



AUSTRALASIAN ASSEMBLY OF VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATED

MINUTES

OF THE 26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE,
HELD AT THE CHIFLEY, ADELAIDE SA ON FRIDAY 29TH AND
SATURDAY 30TH AUGUST 2008.

On Friday the 29th of August 2008 at 1715 hours, President Bruce Conboy opened the meeting and welcomed all delegates and guests, with a particular welcome to Euan Ferguson SA CFS Chief Officer.

1. ROLL CALL & APOLOGIES

The Secretary made a roll call indicating the following attendees -

NSW Rural Fire Service Association

Delegates – Andy Jaffray AFSM and Nick Turner
Observers – Kirsten Thomas and Ken Harris CEO

Country Fire Service Volunteer Association of SA

Delegates – Wayne Thorley and Ken Schutz AFSM
Observers – Rex Hall AFSM, Lyssa Liebelt, Wendy Shirley, Glen Willson
Roger Flavell and Trevor Rainey

Tasmanian Retained Volunteer Firefighters Association

Delegates - Bruce Corbett AFSM and Mathew Philpott
Observer – Don Jones AFSM

United Fire Brigades Association of New Zealand

Delegate - Richard Davidson

Victorian Urban Fire Brigades Association Inc

Delegates – Hans Van Hamond AFSM and Rob Waterson AFSM

Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association

Delegates - Bruce Conboy and Robert Horner AFSM

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria

**Delegates – Mick Taylor AFSM and Quentin Turner AFSM
Observer – Andrew Ford CEO**

WA Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services Association Inc

Delegates - Francis Burgoyne and Paul Southam

Association of Volunteer Fire Brigades of WA Inc

**Delegates – Terry Hunter AFSM and Chris Sousa
Observer – Samuel Dinnison**

NT Bushfire Volunteers Association Inc

Delegates – Dianne Tynan and Steven Solomon

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from –

Dick Irwin, Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland.
Paul du Boulay WA Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services Association.
Gary Lyttle AFSM Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria.
Peter Downes, Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association.
Paul and Kim Maddern, Association of Volunteer Fire Brigades of WA Inc.
Pat Barling and Andrea Bolitho, ACT Volunteer Brigade's Association.

3. ONE MINUTES SILENCE

President Bruce Conboy called for one minutes silence in remembrance of those firefighters who have died in the line of duty during the last year.

4. FIREFIGHTERS PRAYER

Vice- President Terry Hunter read the Firefighters Prayer

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

President Bruce presented his annual report on the activities of the Assembly during the last 12 months, a copy of his report circulated with the agenda papers.

6. DVD - CFS.

Representatives of the CFS showed their new DVD promotion entitled "24/7/365"

7. ADJOURNMENT OF ANNUAL MEETING.

At this stage the time being 1800 hours, the AGM was adjourned and members gathered for the Cocktail Party and Official Opening of the Conference.

8. WELCOME AND OFFICIAL OPENING

Mr Euan Ferguson the Chief Officer of the SA CFS was introduced to delegates and guests and welcomed everybody to Adelaide and officially opened the 26th Annual Conference.

9. MEETING RECONVENED

The meeting reconvened at 0830 hours on Saturday 30th August 2008 with delegates and observers as listed for the opening session on the Friday night.

10. EXTRA AGENDA ITEMS

The President called for any extra agenda items from delegates and the following were submitted –

Finances – discussion on future finances and membership fees

Logo – ideas for new logo

Tax Office visit – report from Board

11. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE 25th AGM HELD AT HOBART TASMANIA – SEPTEMBER 2007

Moved Quentin Turner, Seconded Rob Waterson:

"That the Minutes of the 25th Annual General Meeting held at Hobart, Tasmania in September 2007, a copy of which having been circulated to members prior to the meeting be confirmed as a true record"

CARRIED

12. MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THOSE MINUTES

Nil

13. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – MELBOURNE – MARCH 2008

Copy circulated with the agenda papers

14. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING – MELBOURNE – JUNE 2008

Copy circulated with the agenda papers

15. MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THOSE MINUTES

Andy Jaffray NSWRFSA voiced his support to the stance taken by the Board in relation to Incident Management Teams following the Eyre Peninsula Enquiry.

