

# Brigade

autumn 2018

[cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au)



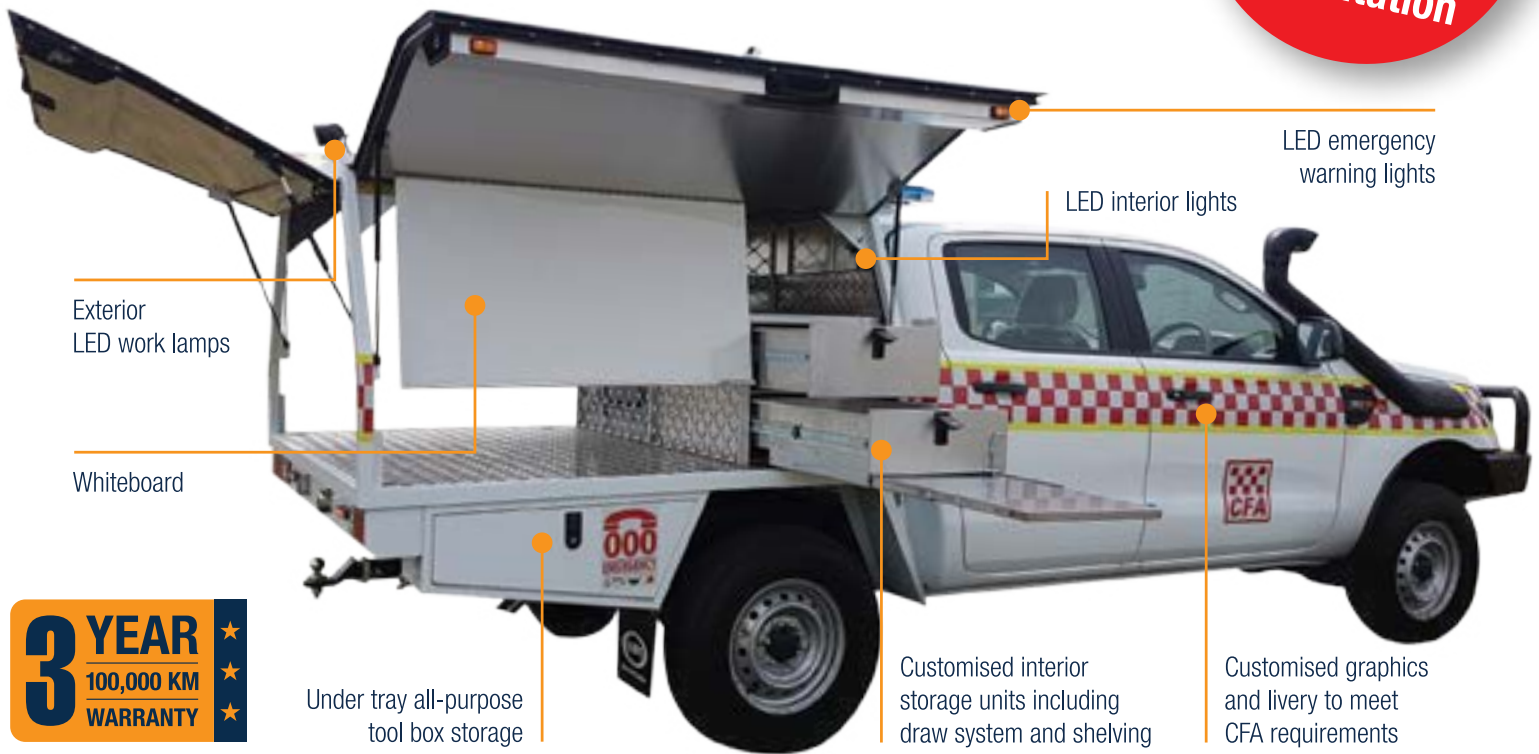
## ▼ Why BASOs love supporting their brigades



# MFI Customised CFA and Emergency Vehicles

Call MFI NOW to arrange a FREE onsite consultation

CFA Tyabb Field Command Support Vehicle



**3 YEAR**  
100,000 KM  
WARRANTY



***Talk to us about how we can customise your vehicle***

17 Southeast Boulevard Pakenham 3810

[sales@mfishb.com.au](mailto:sales@mfishb.com.au)

[www.mfiservicebodies.com.au](http://www.mfiservicebodies.com.au)

**1300 634 669**

*View over 100 customised designs on our website*



05

## CONTENTS

### Cover story 20

Why BASOs love supporting their brigades

COVER PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIJN

### 04 Incidents

### 10 Statewide news

### 10 Chief Officer's column

### 11 CEO's column

### 22 Learning from experience

### 28 Health matters

### 32 Brigade news

### 47 Training

### 48 Youth

### 50 Through the ages

### 52 Memberlink



28



16



40



22



50

## Chair Greg Smith



**First and foremost, let me take this opportunity to sincerely thank every CFA member for your outstanding efforts during this fire season.**

Whilst we have had a relatively subdued season so far, our brigades have been working tirelessly to prepare and protect communities throughout the state.

Serving your communities in this way is extremely demanding and while you are dedicated to protecting your fellow Victorians, it is also vitally important you take care of each other. So I remind all staff and volunteers to look after each other and ensure we are nurturing a supportive working environment.

During this time, our new CEO Dr Paul Smith has taken the reigns of the organisation. Paul comes to CFA with significant experience in environmental management and a strong understanding of emergency management and fire prevention.

He brings a deep understanding of climate change, which is a critical issue for firefighting today and an increasing part of our organisation's planning in the future. As you know, much of the solid groundwork that Paul will build upon was laid by our former CEO, Frances Diver.

During her tenure, she successfully embedded a more inclusive, accountable and transparent culture within CFA and it is crucial that all CFA members take this good work forward.

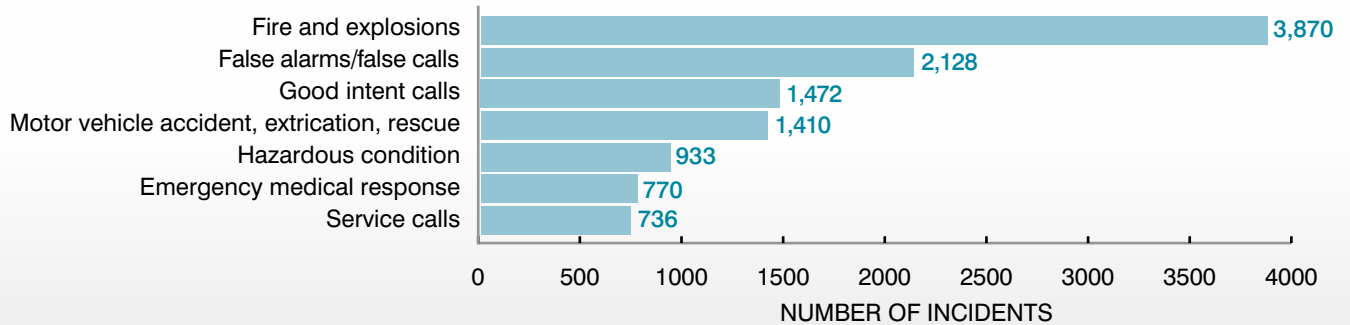
We are all custodians of a proud CFA tradition and it is our collective responsibility to continue to drive this positive change in order to make CFA a modern emergency service for the future.

