

## A Message from the Chief Executive



We have reached the end of the first quarter - and again, summer brought with it its fair share of dangers and surprises.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all personnel who pitched in to help our Victorian counterparts in defending life, property and the

environment during the catastrophic bushfires that devastated that State.

We as a sector and the State Government are deeply indebted to you all for your courage, commitment and bravery. Once again you have shown that the true spirit of Aussie mateship is strong within our sector.

Recent fire behaviour and weather conditions have set a new frame of reference. The 'Upper Extreme' conditions that were experienced in South Australia and Victoria especially has prompted us to examine several aspects of how we manage emergencies.

The newly formed Bushfire Task force lead by the CFS are working in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Heritage, MFS, SAPOL and other State Government agencies to analyse and examine South Australia's preparedness in the event of a significant bushfire, such as was experienced by our neighbours in Victoria.

Not only do the extreme weather conditions pose a risk of bushfires, but they also highlighted another threat - the threat of heatwaves.

SAFECOM is supporting SES in developing effective heatwave management arrangements and communications strategies as part of our Extreme Weather Plan.

Yes indeed, this summer has indeed been a catalyst for change - changes to our approach to bushfires and extreme weather conditions and also changes in the way we operate.

The development of Emergency Services Delivery Standards ensures that we will continue to deliver the best possible service in ensuring the safety of South Australians, whilst maximising the effectiveness of both our technical and human resources capabilities.

The work we have been doing with local government is now bearing results with the establishment of the first Zone Emergency Management Committee. The establishment of these Committees will pave the way for closer collaboration between SAFECOM agencies and local government in responding to emergency situations.

The findings of the Volunteer Administrative Review were presented to the Board. The recommendations of this Review, once adopted, will ensure that we will be able to better manage the pressure faced by our volunteers in dealing with the administrative duties placed on them by legislative reporting requirements, allowing them to focus on their most important task - defending and maintaining the safety of life, property and the environment.

I also wish to highlight that the Australian Safer Community Awards are now open. These National awards help to identify the range of innovative projects and collaborations across agencies, both in the public and private sector that helps build safer communities across Australia.

Yes, once again it has been a season of change .... and as usual, as a sector we have risen with alacrity and spirit to meet the challenges that change always brings

My sincere thanks to all staff for their co-operation in the various accommodation moves. I know what a hassle it can be to move offices and location and the fact that most of the moves are now complete, and with a minimal disruption to our services is a strong indication of your support and keenness to work together as one team.

Thank you and I hope that you and your families enjoy a safe and relaxing Easter break.



# From the Board

Update from the SAFECOM Board meetings held on 5 and 26 March 2009.

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### Financial Performance

The Board noted the current and forecast financial position of the sector and commended the work of the ESO's to derive a forecast balanced budget outcome.

The Board considered the sectors financial position for the period ending 28 February 2009. Most notable was that the forecast outcomes for each of the Agencies is essentially a balanced or minor and immaterial variance. This represents a significant turnaround from a couple of years ago and the Board commended the Chiefs for the positive actions that have been taken.

The Board also received advice regarding the impact of the Mid Year Budget Review and supported the proposed strategy for managing the associated impact. In summary, it supports the targeted application of voluntary separation packages, pending confirmation from Treasury of the terms and conditions.

Members of the Board were updated of the progress on re-negotiating the lease agreements for 60 and 44 Waymouth Street.

### Building Replacement Review

The final report of the Building replacement review was approved by the Board. This completes a major sector wide review and the recommendations that Board have supported include:

- Building Replacement to be subject to a standard decision making framework. The framework ensures that building replacement standards are consistent with community risk rating and therefore the replacement building and capital investment is consistent with that risk. The decision framework also confirms the role of Board as the approving body:
  - (i) when proposed project costs exceed the amount of expenditure recommended for the prevailing community risk by 10%; and
  - (ii) to approve the 10 year building replacement priority list and subsequent variations thereto.

The Board also supported the recommendation that annual capital programs be utilised strictly to upgrade and replace existing building stock, and that requests for expansion must be supported by additional funding received from Treasury following budget bi-lateral negotiations.

The next significant task with respect to ensuring strategic building management is to undertake a condition audit of buildings to better inform replacement and maintenance priorities.