16. WILDFIRE ROSE ACCOUNT

Consideration was given to the recommendation from the Board in relation to this account which read as follows –

“That it be recommended to the Annual General Meeting that the Wildfire Rose Account be closed, the money be amalgamated with the Panadol money in an investment account and the monies be used for the costs of operating the Assembly for the benefit of its members”.

Moved Andy Jaffray, Seconded Mathew Philpott:

“That the recommendation of the Board be adopted and this amalgamation of funds take place when the present term deposit becomes due in January 2009”

CARRIED

17. CORRESPONDENCE

Copies of outwards correspondence was circulated to members prior to the meeting.

Moved Hans van Hamond, Seconded Richard Davidson:

“That the outwards correspondence be confirmed”

CARRIED

18. ASSOCIATION PRESENTATIONS

SA COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION

Wendy Shirley presented the report.

Spoke on recruitment and retention of Volunteers – community service ads – focus on equity and diversity. Combined the project with production of the DVD presented the previous evening, and using the same people.

CFS Charter signed in June 2008 and a copy sent to all Brigades.

Applied for grant through EMA – were successful in the grant to make DVD.

Set up Chief Officer's Advisory Council
VOL FIRE BRIGADES VICTORIA

Mick Taylor spoke on the coming together of the two Associations in Victoria.

Both Associations realised they were not getting the attention they wanted from the Government or the CFA running as two organisations. From the 4th October 2008 there will be one Association in Victoria. He then explained the set-up that will be in place after the combining advising that it has taken seven years to get to this stage.

Quentin Turner talked about the achievements already in place because of the combining and some of the awesome responsibilities that have evolved. Boards are already meeting every two months. Want to part of the solution not part of the problem. Found some problems with separate brigades having ABN numbers – had meeting with Tax Office and CFA to sort out.

Rob Waterson – Urban Association – worked hard to make sure all volunteers get an equal voice on issues – Welfare Fund for all Volunteers, \$2m was made available by the Government in June 2008. New Board already put a structure together to manage the welfare fund, topped up with Brigade Fees.

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE ASSOCIATION

Kirsten Thomas and Ken Harris made the presentation.

Advice on the RFSA Structure and the Committees the Association is represented on. Advisory Committees set up which have direct impact on the strategic and policy direction of the service. Introduced fundraising activities and provides an Annual President's scholarship to enhance professional and personal development. Sponsor championships, conferences and forums.

Introduced RFSA Grants Scheme and has already made grants in excess of \$2,750,000 to brigades and support groups throughout NSW. At the June AGM developed some key initiatives including a new Constitution, divisional boundaries and member representation.

Supported cadets to attend Australian National Fire Cadet Championships.

At the end of their presentation the President thanked the RFSA for their invitation each year for the Board to attend their Annual Conference in Mudgee.

WA VOL FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

Paul Southam gave a brief report advising of the Strategic Planning week-end held recently and discussions on membership. Competitions continuing and have now interstate challenge.

ACT VOLUNTEER BRIGADE'S ASSOCIATION

Representatives of the ACT could not attend the AGM but did forward to the Secretary a copy of a presentation and the main points are included below for member's information.

Volunteer Charter developed by the Association in conjunction with the ACT Government – document due to be signed and implemented on 9th September 2008.

A Volunteer member was chosen to represent the ACTRFS as it supported a local charity organisation, “Picking Up the Peaces” to walk the Kokoda Track as a means of supporting them in their quest to raise awareness for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The walk was held in July with great success and it is hoped that there will be many more of the same. The ACT Minister for Emergency Services has instigated regular meetings with representatives the RFS, SES and CFU. This has proven to be both informative and productive and it hoped that these meetings will be continued after the upcoming ACT election.

