



Welcome to the
April/May
edition of the
CFS FireFront
e-newsletter

The monthly
publication is aimed to
bring you news and
organisational
developments, notices
for meetings and
conferences, senior
staff appointments,
strategically relevant
articles and industry
developments

In FireFront this month

- [Our Local Cross of Valour Winner – Mr Darrell Tree, Mount Damper Brigade Captain](#)
- [CFS volunteer highly commended for EMA Photographic Competition](#)
- [National Volunteer Week](#)
- [Project Phoenix Fact Sheet](#)
- [Fire Danger Season Extended](#)
- [International Firefighters Day, 4 May 2005](#)
- [Heads of Agreement for Cross Border Fire Services](#)
- [The Smorgon Steel Great Scrap Round-Up](#)
- [CFS Shop Survey Winner](#)
- [Volunteer Magazine Submissions](#)

FireFront e-news

Monthly, e-mail newsletter

Submissions to be submitted no later than 20th of each month to the public affairs team:

publicaffairs@cfs.org.au

08 8463 4206

Our Local Cross of Valour Winner – Mr Darrell Tree, Mount Damper Brigade Captain

Every one loves an inspirational story, even more so when it's a story about one of our own. Did you know that Australia's first ever winner of the Cross of Valour – the highest civilian award for bravery – was the Captain of Mount Damper CFS Brigade, Mr Darrell Tree. Here is an extract from the citation:

"The first ever Cross of Valour (CV) was issued was to Mr Darrell Tree of Mount Damper South Australia. On 14 August 1988 Mr Tree, accompanied by his nephew, went to assist a crane-operator in removing wooden telephone poles along the edge of the road running beside his property near Talia. The driver had his three-year-old son on the crane with him."

"When Mr Tree went to put a chain around a pole he saw sparks jumping from the crane's tyres and that the jib of the crane was in contact with the powerline. The driver jumped clear and went to remove his son, who at that time was in a boxed section and not coming into contact with electricity. Sparks were arcing beneath the crane to the ground and twice Mr Tree stopped the driver from going to the truck. He warned him not to touch the boy, as he knew that the crane was alive with electricity and that he would be electrocuted."

"He went to get a rope and turning round he realised that the driver must have attempted to rescue his son, as he had electricity arcing through his body and was being electrocuted. Mr Tree pushed him clear and fell to the ground unconscious having himself been electrocuted."

"Regaining consciousness Mr Tree saw the boy standing between the tyre and the mudguard with electricity entering his head near his right ear, passing through his body and also entering near his left elbow. Knowing that the boy was about to be fatally electrocuted he pulled him clear and again lost consciousness having been electrocuted once more."

"When he regained consciousness on the second occasion he found that neither the driver nor his son was breathing. On his own, as he had sent his nephew for the ambulance, he gave mouth to mouth resuscitation to them both. The boy responded, but in spite of Mr Tree's further attempts to give the father cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, he died before medical assistance arrived."

"Mr Tree comforted the boy and drove him to meet the ambulance. He then followed the ambulance to the hospital at Elliston and was later flown to Adelaide for treatment. In saving the boy's life Mr Tree had 19 stitches inserted in his left arm, 37 stitches to his back, 5 stitches on his right foot and 5 stitches on his left foot. One toe on his left foot was amputated and he received burns to his back. By his actions Mr Tree displayed most conspicuous courage."

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

CFS volunteer highly commended for EMA Photographic Competition

A CFS volunteer has received a Highly Commended Award for the 2005 Emergency Management 'Volunteers In Action' Photographic Competition. Ashley Hosking from the Basket Range CFS Brigade won the commendation for his photo of a couple of CFS volunteer firefighters demonstrating equipment to primary school children as part of the Brigade's community relations program.

The photographic competition was open to professional photographers and emergency management volunteers from across Australia and was held by the peak Australian Government emergency body, Emergency Management Australia (EMA).

Attorney-General Philip Ruddock presented the winners and those highly commended with their prizes and certificates during a reception at the 2005 Emergency Management Volunteers Summit in Canberra on 5 April 2005. A further eight entries received Commended certificates from the Director General of EMA, Mr David Templeman.

