior Firefighter, Equipment Officer, Lieutenant 1 and Cadet Coordinator. Currently, Haylee holds the position of Region 3 Cadet Committee Chairperson and Region 3 State Cadet Committee Representative. Haylee's commitment to her community doesn't stop with volunteering. She currently works as part of a service delivery team for the Mid Murray Council.

Cody has had various roles including Senior Firefighter, Brigade Administration Coordinator and Group Training Coordinator for Mid Murray Group. Currently, he holds the position of Region 3 Youth Advisory Council Representative. Cody has also just recently finished his apprenticeship and is now a qualified builder.

This story highlights the legacy of CFS as a beginning Cadet; the journey and learning that can come from starting as a teenager and the passion all three had to serve their community through to today. Their commitment has also been recognised nationally, with all three having recently been awarded the National Emergency Medal for 2019-2020 Bushfires. During the 2019-2020 Bushfire Season, Kirstie was deployed to Queensland, and both Haylee and Cody were deployed to New South Wales to assist with the Black Summer Bushfires.

No matter how you want to contribute to CFS, or how much, all three think that it's worthwhile. It not only serves the community but also provides opportunities and experiences that you may have never considered before. The skills that you gain can also be translated into other aspects of life, which can be greatly beneficial. Kirstie, Haylee, and Cody are enthusiastic about ensuring that the next generation has a voice, and that they have opportunities to be included and progress as they continue their involvement in CFS.

## Profile:

# Casey Heaver



### What was it that made you join?

I joined Compton Brigade in April 2022 after my oldest child had shown interest in the cadet program. After watching how excited she was each week after attending training and after some peer pressure from her, I decided, why not? I had nothing to lose by giving some time to the community I had grown up in. My son then followed suit and joined cadets soon after. I'd watched the Compton truck for years coming and going while I was a kid attending the school next door, so the idea of being part of that was one that had intrigued me growing up. I also wanted to show my daughter that firefighting is not just for boys but for girls too. Since joining, I have also become part of the cadet program as one of the supervisors. Working with the kids and watching them grow and learn new skills has become a rewarding part of my life.

### What keeps you involved as a volunteer?

A big part of what keeps me involved is the cadet program. Seeing their confidence grow each week and the glow of pride as a cadet learns a new skill or master something they found hard gives me a huge feeling of achievement. I love knowing I am helping the next generation of firefighters learn and grow – it makes me come back each week to continue

expanding my skills to pass onto them. I believe by keeping the cadet program going and growing we are protecting and supporting the community for generations to come.

### What's your advice to others looking to go into leadership roles?

Get to know your team. Learn their strengths and weaknesses and be open to seeing things from a unique perspective. A good leader leads, encourages, advises, directs, engages and respects their team.

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

Standing there on Christmas night, for ten hours in the cold, watching a local business smolder away after being gutted by fire. Seeing the devastation on the owners' face the next morning as they arrived to see the damage. It was grounding to see how overnight everything can change for someone.

### What advice would you give someone who wants to join as a volunteer?

Take the step and go for it. Doing something new can be scary and overwhelming but the brigade you join will become like another family to you. The friendships you will make will stay with you, and the skills you will learn could one day be the deciding factor between saving someone's life or property, or losing both.

## State Bushfire Coordination Committee (SBCC)

The State Bushfire Coordination Committee (SBCC) is proud to share and reflect on the significant milestone of delivering nine Risk Reduction Plans (RRP) for South Australia. The RRP's are a first endeavour to empower Bushfire Management Committees (BMC) to undertake a planned and coordinated approach to the mitigation of bushfire risk. It is acknowledged that capacity and capability vary across all member agencies, which emphasises the collaborative purpose of BMC to address existential and landscape bushfire risk. To administer the SBCC business, CFS provides executive support to the SBCC.

In addition, the Bushfire Management Planning Unit provides bushfire management planning advice and support to the nine BMC.

A series of nine workshops facilitated by the BMPU were held across SA, where BMC members discussed and developed a prioritised list of risk reduction activities based on assets rated as 'Very High' and 'Extreme' in the relevant Bushfire Management Area Plan (BMAP). For the first time, landscape-scale collaborative risk reduction treatment strategies were also documented, demonstrating reform progress made since the release of the first SBCC State Bushfire Management Plan 2021-2025.

The SBCC would like to thank the 306 BMC members and their agencies, all of whom contributed to the new RRP process and governance requirements. These RRP's are the first measurable, transparent and accountable documents produced by the BMC and provide a strategic roadmap for bushfire risk reduction in South Australia. With the SBCC now reporting annually to Parliament, the RRP's provide a foundation on which to report, and represent an important and critical assurance to government that the bushfire risk reduction responsibilities enshrined in legislation are being delivered by all responsible parties for the betterment of South Australian communities.

## Reducing Bushfire Risk Through Community Engagement

CFS has a major role in reducing the risks to people, property and the environment associated with bushfires. Our engagement initiatives range from simple conversations with community members to state-wide coordinated programs. Reducing individual bushfire risk and increasing community resilience reduces reliance on emergency response efforts whilst helping individual community members cope with and adapt to these challenging situations. We deliver these programs through our various community engagement programs and collaborating with partner organisations while also ensuring legislated requirements are met.

At the local level, Regional Community Engagement Officers work with their Regional Prevention Officers to plan what, when and where engagement should happen based on bushfire risk and community needs. So far this financial year, regional Community Engagement Officers have hosted 360 events and engaged with 18,287 community members across the state. Of these, 57 events have focused specifically on the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System, of which 7,397 community members attended.

These programs focus on how residents or organisations can identify and understand bushfire risk, know what to do before, during and after a bushfire, and how to work together as a community. For example, Bushfire Blitz meetings are designed as short presentations targeted to a specific location, with just a few key messages communicated. Following these meetings, participants often seek further information to assist them to be better prepared, including attending 'How to Write a Survival Plan' workshops.

Participants may also decide that they want to get their neighbours involved, resulting in Community Fire Safe groups being established. This has led to increased household preparedness and community resilience through these combined initiatives.

Everyone in our service has a role in reducing the risk in our communities.

CFS will be actively looking at how current and future volunteers can further engage with their communities to build local preparedness.

Bushfire preparedness resources can be found on CFS website and provide a starting point for building awareness and becoming more engaged.

## Airborne Information Systems Operators Take to the Skies

A small team of CFS Air Observers completed additional pre-season training in October 2022 to gain final accreditation as Airborne Information Systems Operators (AISO).

AISOs provide enhanced tactical information during bushfires or other incidents through the operation of an Airborne Information Gathering (AIG) system. The AIG system is a helicopter-mounted gyro-stabilised, multi-sensor imaging system that uses both electro-optical (EO) and infrared cameras and can deliver high-definition images and digital video snapshots.

Outputs from the camera are managed onboard the aircraft by the AISO, utilising a tablet computer and associated hardware, which are linked to a mapping system that allows the operator to create fire perimeters and point data that can be distributed via email or radio.

The AIG system has successfully deployed to a number of fires since 2018, including Cudlee Creek, Kangaroo Island and Cherry Gardens, and was utilised over the 2022/23 Fire Danger Season on the Montacute and Port Lincoln fires.

Gary MacRae, long-serving CFS Air Observer and AISO leader, conducted the training over a three-day period. This training involved a series of practical flights in the Brukunga, Charleston and Harrogate areas. Trainees also exercised operating



the AIG system to plot simulated fire edges, capture and transmit both high definition and infrared imagery, and record short videos of points of interest for the State Operations Centre.

These task specialists are placed on active standby with the aircraft at Claremont Airbase on days of Total Fire Ban or are activated for specific incident requests from Incident Management Teams or Regions.



**What is your current involvement with CFS?**

I am a Region 1 Cadet at Brukunga within the Heysen Group.

**Why did you join CFS?**

I joined CFS for the mateship and comradery that being part of a team brings.