### Workcover Review February

A summary of the feedback from the recent SAFECOM WorkCover review was presented to Board.

The Board noted the excellent result, and commended the efforts of SAFECOM staff in effecting significant improvements. Further reports will be provided following review of the SES, CFS and MFS.

### Human Resources Reports

The Board approved that the performance review and development process for SAFECOM staff be conducted prior to 30 June 2009 and fully endorsed the implementation of systems supporting Organisational Development giving their support to the consolidation strategy proposed.

## STRATEGIC SERVICES

### Board Committees

In order to ensure cross-sector initiatives are discussed and actioned collaboratively and to discharge its statutory assurance role, the SAFECOM Board has confirmed the forming of four new committees with the following chairs:

- Strategic Thinking – Wayne Thorley
- Community Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery – Grant Lupton
- Operational Preparedness, Response and Recovery – Stuart Macleod, and
- Business Excellence Committee – Euan Ferguson.

It was agreed that the Committee Chairs will review existing cross-sector committees and consider how they should become part of the new governance structure. Terms of reference will need to be amended and approved by the Board at an upcoming meeting.

As the Strategic Thinking Committee will not incorporate existing committees, it has already begun meeting this month.

### Volunteer Administrative Workload Review

Agencies within the emergency services sector continue to receive feedback from volunteers concerning the administrative burden that is placed on them, impacting their keenness to volunteer.

As a result, SAFECOM engaged an external consultant to conduct a survey of volunteers and look at options to reduce the administrative burden for volunteers.

Key recommendations put forward by the report include:

- a streamlined approach to forwarding correspondence
- provision of staff support to assist larger groups
- better usage of online reporting through the website
- minimising meetings and using technology such as teleconferencing, online forums and feedback
- clarifying job descriptions for all volunteer roles and developing position descriptions
- training in the rights and responsibilities of volunteers and volunteer managers
- recognising the full range of leadership skills required for volunteer roles, and
- clear guidelines for conflict resolution responsibilities and training assistance provision to Regional Commanders.

As part of the development of a Service Level Agreement between the SAFECOM Volunteer Strategy and Support Branch and the CFS and SES, the job description, training and leadership issues will be prioritised. Priority will also be given by SAFECOM IT to developing the 'members' section of the CFS and SES websites to enable greater use of web technology for communication and information flows.

Copies of the report are available at the initiatives and reviews section of [www.safecom.sa.gov.au](http://www.safecom.sa.gov.au). The SAFECOM Board has asked for feedback on the report's recommendations, and this can be provided to Sally Pfeiffer, SAFECOM Volunteer Strategy and Support Branch at [pfeiffer.sally@safecom.sa.gov.au](mailto:pfeiffer.sally@safecom.sa.gov.au) or phone (08) 8463 4102.

### Next Board Meeting

The Next Board Meeting will be held in Adelaide on Thursday 30 April 2009.

# SAFECOM staff

Welcome to the new additions to the team

## **Bronte Moran**

**Co-ordinator: Training and Development**



Bronte commenced in February.

She comes to SAFECOM from the South Australia Police where she developed and implemented online learning across the organisation. In that role, she established the strategic direction for online learning in SAPOL and directed the development of over 20 online training programs. While at SAPOL, Bronte also spent 18 months as the Manager, Quality and Curriculum Management Section, with responsibility for SAPOL's training framework, approval of corporate training packages and management of their status as a Registered Training Organisation.

Bronte began her adult working career as a high school teacher in Pt Augusta and Renmark then trained and worked as a librarian in both the United States and Adelaide. Her interests in adult learning and training design led her to SAPOL and now SAFECOM. She is keen to take up the challenges in her role as Coordinator Training and Development and to meet and work with staff across the sector.

## **James Mackay**

**State OHS & W Officer - SES**



James joined the team in February, filling the agency gap at SES as State OHS&W Officer.

"I find this a challenging position, and look forward to working with SES and SAFECOM Teams.

"It gives me a chance to go out and meet the Volunteers and pass on knowledge that I have gained. Life is a learning cycle", James said.

