



AUSTRALASIAN ASSEMBLY OF VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATED

MINUTES

OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING, HELD AT THE PARKLANDS RESORT MUDGEE, NSW ON FRIDAY 22ND JUNE 2007.

THE PRESIDENT OPENED THE MEETING AT 1600 HOURS.

1. PRESENT

President Bruce Conboy, Vice-President Terry Hunter, Secretary Bruce Corbett, Executive Members Richard Davidson and Ken Schutz.

Observers at the meeting were Andy Jaffray NSW and Wendy Shirley & Rex Hall SA.

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PRESIDENTS REPORT JUNE 2007

Invitation to join AFAC

I have met with the HR director to discuss joining AFAC before Christmas since then he has resigned and replacement is being sought.

As an interim arrangement AFAC sent Jill Edwards as their representative to the Australian emergency management volunteers' forum sponsored by EMA

Jill replaced Leon Collett who has retired. Leon was an excellent scientist but not a volunteer manager or volunteer. Jill is an 18 year former CFA staff member with considerable volunteer contact.

I have adopted her as the volunteer liaison person.

I have had several discussions with whilst waiting for formal discussions with AFAC CEO Namoi Brown. I have in recent discussions agreed to commence on an observer basis to overcome any attempts from UFU to get on board.

I have spoke with Namoi Brown who has proposed a different path under which we would work with AFAC under an exchange of letters which would set out our mutual intent of working together and by naming number of issues for attention which are of mutual benefit.

Namoi recognises that we are a large component of the fire fighting services and that we bring numbers, skills and experiences to AFAC. We need to list such assets we have, as well as the opportunities we seek. A SWOT analysis would probably help us prepare a draft

This approach helps AFAC recognise and involve the volunteers without creating a parallel for unions.

AEMVF

This forum is the one and only outcome of 2 large and expensive forums for volunteers in Canberra over the last decade.

I have represented the Assembly on the forum,

In my opinion the forum is a basket case and I wonder why I waste a day leaving home at 4am to fly to Sydney and return late a night for no gain.

Major General Brian "Hori" Howard as his fiefdom runs the forum. He is an ex SES NSW director and that service get more support, as do most NSW based services.

The forum has a multitude of organisations attending, many NGO and services, which are state based. Most of the issues are of assistance to these groups much of which is based on Fire fighting arrangements, research or practices.

To date we have not got a single initiative out of the forum.

I will attend in hope I can get a change. The next meeting is on 5 July 2007

What would assist me is, for each association to provide me with a short report on activities both on the fire ground and on the big volunteer's issues inquiries Etc. I need reports by the end of June please. I will highlight the lack of consultation in the ACT with changes that affect volunteers and the need for change to inquiries and coronial inquest s and the blame mentality. I am concerned of the effect these processes have on volunteers. I need to show the forum we are the biggest and the best of the emergency services and our issues need attention

NESVF Applications

I have seen applications made for national grants under NESVF run by EMA

The applications have state based arrangement also.

I was shocked to see an AFAC sponsored application for funds to recruit SES volunteers nationally. It was prepared at a time I was in discussions with AFAC staff but nothing said.

I have been very severe on AFAC maybe that's what's holding up a meeting.

An application from Queensland Emergency Services wants to assist volunteers by analysing trends in volunteering, but they currently won't support financially the Queensland Rural Volunteers Association. It's an area Bushfire CRC has been doing to death anyway.

Other applications seek applications for NGO's for administration, which might have a secondary or minor effect for volunteers.

Some applications purport to be national in intent but are state based. They say if successful the project will go national. They have yet to tell other states though.

SES has an application for travel costs for national competitions, which is something fire fighters need to consider.

ACT

Volunteers in ACT have been shabbily treated with a lack of consultation on major restructure of their fire service, with an urban based service neglecting the needs of the community who in 2003 were burnt out by a bushfire.

As with most governments services are determined by costs not by needs.