Let me finish by again thanking all our volunteer and career firefighters for keeping Victorians safe during this fire season and throughout the year. Your professionalism, dedication and display of CFA values makes our organisation the revered emergency service it is today.

# Incident summary

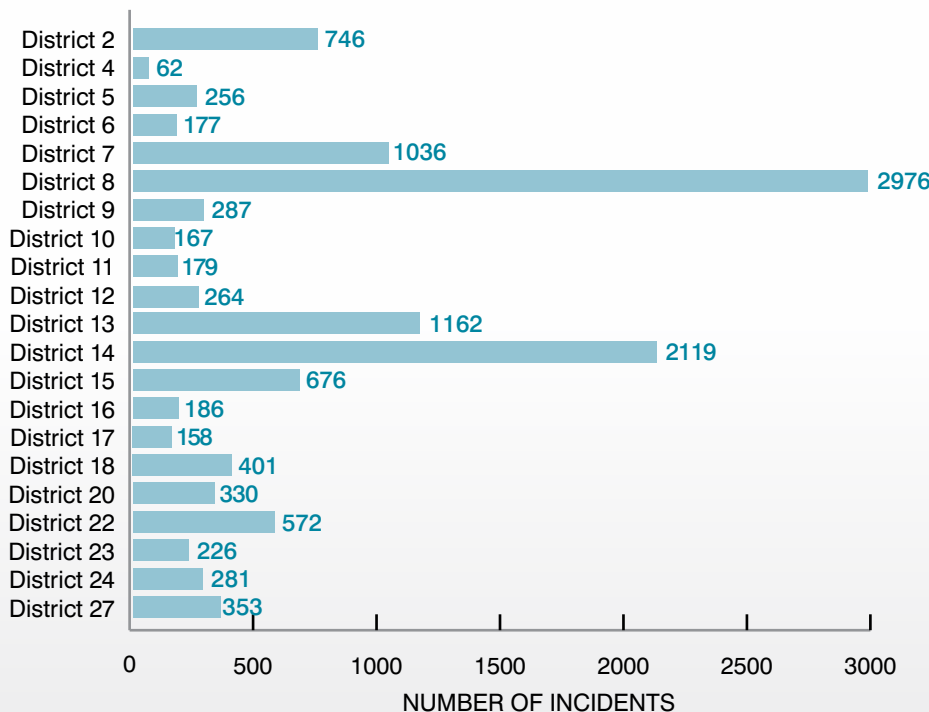
## STATEWIDE INCIDENTS BY Type

1 October – 31 December 2017



## STATEWIDE INCIDENTS BY DISTRICT

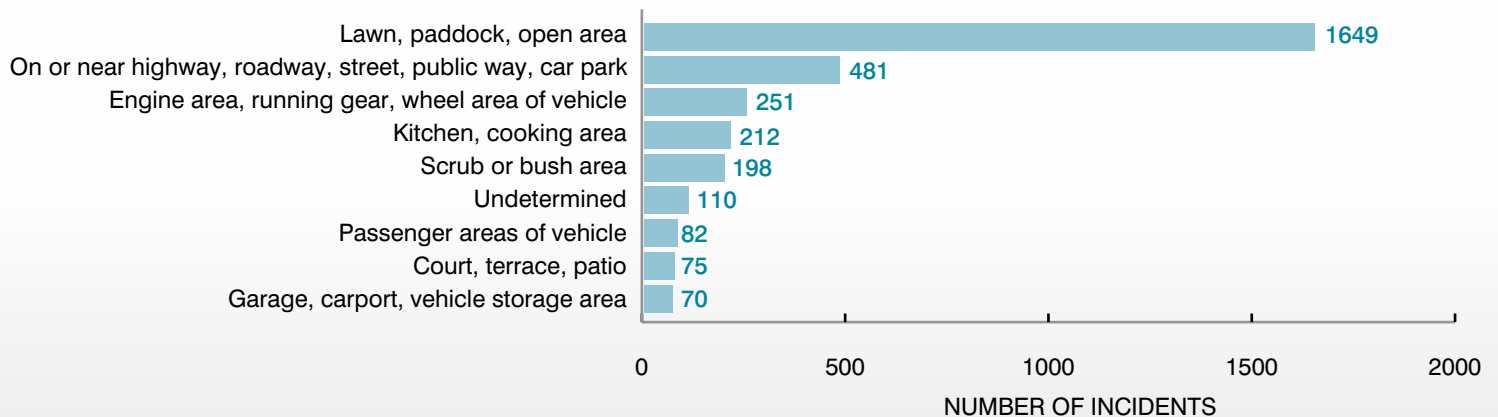
1 October – 31 December 2017



Brigades are reminded to submit their incident report as soon as possible after attending an incident. Brigades on strike teams also need to submit a report. FIRS Call Centre, 1800 62 88 44, is open daily 8am-11pm.

## ORIGIN OF FIRE

1 October – 31 December 2017



# Melbourne suburbs under threat



Residents in two suburbs in south-east Melbourne were faced with flames at their back fences over the Christmas and New Year period, after intense grass and scrub fires escalated rapidly in hot and windy conditions.

## CHELTENHAM PARK

On 27 December 2017, people from around 40 homes and businesses in several streets were evacuated shortly after a grass and scrub fire spread in Cheltenham Park at around 2.15pm.

The fire spread across about five hectares, damaged fences and caused spot fires that burned grass in the Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery. The fire crowned in tree tops 15 metres high.

As this fire was in an MFB area, CFA supported MFB firefighters with four trucks from Keysborough, Springvale and Noble Park brigades plus the Dandenong Support vehicle. Five helitacks also tackled the fire from the air.

Keysborough Fire Brigade Captain Paul Townsend arrived on board a pumper tanker and was despatched to the cemetery sector along with an MFB crew.

'It was difficult to get to,' said Paul. 'We had to go through a car park and then through narrow cemetery gates. We had an inch to spare each side. We only just got through the gate.'

'When we got to the back of the cemetery that bordered the parkland, we had to wait for bombers to drop water. While we were waiting, we watched the pines and gums burst into flames about 15 metres high. For a suburban grass and scrub fire, it had some real intensity. I hadn't seen crowning since Black Saturday.'

