

JUNE 2020



## *A word from the CEO*

The start of 2020 has been a devastating one. Not only for South Australia with major bushfires in Keilira, Cudlee Creek and Kangaroo Island, but the entire country. Our heartfelt condolences go out to those who have lost loved ones as we rally around everyone affected to offer support and help where we can.

We sincerely thank and acknowledge the thousands of volunteers who worked tirelessly to save lives and property and protect our state. Our thanks also go to their families who supported them to provide this important service.

And we are also incredibly grateful for the generous donations made by companies, individuals and the community and for the many offers of help received – your support has been outstanding.

In South Australia, a large number of CFS volunteers needed our immediate financial assistance, particularly from Kangaroo Island to help rebuild homes, businesses, fences, sheds, replace livestock and start the process of rebuilding their lives.

We are now preparing for the long term impact caused by the distress of these traumatic events. Our commitment is that every CFS volunteer and their family who is actively engaged in protecting lives and property will be supported now, and in the future, when the need arises.

This edition of our newsletter captures some personal reflections from CFS leaders and volunteers in the aftermath of the fires.

We look forward to staying in touch with you throughout the year and thank you again for the valuable support you provide as it enables us to be there for volunteers in their time of need.

Gloria Berni  
Chief Executive Officer

*Kangaroo Island - Rebuilding of houses*

## **BUSHFIRE RECOVERY UPDATE**

*Following the catastrophic summer of bushfires in South Australia, we are pleased to report that rebuilding has commenced in all affected areas.*

*Kangaroo Island - Rebuilding of Sheds and Stock Yards*

This next stage has been possible after the major effort involved in the clean-up was finalised enabling our volunteers to move forward and start rebuilding. Fences have been erected, sheds built, crops sown, vineyards

replanted, livestock purchased, and some house construction is also underway.

Tim Buck, a CFS volunteer and Kangaroo Island farmer lost everything. Tim said “the immediate support we received from the CFS Foundation was vital. It meant we didn’t have to worry about how we could afford to buy important things we needed such as tools, clothes, and toys for the kids, and could focus on getting the farm back on track”.

The volunteers who were affected by the fires were all so deeply grateful for the immediate financial support they received and the speed in which the CFS Foundation was able to make payments.

This assistance made a big difference in helping them to rebuild their lives, so to all our supporters, thank you!

*Kangaroo Island - Rebuilding of Fences and Stock Yards*



## **FROM THE FRONT LINE!**

*CFS volunteer Mark Sutton reflects on fighting the Cudlee Creek fire:*

It was early afternoon of Friday 20 December and I was working in a CBD office that day. My phone rings and Region 4 CFS Headquarters wants a leader overnight for a Region 4 Strike Team at a big fire in the Adelaide Hills.

Fire! What fire? I get the briefing and find out that a Region 4 Strike Team is already on its way from the Mid North and I'm going to relieve them for nightshift. This was a big one!

I met the relief Region 4 Strike Team's bus at the Gumeracha Oval staging point at 10pm. The adrenalin was flowing. The outgoing Region 4 crew told stories of great saves, near misses and sad losses. It was our turn to help 'tame the beast'; a beast that had already taken so much.

We were sent to protect property in area between Gumeracha and Lobethal. It was burning all around us and I remember the radio was going crazy. It was a bit of a frenzy and we were keen to do our bit. Spot fires were threatening homes and assets everywhere, the local crews, who had been out on the fireground all day, were hopping between the taskings. It was a dynamic situation and it was hard to know what to do first because there was so much to do.

Around midnight, we were sent to help local landowners stop the fire advancing on the far north east flank of the fire on the other side of Birdwood. This was a real opportunity to stop this beast from getting bigger before sunrise and ahead of winds picking up. For the next six hours we worked with those landowners and we stopped the beast in its tracks. We established good solid fire-breaks and those containment lines held.

The sun rose to an eerie calm, smoke sat in the creek lines and the smell of fire filled the air. The black was stark but the grass in the saved paddocks gave us a great sense of achievement.

Did we tame the beast that night? History says we did not but every single firefighter who responded that day did so because they believed they could, and they really kicked that beast in the teeth.



*Kangaroo Island Fires 2019/20*

### *About the Author*

*Mark Sutton has served as a volunteer firefighter with the Country Fire Service since 1999 and holds the rank of Deputy Group Officer in Flinders Group located in Region 4. Based in Port Augusta, Mark is the Director of the Office for the Outback Communities Authority, a State Government Statutory Authority and is a member of the CFS Foundation Board*

### **Board Member Changes**



**New Chairman - John Lynch OAM**

For almost 10 years, Rob Snowdon has been a Board Member and Chairman of the CFS Foundation, championing its work.