**What is your best memory of your time as a CFS cadet?**

Being part of the ANZAC Day Vigil was an amazing experience. It was a unique way for me to pay my respects to the people who fought for our country.

## Commercial Team

The Commercial Team sits within the Development Assessment Service section of the Community Risk and Resilience Directorate (CRRD).

The team has had a busy year expanding its level of service within the agency, the community, built environment and industry, at both a local and national level.

Over the past 12 months, the Commercial team has been involved with multiple large and complex projects. This includes major state infrastructure projects such as

ultra-large alternative energy installations of greater than one million solar panels, and several mega-size Battery Energy Storage Systems, power interconnectors and rocket launch sites. The Heysen Tunnel upgrade and other significant projects, including several high-rise developments, multiple distribution centres, factories, mines and the school and health services upgrades are also examples of projects within the Commercial team. In fact, 246 commercial developments within the last 12 months has seen the team become a key stakeholder with direct input. As urban space is becoming harder to find or more expensive, the growth of commercial developments in CFS area has dramatically increased and continues to grow.

The Commercial team is available to assist with any commercial building fire safety questions, including concerns or inductions into passive and active fire systems found within a commercial building. They can be contactable via your regional office.



**Profile:**

**Casey  
Billing**

## Work Health and Safety and Professional Standards at CFS

Nothing is more important to CFS than the safety of its volunteers and staff. 2023 saw CFS implement a Work Health and Safety (WHS) team within State Headquarters. The Chief Officer is passionate about developing WHS expertise and capability internally to provide advice and guidance at a corporate and operational level across the service. Consequently, two new staff members were recruited following a competitive selection process and CFS is looking forward to benefits that can be gained from working with in-house experts in this interesting and challenging area.

CFS has operated a professional standards function from State Headquarters since 2021. The team's objective is the ongoing investigation, education and prevention of misconduct and the monitoring of compliance with our Code of Conduct. The team's work assists in maintaining our excellent brand reputation by taking complaints of misconduct and other inappropriate behaviour seriously by developing related policy and procedures to promote a healthy and psychologically safe organisation. The team comprises two personnel who come from investigation and law enforcement backgrounds. Our Professional Standards Officers support our regional management teams with information and guidance on dealing with misconduct matters.





# State Training Centre

## SHQ Training Day

**O**n 24 November, Learning and Development hosted 40 State Headquarters (SHQ) staff for a firefighter experience day at the State Training Centre (STC)

The day started with a welcome and short message from Chief Officer Brett Loughlin AFSM. This was followed by a tour of the training rooms, accommodation, dining room and general training areas to give our newer staff an appreciation of the facility's high standards and what the Training Centre has to offer.

State Training Officer Robin Geytenbeek then shared a personal story centred around bushfire burnovers. This included his experience as a child in the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires.

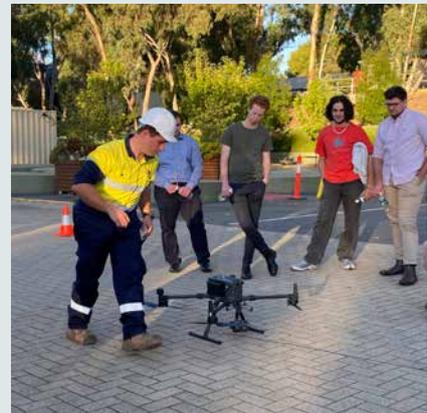
Robin shared how he defended his own property while his father was out on the brigade appliance, how news came through that a member of the brigade had been killed in a burnover and how he needed to go to sleep that night not knowing where his father was.

Then, fast forward to the Cuddlee Creek and Kangaroo Island fires where a crew from his brigade was burnt over, which included a close friend. These stories emphasise the importance of knowing what to do in the event of being trapped in a vehicle surrounded by fire.

The participants were then split into small groups and rotated through eight stations where SHQ staff could gain information or participate in an experience to further enhance their knowledge of CFS and what volunteers do.

These areas included digital virtual reality, fire extinguishers, road crash rescue, burnover in a CFS fleet vehicle, communications, hoses and branch handling, flashover and backdraft simulator, overhead flange fire, pumping operations, and HazMat awareness.

The day was well-received by all involved, providing an excellent networking opportunity and a greater level of appreciation for some of our newer staff.



## RAA Drone Demonstration night

**C**ollaboration between the Royal Automobile Association (RAA) and CFS Foundation resulted in a recent demonstration by the RAA on Wednesday 8 February, 2023.

The RAA are investigating the use of drones with education and training, as they do for road users and pedestrians on the ground.

The purpose of the showcase was to learn key fundamentals on drones and drone use to better understand their full spectrum, limitations, and opportunities.

Following the demonstration there was a short tour of the STC. The night was attended by 30 people including RAA staff, CFS Foundation and CFS staff including the Chief Officer.



## SAPOL Legacy “Wall to Wall Ride”

The “Wall to Wall Ride” is a ride to remember officers that have died as a result of their service to the community, and also raise much needed funds in support of police charity organisations. The ride disembarked from the Fort Largs Police Academy on Tuesday 13 September and stopped for breakfast at the STC, before proceeding to the National Police Memorial in Canberra on Saturday 17 September.

140 riders, legatees and support teams converged on the STC for breakfast and a coffee and thoroughly enjoyed the facilities and hospitality. Throughout the ride \$15,000 was raised, with a donation of \$1,800 to be made to CFS Foundation.

## Joint Road Crash Rescue Training Session

On Monday, 24 April 2023, both Mt Barker CFS and Retained MFS staff attended a joint road crash rescue training session at the STC. There were a total of 12 members who attended.

During the training, crews were briefed that they were to attend a multiple-vehicle incident, and that was the extent of the information they received. Crews arrived to find five casualties, including two adults in a small vehicle, two adults in a van, and a single adult pinned under a quad bike.

Crews got to work and removed the quad bike from the pinned casualty while others prepared and tested equipment. They began by working on the small vehicle, removing the doors to gain access to the two casualties.

Once they were removed, the vehicle was relocated to gain access to the van.

As they worked on the van, they discovered two more casualties, one adult and one infant. After removing them, they found an eighth casualty within the van. Crews worked for about one and a half hours to free all eight casualties from the scene. Once the rescue evolution was completed, the crews continued to cut up both cars to refine skills and get extra time on the rescue tool.

At the end of the night, all crews shared how much they enjoyed the evening and expressed a desire to undertake more sessions. Feedback from the night included the awareness of common language used between CFS and MFS. In the future, there will be more joint training sessions between the agencies.

Thank you to the crews that attended - it was a great night and everyone left on a high.



## Profile: Jill Krebs

### When did you join as a volunteer and what roles have you had?

I joined the Mintabie CFS in 2006 as a firefighter. In 2009 I took on the role of Captain, as well as Admin and Training Officer. I held these positions until I moved to Port Augusta and in 2016 accepted the role of Captain of the Region 4 Operations Brigade.

### What was it that made you join?

I was Unit Manager of Mintabie SES for three years before I joined CFS. As in most small towns, SES and CFS work closely in conjunction with each other, attending all call outs together. It therefore made sense to upskill my training so I would have the skills to respond to any incident that may present itself to me.

### What opportunities has CFS provided you?

I have had the opportunity through various deployments to experience many fires, from the APY Lands to the far west, NSW border, Kangaroo Island and many in between. This has given me the chance to experience and learn about all sorts of terrains, several types of fires and the individual responses needed to deal with them.

I have also had the opportunity to do a lot of training, a lot of which has challenged me outside of my comfort zone, and I have enjoyed the sense of achievement that it has given me.

### What does responding to incidents look like as part of an Operations Brigade?

The Operations Brigade is a brigade that has been set up to assist with

communications, logistics and support roles within CFS Regional Headquarters during major incidents or busy times.