After the helitacks finished, Paul's crew deployed hoses from the cemetery into the park.

'The fire took off at a rate of knots in the parkland,' added Paul. 'We tried to slow its progress; there was no way we could stop it.'

The Keysborough crew put another line out near the golf course to attack small fires that remained after the main fire had passed, and to put out spot fires around gravestones.

All crews were instructed to leave the cemetery, with water reserves empty and assistance needed elsewhere. The Keysborough truck was then despatched to the golf course to black out after the fire had passed.

An evacuation centre was set up at Beaumaris Community Centre and some local roads were closed.

The Dandenong Support truck was called at about 4pm and its rehab facilities were used to look after the welfare of the firefighters. It stayed at the scene for more than three hours.

The fire was brought under control by 5.30pm, though firefighters remained at the scene overnight to make sure there were no flare-ups.

Paul 'had a good chat with the MFB crew leader, who was grateful for our help.'

MFB Acting Chief Officer David Bruce said the fire could have been devastating. 'This fire was extremely fast moving and was headed straight towards homes and a primary school,' he said.

'If it wasn't for the quick response and aggressive firefighting of MFB and CFA crews, the fire could have had devastating consequences for the local community.'



PHOTOS: LORETTA BINDER



## PINES FLORA AND FAUNA RESERVE, CARRUM DOWNS

There was a statewide Total Fire Ban on 6 January 2018 and the temperature in Melbourne soared to 42° Celsius. From 5pm 5 January to 5pm 6 January, firefighters battled 114 grass and scrub fires throughout the state.

A 35-hectare blaze in Carrum Downs started at around 2.30pm on 6 January in dense scrub in the Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve. It travelled quickly because of a strong north-westerly wind, and soon threatened houses next to the reserve.

At the height of the fire, there were around 300 CFA and Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) firefighters and three helicopters (including 'Ichabod' an Erickson Air-Crane) at the scene.

The initial incident controller was Skye Fire Brigade Captain Troy Wallace, pictured below.

"When I arrived at Blue Wren Rise, the Skye tanker attacked the fire at the end of the road. It looked about 20 metres by 20 metres and I said to my crew we should be able to pull it up," said Troy.

But Troy couldn't see the back of the fire and thought it was heading into scrub. "I couldn't see what was going on, so I went to the top of a hill in the slip-on to do a 360 size-up. I could see the fire edging towards the



PHOTO: MARK DRYDEN



containment track. But then the wind took it and the fire exploded onto the other side of the track.

"I immediately contacted VicFire to make tankers 20 and pumpers 10. As soon as I realised where the fire was going, I asked for a warning to go out."

A telephone alert was sent to all mobile phones in the area just after 4pm, telling people to go to Carrum Downs Plaza.

After telling FFMVic that the fire had taken off and jumped the track, Troy went to Darnley Drive to set up a control point.

"Carrum Downs brigade Captain Stephen Rhodes arrived to help. We put a map together and sectorised the fire.

"I've never seen a fire take off so quick and hard. It came up over the hill so fast that within five minutes it was at the back of fences bordering the park. I told all the pumper crews to protect the houses on Darnley Drive.

"Stephen saw that the air conditioner of a house was on fire, and I told an FFMVic tanker to get water on it." The house was badly damaged after embers entered through the evaporative cooler on the roof. Some sheds and fences were also damaged.

As the fire continued to travel, trucks protected a further two streets.

The Narre Warren Catering Unit arrived at around 4pm to feed hungry firefighters. According to Andrew Bartels, the catering coordinator at Narre Warren and a regional BASO, the eight team members dished up 600 serves and put in 120 hours between them.

"They're a powerhouse of mainly retired people," said Andrew. "They're out constantly serving people. It's a really rewarding experience."

The fire was brought under control just after 11pm.



PHOTO: DARREN PADGETT

### THE VFRR – BUSHFIRE POST-INCIDENT ANALYSIS

The Victorian Fire Risk Register – Bushfire (VFRR-B) is Victoria's first consistent process to identify assets at risk from bushfire. Since its launch in 2009, the VFRR-B has had input from more than 160 agencies with responsibility for local fire management planning across 66 municipalities, alpine resorts and French Island.

During the Carrum Downs fire, the VFRR-B data was identified in the Consequence Report and published to Emergency Management – Common Operating Picture (EM-COP). The Consequence Report is an incident management product which identifies a range of assets at risk in a given area or, in this case, a potential impact zone.

The post-incident map (see below) shows burnt area, the assets at risk and areas where properties were impacted by the fire. The VFRR-B layer identified the residential area on the interface of The Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve assessed as 'very high' bushfire risk. The impact of the fire was consistent with the identified risk.

The Frankston Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC) has done a commendable job keeping its VFRR-B data accurate and up to date. The MFMPC comprises representatives from a number of agencies, and proves the importance of multi-agency collaboration to support fire management planning and decision-making both before and during fires.