The SES Units have been members of the association since 1997 but with more SES Units being relocated to their own premises, and with the separation of the RFS and SES management, the SES has decided to form its own Association. To that end, a working Group has been formed and is in the process of developing a constitution for this Association. It is anticipated that this process will be finalised by the end of October at which stage the VBA will revert to RFS membership only.

19. ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Moved Hans van Hamond, Seconded Steven Solomon:

“That the Annual Balance Sheet for the Assembly Accounts for 2007/2008; duly audited and circulated in the agenda papers, be adopted”

CARRIED

Moved Robert Horner, Seconded Andy Jaffray:

“That the Board be given the authority to deal with the finances as is required when the term deposit becomes due in January 2009 and then determines what funds are to be invested and what monies are needed for operating expenses”

CARRIED

20. FIXING MEMBERSHIP FEES 2008/2009

The meeting was reminded that the membership fees had been fixed for a two year period at the last AGM and a copy of that resolution is shown below -

“That the membership fees for the Assembly be \$700 per year per membership, and this fee be the same for the next two years; it being noted that under the Constitution the Board have the power to vary this fee under hardship circumstances”

Discussions took place on membership fees for the future, particularly taking into consideration our financial requirements, the fact that one Tasmanian organisation is no longer a member and the three Victorian associations are now about to become one.

Moved Terry Hunter, Seconded Richard Davidson:

“That the matter of membership fees of the Assembly be dealt with by the Board at its next meeting and that they put together a proposal for affiliation fees 2009-2011, taking into

consideration the viewpoints put at the meeting, and then circulate a recommendation to the member associations for endorsement”

CARRIED

21. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

Moved Robert Horner, Seconded Andy Jaffray:

“That authority be given to the Board to appoint an Auditor”

CARRIED

22. ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION

The meeting was advised that a Special Resolution was required to adopt the Constitution as agreed to in Hobart to comply with the requirements of our Incorporation with the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection in Western Australia.

Moved Bruce Corbett, Seconded Quentin Turner:

“That by Special Resolution this Conference adopt the Constitution, as amended, and as circulated to the members as part of the agenda papers, and as per notice given to members two months prior to the meeting; and further that a copy as adopted be sent to the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection in Western Australia”

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

23. VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATION ON STANDARDS COMMITTEE – SF049

President Bruce presented a report in relation to Mr Ralph Walker representing the Assembly on the above Committee and a copy of reports received from Mr Walker was circulated to members at the meeting.

The representatives of the NSWRFSA advised that they wished to clarify the situation as far as the assembly is concerned of representation on the Standards Committee and it was acknowledged that Mr Walker was not an appointed representative of the Assembly. The RFSA to decide how they proceed within their own organisation with regard to that representation.

Moved Rob Horner, Seconded Rob Waterson:

“That the advice from RFSA be acknowledged and the Assembly seek information from AFAC to see if there are any Committees it should be represented on; and further that a letter be written to the RFSA acknowledging their contribution to date”

CARRIED

24. GUEST SPEAKER – ANDREW FORD

At this stage Andrew Ford the Chief Executive Officer; Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria addressed the meeting on Service Delivery Models for Volunteer Agencies.

Presented the model being discussed in Victoria, pointing out that it may not necessarily work in other areas.

25. ASSOCIATION PRESENTATIONS (CONT.)

TAS RETAINED VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

Mathew Philpott spoke on events within the Association, particularly -

The Emergency response review

Benevolent Funds – Bereavement Fund and Family Support Fund

Working Parties the Association are represented on

Wildfire Preparedness

UNITED FIRE BRIGADES ASSOCIATION OF NZ

Presented by Richard Davidson.

About to have legislation review

Rural and Urban fire services were to be combined into one but this has been put onto backburner because of forthcoming election.

Association going through re-learning process.

ASSOC OF VOLUNTEER BUSH FIRE BRIGADES OF WA INC

Terry Hunter made the presentation.

Advised of the Structure covering Volunteers – Bushfire Brigades come under the control of Local Government. How the finances work within the organisation now there is an Emergency Service Levy.

