

VISION STATEMENT

Safe communities supported by motivated, well-trained, managed and equipped volunteers.

NSW SES VALUES

The Code of Conduct & Ethics makes clear the "Values" framework within which every NSW SES Member is to operate. Every decision or step taken on behalf of NSW SES must reflect:

Trust

Accountability

Respect

Professionalism
& Integrity

Safety & Service

These, very simply, are the standards of conduct and ethics expected of each and every Member acting for or on behalf of NSW SES.

PREAMBLE

The purpose of this Charter is to provide a documented commitment between the State Government, NSW SES, NSW SES Volunteers and the NSW SES Volunteers Association (NSW SES VA) to enhance the objectives and outcomes of the NSW SES Corporate Plan, ensuring the protection of the needs and interests of Volunteers.

This Charter is to ensure that all members have an ability to influence decisions, that there is consistency in the way things are done across New South Wales and that members are empowered to contribute.

This Charter was written in consultation with the State Government, NSW SES and the NSW SES Volunteers Association that represents the interests of Volunteers in New South Wales.

DEFINITIONS

In this Charter, the following definitions apply:

"Act" means the *State Emergency Service Act 1989*, as amended.

"Values" means the established NSW SES Values – TARPS: Trust, Accountability, Respect, Professionalism and Integrity, Safety and Service.

"NSW SES VA" means the New South Wales State Emergency Service Volunteers Association.

"NSW SES" means New South Wales State Emergency Service.

"State Government" means the Government of the State of New South Wales.

"Volunteer" means a Volunteer member of NSW SES.

VOLUNTEER CHARTER

The Volunteer Charter is to:

- Be read in conjunction with the Act, its regulations and related legislation, and the NSW SES Corporate Plan.
- Be an agreement between the State Government, NSW SES and the NSW SES VA on behalf of Volunteers.
- Ensure the State Government, NSW SES and the NSW SES VA commit to consultation about all matters which might have the potential to affect Volunteers.

This Charter is written with the intention of it being:

- Fair, just and reasonable.
- Non-discriminatory.
- Practicable and sustainable.
- In the best interests of the safety of the NSW community.

This is an enduring agreement to which all parties will be committed. This Charter shall be reviewed as required by agreement of the parties or at the end of three years from its date of commencement. In the event that it is not reviewed at the end of three years it will continue on, as is, until such time as a review is conducted.

VOLUNTEERS' CONTRIBUTION

Volunteers devote their time, commitment and experience to protect life and property, through prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities. From the core roles of managing floods, storms and tsunami events to performing rescue operations and supporting other emergency services, the Volunteers commit themselves to creating safer communities across NSW.

It is important to acknowledge that Volunteers:

- Are drawn from communities throughout NSW in order to participate in an integrated emergency service.
- Ensure that community safety needs are met to the best of their collective abilities.
- Depend on the goodwill and practical support of their families, friends and employers to enable them to serve, recognising that time available to them is limited by the needs and demands of their families, employment and other obligations.
- Contribute their time not for financial reward but to gain satisfaction from service, achievement, personal development and fellowship.

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

Volunteers will, to the best of their abilities:

- Uphold, contribute to and demonstrate the Values and Code of Conduct and Ethics of NSW SES.
- Perform duties safely and adhere to the policies, procedures and directions of NSW SES.
- Undertake appropriate training to enhance the delivery of services and ensure their collective safety.
- Exercise the powers vested in them by the Act and Regulations in the best interests of the community and NSW SES.
- Recognise the consultative mechanisms between NSW SES, Volunteers, the NSW SES VA and the State Government.
- Recognise the reporting mechanisms within NSW SES via the Chain of Command reporting structure.
- Be committed to working in harmony and consultation with NSW SES, and seek to resolve issues internally in the first instance.

NSW SES MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

NSW SES management will, in recognition of the Volunteers' commitment:

- Recognise, value, respect and promote Volunteers who come from widely divergent communities with differing needs and characteristics, as core partners with people employed by NSW SES.
- Uphold, contribute to and demonstrate the values of NSW SES and the Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- Nurture and encourage Volunteers and facilitate and develop their skills and competencies.
- Recognise and acknowledge the value of the time that Volunteers provide.
- Utilise Volunteers, their skills, knowledge and expertise effectively and efficiently.

Specifically, NSW SES will:

- Consider the impact of policy development and amendment on Volunteers.
- Deal with matters raised by Volunteers via the chain of command appropriately and expeditiously.
- Recognise that the NSW SES VA represents the interests of Volunteers across NSW and will ensure there is meaningful consultation, allowing enough time for real involvement, on all matters that have the potential to impact upon Volunteers before new or changed policies and/or procedures are adopted or implemented. There may be instances where legal or other constraints preclude this although NSW SES commits to consulting post those changes.
- Provide necessary resources to enable policies, procedures or directions that may impact Volunteers, to be implemented efficiently and effectively where those resources exist.
- Provide administrative, operational and infrastructure support to enable Volunteers to perform their roles safely and effectively.
- Provide effective and comprehensive support services within available resources, including but not limited to:

- Legal assistance in current or anticipated court proceedings, where the proceedings arose from a volunteer's performance of duties (requests for legal assistance will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are at the sole discretion of the NSW SES Commissioner).
- Safety support and protection.
- Membership support.
- Assisting Volunteers who wish to apply for employment as NSW SES employees by supporting them to be competitive within the merit selection process.
- Provision of training to Volunteers to enable them to effectively and efficiently exercise the powers, duties and responsibilities vested in them by the Act and Regulations.

STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT

The State Government recognises and acknowledges the Volunteer commitment and will:

- Recognise, value, respect and promote Volunteers, their families and employers for their contributions to the well-being and safety of the people of NSW.
- Ensure that relevant legislation pertaining to NSW SES recognises the needs and interests of Volunteers in the delivery of services to the community of NSW.
- Promote and support consultation with the NSW SES VA, as elected representatives of Volunteers on all matters which may directly impact upon Volunteers.

NSW SES VA COMMITMENT

The NSW SES VA, in acknowledgement of the commitments of the Volunteers, the State Government and NSW SES management will:

- Recognise the authority of the State Government and the NSW SES Commissioner.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, NSW SES legislation recognises the needs and interests of Volunteers in the delivery of services to the community of NSW.
- Promote and support meaningful consultation within the NSW SES VA and with the NSW SES Commissioner, as elected representatives of Volunteers on all matters which may directly impact upon Volunteers.
- Ensure that a timely response is provided by the NSW SES VA when one is required for the purpose of providing comment, consultation and/or communication with other parties such as NSW SES and State Government.
- Appropriately represent NSW SES Volunteers when engaging in consultation and/or communication with other parties.
- Endorse constructive communication between all parties in effort to foster and improve the harmonious relationship between NSW SES, its Volunteers and the State Government.

VOLUNTEER CHARTER AGREEMENT

The parties commit themselves to apply this Charter in the spirit of mutual respect and goodwill and to work together in that spirit, in accordance with the key principles set down in this Volunteer Charter.

SIGNATORIES This Charter commences on the _____ 2015

Signed :



The Hon Stuart Ayres MP
Minister for Police and
Emergency Services



Adam Dent
Commissioner NSW SES



Charlie Moir
Chairman NSW SES VA, on behalf of the Volunteers
and NSW SES Volunteers Association