The brigade also has the role of deploying both the Communications trailer and the IMT Support trailer. Most of our members are also firefighters at their local brigade, others hold positions in the IMT, and some go on deployments.

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

Of course, the road crash rescues and searches that don't end well will always be with you, but there are lots of other memorable incidents including assisting in the search for Peter Falconio in the far north of the state, a fire near the NT border that had a three kilometre front by the time we got there, and of course the Bangor Fire for its longevity.

### What's your advice to others looking to go into leadership roles?

It isn't always easy being in a leadership role. You can't please everybody, but I think if you are open to listening to what people have to say and hearing their point of view, you can learn a lot. Don't make the mistake of thinking that if you are in a leadership role that you are always right.

It is a satisfying feeling knowing that, in your role as a leader, you have been an integral part in helping someone along the way to achieving their goals.

# Honours

A huge thank you and congratulations to the latest recipients.



“ In 2023, four additional recipients join the list of 113 CFS members awarded one of Australia’s most prestigious awards. ”



## Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM)

The Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) is a peer-nominated medal that recognises distinguished service by members of an Australian fire service.

**T**he Governor-General awards this medal on the recommendation of the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services.

In 2023, four additional recipients join the list of 113 CFS members awarded one of Australia’s most prestigious awards.

Congratulations to Group Officer Gregory Crawford AFSM, IMT Coordinator Lynda Smith AFSM, former Lyndoch Captain Neville Kies AFSM and Chief Officer Brett Loughlin AFSM on being awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal.



## Gregory John Crawford AFSM

Group Officer  
Southern Fleurieu Group

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Mr Gregory Crawford has demonstrated outstanding operational command and administrative leadership for the Southern Fleurieu Group as Group Officer, a role he has held for 15 years. His operational roles have included Crew Leader, Divisional Commander, Group Duty Officer, Sector Commander, and Incident Controller.

As a highly respected operational leader, his dedication and proactive approach to mentoring and developing the young leaders of today and encouraging and preparing the leaders of tomorrow will see CFS in good hands in the years to come. Mr Crawford encourages members to develop their own skills, knowledge and ability. He pushes members to learn and he maintains and supports them in these endeavours. He actively promotes CFS at community events and open days. He is a strong advocate for developing relationships that support the organisation and the community.

Mr Crawford is a quiet achiever who allows others to develop and roll out programs and projects while he supports and guides from behind. This approach, whilst building strength and capacity of CFS members, often means that he does not receive the recognition that should be accredited to him. Mr Crawford is an advocate for all members to reach their potential, and is a strong voice for female inclusion within CFS.

Mr Crawford's most recent project is establishing an operational support brigade within the Southern Fleurieu Group to ensure that skills and knowledge of members no longer wanting to be active firefighters are maintained within the organisation and used to build greater ongoing resilience and skills within the community.

During his time within CFS, Mr Crawford has displayed the highest level of leadership and effective decision making, making him very deserving of the Australian Fire Service Medal.



## Brett Anthony Loughlin AFSM

Chief Officer, CFS

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Mr Brett Loughlin repeatedly goes above and beyond expectations to ensure great safety outcomes for South Australians. His dedication and calm, professional, leadership style sets the standard for others to follow and through his command of large emergencies he has contributed greatly to the safety of South Australians.

In late 2019, he volunteered to go to New South Wales and lead the teams of firefighters that were sent to assist in battling multiple large bushfires. His skills in jurisdictional liaison were valuable in ensuring an effective and safe mission.

He has excelled in the fields of planning and preparation, incident command and legislative enforcement and, by doing so, has contributed greatly to the safety of South Australians. Mr Loughlin's leadership, work ethic and professionalism has set great examples for others to follow and his commitment to developing less experienced members of staff ensures that the whole Service benefits from his skills.



## Neville Howard Kies AFSM

(former) Captain,  
Lyndoch CFS

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Mr Neville Kies joined CFS in 1978 and has served diligently for 44 years. He has served as a Deputy Group Officer in Barossa Group as well as Captain at Lyndoch Brigade, a position he held for 29 years.

Mr Kies is a true leader and mentor within CFS and wider Barossa community. He is generous with his time, always making himself available for callouts, training, or community events. He has attended more than 800 incidents since 2008 - more than anyone else in the Barossa Group. He has also completed more than 170 training courses in his career.

He is known for putting others first and for setting high standards. He is passionate about collaboration and professionalism. People and equipment under his control are meticulously cared for. His support goes well beyond his Brigade and extends region-wide, including managing two regional vehicles, representing the volunteers' interests as Brigade and Group CFS Volunteer's Association representative, and providing exceptional support to other Brigades, Farm Fire Fighting Unit Groups and residents in the community.

Mr Kies' exemplary leadership and commitment to CFS spans well beyond the expectations of a volunteer and he is deserving of the Australian Fire Service Medal.



## Lynda May Smith AFSM

IMT Coordinator

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Mrs Lynda May Smith has demonstrated distinguished, exceptional service and commitment to CFS over the past 44 years as a volunteer, making her very deserving of the Australian Fire Service Medal.

Since 2011, Mrs Smith has attended over 75 incidents, including interstate deployments to Victoria and New South Wales in 2009 and 2022 respectively. At these incidents she had a variety of roles, including Brigade Firefighter, Jurisdiction Liaison Support Officer, Logistics Officer, and Incident Management Team (IMT) Coordinator.

Mrs Smith's expanding innovative implementations of new administration systems and procedures provided CFS with accurate record management and review processes for personal protective clothing (PPC), and vehicle servicing and maintenance programs at the local level, for the interest and safety of community, volunteers, and fire/emergency operations.

Mrs Smith dedicates her service assisting in developing and improving systems for state, regional and group incident management teams, and supporting her peers. She has invested in many interstate and intrastate deployments, from fire to flood, providing an abundance of experience.

In her current role of IMT Coordinator, she provides operational support, mentoring, leadership, and opportunities for new Logistics Officers to improve and develop their skills to pursue regional and state IMT roles.

## SA Emergency Services Medal & Ministerial Commendation

Established in 2001, the SA Emergency Services Medal (SAEMS) recognises the tireless and extraordinary work of persons contributing to community safety through operational emergency service organisations and associated agencies.

This medal is given to an individual or group who has demonstrated “distinguished and/or meritorious services of the highest order” in recognition of significant contribution to the emergency services in South Australia.

The Ministerial Commendation recognises significant effort, bravery or service and is awarded for “meritorious or courageous action”.

# SA Emergency Service Medals

**Anthony Alcock**  
Brigade Captain  
Roxby Downs Brigade

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**Stephen Boucher**  
CFS COVID Commander

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**Todd Harris**  
Group Officer Mawson  
Group

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**Peter Simpson**  
Strathalbyn Brigade

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**Thomas Walsh**  
Deputy Group Officer  
Para Group

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“ Your dedication and commitment to the Service will inspire the next generation of volunteers to walk in your footsteps. ”

## CFS 60-Year Service Medals

There are eight dedicated volunteers who recently hit a significant milestone - 60 years of service to CFS.

A huge thank you and congratulations to the latest recipients of CFS 60-Year Service Medal - your dedication and commitment to the Service will inspire the next generation of volunteers to walk in your footsteps.



# Ministerial Commendations

## **Matthew Bain & Christopher Blasche**

Deputy Group Officer & Lieutenant 1 Williamstown Brigade Group

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## **Ryan Pym**

State Operations Planning Officer

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## **Wayne Phillips**

Gladstone Brigade

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## **Kym Kenny**

Deputy Group Officer 1 Lower Eyre Peninsula Group

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## **Andrew Francis & Nicole Viant**

Morphett Vale Brigade

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“ Recognising meritorious and courageous services of the highest order ”

## **Murray Sherwell**

AFSM OAM Region 5 Operations Brigade

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## **Alister Hope**

Clare Brigade

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## **John Quinn**

Mount Bryan Brigade

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## **Robert Possingham**

Montacute Brigade

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## **Kevin Van Heythuysen**

Woodside Brigade

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## **John Peter**

Sherlock/Moorlands Brigade

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## **David Moulton**

Maaoupe Brigade

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## **Alec Ross**

Maaoupe Brigade

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Please note, due to COVID-19 restrictions, not all medals have been presented. SAFECOM's Volunteer Services Branch are working on the distribution of these.