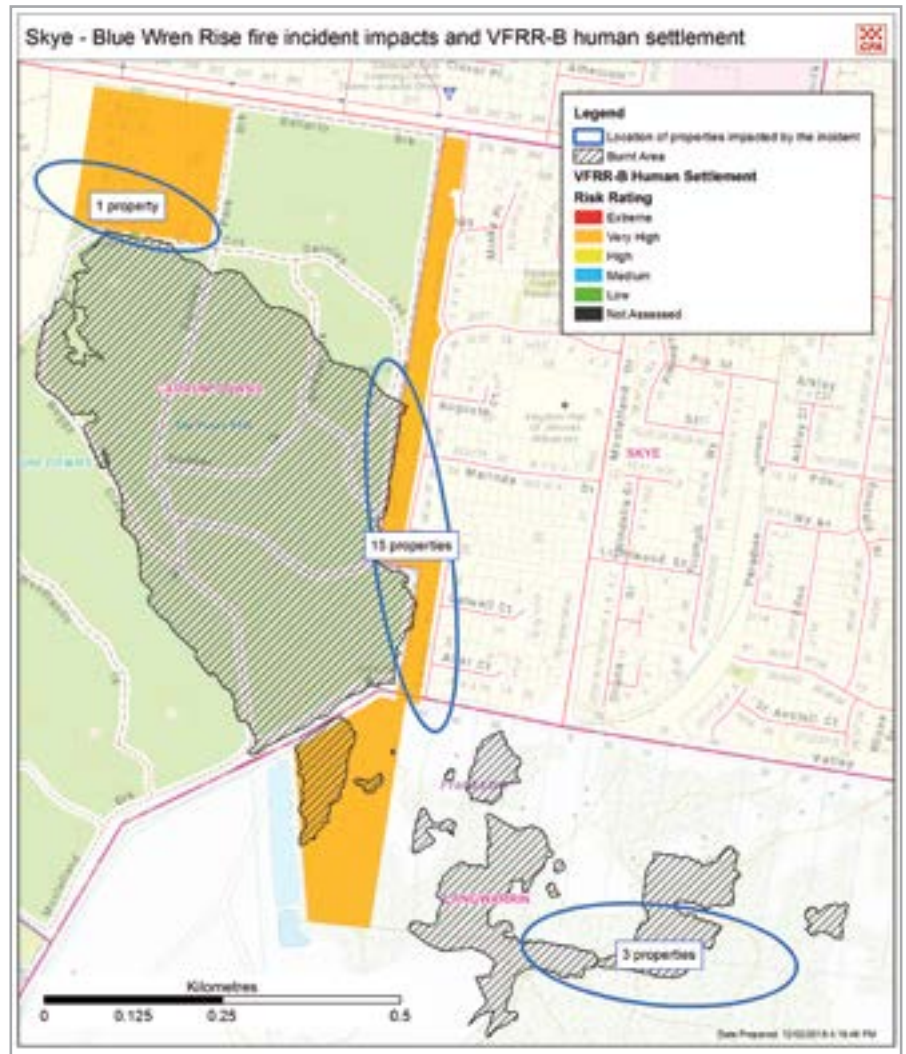


PHOTO: BEN MEIERS

The VFRR-B is one of many valuable tools used for strategic fire management planning and incident fire management at a range of levels. Mapping assets at risk from bushfire enables informed decision-making by emergency management agencies across the state.

For more information about the VFRR-B go to [vfrr.vic.gov.au](http://vfrr.vic.gov.au).

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL AND JACQUI KITCHEN



# The value of after-action reviews

**When a lightning strike started a fire 200 metres from houses in Bellbridge at Lake Hume early in the morning, CFA and RFS brigades rushed to the scene.**

First to respond was Bethanga Fire Brigade's ultralight, which was housed at the satellite station in Bellbridge. The vehicle was purchased through Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program funding and this was its third call-out since it was delivered in December 2017.

"When members arrived on scene they reported that the fire was about the size of a tennis court," said Bethanga brigade Captain John Northey, "but they couldn't reach the fire and had to exit the paddock and go round the road to gain access. By that time it'd grown significantly."

The main problem was that the fire was burning on four properties surrounded by fences and locked gates.

"The steep, rough terrain and darkness made the going difficult and tested all our abilities," continued John. "We ended up cutting five fences to gain access. By the time the fire was out it had burnt 10 hectares."

Despite being close to houses in Bellbridge, the front of the fire was heading uphill away from the township.

"With local knowledge we knew the fuel we were dealing with was predominately native red grass which has a relatively high moisture content this time of year. The fire was on a 30-degree slope above the houses and we observed the fire moving very slowly downwards towards the back of the houses. However, the front was traveling up the hill at a much faster rate and I wasn't sure we were going to beat it before it went into the next valley.

**INCIDENT:** Grass and scrub fire

**DISTRICT:** 24

**DATE:** 24 January 2018

**BRIGADES:** Bethanga, Talgarno, Bonegilla, Thurgoona RFS



"My assessment was that the township was not in great danger, so we concentrated the majority of the resources to stop the head of the fire." After the fire was brought under control, local crews stayed on scene throughout the day to ensure it remained safe.

When the fire was under control, Bethanga brigade members immediately actioned a review.

"From previous experiences we knew it was a good idea to have a brigade debrief," continued John. "By getting feedback from all our on-scene members we were better able to reflect on the incident.

"Our after-action review allowed us to highlight what went well and discuss things that needed improvement."

Access to this fire was a major issue. In the debrief, members discussed how important it was to know the owners of the properties. They have crucial knowledge and should be contacted for advice when there's an incident.





The brigade also raised the problem of locked gates. Some brigades in District 24 have bought CFA locks which are placed on a gate alongside the landowner's lock. If there's an emergency, responding crews can unlock the gate – a far better solution than cutting fences or waiting for a landowner to arrive. Bethanga brigade will be talking to property owners and will consider buying these locks.

Brigade members also identified there was a lack of portable radios. The brigade captain is only allocated one radio for his private vehicle, and “for us to do incident control effectively, we need to take the portable radio out of a truck,” said John. “This leaves the truck with no portable radio, so the brigade will discuss buying an additional portable radio.

“The suggestion was raised to hold a community meeting for the Bellbridge residents to explain what we observed and what actions we undertook. We thought this was a good opportunity to engage with the community and to give them confidence by describing why the risk to the township was low.

“Interacting with residents in our community is a valuable way to improve relationships and highlights the spirit of our volunteers.”

With help from the District 24 Community Safety team, a community meeting was held and well received. “Residents appreciated us going to the effort to explain everything, and locals now have more knowledge about their environment and their brigade,” said John.

The after-action review identified several positive aspects of this incident:

**Communication:** From the control point to VicFire and using the fireground channel, the communication went well. Prior brigade training enabled effective communications, especially with VicFire.



PHOTO: PAUL KING

**Support:** The Tallangatta Group and District 24 Headquarters gave good support.

**Teamwork:** Brigades from Victoria and NSW, alongside private units, all worked seamlessly together. Neighbouring brigades in NSW have a CFA radio so they can communicate with us.

**Member turnout:** In Bethanga brigade, there isn't a single alerting system that suits all its members, and not all members have a pager. In spite of this, an impressive 28 members responded to this fire, thanks to a combination of pagers, town siren, the BART first responder phone app and automated text messages.

**Effective training:** Brigade members reflected on the value of their training.

**Private units:** Private ultralights play an important role in fighting fires in this area because of access difficulties and a hilly terrain.

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL

## Night rescue in Gippsland cave

**CFA crews were called to the Slocombs Cave Reserve at around 12.30am to rescue a man who had slipped into a sinkhole. While he was exploring the caves with a group of friends, he slipped and fell 15 metres.**

Technical rescue crews were called from Morwell and Traralgon, as well as Victoria Police Search and Rescue Squad and firefighters from Lakes Entrance Fire Brigade, who were first on scene.

“We did an initial assessment of the situation, ran a safety line down, and gave equipment to a paramedic who lowered himself into the cave to help the man,” said Lakes Entrance Captain Geof Bassett.

“The rescue was very complex due to the narrowness of the shaft,” said Traralgon Leading Firefighter and Rescue Commander Greg Fisher.

“A rope technician from CFA and Police Search and Rescue personnel were lowered to the floor of the cave and secured the man onto a rescue stretcher,” Greg said. “The man was lifted from the cave with ropes and hands-on lifting, and crews placed at the top of the shaft played a pivotal role in completing the rescue.”

The rescue was complete at around 8am, and the man was taken by road to Bairnsdale then airlifted to hospital.