The 'Volunteers In Action' Photographic Competition is held every two years. Ashley Hosking is also a member of the CFS Promotions Unit and is responsible for taking many photos of volunteers seen in CFS publications and on their website (www.fire-brigade.asn.au). Congratulations Ashley!

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

National Volunteer Week (Monday 9 – 13 May)

National Volunteer Week has provides a great opportunity for us to acknowledge and celebrate the volunteers of the SA Country Fire Service for their dedication to the community.

With CFS volunteers having donated more than 1 million hours to protecting life, property and the environment throughout South Australia this week is dedicated to saying "thank you for a job well done."

The past 12 months have been significant in the history of the CFS and will help to shape the organisation as it moves into the future. We have experienced a number of significant incidents, suffered some tragic times and welcomed some more positive ones.

It is important to recognise the role that CFS volunteers play in the organisation – without them there would be no fire and emergency service in more than 434 communities in South Australia.

A thank you must also extend to the families, friends and employers of volunteers. They also make a big sacrifice, if it was not for the care and understanding of these support groups the CFS would be a different organisation to what it is today.

Countless hours have been devoted to personal development, training, recruitment, fundraising and promotional events, not to mention the paperwork trail. This time and effort put in by so many community members helps to make the CFS what it is today.

We recognise that CFS volunteers often place their own lives on the line to protect others, and that takes immense courage and dedication.

A DVD has been produced as a way of thanking all CFS volunteers and affirming the efforts of those who contributed to the firefighting effort on 11 January.

Keep an eye out for the DVD as part of a special pack to be delivered to each Brigade during National Volunteer Week 9–15 May 2005.

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

Project Phoenix Fact Sheet

As part of an internal review of the events of 11 January, CFS Chief Officer Euan Ferguson has commissioned a formal project, titled Project Phoenix, to develop and implement lessons learned from the devastating events of that day. A fact sheet has been created and is available to be downloaded from www.cfs.org.au under 'About Us' / 'Publications'.

BACKGROUND

The bushfires of 10 and 11 January 2005, in particular, the fire on the Lower Eyre Peninsula in South Australia was one of the largest and most significant incidents experienced in the State. Nine lives were lost, more than 100 homes and properties destroyed and around 47 000 stock were killed. In only a few hours, the bushfire raced across 77 000 hectares of land from the west side of the Peninsula to the east and up to the north-east. Many CFS resources were dedicated to battling and containing this blaze including 1 000 CFS volunteers, staff, farming units and hundreds of vehicles.

As CFS is a learning organisation, a major part of the continuous improvement process is debriefing after a major incident, which has occurred within CFS Brigades, Groups, Regions and staff involved in that incident, along with other agencies that were involved.

COMMISSIONING OF PROJECT PHOENIX

In the weeks following the bushfires, the SA Country Fire Service Chief Officer, Euan Ferguson, commissioned a formal project to develop and implement lessons learned from the devastating events.

INTENT OF PROJECT PHOENIX

From the events of 10 and 11 January 2005, CFS has the opportunity to improve its systems of work and enhance community and firefighter safety. CFS will achieve this through the commitment of its people addressing the current systems of work and developing a cooperative culture. From this CFS believes it can meet the prospective outcomes of the Coronial Inquiry and better meet community and stakeholder expectations.

PROCESS OF PROJECT PHOENIX

The process will be one of:

- "No blame"
- Continuous improvement
- Consulting and engaging key people and organisations in what we do

The process will include:

- Gathering issues of volunteers, staff, community and interest groups involved in the incident and reviewing relevant fire reports
- Identifying stakeholders who should have an ongoing involvement during the life of Project Phoenix
- Identifying quick actions
- Sifting and sorting issues into group's then priorities established. The issues will be reviewed to ensure that the cause is properly identified
- Developing an action plan including resources required for implementation
- Implementing a review of existing processes

To assist in capturing issues and facilitating the process an external team of consultants will provide independent support to assist in the learning process and outcomes of the project.

OUTCOME OF PROJECT PHOENIX

The outcomes of the project will provide guidance for the future of CFS.