# National Emergency Medals



The 2019/20 bushfire season saw fires ravage over 20 million hectares of land across Australia. It was subsequently declared as a nationally significant emergency for the purpose of the National Emergency Medal; one of five declared since the award's establishment by Her Majesty The Queen in 2011.

Thousands of CFS volunteers took up the call throughout the season, contributing to the response across South Australia and interstate. While all service undertaken by CFS volunteers is significant and highly valued, over 2,500 CFS volunteers and staff met the criteria determined by the Governor-General and have since been awarded the National Emergency Medal (Bushfires 2019-20).

Since the initial three ceremonies held in February 2022, more than 35 further CFS ceremonies have been held across the state to present these medals to the very deserving recipients, often alongside other honours and awards.

“ Thousands of CFS volunteers took up the call throughout the season, contributing to the response across South Australia and interstate ”



## Chief Officer's Commendation – Mr Rex Hall

On 25 January 2023, Mr Rex Hall AFSM became the second recipient of CFS Chief Officer's Commendation for Service. Rex was recognised for his outstanding commitment to preserving the culture and history of volunteer firefighting in South Australia.

Rex was presented the award by Chief Officer Brett Loughlin AFSM at a small function at the SA Volunteer Firefighters Museum. Retired Deputy Chief Officer Rob Sandford was also present as the first recipient of the Chief Officer's Commendation award.



## Bravery Awards – The Royal Humane Society of Australasia

**S**ix of our members have been recognised at the Annual Bravery Awards of the Royal Humane Society of Australasia after saving the town of Ernabella in the APY Lands from an uncontrolled bushfire in September 2017.

The Bronze Medal recipients, Peter Ikonomopoulos, Rosco Haustorfer, Ant Williams, Tim Cooper, Nicoli Ackland and Dudley Dagg, were visiting the APY Lands to upskill local CFS volunteers in basic firefighting training when a large and unexpected fire impacted Ernabella. The conditions were difficult and dangerous due to dry and windy 50 kilometres per hour north to north westerly winds which rapidly intensified the fire.

Mr Ikonomopoulos took control of the incident to evacuate residents of the community to the football oval as the fire had quickly impacted the local aged care facility. Mr Ikonomopoulos was almost engulfed by the rapidly increasing and intense fire, as he tried to protect the aged care facility by backburning to create a barrier.

To ensure the safety of the people in the community the team evacuated homes in Hidden Valley and made sure that all the community was safely evacuated to the oval. They then engaged in asset protection and back burning alongside local members, many of whom were responding for the first time after completing their training

They worked throughout the night until 2:30am, under extreme conditions and suffering from physical and mental exhaustion, to protect the community from the fire. Mr Dagg suffered heat exhaustion and collapsed whilst trying to protect the aged care facility.

The fire burnt over 100,000 hectares of land in the APY lands however CFS members were able to stop the blaze before it impacted any structures in Ernabella, including a nearby housing estate and aged care facility.

This outstanding response exemplifies what it means to be a CFS member. Congratulations to all six recipients on this well-deserved recognition.

# 2023 CFS Chief Officer Awards

**A**warded to recognise outstanding service of a meritorious nature. This can be in relation to fire service duties, administrative leadership, or exemplary performance of a specific difficult project or task. However must be above and beyond what could reasonably be expected in similar circumstances.

“  
Congratulating those exemplary performances that went above & beyond  
”

## Chief Officer’s Certificate of Commendation (Individual Commendation)

### Neil Atkinson

Norton Summit-Ashton Brigade

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### Kayne Davis

Group Deputy Officer 1  
Kangaroo Island

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### Monique De Silva

Manager Public Information

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### Toni Tiller

Region 1 Operations Brigade

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**Chief Officer's  
Certificate of  
Commendation (Unit)**

**Burnside 34P Tour  
Down Under Crew**

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**Kerryn Fricke &  
Warren Stancliffe**

Kingscote Operations  
Support Brigade

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**Kiribati  
Project Team**

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**Lincoln Gap  
Composite Crew**

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**Region 3 CFS Staff**

River Murray Flooding

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**Chief Officer's Unit  
Citation for Service**

**Cadell CFS Brigade**

River Murray Flooding

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**Chief Officer's  
Commendation for Service**

**Samuel Hagger**

Swanport Deputy  
Group Officer

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**Ian Hunter**

Ridley Group Officer

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**Peter Ikonomopoulos**

Regional Officer  
Outback Areas

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**Jeremy Strauss**

Mannum Brigade Captain

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# Youth Advisory Council (YAC)

**T**he Youth Advisory Council (YAC) plays a vital role in promoting youth and the benefits of young volunteers in CFS. We are known for holding several week-long courses, targeted to specific pathways. These include Incident Management Week in April, the YAC Rural week held in July, and the Urban week held in October.

The YAC, in conjunction with the STC has successfully run courses aimed at CFS Youth. In the past 12 months these have included Breathing Apparatus (BA) courses, Rural Skills Week, Incident Management and Leadership Week and a multi-agency Frontline Leadership course.

Feedback remains overwhelmingly positive, with participants reporting that being in a training environment with peers within the same age group is an advantage and gave participants more confidence to actively participate.

If you have any queries regarding the YAC or want to contact your regional representative on the committee to raise any local issues regarding young people, please send an email to: CFS.YouthAdvisoryCouncil@eso.sa.gov.au

*Photo Credit: Ben Tran a participant on the YAC BA Course.*

## Adelaide ANZAC Eve Youth Vigil

**C**adets from Region 1 represented CFS at the South Australian National War Memorial on North Terrace in Adelaide. Eight cadets from the following brigades stood vigil overnight between 6pm until the beginning of the ANZAC Day Dawn Service.

CFS Cadets joined youth and leaders from Australian Army Cadets, Australian Airforce Cadets, Boys Brigade, Australian Navy Cadets, Girls Brigade, Girl Guides, Scouts, SES Cadets, St John Ambulance and Surf Lifesaving.

### Brukunga Brigade

Liticia Wilks  
Justin Boscence  
Casey Billing

### Coromandel Brigade

Ewan Coghlan  
Brooklyn Bentley

### Hindmarsh Brigade

Jack Williams  
Nick Blesing

### Bridgewater Brigade

Noah Stanbridge



“The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) plays a vital role in promoting youth and the benefits of young volunteers in CFS.”



## Profile:

# Emily Pettman

### **What do you think the service can do to ensure we continue the legacy of CFS throughout cadets?**

I strongly believe that the cadets are the most important part of our service. Succession planning for the future is made easy when cadet programs can provide well-trained young people who are enthusiastic and driven to do their best in the service. The training level in cadets is largely focused on basic skills. This produces very good young firefighters who already have an understanding of how things operate, and a lot of the time can really thrive in a brigade when putting their skills into practice.

### **What's your advice to others looking to go into leadership roles?**

My advice to others looking to go into leadership is simple – learn as much as you can about everything you can. Knowledge is power and having a good understanding of the tasks you expect others to achieve makes all the difference in kicking goals. I believe leadership takes an interest in the long-term goal of the service. It is about furthering the motivation of others to achieve greatness for now and for the future. I would encourage anyone who is interested in being a leader to push yourself outside your comfort zone, jump in and give it a go.