“Although the narrow shaft made the rescue complex, crews worked patiently and effectively to perform the rescue,” Greg said. “All crews worked incredibly well together. It was a great combined effort from CFA, Victoria Police Search and Rescue and Ambulance Victoria – and a good result.”

See page 27 in the ‘Learning from experience’ section for more information about this incident.

**INCIDENT:** Grass and scrub fire

**DISTRICT:** 11

**DATE:** 24 January 2018

**BRIGADES:** Traralgon, Morwell, Lakes Entrance

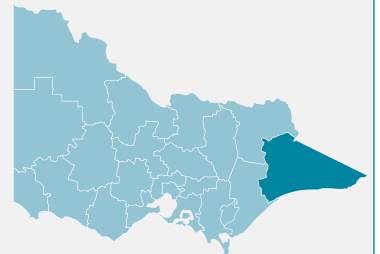


PHOTO: GEOFF BASSETT

## CHIEF OFFICER

## Steve Warrington



**Timely interaction is a key for first responders. To engage with you, our members, on a regular basis, I have joined the social media community.**

I invite you to join me on the Chief Officer Facebook page, where I'm enjoying being able to regularly engage in two-way conversation with CFA people and community members.

It is on this page that I have been sharing my 2018 objectives and outlining several new initiatives, many of which are being piloted throughout the regions.

Some of these initiatives are:

- Improving service delivery model
- Brigade Capability model
- Fit for Duty
- Prerequisites for Officers
- Community safety in response mode
- Brigade annual review process
- Driver training requirements

Being piloted in West Region by ACO Peter O'Keefe, Brigade Capability is targeting Class 4 and 5 brigades. The purpose of this initiative is for us to know what capability a brigade needs in order to run operations.

Some of our brigades have more than 100 members who all access turnout gear, training, welfare support and so on. However, when we've looked at some brigades, there are somewhere between 20 and 30 people who turn out on a regular basis

We want to reach an agreement with those brigades on exactly how many members are needed to respond. We think it will vary between 30 to 50 people. Once identified, we'll then be able to come up with a commitment with those brigades to provide the equipment needed to fit out those members turning out.

Likewise, if we can identify how many people are needed for specific roles, such as chainsaw operators, truck drivers, pump operators, we can establish where to target needs. For example, I'll liaise with DCO Training to determine which courses to run, work with Infrastructure on what sets of wildfire gear are needed, establish what welfare people are needed, and so on.

Again targeting Class 4/5 brigades, Fit for Duty is being piloted in the south-west.

This covers two components: physical requirements and psychological requirements.

For psychological, that would involve checking in through programs similar to those conducted by beyondblue. Physical is simply a health check, making sure you're healthy enough to go on a fire truck. Depending on your role, such as wearing BA gear, there will be different physical requirements that enable you to safely perform the task.

ACO Rohan Luke has discussed the pilot in a video on my Facebook page. You can also read more about Fit for Duty on page 31.

The Knox Group is piloting Operationalising Community Safety. On this front, our community safety model has traditionally been great at prevention, preparedness and then recovery. This pilot involves the response phase. Where a structure fire occurs, there is a secondary group that responds to engage with community members at the scene. While the primary group is fighting the fire, the secondary group is explaining what is happening with the fire and delivering fire safety advice to a captive audience.

Then in the days after, brigade members knock on doors in the surrounding community to inform people about why the fire occurred and how to prevent it happening to them.

Our driver training pilot, which is being run by Operations Officer Glenn Jennings, will initially target our Class 4/5 brigades in the high density urban areas. Members will be given time to complete the driver training and obtain the skills needed to drive in urban areas.

After a period of time, though, people without the driver training qualifications won't be able to drive Code 1. So it means someone can no longer just walk in with a heavy truck licence and drive Code 1 – we'll have a standard expected.

We recognise that in developing competencies for our drivers, local conditions will play a big part in training requirements. This isn't a one-size-fits-all, so as we move into other environments, such as the wheat belt or high country, the skill set reflects the needs of your area.

It is not lost on me that where we have strong brigades, we have strong leaders. In the north-west ACO Gavin Thompson is leading the pilot on Prerequisites for Officers.

We think brigade officers primarily need two things: crew leader qualifications and leadership competency. Each level of leadership within CFA will require certain competencies and a higher level of training to effectively perform the duty.

So when elections come up, individuals will need to meet these prerequisites to be considered for leadership roles. To achieve this, we need to be able to offer the training opportunities at various times of day and days of the week, so you have the chance to obtain the prerequisites.

We know this is a big change and will be a challenge. So for this, and all my initiatives, please provide feedback directly to me on my Facebook page, as well as gathering more information about the status of the pilots.

Finally, I want to congratulate all of you for your work over the course of the summer months, during which time CFA attended more than 12,000 incidents. Throughout this period, many of our people have missed key personal and family commitments and left loved ones to ensure their community was protected.

This passion and commitment from our people is why I'm proud to be CFA.

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# Paul Smith

**Throughout Victoria, CFA people have been working tirelessly over the past few months preparing and protecting communities during the summer fire season.**

While many Victorians were understandably relaxing over the summer break, CFA people were putting their communities first. They were out in urban, regional, rural and remote communities ensuring that life and property in Victoria was protected.

So in my first contribution to Brigade magazine, I want to say a big thank you to the women and men of CFA for your outstanding efforts over the recent fire period, and acknowledge the significant contribution you make.

I also want to introduce myself as CFA's new CEO, which is a role I am thrilled to take up.

CFA is a much revered organisation, valued as an intrinsic part of many communities across Victoria, so it is a real privilege to be able to lead such an organisation.

While we have plenty to be proud of, we can't write our future relying on our past.

I am focused on embracing the opportunities that come with modernising CFA, and a strong future demands us to be resilient when it comes to the changes that are needed inside our organisation.

All CFA people must feel comfortable and safe in acknowledging there are things we can do better. I'll be working hard to make sure we embrace the opportunities that come with the dynamic environment we operate in.

We need to adhere to CFA values and look after each other as we deal with the challenges that come with a changing Victoria – urban growth, a changing and unpredictable environment, broader community changes – and take steps to increase diversity across our organisation.

I look forward to meeting with all CFA people and working with you on this journey.

Our tradition and history will always be valued, but our future should be just as exciting.

Together we can seize this future and make CFA the resilient and future-focused emergency service it needs to be.

Finally, it's a great privilege to make a contribution to Brigade magazine and I look forward to making many more in the future.

## DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER



# Alen Slijepcevic

**After 25 years of service to CFA, David Nichols, Manager Research and Development, has decided to hang up his boots (or his white coat). David came to assist with satellite monitoring of grassland curing. He has come full circle managing the Bushfire Research and Development team to deliver the Grassland Curing and Fire Danger Rating project and now the NISCA project.**

David has also been a pioneer in crew protection research, which has led to significant improvements in tanker design, ensuring the safety of our firefighters. Congratulations David, enjoy your well-earned retirement.