I have written the Chief Minister of ACT. I received a telephone call for the emergency commissioner and had a heart to heart discussion requesting he better value his volunteers. I understand several meetings have taken place to try and move on but the damage has been done. The Chief Minister sent me a reply. The ACT delegates will report on the latest.

Other

- The Victorian Rural Fire Brigades President Bernie Pearson passed away on May 26 2007. Bernie was a character but a very strong leader. He is sadly missed.
- Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria has appointed Andrew Ford as their CEO. Andrew had been a CFA area manager and brings a high-level of skills and experience to the position. Bob Macdonald and Peter Davis continue as executive officers of VFBV and their associations.
- Victorian volunteers have adopted a VFBV road map to progress amalgamation of the associations with a tight timetable of December 2007 to have a firm proposal prepared.
- Also CFA in reorganising its form and moving to 6 super regions. The process has been under discussion for some time but precipitated by resignation of three area managers
- The Tasmanians are well advanced with preparations for an annual conference in conjunction with AFAC conference in Hobart
- I have attended a workshop on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities CALD at EMA Mount Macedon to deal with getting these people aware of volunteering. EMA are running this program, which will help us all.
- I have been successful in obtaining a study tour grant from the valuing Volunteers program run in Victoria. The program deals with the retention recruitment recognition and support of emergency services volunteers namely CFA, SES Lifesaving Victoria and Coast guard. The program has \$3 million over 4 years to spend.
- I will travel to Canada to visit the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg. Manitoba, they coordinate fires and resource management at the federal level in a country with a similar government system. I will stop over in Vancouver to see the British Columbia Forest Service, Protection Branch. I am away 9 July to 5 August. I have to write a report on the study, which I hope to present at a future AFC conference.
- Recent American law changes see that volunteers attending major federally declared emergencies eg Hurricanes cannot be dismissed from their jobs

3. CONFIRMATION EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES – MELBOURNE

Moved Ken Schutz, Seconded Terry Hunter:

“That the Minutes of the Executive Meeting held in Melbourne on the 2nd and 3rd December 2006; a copy of which having been circulated to members prior to the meeting be confirmed”

CARRIED

4. PROGRESS ON ACTION PLAN

The following Action Plan was set at the Executive meeting in December -

	ITEM	ACTION BY	TIME / COMMENTS
1	Meeting CEO AFAC – discuss funding assistance	President	Jan 2007
2	Letters AFAC –new CEO and volunteering survey	Secretary	Dec 2006 - Jan 2007
3	Application for Grant EMA	President	By end Jan 2007
4	Financial – Fiskville Account – Treasurer’s role (Bob Horner)	President	By end Jan 2007
5	Tax Exemption ATO – Invest Wildfire Rose funds	Treasurer	Prior to 2007 AGM
6	Strategic Plan and Constitution adoption	Assembly	AGM 2007
7	Organisation 2007 Conference	Tas organising Cttee	On-going
8	Mudgee Conference and Board Meeting	President	Jan 2007
9	Webmaster	Secretary Vice-President	Jan 2007
10	Annual Business Plan	As detailed in the plan	As detailed in the Plan
11	President’s newsletter	President	As applicable

The following progress reports were given to the meeting –

1. Refer to Presidents report
2. Done personally by President – Volunteering survey by Anglicare was done during fire season so Volunteer Firefighters didn't have time to give input.
3. President reported that he hadn't done anything with this – EMA do grants for once only projects – Secretary to investigate VSEG grants for laptop and data projector.
4. Bob Horner has agreed to take on Treasurer's position and books have been handed over.
5. Wildfire Rose Account funds have been invested – Secretary to try and find supporting documents relating to this account as time permits.
6. Strategic Plan and Constitution to be adopted in Hobart.
7. Organisation for Hobart Conference going well – Tassie have committee set up to organise and Secretary to report later in the meeting.
8. Mudgee conference and board meeting organised and taking place.
9. Website – Richard Davidson offered to set up web site and report to Hobart meeting. He advised that the name had already been registered. Items required to go on the initial web page were discussed and noted by Richard.
10. As detailed
11. President's newsletter happening as applicable.