James has worked in the disability sector for 25 years as both a trainer and OHS coordinator. Currently increasing his skills, James is studying his Diploma in OHS&W, and his Diploma in Training and Assessment.

James also volunteers for the CFS, Virginia Brigade and has 18 experience.

## **Jason Drewitt**

**Volunteer Support Officer - CFS Region 2**

Jason joined the team in early March as the Volunteer Support Officer, CFS Region Two.

Prior to joining SAFECOM, Jason was employed in the wine industry for 11 years within the Barossa Valley. Before this he worked in the meat industry and has been a member of the Army Reserves for nine years. Jason is also currently a volunteer with the Tanunda CFS.

When he is not fighting a fire or saving his community, Jason enjoys spending time with his three young sons aged two, four and six.



"With fishing, water skiing, bike riding and enjoying good food, good wine and good friends, there is rarely a quiet moment.

"Volunteers are an integral part of the emergency service and I am looking forward to using my knowledge and skills to further develop my role so that I can establish a good working relationships to support and assist them." Jason said.



# 2009 Australian Safer Community Awards

## Recognising and rewarding excellence in creating safer communities

The Australian Safer Community Awards are sponsored by the Federal Attorney-General's Department in conjunction with States and Territories.

The Awards recognise and reward outstanding achievements and innovation in emergency management.

Applications are open to workgroups and individuals who have made a significant contribution to creating and promoting community safety in the context of emergency management including:

- risk assessment
- research
- education & training
- information and knowledge management
- prevention
- preparedness, and
- response and recovery.

You can also nominate other organisations or individuals for an award.

Entries must relate to:

- projects that commenced in 2008 or 2009, or
- existing projects with significant outcomes since January 2008, or
- existing projects with significant enhancements since January 2008.

Application forms can be downloaded from the EMA website at [http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/News\\_Awards\\_AustralianSaferCommunitiesAwards](http://www.ema.gov.au/www/emaweb/emaweb.nsf/Page/News_Awards_AustralianSaferCommunitiesAwards).

Awards are judged on two levels – State winners will receive an award and certificate at a special ceremony. State winners are then considered as finalists for the National Awards and the winners sponsored to attend a ceremony at Parliament House, Canberra. Winners of the State and Territory Awards will be announced and recognised first, and in turn are considered as finalists for the National Awards.

**Closing date for applications is 3 July 2009. Inquiries and nominations to Julie Frittum on 8204 9376 or [Frittum.Julie@safecom.sa.gov.au](mailto:Frittum.Julie@safecom.sa.gov.au).**



The Minister for Emergency Services, The Hon Michael Wright, with 2008 Award winners

State Award Winners - a joint collaboration between the Dept of Families and Communities and the City of Playford went on to receive a high commendation in the National Awards for the Virginia Safety in Emergencies project



# Seamless integration

During major incidents the community requires assistance and isn't concerned which agency provides that assistance as long as they get the help they need. Hence, one of the priorities of the SAFECOM Board is seamless integration – agencies working as one team. During the catastrophic events that unfolded over the border, SAFECOM agencies supported their Victoria counterparts defending life, property and the environment from the threat of bushfire and also in the recovery effort.

## Joining forces to help a neighbour



Part of the combined CFS and MFS deployment to the Victorian bushfires at the Churchill-Jeeralang complex. Photo by Adam Hurlie

Nothing brings neighbours closer together than adversity and the recent bushfires that threatened Victoria brought the true spirit of the 'Aussie battler' to the fore.

Just under 800 firefighters and support staff from the CFS and MFS provided much needed assistance to their Victorian counterparts as they struggled to contain a range of fires in the most ravaged parts of the state. Our personnel worked alongside their Victorian counterparts and strike teams from the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) and Forestry SA. In addition to 19 DEH vehicles that were deployed, the CFS also committed fire fighting appliances and a command vehicle to the bushfires.

CFS Chief Officer Euan Ferguson praised the courage and commitment of firefighters, paying tribute to their selfless efforts and professionalism - with some being deployed more than once.

"The CFS praises the firefighters who gave up their time to offer their services interstate and also those who stayed behind to ensure the safety of the South Australian community." Mr Ferguson said.

