



COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATIONS LTD

Communique No 1

April 16 2013

Welcome to the first communique from the newly formed Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations, or CAVFA - the national voice for volunteer firefighters around Australia. It is anticipated that the Council will send out three of these communiqués each year, to keep the state volunteer fire brigade associations and their members up to date with progress on the issues that affect volunteer firefighters at the national level.

CAVFA replaces the now wound up Australasian Assembly of Volunteer Fire Brigade Associations. CAVFA membership includes all of the eleven state volunteer fire brigade associations around Australia which directly represent some 250,000 volunteer firefighters. Every state and territory is represented on the Council.

Below is a copy of the media release that has been sent to media outlets across the country.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS OF AUSTRALIA UNITE

Volunteer firefighters in every State have united to form a new forum to promote the interests of over 250,000 members nationwide.

The Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA) has been formed to ensure that volunteer firefighting continues to help keep the communities of Australia safe from bushfires and other emergencies, according to inaugural president, Mr Brian McKinlay AFSM.

“CAVFA provides a forum for the eleven volunteer firefighter associations in all of the states and territories across Australia to work together to put the views of its combined volunteer membership to the Federal Government and other key stakeholders” said Mr McKinlay.

“Emergency Services comes under the jurisdiction of the various states and territories. However, in recent years the Federal Government has become more focused on emergency management and in other areas that impact on volunteer firefighters. Volunteers respond to a wide range of emergencies, including major bushfires, and devote their time, skills and knowledge to keeping their communities

safe. CAVFA hopes to work with the Government to ensure that the views of volunteers are considered when decisions are made that impact upon them and the communities they serve.” he said.

“CAVFA, along with its state association members, is keen to ensure that volunteer firefighting remains a viable and attractive volunteering choice into the future.

“Australia depends on the dedication and expertise of the brave men and women of the volunteer fire services across the nation. CAVFA and the state associations will work together to ensure that the volunteer fire services and their members are supported and encouraged in the vital work that they do”.

As the release states, Mr Brian McKinlay AFSM, who is also the President of the Rural Fire Service Association of NSW, has been elected as the inaugural President of the Council. Mr Phil Koperberg, AO, AFSM, BEM Hon DLitt (UWS) has been appointed as the Executive Director of the Council, in a part time capacity. He and Council members are currently working on a number of issues on behalf of the state associations:

- CAVFA concerns with the total allocation of 10MHz of dedicated spectrum from the 800MHz band together with 50MHz from the 4.9GHz band, to support the proposed nationally interoperable public safety mobile broadband capability may not be adequate for the purpose.
- Developing a case for CAVFA to have input into the work of the Bushfire and Natural Hazard co-operative Research Centre.
- Developing a case for a Commonwealth Volunteer Respect Act which builds on the volunteer charters that are already in place in most states.

In addition, the Council is developing a website to promote its aims and objectives and seeking written agreements with national bodies to further those aims.

CAVFA is looking forward to a new era of cooperation and collaboration between all volunteer firefighters around the country, to ensure that our communities continue to be protected by strong, viable and well supported fire and emergency services volunteers into the future.

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The website will be online in May at www.cavfa.org.au