5. WEB SITE AND NEW LOGO

Moved Terry Hunter, Seconded Ken Schutz:

“That Richards offer to set up the web site be accepted and the matter of a new logo for the Assembly be discussed at the AGM in Hobart.

CARRIED

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

Moved Terry Hunter, Seconded Bruce Corbett:

“That financial report presented to the meeting be adopted and this meeting confirm the investment of \$25,000 from the Wildfire Rose Account as organised by the Treasurer”

CARRIED

7. HOBART AGM AND CONFERENCE - AGENDA

The Secretary tabled a draft agenda and also suggested registration fees for the Hobart Conference.

He advised that the Conference would be held at the "The old Woolstore Apartment Hotel" 1 Macquarie Street, Hobart on the 21st and 22nd September 2007.

It was noted that Election of Officers needed to be included in the Agenda and if the constitution were adopted then these elections would be for a two-year period.

It was agreed to call for expressions of interest for presentations from member associations and these to be restricted to 15 Minutes.

To include 15 minute time-slot for a NZ rep to talk on their recruitment process and also 15 minutes for Richard to advise on Website progress.

Moved Terry Hunter, Seconded Ken Schutz:

"That the registration fees for the Hobart Conference be approved at \$150 for delegates and observers and \$100 for partners"

CARRIED

The secretary advised that 15 rooms had been set aside at the Woolstore for the AGM and conference, some of these had already been taken up by the organising Committee and Tasmanian delegates and some still available for the Executive.

President Bruce to take 1 room for Friday and Sat night, Richard to take 1 room for Friday, Sat and Sun night, Terry to take two rooms for Friday and Sat night. SA organised their own rooms already.

Other delegates to organise own accommodation, it being noted that AFAC, which holds their conference just prior have rooms at both the Grand Chancellor and the Woolstore, which are very close together, and a lot of delegates will be staying on. Secretary to allocate rooms left at the Woolstore under our package arrangement.

8. CORONIAL PROCESS

Ken has raised the issue of the Coronial process which is to be discussed at AFAC and how it can be made an inquiry rather than a "who is to blame" process.

It was agreed that President Bruce would follow this matter through with AFAC and take up at the National Emergency Volunteer Support Forum through EMA.

9. COMPENSATION PAYMENTS TO VOLUNTEERS

Andy Jaffray had asked the Executive to look at how compensation is paid to Volunteers.

Enclosed with the Agenda was a copy of an Email from Greg Prior from the Association of Volunteer Bushfire Brigades of WA, a copy of CFA Volunteer Compensation guidelines and also pages from the Tasmanian Volunteer Handbook on Law, Insurance and Indemnity.

Victoria are self insured.

It was suggested that Andy should contact CFA through j.green@cfa.com.au for further information.

10. INCORPORATION OF ASSEMBLY

Terry tabled some information from Samuel Dinnison the Executive Officer of FESA WA in relation to this matter. It was agreed that Terry to follow through and seek legal advice as to the best option open to us and circulate further information when it comes to hand.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS

Agreed to keep major issues flowing through to President for reporting.

The meeting asked Andy Jaffray to pass on our thanks to the NSWRFSA for inviting us to Mudgee for their Conference and particular thanks to Kirsten and Melissa for their assistance in setting our meeting up, booking rooms and assistance with hire car.

THE MEETING CLOSED 1755 HOURS

Confirmed

President

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ACTION LIST FROM EXECUTIVE MEETING JUNE 2007

	ITEM	ACTION BY	TIME / COMMENTS
1	Website	Richard Davidson	Sep 2007 – Report Hobart AGM
2	Organisation 2007 Conference	Tas organising Cttee	On-going
3	Circulation of registration forms Hobart AGM	Tas organising Cttee	July 2007
4	Coronial Process	President	Sept 2007
5	Incorporation	Terry Hunter	Sept 2007
6	Strategic Plan and Constitution adoption	Assembly	AGM 2007
7	President's newsletter	President	As applicable