Advised of Structure of their organisation and the support required from their Executive Officer and Executive support Officer.

Looking at more funding and membership problems.

NT BUSHFIRE VOLUNTEERS ASSOC.

Presented by delegates Dianne Tynan and Steven Solomon – back after 4 years

History of the association and main objects and purposes.

21 Brigades across the NT covering 1.4 million sq kms

Do a lot of early season reduction burning.

Showed different fire appliances.

26. STRATEGIC PLAN

Discussion took place on the Strategic Plan a copy of which having been circulated to the members with the agenda papers.

The President advised that the Board had not had time to consider this and therefore it will be on the Agenda for the next Board Meeting.

27. FUEL REIMBURSEMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

President Bruce advised that he has through his local member for Federal Parliament, requested details from Minister Jenny Macklin, on the inclusion of fuel reimbursements in an expanded Volunteer Grants program. It would be necessary for members to keep a log of travel for training, meetings etc.

The program applies to all volunteers and when funding is available in 2008/2009 it will be widely advertised both in the press and on the government website www.fahcsia.gov

NB. (For those interested I believe that this may now have been advertised and details on the web-site) – Secretary.

28. GUEST SPEAKERS

At this stage Naomi Brown CEO AFAC & Euan Ferguson SA CFS Chief Officer addressed the meeting.

At the beginning of the presentation Ken Schutz introduced Geoff Buryn a SA CFS Volunteer who was severely injured in a fire truck roll-over some time ago and was now confined to a wheelchair. The CFSVA, CFS and the CFS Foundation, launched a donation drive to raise money to assist Geoff and Euan Ferguson then presented a cheque for \$20,000 to him.

Naomi talked to the Assembly in relation to what AFAC is about and the goals of that organisation. Now have new logo and is called the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council but still known as AFAC.

Drivers for the Industry's Future –

- Climate Change
- Technological Advancements
- Demographic Change
- Focus on firefighter safety

AFAC Knowledge Web – if you log in as a member access is available to latest research and

case studies that not yet available to the public. To become a member, use the web-site and fill in an on-line form. Use agency Email address to be recognised. If using private email address it is checked through your agency first. Keen to get a lot of people in there so if you register before end of September then you go in a prize draw for and IPod.

Major links – work coming out of Bushfire CRC research – much of the research goes across all the emergency services. Another area that is getting research is firefighter health and safety concentrating on stress, fatigue and dehydration.

AFAC is about to start with Monash University the scoping of a longitudinal study of cancer in Volunteer firefighters and will be seeking representation on that from the Assembly.

Euan spoke on Volunteerism and the perception of what AFAC think about us.

Problem – existing fire management practices at all levels are not sustainable in today's changing world.

AFAC and CRC looking at this for the future.

Problem with member's age and the number of females. Is the Volunteer model we currently have sustainable?

Missing an opportunity here – work that our people do is the pinnacle of citizenship and we should be promoting this. Thinks we need to have our eyes wide open on how we deliver our services in the future. Cut a lot of work out that volunteers are asked to undertake so they can do what they volunteered to do.

Euan put to the meeting that we operate in a political environment, and our Volunteer Associations need to engage with our Premiers and all members of Parliament.

Member's comments –

We are involved in AFAC Mission and hope we can continue to work together and Naomi to meet with our Board in the future.

Suggested to AFAC that we offer a big opportunity to resource at zero cost – agencies in AFAC need to see our Associations as being a valuable resource.

29. DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

At this stage Brenton Raglass previously Media Liaison Officer from the CFS and now Weather presenter on Channel 9 in Adelaide addressed the meeting on media relations.

Spoke on his involvement with the CFS – volunteer and later spokesperson for the CFS to

the media and the large fires in SA that he has been involved with in that position.

Spoke about communications and how it has changed dramatically in recent years. Suggested web based media followed by radio is the best way to get messages out to the public in the case of an emergency – quick message out as incident unfolds.