At the end of this process, CFS will have:

- Identified all the issues from the bushfires
- Reviewed the issues and consulted with stakeholders who may be interested in the issues
- Worked with those who are interested in the solution to an issue to identify what CFS needs to do to address the issue, and
- Either fixed the issues, or have developed a program (and allocated resources) to address the process identified

STEERING GROUP

The Steering Group for Project Phoenix will include (but not be restricted to):

- Deputy Chief Officer (Brenton Keen)
- Manager Strategic Services (Andrew Lawson)
- Manager Operations Planning (Rob Sandford)
- Region 1 Regional Commander (Mark Thomason)
- Manager Prevention Services. (Leigh Miller)
- Executive Officer SAVFBA. (Wendy Shirley)

TIMING

The Steering Group will report regularly to the Chief Officer with an action plan to be submitted to the CFS Board by 13 May 2005.

For further information, please contact SA Country Fire Service (08) 8463 4200.

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

Fire Danger Season Extended

The Fire Danger Season has been extended for several parts of the State, with the most recent being the **Mount Lofty Ranges** and **Kangaroo Island** fire ban districts.

The Fire Danger Season for these two areas was due to end on 30 April, however, extreme dryness of soil and vegetation and a lack of rain in these districts, will see the season officially end at midnight Sunday, 15 May 2005.

In all other areas of the State the Fire Danger Season finished at midnight Saturday, 30 April 2005.

Previous to this the Fire Danger Season in the West Coast, Lower Eyre Peninsula, Eastern Eyre Peninsula, Flinders, Riverland, Murraylands, and Upper South East fire ban districts was extended by two weeks from 15 April.

CFS Manager of Operations Planning, Rob Sandford, said the soil and vegetation is the driest the State has experienced in more than three years.

"That combined with warmer weather and a lack of rain has only increased the risk of fire," Rob said.

"The extension of the Fire Danger Season in the Mount Lofty Ranges and Kangaroo Island districts is a necessary precaution. We are simply not confident of ceasing the fire restrictions when we know the threat of bushfire is still very real.

"This is a popular time of the year for people to conduct burn off operations. We cannot stress enough the importance for people to be responsible for their actions and ensure they comply with fire restrictions," he said.

All burn off operations require a permit during the Fire Danger Season. **Burning off is not allowed on days of Total Fire Ban.**

"Given the current warmer weather and the dryness of soil and vegetation, there are high chances that small fires can escape control and quickly develop into large-scale bushfires that place the entire community at risk," Rob said

"CFS fire cause data indicates that 789 fires in SA in the past five years have been attributed to burn offs getting out of control.

"People burning off have a duty of care to ensure that fires do not get out of control and threaten lives and property. Severe penalties will apply if fire restrictions are not adhered to," he said.

For more information on fire bans and regulations contact the CFS Fire Bans Information Hotline on 1300 362 361 or log onto www.cfs.org.au to download a guide to fire regulations.

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

International Firefighters Day, 4 May 2005

SA Country Fire Service volunteers will be among millions of firefighters across the world who will be honoured on **Wednesday 4 May**, to mark the seventh annual **International Firefighters' Day**.

The public is being encouraged to support the day, and recognise the efforts of the firefighters both in South Australia and across the globe who have died in the line of duty.

To date, 13 South Australian volunteer firefighters have died in action while serving in the CFS between 1979 and 2005.

CFS Chief Officer Euan Ferguson said that this year carries the added sadness of the loss of two firefighters who died during the devastating bushfire on the Eyre Peninsula on the 11th of January.

"That day was an extraordinary day for our crews. More than 2 500 CFS volunteers responded to 57 incidents across the State including major fires at Wangary, Mount Osmond, Rendelsham and Mount Bold," Euan said.

"An entire generation change has occurred since the Ash Wednesday bushfires of 1983. On the 11th of January, it was the first time many CFS members experienced such devastation caused by bushfire.

"The events of that day attracted international media attention. Many reporters from across the globe found it difficult to comprehend that CFS firefighters are actually volunteers," he said.

"We have more than 16 500 volunteers who continually place the needs of others ahead of their own. As most people are leaving a fire, they're going in.

The day is also known as St Florian's Day. St Florian, the patron saint of all firefighters, was the first known commander of a firefighting squad in the Roman Empire.

He lost his life for fulfilling the same mission firefighters all over the world share today.

International Firefighters' Day is already recognised by numerous countries across the globe including Australia, the UK, USA, Lithuania, Puerto Rico, Germany and New Zealand.