As David is retiring, it's a good opportunity to provide an update on the work his team has been undertaking.

### Crew protection

Late last year, CFA conducted fire impact simulation tests on a medium and ultralight tanker at the NSW RFS Bushfire Flame Front Simulator in Mogo, NSW. The aim was to validate the effectiveness of the retrofitted crew protection system (CPS) on the medium tanker, as well as test an ultralight tanker compressed air foam system (CAFS) CPS developed by our Engineering section, on the Flame Front Simulator. The results showed that the CPS provided adequate protection during the simulated bushfire burnover at multiple fire intensities. The CAFS crew protection results are currently being analysed and compared to another water enhancing CPS. The evaluation will result in the selection of an ultralight tanker CPS and plan for a retrofit program.

### Grassland curing research

With national support, CFA is developing a National Improved Satellite Curing Algorithm (NISCA) which will produce a rolling, daily national curing map. This will reduce border effects and ensure that grassfire danger calculations across the country are consistent. I would like to thank all our grassland curing observers for the important work they conduct in order to improve our readiness, and provide more accurate messages to Victorian communities.

### Fuel-based Fire Danger Ratings

CFA implemented the fuel-based Fire Danger Rating (FDR) model this season. Rather than assuming the Mallee, Wimmera and Northern Country weather districts are entirely grasslands and the remainder of the weather districts are forest, CFA now calculates fire danger over the appropriate fuel type to determine the weather district FDRs. This method is also being applied to incident control centre footprints, to ensure IMT activations are based on appropriate fire risk. There's still some work to be done to improve the Fire Danger Ratings calculation for mallee heath as the Forest Fire Danger Ratings are not properly representing this fuel type. This work will be undertaken before the next Fire Danger Period.

## ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER South East Region



# Trevor Owen

**As ACO of South East Region, I acknowledge that CFA needs to better reflect the communities we serve. This is something we in CFA have been talking about for some time now.**

I also acknowledge that driving change is not always easy, and we know that mistakes will be made along the way. However, we must be prepared to have a go. Therefore, I'm pleased to say that here in South East Region we are in the early stages of establishing our Regional Inclusion and Fairness Council.

Late last year, a call was put out to our members asking for expressions of interest for council membership. We received such a positive response that we needed to undertake a selection process. This strong interest affirmed my decision to move ahead at the earliest opportunity with the Regional Inclusion and Fairness Council. It demonstrated to me that our members were ready for change.

The inaugural council meeting was held in February, and I was pleased with the discussion and enthusiasm of our new council members. This group of people has a great opportunity to steer change and advocate for improvement, not just within CFA but within our communities and as individuals.

Underpinned by the CFA values, the contributions from individual council members will help South East Region take a lead in demonstrating our commitment to creating a diverse and more inclusive CFA.

I acknowledge that the path to cultural improvement across CFA will be challenging at times. CFA will walk the talk and build on the strength of our proven 'can do' culture when faced with such challenges. Our culture has evolved over a long period of time and we should respect the past, challenge the present and shape the future.

The creation of the Inclusion and Fairness Council is one step in the right direction to shaping CFA's bright future by actively promoting and embracing diversity in CFA.

We all need to focus on the future and the role we will each play to ensure our organisation is sustainable, contemporary, diverse and connected with the communities we serve.

The willingness of our members to change is there – we need to lead by example, ensure that we are all contributing to create a CFA that treats its members with respect, makes them feel valued, encourages anyone and everyone has an opportunity to contribute, affords equal opportunities and understands that better outcomes are achieved through involvement, respect and connection.

**Twitter:** <http://twitter.com/CFASouthEastACO>

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/CFASouthEastACO>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/CFASouthEastACO>

## OPERATIONS MANAGER District 24



# Paul King

**District 24 has an approach of taking opportunities to provide resources that support member welfare. Recently, we've seen a number of opportunities to better support members at fires.**

We've bought a cool room trailer to give cold drinking water to our firefighters who are required to work their hardest in the worst of conditions.

We've built a 'two hole' toilet trailer to use on the fireground because we'd heard about members, especially women, who had avoided hydrating at fires because they were worried they may have to go to the toilet on the fireground. The toilet trailer is regularly deployed to fires (and placed on the fireground at water points or similar) so that members can perform their role safely.

District 24 Headquarters Fire Brigade has undertaken the training for member rehabilitation at fires and have equipped a trailer that allows them to respond to bushfires, structure fires and protracted vehicle incidents to ensure our members who may suffer from heat health issues are well looked after, and return home (or to the fire) feeling well again.

Wodonga Fire Brigade has provided a mobile hose testing trailer to the district so that brigades can test their hose safely and efficiently. Fire hose is arguably the most important tool of the trade for a firefighter and to have it guaranteed to be in good nick by a rigorous testing program undertaken safely is paramount.

Our Women's Reference Group has provided hygiene packs in each operational vehicle so that any members caught without essential needs are able to access them.

All of these resources, while obvious in their value, have only come about with the innovation of our staff and volunteers and the generosity of brigades, groups, CFA HQ departments and local organisations.

Although these resources are physical tools of our trade, their value relies on our commanders and leaders putting member welfare first and foremost, to recognise the need for these resources, to request them in a timely way and to have the systems and processes for us to deliver them to places where our members can use them safely.

This equipment has enormous value. Our District 24 Headquarters brigade operates all these resources (along with the field operations vehicle) and is regularly called upon to provide and operate these at fires. They work closely with fireground commanders to ensure the resources are available efficiently to members, and that they are safe enough from fires but close enough to be useful. They also must recover them all at the conclusion of activity and make them ready for the next round.

Our district is looking for the next opportunity to provide resources that support our members' wellbeing and health.

# Australia Day 2018 AFSMs



In January, two CFA members received the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) for making a significant difference to their communities through their work in emergency services.

## Two veteran CFA firefighters featured in the fire and emergency services section of the 2018 Australia Day Honours List.

In recognition of their outstanding service to the community, John Atkins (pictured right) and Glenn Jennings (pictured below) received the AFSM, the highest individual fire service accolade in the nation.

John is Drouin Fire Brigade captain and has 50 years of CFA service behind him. He received an AFSM for his distinguished service, including outstanding leadership and making an exceptional contribution to CFA and his local community over the past five decades.

The Governor-General website states that John “has earned the respect of his peers and established sound and effective working relationships within the emergency services sector and in the community. He has made an exceptional contribution to CFA through his commitment to fire prevention, operational training and readiness, and through his excellent record of response and command at emergencies.