Media is a powerful tool we need – but it is a tool that without control can get out of control like a bushfire.

30. NEXT CONFERENCE

The Secretary advised that the next AFAC conference would be held on the Gold Coast Queensland starting on 22nd September 2009. He also advised that Dick Irwin, Rural Fire Brigades Association of Queensland has confirmed that his Association would organise the Assembly Conference and it was suggested that on that basis the 2009 Conference be held from Friday 18th to Sunday 20th September 2009.

Moved Terry Hunter, Seconded Dianne Tynan

“That the 2009 Conference be held in Queensland Starting on Friday 18th September 2009 until 20th September 2009 and we accept the offer of the Queensland Association to organise the event”

CARRIED

31. TAX ISSUE

President Bruce advised that the Board had met with the Taxation Office and he needed to liaise with CEO's and if necessary get outside assistance. He advised that the tax office is calling for submissions to look at future tax systems. Information provided by the Taxation Office was circulated to members at the meeting.

32. NEW LOGO

The President advised that the Board had decided to seek ideas for a new Assembly logo and would be asking for some participation from members and some criteria for what we are looking for would be circulated after the next board meeting.

33. RFSA MAGAZINE

Andy Jaffray from the RFSA asked that a list of member's addresses be forwarded to them so that a copy of the RFSA magazine can be sent to all members. This to be done by Secretary through the members contact list

Andy also advised that this will be his last conference and President Bruce thanked him for his input over many years.

34. MUDGEE CONFERENCE

Vice-President Terry Hunter presented a verbal report on his attendance at the RFSA Annual Conference at Mudgee in June. Terry complimented the RFSA on the conference saying it was one of the best conferences he had attended. He thanked the RFSA for the opportunity given to the Board members to attend this conference each year.

35. AFAC CONFERENCE SESSION

Andrew Ford advised that he was chairing a session on Tuesday at the AFAC Conference which also included a panel which has volunteers on it to discuss the CRC research and if Volunteers are getting enough out of it?

Recommended it to any members attending AFAC.

36. WEB SITE

Richard Davidson reported that website is up and running – new AFAC logo and updated version of our Assembly logo is on the website – requested members send in any information that they would like to put on the site.

37. STUDY TOUR – PRESIDENT BRUCE

President Bruce gave a presentation on his recent Study Tour to Canada where he had undertaken a study on how Canadians co-operate in fire management. He had received a grant from the Emergency Services Commissioner to undertake this tour.

38. CONFERENCE CLOSURE

The President declared proceedings closed at 1640 hours and thanked all attendees for their contribution to a very successful meeting,

Confirmed

President

19th September 2009.

ACTION LIST AUGUST 2008

	ITEM	TO BE ACTION BY	TIME / COMMENTS
1	AMALGAMATION OF ASSEMBLY ACCOUNTS AND RE-INVESTMENT	BOARD AND TREASURER	JANUARY 2009
2	MEMBERSHIP FEES 2009-2011	BOARD	NEXT BOARD MEETING
3	APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR	BOARD	NEXT BOARD MEETING
4	CONSTITUTION – ADVICE TO DEPT CONSUMER AND EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION – WA	SECRETARY	BY 28 TH SEPTEMBER 2008
5	LETTER TO RFSA NSW – RE THEIR CONTRIBUTION IN RELATION TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE	SECRETARY	BEFORE NEXT BOARD MEETING
6	STRATEGIC PLAN	BOARD	NEXT BOARD MEETING
7	NEXT CONFERENCE – SECRETARY TO ADVISE QUEENSLAND ASSOCIATION OF REQUIREMENTS	QUEENSLAND ASSOCIATION TO ORGANISE	ON-GOING
8	NEW LOGO - CRITERIA	BOARD	NEXT BOARD MEETING
9	SECRETARY TO ADVISE RFSA OF MEMBERS ADDRESSES FOR RFSA MAGAZINE TO BE SENT TO EACH	SECRETARY	BEFORE NEXT BOARD MEETING