MFS Deputy Chief Officer, Mick Smith said he was proud of the many MFS and CFS firefighters who volunteered their time to assist their Victorian neighbours.

"It was great to welcome home our firefighters, all of whom were touched and moved by what they experienced," Mr Smith said. "Our thoughts are with the many people who lost families, loved ones, properties and livelihoods in this tragedy."

The SES also lent its support across the state, providing staging area managers, crew and lighting towers. A total of 18 SES personnel were deployed to Victoria, to assist with loss and damage assessment, traffic management points and clearing trees from roadways. Two senior SES officers also travelled to Victoria to assist in the recovery by providing specialist incident management support within the Victorian SES Integrated Emergency Coordination Centre (IECC).

SES Chief Officer Stuart Macleod said that the SES often plays a key role in supporting other emergency service organisations, and that there is a firm agreement in place between the SES in all states and territories to assist and support each other in times of need.

"The SES organisations throughout the country have a long history of helping each other. We are one big family and if South Australia was faced with such a disaster, I know our interstate colleagues would be right here with us, helping us protect and defend what is important to us". Mr Macleod said.

In addition, two SAFECOM staff also travelled to Victoria to assist with the logistics.



## Minister for Police and Emergency Services

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11 FEB 2009

The Honourable Michael Wright MP  
Minister for Police  
Minister for Emergency Services  
GPO Box 464  
ADELAIDE SA 5001



Our Ref: CD/09/34527



Dear Minister Wright

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

I am writing on behalf of the State of Victoria, firefighters and other emergency service workers to thank you for your support during the worst bushfires in Australia's history. Your offers of assistance and words of support are greatly appreciated by all Victorians.

The fires that broke out across the state were precipitated by the most severe weather conditions we have seen in our history.

The impact of these devastating fires has shocked us all. The human cost has been horrific, hundreds of houses and properties destroyed and whole communities virtually flattened. The extent of the loss and destruction, incomprehensible in many ways, is only now beginning to be realised and will not be fully known for some time to come.

Despite these tragic events the response effort to this crisis is still not over. Many fires are still active posing a threat to more townships. Firefighters confronting these ongoing fires are operating under great levels of stress and fatigue. The contribution of your emergency service resources will be of invaluable assistance to the Victorian community in responding to and recovering from these bushfires.

Yours sincerely

**Bob Cameron MP**  
Minister for Police & Emergency Services



# Being accountable

## Emergency Services Delivery Standards

Reviews undertaken have stated that the allocation of resources across the sector are based more on historical precedent and risk. Under legislation, the SAFECOM Board is charged with ensuring resources are allocated on the basis of risk and as such has endorsed the project plan for emergency services delivery standards.

Developing categories of common fire fighting and rescue scenarios is the first task of the Emergency Services Delivery Standards working party which met recently. The working party is providing input to the project with the overall project aim to “develop Emergency Services Delivery Standards with which to determine where best to place resources and prevention leading to a safer more resilient SA community”.

The first meeting included a presentation by the Chief Officers Euan Ferguson, Grant Lupton and Stuart Macleod and SAFECOM Chief Executive David Place about the importance of the project.

David Place commented “the sector operates through the SAFECOM Board and this project is about ensuring that the right resources are in the right place at the right time.”

Euan Ferguson stressed that “this is the single most important project across the sector.”

Grant Lupton advised that “with economic profiles changing, a systematic approach is needed for resource allocation.”

Stuart Macleod highlighted “the community and state deserve the highest possible quality of service and that this project needs to keep public good and public need as the most important priorities throughout.”

All Chief Officers agreed that the project was an important pathway for the sector and would shape the sector’s future as to how resources and prevention are allocated based on risk. Key stakeholders forming the working party are:

- Matt Maywald and Graeme Wynwood SES
- John Lawrence and Simon Kreuschmer SESVA
- Mick Ayre and Malim Watts CFS
- Ken Schutz and Roger Flavell CFSVA
- Glenn Benham and Chris Smith MFS, and
- Greg Northcott and Bill Jamieson UFU.

Further updates on progress will be reported through COMMeT and the Intranet. For more information contact the SAFECOM Strategic Services Division on 8463 6561.