“His innovative suggestion to recycle a vacant, but valued, historical town building in order to obtain a new fire station, his encouragement and development of young people within the brigade, and his innovative Youth Crew programs at Drouin Secondary College are particularly worthy of recognition.”

John said he was very surprised when he opened the letter and saw he was receiving such a prestigious award.

“I never joined the fire brigade for the awards,” John said. “My greatest achievement as a firefighter will always be saving people’s homes. It’s what I was trained to do and continue to do. It’s why we’re here – for the people.”



PHOTO: MELINDA ATKINS



Glenn Jennings joined CFA more than 40 years ago as a 12-year-old junior volunteer and has been a career firefighter since 1980. He is the CFA state driving coordinator and was honoured with an AFSM for his distinguished service, including establishing and implementing CFA’s Driver Training Strategy.

The Governor-General website says Glenn “has established himself as one of Australia’s respected experts in emergency vehicle driver education and also as an accident investigator. He has been instrumental in the development of a motor vehicle accident investigation capacity in CFA that is directed towards identifying causal factors, and then implementing strategies that will reduce the likelihood of future accidents.

“His expertise has also influenced the design and operation of CFA vehicles, particularly with respect to aerial appliances. He is recognised by his peers for the positive and professional example he sets, and for his work in leading, developing, and mentoring others in delivering outcomes in driver education, accident investigation, and vehicle design and operation.”

Glenn said he was humbled to have received the prestigious medal.

“I love my job – CFA has been my life. We often use the term ‘family’ to describe CFA, but the amount of time you spend on shift really does mean you see your colleagues become your close friends and family,” Glenn said.

CFA Chief Officer Steve Warrington congratulated them for their outstanding achievements.

“I want to thank John Atkins and Glenn Jennings for their distinguished contribution to the emergency services sector. They have made CFA stronger and have kept the community safe,” Steve said.

“Both John and Glenn have made a remarkable contribution to CFA and we applaud the exceptional performances of both men.”

# New BA takes it to the next level

In 2018, we'll see a new chapter in Victoria's firefighting equipment with the introduction of a new generation of compressed air breathing apparatus (CABA) sets.

The Respiratory Protection Replacement Project (RPRP) was established to replace the respiratory protection equipment used by CFA, MFB, Corrections Victoria and Ambulance Victoria. This State Government-funded project will improve first responder safety and enable interoperability between agencies.

The RPRP is led by CFA with support from MFB. There was an extensive process to select and evaluate a new generation CABA set, requiring collaboration between many teams, and endorsement from the United Firefighters Union and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria.

CFA's current 2,479 Sabre Centurion and Drager CABA equipment will be replaced.

The MSA G1 has been selected as the new CABA set best suited for our first responders. MSA (Mine Safety Appliances) was established in 1914, and today MSA Safety Incorporated manufactures and supply safety products that protect people and infrastructure. Many MSA products integrate electronics, mechanical systems and advanced materials to protect users against hazardous or life-threatening situations.

Two versions of the new CABA set will be developed: the MSA G1 and the MSA G1 Electronic. These will be used across the emergency services sector depending on the risk profile.

Within CFA, the Chief Officer has determined how the versions will be allocated, taking into account brigade hazard class, support activities, growth areas and special risks. The rollout of new CABA sets to CFA brigades and training grounds is strictly on a one-for-one basis. Brigades will receive only one type of CABA, whereas some training grounds may receive both.

The MSA G1 Electronic set will require additional training and skills maintenance compared with the G1, as well as additional checks to ensure the sets are operating correctly. The electronic version has an integrated battery pack that concurrently operates the electronic multi-functional gauge, distress signal unit (DSU), head-up display, face mask assisted voice amplifier and other alarm lighting features.

The MSA G1 will have a standalone DSU and a pneumatic gauge. It won't have the other electronic features. It will be lighter and less complex to operate than the electronic version.



PHOTOS: JAMES WONG

Both versions are interoperable and modular in configuration, and all sets will have the same improved ergonomics. For CFA, a new firefighter rescue capability will be available in the form of a 'buddy breather' which lets two emergency responders share a common air supply during emergency escape.

The new MSA sets will be used with a Drager 300 bar, 6.8-litre, carbon fibre wrapped aluminium composite cylinder, with a ratcheting cylinder valve. The existing 200 bar cylinders will be taken out of service as the new sets are introduced.

CFA anticipates that the new CABA sets will start to be introduced in the second half of 2018 and the rollout will probably take more than 12 months.

The rollout plan will include:

- the commissioning of sets by the State Protective Equipment Management Centre
- training for existing qualified members
- modifications to firefighting vehicles (if required)
- coordinated changes to other equipment to allow full integration with the new CABA (for example, fittings on gas suits, airline equipment, compressors, etc).

The contribution by all the agencies, stakeholders, firefighters and emergency responders has resulted in this new chapter for Victoria; arguably one of Victoria's largest joint operational projects in the history of the Victorian emergency management sector.

For more information contact the RPRP team on **9262 8912** or email [w.malak@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:w.malak@cfa.vic.gov.au).

# CFA welcomes new DCO Stephanie Rotarangi



**CFA has welcomed a new Deputy Chief Officer, Stephanie Rotarangi. Stephanie will be responsible for operational capability, future planning and leadership development.**

Stephanie comes to CFA from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, where she was chief fire officer since 2016.

"I am so pleased to be joining CFA and working with the thousands of dedicated volunteer and career firefighters who work tirelessly to keep Victorians safe," Stephanie said.

"I have come to know rural and regional Victoria very well in my current role, and I'm really looking forward to bringing all my experiences to the organisation.

"CFA has a proud history of serving the community and I cannot wait to work with all CFA people to make the organisation as strong as it can be for the future."

Stephanie joins existing Deputy Chief Officers Gavin Freeman, Garry Cook, Alen Slijepcevic, John Haynes and Gregg Paterson in working with Chief Officer Warrington.

CFA CEO Paul Smith said Stephanie, who is the highest ranked female officer in CFA history, will make an outstanding contribution to the organisation.

"This is a fantastic moment for CFA and for the communities we serve," Paul said.

"Stephanie comes into the role with a wealth of fire management and operational experience in senior emergency services roles both in Australia and in her native New Zealand.

CFA Chief Officer Steve Warrington was excited by Stephanie's appointment, which is a huge boost for CFA.

"Her skill set will enhance our team, both from a cultural change perspective and also with her operational experience and qualifications," Steve said.

## Lighter trailer pump prototype

**A prototype single-axle trailer pump has been designed and built to improve operational capability, and CFA members had the opportunity to see it on a roadshow.**

Based on the successful two-axle variant, this standalone pump can fill two vehicles at the same time.