### **What keeps you involved as a volunteer?**

If you have an interest in helping your community and feeling good about it, I don't think it takes much to keep you involved in the service. The more exposure you have to the diversity of CFS and just how many different tasks and positions you can be a part of, I really do believe that there is something that could interest everyone. There is plenty to be thankful for and plenty to keep members engaged, once you're involved it feels infectious. The reward of being a trained person in someone's time of need is motivation to keep learning and attending.

### **As a female what do you think CFS has done well in this space?**

I joined the service in 2008 and was the only female member for a little while, which was challenging at times. However, despite the challenges, I continued to show up and I am glad I did because it's been the most rewarding decision. CFS has worked hard over the past 15 years to get us where we need to be as a service who is inclusive of all genders. I have always been encouraged by paid staff in the service to keep up the good work and been motivated by their encouragement. We now have eight female firefighters in our brigade, and I am so thankful I have been a small part of the change in our brigade to be more inclusive of this.

### **What are some of the challenges you've faced?**

I have faced many challenges in my time in the service. Some of these include being fearful that I wasn't good enough to be a firefighter, but I think it's important to remember that not everyone is perfect and to not lose sight of the motivation to join the service in the first place. Training has played a huge part in the growth of confidence for me. The more I trained, the easier tasks seemed to be. I have faced the challenge of being thrown into leadership, a sink-or-swim type scenario. For me, this worked in a positive way, and I did in fact swim, I think. Ha-ha. I learnt to trust my ability and my training to see me through some tough leadership situations. This has been a successful tactic so far. The challenge of recognising different personalities within our group and understanding that not everyone will agree with your opinion or thoughts is ok. Keeping an open mind and agreeing to disagree has helped me navigate through this.



# SAFECOM Health & Wellbeing Team

**T**his year we have been working in the space of prevention and improving mental health literacy. Recently, eight of our Peer Support Officers were trained in the delivery of Stress, Trauma and Suicide sessions. These workshops are delivered on training nights and go for 90 minutes. The workshop aims to increase mental health literacy at a brigade level and recognising the need to conversations about suicide. To book a session, please call the SPAM helpline 08 8115 3950.

We have also been busy developing an online course which will soon be made available on the Online Learning Hub. The content has been written and developed within the context of a South Australian first responder. The course covers stress, trauma, anxiety, depression, suicide, self-care and how to have a meaningful conversation.

Therapy dogs Maxi and Smoke are some exciting new members of our team and are currently in trial to increase wellbeing. Therapy dogs have been shown to decrease physiological arousal and stress. Maxi visits State Headquarters weekly and will begin his regional visits soon. Smoke works with SES, but you may have the opportunity to meet either dog on deployment.

## Mental Health First Aid

**F**igures indicate that more than one in five Australians are experiencing a common mental illness in any one year. Those living with a mental health problem are facing stigma and discrimination, long wait times, misinformation, and other barriers, often meaning one in two people do not receive the help they need.

Mental Health First Aid® training provides participants with knowledge to identify the signs of declining mental health, how to approach and encourage someone to seek support and what to do should a mental health crisis arise. The skills learned will help reduce stigma, increase confidence, improve help and influence positive outcomes.

Funding for the role is provided by CFS Foundation and I feel incredibly privileged to have the opportunity to be increasing awareness and understanding of such an important topic and meeting so many kind and passionate people along the way.

There have been occasions where CFS members are referred to as “ordinary people going above and beyond”, but someone who gets up in the middle of the night because the pager goes off, who is prepared to brave the elements no matter how dangerous it may be and who supports strangers during, what is often their worst time, is extraordinary.

Unfortunately, extraordinary humans often struggle to seek and accept help themselves and the involvement of their peers becomes vital. This is where Mental Health First Aid training steps in to provide those peers with the right tools to be able to provide appropriate initial support.





## Profile:

# Dimity Griffiths

### **What was it that made you join CFS?**

I had grown up on a farm in the Clare Valley, where Dad always had his Farm Fire Unit (FFU) and would attend to help on local incidents. On the day of the Pinery Fire in 2015, I was travelling through Roseworthy with Mum and when I saw the fire, I imagined Dad out there in his FFU, and I just thought I wanted to make a difference helping people too. People in my local community had also started to complain about slow response times to incidents, and I am a strong believer that if you call 000 you expect people to turn up. However, sometimes I feel people who move into the country areas expect that CFS station is staffed like MFS is, and firefighters are just waiting there for callouts. I knew this wasn't the case, and so rather than join the complaining bandwagon, in 2016 I signed up as a volunteer with Watervale CFS and began my training so I could jump on a truck as soon as possible.

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

During the 2019/20 fire season, I was a regular volunteer for Horrocks Group strike teams, attending the Cudlee Creek Fire and then two deployments to Kangaroo Island within a month. Some of the experiences in Cudlee Creek were quite hairy, but one of my most memorable experiences were on Kangaroo Island. Listening to the farmers who had hardly slept, rarely eaten, and had not showered for a week was devastating. On hearing this, I offered ration packs from the QRV to some farmers who had lost everything

and were just exhausted and heartbroken. The farmers were moved to tears, and for me this was a relief to be able to just provide them with some small amount of moral support. Knowing that in some small way you can help people when their entire livelihood is being burnt to the ground is so important to me and that is the key reason, I am proud to be a CFS volunteer.

### **What do you think can be done to recruit more female volunteers?**

I'd really love to see CFS raise the profile of more of our female volunteers. It would be great to see more female faces on the images of firefighters shown on promotional items, recruitment banners, and in advertising campaigns or on social media. When it comes to recruitment, quite often men approach other men about becoming a volunteer, but their female partners are not approached as often. If we can encourage these women to just give it a go and come out to training, we can keep the momentum going and grow the female volunteer cohort. Women have a lot of great skills to contribute to CFS.

### **What makes you get out of bed every morning to continue doing what you do with CFS?**

Knowing that I'm doing my bit for the community. I've always been that person who puts their hand up to help others before I help myself. It's who I am.



# CFS Foundation

## A word from CFS Foundation Team

**C**FS Foundation recognises the critical role that our CFS volunteers play in safeguarding our communities, and their wellbeing is our highest priority. With this in mind, we are constantly striving to enhance their volunteering experience by providing small comforts, such as a Nespresso coffee machine for the brigades. We also provide larger-scale infrastructure and equipment through our sponsors, on top of the financial support we provide.

Following the devastation of the 2019/20 bushfires, we recognised the pressing need for mental health support for our CFS volunteers, including those on the frontline and their families and colleagues. In our proactive approach, we are proud to announce the funding of CFS Mental Health First Aid Officer, Jana Wurriehausen. Jana will be delivering Mental Health First Aid® training around the state to our CFS volunteers who are interested in having the skills to support their colleagues. CFS Foundation would like to thank SA Power Networks for their contribution towards this initiative.

Throughout the year, CFS Foundation is proud of its ability to provide financial support to our volunteers who have been impacted in the course of their volunteering duties, including several volunteers from the Riverland who lost their own property and were impacted during the recent floods.

Our purpose is to ensure that no CFS volunteer firefighter, who actively engaged in protecting lives, property, and communities and suffered a loss, goes without assistance and support.

CFS Foundation receives no financial support from the SA Government and all money raised comes from corporate sponsorship, donations, bequests and community fundraising.

## ElectraNet Small Equipment Grants

**C**FS Foundation was able to offer Small Equipment Grants to CFS brigades thanks to our major sponsor ElectraNet. The response was truly remarkable, with the Foundation receiving an overwhelming number of applications from brigades across the region, which well exceeded the grant of \$20,000.

With such a response, we've made every effort to maximize the impact of the grant by allocating resources in a way that will benefit as many brigades as possible.

The Small Equipment Grant process saw a variety of requests: for items that needed replacing, enhanced training, or items that made the volunteer experience more comfortable. CFS Foundation has happily been able to provide many brigades with a variety of items such as gazebos, TV screens for training, portable LED lighting, fridges, BBQs for training nights and much more.