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## Justice Innovation Program

The Justice Innovation Program:

- encourages innovation, creativity and enterprise that promotes the vision of South Australia being a safe, fair and just place to live, work visit and conduct business
- encourages cross-portfolio collaboration and learning
- provides an opportunity to create an environment that will solve problems, and
- enable efficiencies and improve service outcomes or quality.

To progress this program, a small project team has been established within the Justice portfolio. Sally Hardy is the SAFECOM representative.

The Justice Portfolio comprises a broad range of South Australian statutory officers, authorities and government departments with a justice and equity focus including the Attorney-General's Department, the Department for Correctional Services, SA Police, The Courts Administration Authority, Legal Services Commission, The Commissioner for Victims' Rights, the Police Complaints Authority, the State Electoral Commission, SAFECOM, SES, MFS and SES.

The project team will develop an overarching Innovation Program Framework and implementation plans to apply the Framework in each Justice agency taking into account local circumstances. The design phase is expected to take 1-2 months.



## Better be safe than sorry

The MFS, CFS and the State Government recently launched a state-wide campaign urging people to send their smoke alarms into retirement when they reach 10 years of age.

The campaign was launched by the Minister for Emergency Services, the Honourable Michael Wright, MP who said it was crucial for people to make the effort to check their alarms.

"We're asking all South Australians to take the time and do the right thing by themselves and their families, as making sure that your smoke alarm is in good working order could just save your life and home in a fire emergency." Minister Wright said.

Nearly 70 guests from the smoke alarm, electrical and building industries, from the emergency services and from a variety of other government departments attended the event that received a high level of media interest and publicity.

Guest speakers Karen and Brian Leibbrandt addressed the gathering, speaking of their recent ordeal when their home was severely damaged by a fire. They spoke of the importance of replacing old smoke alarms reiterating that just like other household appliances they have a limited life.

Regardless of whether smoke alarms are battery operated or connected to the mains power supply, they only last for 10 years, after which time they may malfunction and their efficiency may be compromised with accumulated dust, insects, airborne contaminants and corrosion of electrical circuitry.

MFS Chief Officer, Grant Lupton, said "Years ago in a house fire you would have well over 10 minutes to get out. Today that time has reduced to less than four minutes, so every extra warning per second is vital."

Today's housing designs and our increasing preference for synthetic furnishings and building materials have reduced the amount of time available to escape from a house fire.

"Old smoke alarms take longer to respond to smoke, or may not respond at all, reducing critical escape time from a house fire. It's so easy to lose track of the years and not realise that your smoke alarm is too old to be relying on." Mr Lupton said.

Research undertaken by the MFS indicates that only on third of the population knows that smoke alarms have a limited life.

CFS Chief Officer, Euan Ferguson said, "The fire services are asking people to check when they installed their smoke alarms. If they have passed their 10 year 'use by' date, replace them immediately."

The fire services are also using this campaign as an opportunity to promote the benefits of upgrading smoke alarm systems when old smoke alarms are replaced. They are encouraging home owners to install interconnected, photo-electric, hard-wired smoke alarms and to put them in all sleeping areas, in living areas and in passage-ways leading to sleeping areas.



The Minister for Emergency Services, The Hon Michael Wright, launches the Smoke Alarm Retirement campaign



Karen and Brian Leibbrandt tell of their ordeal and the importance of having a working smoke alarm

# Building partnerships

Collaborative partnerships and alliances enable us to improve, enhance and work across a range of agencies to deliver the services to ensure ongoing community safety and make our job easier. SAFECOM and its agencies continue to work with State and Local Government sharing resources and leading to safer and more resilient communities.

## Zone Emergency Management Committees



The Barossa ZEMC meets for the first time.

Pictured at the meeting, back row: Ian Baldwin (Barossa Council) Allan McDougall and Bob Stevenson (SAFECOM Emergency Management) Heather Barclay (Gawler Council) Neville Hyatt (Local Govt Association)  
Front Row: Gerry Habils (SES Regional Commander) Stephen Kerrigan (Chair) Chief Inspector Alex Zimmermann OIC Barossa Local Service Area

The establishment of Zone Emergency Management Committees (ZEMCs) is the latest initiative in achieving a more effective delivery for emergency management planning outcomes across the State. A key benefit of the new system is that each committee will be able to provide a local perspective to emergency planning.