Rob made the decision to step down as Chairman before Christmas, however, with the major outbreak of bushfires, stayed on as a board member and liaised with brigade captains and CFS volunteers that had been injured or lost property and managed the support given to these volunteers by the Foundation.

We thank Rob for his dedication, time and effort he has contributed to the CFS Foundation and wish him well on all his future endeavours.

John Lynch OAM was appointed the new Chairman of the CFS Foundation. John recently retired as CEO with the Royal Flying Doctor Service and is looking forward to making a positive contribution of the work of the CFS Foundation.

## A WORD FROM THE NEW CFS FIRE CHIEF – Mark Jones

It has certainly been a busy first few months since taking over this great Country Fire Service. We arrived in Adelaide in the late hours of 9 October last year, and I went to work early the next day, abandoning my partner in a hotel room in a city she had never seen before. Having received a hostile and unwelcoming greeting from numerous key stakeholders in the press and on radio shows, I didn't quite know what to expect. I should not have been worried as everyone in South Australia is so polite and hospitable that the criticisms of my appointment were soon forgotten.

Throughout my career, I have enjoyed a wide range of roles: firefighting, special rescue, emergency planning, health and safety enforcement, command and senior management. I thought that my main challenges early in my new job might be managerial but, within weeks, the state was ablaze. It gave me the chance to watch some great firefighters and officers at work and to command the operational strategy and image management of the Service.

The CFS crews and their emergency services partners in the Metropolitan Fire Service, State Emergency Service, SA Ambulance Service and SAPOL, were masterful. The outcomes from what were the worst set of conditions and fires the state had ever endured might have been far worse if not for their heroic efforts and bravery.

I have had a long association with firefighter charities and was a supporter of the Firefighters (national) Charity in the UK for 30 years, culminating in a term as its Deputy Chairman. Therefore, I was extremely pleased to learn of the CFS Foundation and the reason it exists.

It has already been an honour to have stood as head of such a fantastic group of people at SACFS and, while I wish our Foundation hadn't been necessary to support those who lost so much, I am truly grateful it was there and willing to assist our volunteers in their time of extreme need.

In one of the many interviews I gave at the end of 2019, I said that when nature throws the worst it can at us, the CFS does its best. That same statement could equally be made about the CFS Foundation and its magnificent supporters.

On behalf of all our volunteers who were able to benefit because of the donations made by our donor base, I say a big Thank You!



CFS Fire Chief - Mark Jones

## Overwhelming public support...

Many thanks to the generous businesses which offered free tickets and passes to our brave volunteers to enjoy some 'down time'. These were distributed to volunteers via our Facebook page and the CFS portal.

Statewide Super for donating tickets to various events, West End Brewery (Lion Nathan) for donating their corporate box Adelaide Entertainment Centre for donating tickets to various concerts including Jack Whitehall, Michael Buble and Alice Cooper and SA Almond Growers for donating almonds, of which we sent to various brigades.

Thanks must also go out to multiple others who organised concerts and events and invited CFS volunteers along as VIP guests.



Volunteers in West End Corporate Box watching T20 game.



Alice Cooper autographed the helmet and uniform he wore on stage to pay tribute to our volunteers at his Adelaide Concert in February 2020





# THANK YOU

To all the remarkable volunteers who continue to protect our communities

[www.cfsfoundation.org.au](http://www.cfsfoundation.org.au)



## Celebrity Donations

The outpouring of support has been enormous, and we really have felt encouragement from around the world. The Foundation was fortunate to receive donations from a number of celebrities based in and outside of Australia.

A few celebrities we would like to make a special mention to for their generosity are Kylie Jenner, Pink, Kate Ceberano, the Minogues and Hemsworth families!

## Corporate Donations

Along with donations from the public, we would also like to thank the numerous businesses and corporations that made significant donations to the foundation, including the following:



## Thanks to our Corporate Sponsors

Aside from the generous donations and contributions we received during this terrible bushfire season, the Foundation would not be able to support our CFS volunteers without the ongoing support from our major sponsors and we thank them.



**CFS FOUNDATION INC.**  
PO BOX 4197  
Norwood South SA 5067



P: 1300 270 278  
E: [admin@cfsfoundation.org.au](mailto:admin@cfsfoundation.org.au)  
W: [www.cfsfoundation.org.au](http://www.cfsfoundation.org.au)