Thank you to all the brigades who took the time to apply and share their needs with us. Your dedication and commitment to serving your communities is truly inspiring, and in association with ElectraNet, we are honoured to be able to support your efforts in this way.

We look forward to seeing the impact that this new equipment will have on CFS brigade operations.





## Louise's Memorial Garden

In November 2022, a Memorial Garden in honour of fallen CFS volunteer Louise Hincks was officially opened by the Hon Peter Malinauskas MP, Premier of South Australia, with Louise's daughters, Alice and Addie unveiling their mother's plaque.

The memorial garden is located at Louise's CFS brigade at Happy Valley. The creation of this garden was proudly coordinated by the CFS Foundation with an array of people contributing financially and physically.

“ The creation of this beautiful garden was proudly coordinated by CFS Foundation with an array of people contributing financially and physically. ”

A special mention must also go to the members of Happy Valley Brigade, Lindsay Hincks and Sue Brown for their work in establishing and maintaining the garden. Our thanks extend to the SA Government who contributed \$15,000 and the City of Onkaparinga Council who made a contribution of \$5,000 towards the memorial garden. The wonderful 'Firestar Roses' were donated by Knights Roses.

The garden is open to the public to view at any time.





# SA Volunteer Fire Fighters Museum

It was with heavy hearts that the museum bid farewell to Rex Hall, who passed away peacefully on Friday, 2 June 2023. Rex was the heart of the Fire Fighters Museum, hatching the idea with Russell Branson to preserve, record and display the history of volunteer firefighters of South Australia. With the final stage of the museum still to come, Rex was very proud of what he dreamed and brought to fruition. He achieved so much over the 20 years, including his love of bringing people together at the annual Memorial Service, which recognises fallen CFS firefighters. Rex touched the hearts of many people over his 84 years with us, may he rest in peace.

“ Rex was the heart of the Fire Fighters Museum, hatching the idea with Russell Branson to preserve, record and display the history of volunteer firefighters of South Australia ”

After such a long period of isolation during COVID, it was great to see so many of CFS family travel from near and far to gather, reminisce and celebrate at CFS Reunion in Naracoorte. Past CFS volunteers travelled from as far as Western Australia and Victoria to join CFS staff and volunteers for a dinner, filled with guest speakers and great laughs. It was a great time to welcome and hear from the new CFS Chief Officer, Brett Loughlin AFSM. There was a very generous donation to the Museum by the Neales Flat Brigade and a successful raffle. This was just the event to kick off a great year of events organised by the museum.

A dedicated team of volunteers has been working on re-vamping our online presence with both the website and Facebook page undergoing upgrades. We released a fresh new look for the website at last year's reunion and encourage all to visit it for themselves at [www.savffm.net.au](http://www.savffm.net.au).

Throughout the year, we continued to welcome different visitors to the Naracoorte Museum.

“ If you have any old items that relate to the Volunteer Fire Service that you no longer wish to keep, please give us a call and let us preserve them for future generations. ”

The SA Fire Fighters Memorial Service and Wreath Laying event was held at 11am on Saturday, 15 April at the Museum. The weather tried to deter us, but we held a very special service inside with current and past CFS volunteers attending from far and wide. We were also greatly honoured by Joe Szakacs MP, Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services of South Australia for joining us.

The memorial service was followed by the Annual General meeting. We welcomed Alan Hall as Chairperson as outgoing Chairperson Rex Hall did not stand for reelection. A massive thank you is extended to Rex Hall with all that he has achieved in this position over the 20 years since its inception. We also welcomed Rob Sandford into Vice-Chairperson position and Peter Monkhouse onto the Committee. Tony Hill did not stand for reelection on the committee and we thank Tony for his ongoing technical support and future support in the background.

There are, of course, always so many people to thank after such a momentous event. To name a few, the memorial service would not have been the same without the Kingston CFS cadets who stood the honour guard, Stuart Stansfield (MC extraordinaire), Bev Branson, Brenton Ragless (who shared memories of Ash Wednesday through the eyes of his 6-year-old self), Tammy Moffat, Jim Keatch, the entire SAVFFM committee. Special thanks must also go to the extraordinary leader Rex Hall AFSM, who unfortunately could not attend the memorial service due to illness.



Strength is in numbers and the SAVFFM is always on the lookout for new members and people who are keen to help us with our efforts of preserving the history of the Volunteer Fire Service.

Anyone who is interested in becoming a member should either visit the website at [www.savffm.net.au](http://www.savffm.net.au) where there is a link to our membership portal or contact us directly for information if you are not computer savvy.

Likewise, if you would like to be involved in the preservation / restoration aspect of what we do please give us a call or email.

The SAVFFM are always grateful for any monetary donations, which are tax deductible. Donations of memorabilia or equipment are gratefully accepted. If you have any old items that relate to the Volunteer Fire Service that you no longer wish to keep, please give us a call and let us preserve them for future generations rather than seeing them be discarded and lost forever.

## Profile:

# Zac Stichel



### What encouraged you join CFS?

I joined CFS as firefighting has always been a passion of mine. I have grown up in and around the firefighting industry with my Dad, Uncle and my Pop being volunteer/full time firefighters. I've always been passionate about serving my community and working in a team environment.

### When did you join as a volunteer and what roles have you had?

I joined the Goolwa CFS Brigade as a volunteer firefighter in 2020 when I was 17 years old. I have been fortunate enough to be voted in as senior firefighter in 2022 and I have learnt so much more about myself since taking on the role in an incredibly positive way.

### What keeps you volunteering for CFS?

Firefighting is very dynamic; no incident is ever the same. I love the challenges I'm faced with every time I ride the truck!

It's also a really good way to give back to the community. I feel a sense of accomplishment every time I help a member of the community.

I've met so many new and amazing people who are now lifelong friends and enjoy the camaraderie within my brigade/group.

### What sort of callouts does your brigade respond to?

Goolwa is a relatively busy brigade responding to around 130-150 calls annually. We respond to many different calls ranging from structure fires, Road Crash Rescue, assist SA Ambulance Service at medical assists/extrications, aviation incidents, fire alarms and tree downs.

### Why do you believe people should volunteer with CFS?

I strongly recommend to anyone considering joining CFS to do it. Firefighting isn't for everyone but if it is for you then it is super rewarding. By joining CFS you are making a difference to your community and being involved with the community in a positive way. CFS is a fantastic opportunity for personal growth and development with opportunities including leadership, teamwork and critical thinking skills.

### When did you join CFS and what encouraged you to join?

As I've never married or had children I had a lot of time on my hands, so I decided to join CFS in December 2019. I also wanted to do something to increase my connection to my community. I love living in forest areas but know they come with bushfire risk, so joining CFS seemed like a perfect marriage of the two things.

### What keeps you involved as a volunteer?

I have found a lot of connection, happiness and enjoyment from being a volunteer. I enjoy physical challenges and extending myself, but for me it's the meaningful friendships that form.

It feels like an extended family in the local area who are always there for the community and each other.

### What are some of the challenges you have faced?

When I first joined, I did feel quite anxious, and confused with all the acronyms, however after going on a few call outs to jobs, 6 months into it, it became second nature. Responding to the Cherry Gardens Fire as the only major fire I have attended, I gained confidence. I know that when I need to call on my training it is there, and I don't feel anxious anymore when I go out to calls.

After fleeing Iran with my family in 1983 and arriving in Australia as a first generation refugee in 1985, I had to learn English to assimilate. I am proud that I'm Australian as they come. I'm accepted with open arms and have never had any feeling of prejudice within CFS. They don't differentiate, it just comes down to your character and skills.

### What makes me get out of bed every morning to do what I do with CFS?

It's the camaraderie and being involved in the community.