For more information about International Firefighters' Day log onto www.iffd.net

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

Heads of Agreement for Cross Border Fire Services

CFS Chief Officer Euan Ferguson and the CEO of Victoria's Country Fire Authority, Neil Bibby have established a framework of mutual co-operation between cross border emergency services.

The 'Heads of Agreement' addresses issues such as cross-border strategy development, consultation, incident management utilising the Incident Control System (ICS) and consistency between state and local arrangements. It represents a preliminary agreement between the agencies. It is not intended to be legally binding but, notwithstanding, each agency will comply with its intent. It is intended that the Agencies will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding, which will deal with the issues contained in this Heads of Agreement in more detail. This document will not detract from any existing Local/Regional Mutual Aid Arrangements (MAA) enabling the exchange of Local/Regional resources for lower level incidents.

The mutual support and operating principles have been formulated as follows:

Statement Of Intent

It is the intent of CFA and CFS that we cooperate and support each other in our planning and operations.

Our operations will respect each other's systems of work, culture and values. Operations will maximise the health and safety of firefighters and emergency workers. The primary objectives will be the protection of life, property and the environment. It is intended that operations will be effective, efficient and carried out in a seamless manner and in the pursuit of excellence.

Principles

1. The health safety and welfare of firefighters and emergency services workers will be paramount.
2. The agencies agree that they will present and promote a united, professional and responsible image to the community at all times which reflects the principles of seamless service delivery for emergency activities to the community across State boundaries.
3. Operations will be conducted in accordance with the Australian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS), respective agencies Operations Management Guidelines and associated documentation.
4. Each agency will ensure they consult with the other agency in cases where it can reasonably foresee that plans or strategies it is developing during emergency management and emergency operations will impact or require work in the other State.
5. Each agency will pay its own costs when operating within their own jurisdiction. Costs directly associated with an inter-state deployment will be captured by the supporting agency in the first instance. Additional or above "normal" agency costs incurred when operating within the other agency jurisdiction may be claimed from the

other agency. Where accounts are cross-charged (*ie: from one agency to another*) the invoice shall be co-signed by an authorised representative from each agency.

6. Equipment, plant hire and aircraft costs for a particular incident are to be approved by the host agency Incident Controller prior to engagement.
7. It is the intention of both agencies to fulfil their own responsibility to comply with occupational health and safety requirements during any joint training or joint operational activity.
8. Normal agency processes and policies (ie. through the agency's own chain of command) will be followed for procurement of administration and logistics.
9. Both agencies will establish and maintain a series of Protocols / Planning Documents at a State and Regional level that more fully cover the operating procedures required to ensure an effective, efficient and flexible response in support of each other.

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

The Smorgon Steel Great Scrap Round-Up

Clean up! Smorgon Steel will collect almost any scrap metal from old machinery, cars, trucks, implements, corrugated iron, wire, pipes, tanks and posts.

Cash in! Smorgon Steel will pay you a fair value for it the form of Smorgon Steel Bucks TM that can be used to buy any new Smorgon Steel and Cyclone products. Or, you can choose to donate the funds to your local Country Fire Service Brigade or you can take the money and run!

Help out! Plus, Smorgon Steel will give an additional \$15 per tonne collected to your nominated CFS Brigade.

Become a local hero and get behind this terrific initiative designed to help you and your local community where it's really needed...locally. Phone 1300 669 102 or log onto www.scrap.org.au

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

CFS Shop Survey – Winter Prize Pack Winner

Thank you to all who have returned the survey on the CFS Shop found in the latest edition of Volunteer Magazine.

A large number of survey forms have been sent into us - it's great to receive your feedback and comments. If you haven't yet returned your survey, please send it in!

The winner of our Winter Prize Pack, which includes a CFS polar fleece jumper, beanie and a coffee mug, is Lawrie Collins from Tumby Bay.

Lawrie has been contacted and his prize pack will be forwarded to him over the next week.

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

Volunteer Magazine Submissions

If you would like to contribute to the next CFS Volunteer magazine send your photos and stories to:

The Editor, Volunteer Magazine
GPO Box 2468
Adelaide SA 5001
Or email: publicaffairs@cfs.org.au

Submissions for the July Magazine are required no later than 20 May 2005. Don't forget to include your name, address or brigade and a contact phone number.

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

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