Local Government is recognised as a crucial participant in these committees and the first ZEMC established in the Barossa Zone, is chaired by Stephen Kerrigan, CEO Gawler Council and Deputy Chair of the State Mitigation Advisory Group.

The Barossa Zone ZEMC is the first to be set up according to the recently revised SA Government Regions and the New Administrative Guidelines for ZEMCs in South Australia.

Membership of this Committee includes representatives from Gawler, Light, Mallala and Barossa Councils.

Recently, the Committee met to discuss its role, to confirm the composition of its membership, determine future strategic directions and to identify options for training.

The Barossa ZEMC will become a crucial benchmark for the establishment and operation of similar committees throughout South Australia, paving the way for closer collaboration between SAFECOM and Local Government agencies in making our communities safer.

SES Planning Officer Bob Stevenson said the new Zone Emergency Management Committees will differ from existing ones in that they will be based on a thorough risk assessment of each zone and will utilise treatment options involving prevention, preparedness, response and recovery strategies.

"While previous ZEMCs have traditionally concentrated on improving response strategies to emergency incidents, the new system takes into account community needs and integrates the work of both government and non-government agencies." Bob said.

## Bushfire Task Force

The devastating bushfires that occurred in Victoria will be remembered as one of the darkest days in Australia's history.

We learnt lessons from the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983, we learnt lessons after the Wangary fires in 2005 and there is no doubt that we will learn lessons from these horrific bushfires too.

South Australia is not impervious to a bushfire of the magnitude and the devastation that occurred in Victoria. Climate change and drought are altering the nature, ferocity and duration of bushfires.

The State Government and SAFECOM are committed to ensuring that South Australia has the most effective bushfire management practices in place and as a direct result of recent events, the South Australian Government has formed a **Bushfire Taskforce**.

The Bushfire Taskforce consists of senior government officers with the aim of developing a new level of bushfire preparedness, to analyse key issues arising out of the Victorian bushfires and to look into immediate, medium term and longer term actions required to improve bushfire management practices and strategies in South Australia.

The task force will be headed by CFS Chief Officer, Euan Ferguson and comprises of:

- Allan Holmes, Chief Executive, Department of Environment and Heritage
- David Place, Chief Executive, SAFECOM
- Grant Lupton, Chief Officer, MFS
- Tanya Smith, Deputy Chief Executive, Cabinet Office
- Ronnie Faggotter, Director, State Recovery Office,
- Bronwyn Killmier, Assistant Commissioner, South Australian Police
- John Hanlon, Deputy Chief Executive, Department of Planning and Local Government, and
- Brett Rowse, Deputy Under Treasurer.

*"While many of our bushfire policies have been developed over the years and have served us well, it is prudent to re-examine our strategies and policies. We can not afford to wait for the outcome of the Victorian Royal Commission; if there is evidence that immediate changes need to be made to our bushfire policy, then we will take the necessary action".* Chief Officer Ferguson said.

The task force will consult other agencies such as PIRSA, DECS, SA Water, Native Vegetation Council, Engineering Functional and Services and the Bureau of Meteorology and report to State Cabinet.

Fire behaviour and weather conditions across South Australia and Victoria on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February have set a new frame of reference for fire management authorities.

Usually the accepted fire danger index is in a range of 1 to 100 (with 50 to 100 being rated as "Extreme"). On the 7<sup>th</sup> of February across South Australia and Victoria, many stations had forecasts of 120 to 300, in other words "off the scale". This is uncharted territory.

The task force will focus on:

- Defining "Upper Extreme" bushfire risk (providing advice to those affected and what the community needs to do about it)
- Identifying the new vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure which could be at risk of bushfire in "Upper Extreme" conditions
- Engaging with Local Government agencies to coordinate timely messages
- Considering Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission findings as they emerge before the next bushfire season
- Considering any evidence and lessons from the Victorian Experience / Royal Commission as they emerge
- Analysing South Australia's readiness for further "Upper Extreme" bushfire risk events
- Revising the State's Bushfire Hazard Plan to take into account this new risk, and
- Developing standards for construction of bushfire bunkers.