## Profile:

# Sara Azadegan (Deegs)

# Retirements

## Wayne Richardson

**A**fter 29 years of service, Wayne Richardson retired in April 2021 as a State Training Officer.

Wayne is an extremely knowledgeable and highly regarded State Training Officer specialising across the whole range of CFS training activities from rural to urban/HazMat to incident management. Wayne worked across the state as a trainer, completing thousands of kilometres a year to support Regions and State training programs – always with a smile. This made Wayne a very visible trainer in all corners of the state. What wasn't as often seen is the effort Wayne put into changing and updating CFS training curriculum. He wrote or rewrote a number of current courses and consulted on many others with various stakeholders.

His attention to detail and focus on the needs of CFS volunteers is greatly appreciated.

Some members might be surprised to read that Wayne has been retired for some time, as Wayne continues as a volunteer member in his brigade and a regular Trainer in courses across Region 5 and the State Training Centre – as well as recently becoming a published author.

## Tony Stockham

**T**ony "Stocky" Stockham joined CFS in August 2012 bringing his training expertise across from our friends in Orange. Stocky is known for his dry sense of humour, "being a top bloke and all-round good guy" and his efforts never to use the "Q" word with the phrase was .... an extended period of time with limited activity. Region 6 will miss you. Enjoy retirement Stocky. Stocky retired on the 5 May 2023.

## Bruce Lacey

**B**ruce has been an integral part of CFS family for over thirty years since his employment with the Forestry Department in 1990. For many years Bruce has been involved in senior operational incident management roles, including Division Commander. He is a very experienced and capable Level 2 and Level 3 Operations Officer and Level 3 Deputy Incident Controller, with numerous CFS, interstate, and inter-jurisdiction responses. Bruce also has significant operational experience as a Deputy Commander in the Region 5 RCC in particular. Bruce has served as a training officer and has also expressed an interest in continuing to deliver in some training areas after retirement, where he is a valuable SME.

We wish Bruce and Judy all the very best in his retirement and look forward to the imminent arrival of his new boat.

## Rosemary Wrightson

**R**osemary retired on 16 September 2022 after 15 years of service as the Administration Supervisor. Rosemary was the go-to person for queries in the admin space and provided support to most Directorates and Regions over the years, who we know are grateful for her assistance.

The agency thanks Rosemary and we know her impact on CFS will not be soon forgotten.

# Obituaries

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## Malcolm Byerlee 1934 - 2023

Malcolm served for almost 17 years as a Brigade firefighter from 1994 to 2011.

He was a Deputy Group Officer 1 at Oladdie Group and Black Rock Group.

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## Steven Cornwell 1950 - 2023

Steve's involvement with CFS included the Port Vincent Brigade and as a Group Officer with the Southern Yorke Group. Steve was well known with his involvement locally in the Group and across the Region.

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## Doug Cram 1949 - 2022

A rather quiet achiever, Doug served as a CFS volunteer for over 42 years with the Glencoe Brigade. He served as a Brigade Lieutenant for nearly 35 years before being appointed as Captain in 2013 and stayed in that role for 7 years. Doug also spent 24 years as the Brigade Equipment Officer as well as filling roles as Admin Officer and Training Officer at different times.

Doug was awarded the National Medal in 1996 and CFS Life Membership in 2005.

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## Albert "Bert" Ewing 1929 - 2023

Bert and his brother Fred joined the Mylor Brigade on 6 December 1951 and saw active service for over 44 years, including the Ash Wednesday fires of 1980 and 1983. Bert was a stalwart of the brigade and held the position of Captain for many years up to his retirement from active service in 1995. He transferred to Auxiliary/Brigade Operational Support and continued to support the brigade in this role until his passing. In all Bert served CFS for more than 74 years.

He will be fondly remembered in the Mylor Brigade for many, many years.

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## Eric Gunn "Gunny" 1936 - 2022

Eric (Gunny) served as a volunteer in the Mount Gambier district for over 43 years. He was appointed Captain in 1979 and held that position for 25 years, he also served as the Brigade Training Officer for 19 years.

In 2004 Eric was appointed as DGO2 for the Mount Gambier and District Group and served in that role for 10 years. In his later years Eric transferred his membership and served as a member of the Mount Gambier Operations Brigade.

Eric was awarded the National Medal in 1997 and Life Membership in 2003.

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## Dale Hollitt 1959 - 2022

Dale served as a brigade firefighter from 1998 to 2022 at various brigades including Mambray Creek, Port Germain, Marla and back to Port Germain, totalling 31 and a half years of service.

During Dale's service he held the position as Brigade Captain at Marla, Brigade Captain at Port Germain, Brigade Lieutenant 1 at Port Germain, Brigade Training Coordinator and Brigade Training Officer at Port Germain.

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## Graham Hewett 1948 - 2023

Graham was born on the 3 September 1948 and was tragically killed in a car accident on 7 March 2023 at the age of 74. Graham was well known in the community and throughout CFS due to his involvement as the Group Officer at Bute Group prior to the restructure into what is now the Northern Yorke Group. He will be missed by his family, friends, community and fellow CFS members.

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## Mark Hoare 1966 - 2023

Mark was a valued member of CFS for the past 23 years. His service began with Woomera CFS in 1996 where he was Brigade Captain 1999-2003. In 2007 Mark joined Clare brigade and was Lieutenants 1,2,3 & 4 from years 2008-2015. His most recent position was Horrocks Group Equipment Coordinator beginning in 2022.

We extend our sincere condolences to Mark's family, friends and CFS families, both past and present in Clare and Woomera.

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## Rex Hall AFSM 1938 - 2023

Rex devoted 60 years of his life to CFS, ranging from extensive frontline leadership roles through to preserving the legacy of the Emergency Fire Service (EFS) and proud history of CFS, undeniably leaving his mark on CFS history.

Rex authored several books on the history of CFS and EFS and worked tirelessly to establish the South Australian Volunteer Fire Fighters Museum in Naracoorte, which he led for 20 years.

Rex's service and dedication to the community was recognised with him being awarded a CFS Chief Officer's Commendation in January 2023, a 60 year Service Medal in 2021, SA Emergency Services Medal in 2006 and Australian Fire Service Medal in 1994, serving through until his passing.

Rex was a friend and mentor to so many volunteers and members of the community and his passing will be deeply missed.

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## David Hobbs 1952 - 2022

David joined CFS in December 1983, following in his father's footsteps only a few months after the Ash Wednesday Fire, which claimed many lives from the local community. From the moment he joined he began his volunteer career within the service, holding positions with the Lucindale Brigade and rising through the ranks to hold the position of Group Officer for a number of years.

David's outstanding contribution to the welfare of not only his community but also the State and nation saw him actively participate in many deployments as a valued member of the State Level 3 IMTs.

David was an inspiration to all who volunteer. His dedication to the protection and safety of his community was always at the forefront of his service.

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## Peter Kelly 1949 - 2022

Serving at Quorn Brigade for almost 31 years, Peter was a firefighter from 1978 to 2003, Brigade Auxiliary from 2003 to 2005 and then became Brigade Operational Support till 2011.

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## Franklyn "Frank" Longmire 1930 - 2022

Frank spent 1961 to 2001 as brigade firefighter, but also the Crystal Brook and Redhill Deputy Group Officer from 1961 to 1997. With 46 years 10 months service on record, Frank will be very missed.

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## Brendan "Sol" Lynch 1954 - 2023

Brendon was a brigade firefighter from 1990 to 2008 and then became Brigade Operational Support until 2012. He held the rank of Air Base Manager Bombing Support for a period of time and volunteered for just over 22 years, finishing up with the Stirling North Brigade.

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## Ross Mackie 1982 - 2023

Ross Mackie passed away suddenly on the 1 March 2023, leaving a very big hole in the Freeling Brigade where he had been a member for eight years. Ross leaves behind his wife Sandra and his two boys Lachlan and Riley who are both cadets at the Freeling Brigade.

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## Mark MacDonald 1965 - 2023

Mark was born on the 9 November 1965 and passed away peacefully on 25 March 2023 aged 57. Mark's involvement with CFS included the Mt Lofty Tower Brigade, Burnside Brigade, Hermitage Brigade and recently as a Deputy Group Officer with the Gumeracha Group. Mark was also pivotal to CFS training team with his involvement locally in the Gumeracha Group, at the State Training Centre and across the Region. His dedication and service will be missed.

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## Alan "Mac" McKerlie 1948 - 2022

Alan (Mac) was an early member of the Stirling North Brigade and served as a Brigade Lieutenant, Brigade Captain, Group Officer, Deputy Group Officer - Flinders Group.

Mac was a brigade firefighter from 1975 until 2017 then became Brigade Operational Support until 2022. Thank you for your almost 48 years of service, Mac.

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# Obituaries

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## Rodney “Toad” McMartin

1964 - 2022

Toad served as a volunteer with CFS for nearly seventeen years, serving as Captain of the Robe Town Brigade for six years from 2007 to 2013 before moving up to Deputy Group Officer for the Robe Group for a further six years and then serving as Group Officer from 2019.

Operationally, Rodney worked as a Divisional Commander within incident management at numerous incidents and also held roles as a Level 2 Operations Officer and Deputy Incident Controller.

As a volunteer trainer, Toad passionately shared his knowledge with others, he was also one of the original members of the RCR Trainer Assessor Team.

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## Wayne Morris

1959 - 2022

Wayne was a brigade firefighter at Wirrabara from 2014 to 2022. Wayne had the ability to be a leader or be part of the team, whatever you asked of him, he was great at it. Wayne was the person who always gave a helping hand, either on the fire ground with a rake hoe and hose or at the station cleaning trucks (even if it wasn't their truck). No matter what, Wayne was there to help with a listening ear, and if you weren't having a good day Wayne would somehow be able to brighten your day. Thanks for your eight and a half years of service, Wayne.

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## Francis “Frank” Petagna

1936 - 2023

Frank was a quiet achiever who would always go out of his way to help someone. Frank enjoyed doing Radio Operation and he was willing to show and support people learning Radio Operation. Frank served for just over 37 years, finishing his time at Napperby Brigade.

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## Michael “Mike” Pickering

1942 - 2022

Serving for 34 years and 11 months, Mike was a brigade firefighter from 1980 through to 1995, becoming Brigade Auxiliary for Hahndorf in 1995.

During Michael's service he held the position as Brigade Lieutenant 4 at Hahndorf over 11 years and Brigade Lieutenant 2, and 4 at Yongala & District over 4 years.

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## Michael Sandford

1957 - 2023

Mike followed in the footsteps of his father (Gordon) and two brothers (Jim and Bill) and joined CFS on 21 July, 1975 when it was known as the Emergency Fire Service (EFS) and enjoyed continuous service until his passing some 48 years later. He was joined later in CFS by his mother (Kath) and younger brother (Rob).

Mike's service to the community and dedication was recognised with him being awarded CFS Service Medal (40-year clasp), National Medal (3rd clasp 45 years), United Nations International Year of the Volunteer Medal in 2000, and both CFS and Tea Tree Gully Brigade Life Membership. Mike loved CFS and the people in it and he made several lifelong friends over the many years of his involvement

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## John “Sarge” Sargent

1943 - 2023

Sarge was a brigade firefighter from 1964 to 2017 and then became Brigade Operational Support. He was affectionately known by all and was mostly seen in driver's seat of appliance for the Gladstone Brigade. In later years Sarge would respond in his FFU when changed to BOS. Sarge gave up his pager so a new member could respond after just over 58 years of service.

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## Brian Lawrence Smallacombe

1955 - 2022

As a brigade firefighter from 1978 to 2017, Brian held many roles during that time, later becoming Brigade Operational Support till 2022. Brian was very much a man of the land, dedicated to the Gladstone Brigade.

During Brian's 44 years of service he held the position as Brigade Lieutenant 1, 2, and 4

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# Contacts



## CFS State Headquarters

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Postal GPO Box 2468, Adelaide SA 5001  
Email [CFS.Enquiries@eso.sa.gov.au](mailto:CFS.Enquiries@eso.sa.gov.au)

## Region 1

### Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island

75 Gawler Street, Mount Barker SA 5251  
Phone 08 8391 1866  
Email [CFS.Region1@eso.sa.gov.au](mailto:CFS.Region1@eso.sa.gov.au)

## Region 2

### Upper Mount Lofty Ranges, Yorke Peninsula and Lower North

Spurling Circuit off Mudla Wirra Road, Wasleys SA 5400  
Phone 08 8522 6088  
Postal PO Box 1506, Willaston SA 5118  
Email [CFS.Region2@eso.sa.gov.au](mailto:CFS.Region2@eso.sa.gov.au)

## State Training Centre

Pyrites Road, Brukunga SA 5252  
Phone 08 8398 9900  
Email [CFS.training@eso.sa.gov.au](mailto:CFS.training@eso.sa.gov.au)

## Region 3

### Murraylands and Riverland

11-17 Kennett Road, Murray Bridge SA 5253  
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## Region 5

### South East

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## Region 6

### Eyre Peninsula and West Coast

32 Matthew Place, Port Lincoln SA 5606  
Phone 08 8682 4266  
Email [CFS.Region6@eso.sa.gov.au](mailto:CFS.Region6@eso.sa.gov.au)

## Development Assessment Service

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Phone 08 8115 3372  
Postal GPO Box 2468, Adelaide SA 5001  
Email [das@cfs.sa.gov.au](mailto:das@cfs.sa.gov.au)

## Country Fire Service Volunteer Association (CFS VA)

Suite 3, Transport Training Centre, 17 Worriga Street, Regency Park SA 5010  
Phone 08 8244 6500  
Postal PO Box 2359, Regency Park SA 5942  
Email [admin@cfsva.org.au](mailto:admin@cfsva.org.au)  
Web [cfsva.org.au](http://cfsva.org.au)

## South Australian Country Fire Service Promotions Unit

*Raising awareness of the roles, training, and activities of CFS volunteers statewide.*

Postal PO Box 73, Basket Range SA 5138  
Email [info@fire-brigade.asn.au](mailto:info@fire-brigade.asn.au)  
Web [fire-brigade.asn.au](http://fire-brigade.asn.au)

## Community Engagement

Phone 08 8115 3319  
Email [CFS.CommunityEngagementSupport@eso.sa.gov.au](mailto:CFS.CommunityEngagementSupport@eso.sa.gov.au)

## Stress Prevention and Management (SPAM)

*Contact Health and Wellbeing for referrals for individual counselling and group sessions following traumatic events.*

SPAM Helpline on 08 8115 3950.

## Volunteer Services

*Providing advice and services in volunteer management including recruitment and retention, non-operational training, youth programs and legislative/policy advice.*

37 Richmond Road, Keswick SA 5035  
Phone 1300 364 587  
Postal GPO Box 2706, Adelaide SA 5001  
Email [vsb@safecom.sa.gov.au](mailto:vsb@safecom.sa.gov.au)

## CFS Foundation

*Providing immediate financial assistance to CFS volunteers and their families in the event of death, injury or loss of property while engaging in their community service.*

Phone 1300 270 278  
Email [admin@cfsfoundation.org.au](mailto:admin@cfsfoundation.org.au)  
Postal CFS Foundation Inc GPO PO Box 2468, Adelaide SA 5001  
Web [cfsfoundation.org.au](http://cfsfoundation.org.au)  
Facebook [facebook.com/CFSFoundationFoundation](https://facebook.com/CFSFoundationFoundation)



Government  
of South Australia



**CFS State Headquarters**

37 Richmond Road, Keswick SA 5035

Phone 08 8115 3300

Postal GPO Box 2468 Adelaide SA 5001

Email [CFS.Enquiries@eso.sa.gov.au](mailto:CFS.Enquiries@eso.sa.gov.au)