The new trailer is lighter, more compact and more manoeuvrable than the dual-axle model, without a reduction in pumping capability. It uses an Isuzu 4LE2/GAAM MK500 water-cooled diesel engine driven pump set, which delivers up to 2,000 litres per minute through two 65mm diameter Storz outlets.

The pump can operate at full output for six hours without the need for refuelling.

"It was suggested that a more manoeuvrable, compact version would suit some brigades, so the single-axle variant was developed to give brigades an alternative to the dual-axle model," said Project Manager Peter Hill.

"One major advantage of this pump is it negates the need to tie up an appliance that would previously have been used as a water fill point."

If you're in District 5, you can see the trailer during April and May as it finishes its roadshow.



# Two new tanker prototypes

As we start the new year, it's once again a busy time for CFA's Engineering team. A number of new and innovative prototype vehicles will be on display around the state over the coming months.

The first, a new single-axle trailer pump, has hit the road for a review tour. You can read more about this on page 15. Two other prototype vehicles were recently completed and started their tours in March.

## ULTRA HEAVY TANKER

Two new ultra heavy tankers have been built to CFA requirements. Although it's based on the NSW Rural Fire Service version, it has a number of key differences to align with our specific safety, maintenance and operational requirements.

"We don't have a tanker of this size in our fleet just yet," said Engineering Project Manager Karen Barnet. "Last year, we built two 11,000-litre bulk water carriers that are now in service in the north-west of the state. Our volunteers have also been asking for a similar-sized large tanker."

The new vehicle has a 9,000-litre water tank and a 1,000-litre-per-minute firefighting pump, plus many of our standard operational and safety features.

The vehicle is as large as the name suggests. Weighing in at approximately 22.5 tonnes, it's almost 8.5 metres long. The cab chassis is a 6x4 single cab Hino FM2630 with an automatic transmission and seating for three crew. It has a 450-litre-per-minute front-mounted monitor that can be operated from inside the cabin. The same feature is fitted to our heavy and medium tankers.

To drive this vehicle, you'll need a heavy rigid truck licence.

There are two live hose reels, one with a traditional 20m x 25mm diameter hose and one with a new 45m x 19mm diameter hose. Both are fitted at the rear together with pump controls and 200 litres of Class A foam.

The vehicle is also kitted out with a full stowage inventory.

There's a traditional open deck area behind the cabin for firefighting. However, one difference you will notice is that the pump is mounted up on the tray area behind a number of soundproofing panels.

"If you see it in your area, please try and have a look," said Karen, "it's pretty hard to miss."





## ULTRALIGHT TANKER

At the other end of the scale, CFA is also trialling a new ultralight tanker. The team had to change the cab chassis because the Nissan Patrol that this vehicle was previously based on is no longer available.

The team has taken the opportunity to upgrade the vehicle to the new ANCAP 5-rated four-wheel drive, 4.5-litre, V8 Toyota LandCruiser 70 Series Workmate. This still only requires a car licence to drive.

The team tried to keep the main body and locker features the same. It has the same amount of water (550 litres), same capacity of 500 litres per minute pump and the same live hose reel fitted with lightweight 30m x 19mm diameter hose. However, there are a couple of new features being trialled.

The body now includes a permanently connected suction hose and locker fitted underneath the tray at the rear on the driver's side. There is also a new water-cooled pump engine with the expectation that this will be a lot quieter. With the new pump and plumbing the layout at the rear has changed, but the team has tried to keep the main features, including controls and the deliveries, as consistent as possible.

"The vehicle is very near completion and nearly ready for testing over the coming months," said Engineering Project Manager Elliott Barnfather.

These new trucks follow the new heavy tanker and medium pumper, which are now under mass production.

It's been a busy and exciting time for CFA's Engineering team members, who are keen to know how well these new prototypes perform and what suggestions our members have to make them even better.

STORY ANDREW WEBB



# Collaborating to protect communities

To capitalise on the opportunity to feature content tailored to their region and their local risks, CFA and SES trialled five regional community engagement forums in 2017. This regional approach also made it easier for volunteers to attend.

The community engagement forums have transformed since the first event in 2011, growing from 140 attendees to more than 600 at the recent regional forums.

The forums were held in Ararat, Bendigo, Camperdown, San Remo and Pinnacle Valley. Last year's theme – involved, inclusive, and connected communities – challenged delegates to think about how they engage with diverse communities in their local areas.

Delegates participated in workshops, listened to subject matter experts, and shared ideas and success stories about community engagement. Feedback from delegates has been overwhelmingly positive. They said many speakers were engaging, the localised content was beneficial to their role, and the networking opportunities with peers and staff was highly valued. More than 90 per cent of the delegates who provided feedback said they were now better equipped and resourced to perform their role.

A highlight at all five forums was the social media presentation where delegates learned how to target advertising campaigns for events, and picked up tips and techniques to get the best out of mobile devices. North East Region had beginner and advanced social media sessions to cater for delegates with different levels of knowledge.

Many volunteers commented on the value of Q & A sessions with regional and district management, which allowed attendees to get to know their support networks, and engage in productive and mutually beneficial discussions. Delegates in North West Region enjoyed a cooked breakfast at Junortoun brigade, followed by a talk from the captain about how they are adjusting to population expansion and the increased local risks.

The SIM table showcased in South West Region offered a glimpse of how new technology can be used to engage with the community, and



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMUN

the burn table highlighted a practical way of working with fire to educate locals about fire risk. Other notable highlights were West Region's workshop format, and the many networking opportunities afforded by getting such positive, community-minded individuals in the same place.

As a result of conversations at the forum, volunteers from North West Region created a Facebook group that any CFA member involved in community safety can join. This initiative allows members to share knowledge, ideas and success stories, and continue to collaborate long after the forum doors have closed.

STORY LISA MACKENZIE

*Gotta go* **MANTELLIO KIA FAWKNER**  
 MELBOURNE'S NEWEST KIA DEALERSHIP

NATIONAL FLEET PRICING TO  
 CFA STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

• TRADE IN'S WELCOME • FINANCE AVAILABLE • OPEN MONDAY - SATURDAY •



**Mantello**  
MOTOR GROUP

VISIT [mantellokia.com.au](http://mantellokia.com.au)  
 OR CALL (03) 9359 1333



**7 YEAR 100,000 KM**



**MANTELLIO KIA**  
 1253 Sydney Road, Fawkner 3060  
 LMCT 3564

All times Kia may support retail vehicle sales over and above National Fleet pricing. In the event a retail offer supersedes National Fleet, the retail campaign will be applied in lieu of National Fleet pricing. The dealership will apply whichever discount channel is greater. This offer cannot be used in pre-owned or demonstrator Kia's and our range of other brands within the Mantello Motor Group. Mantello Kia Fawkner reserve the right to withdraw or change this offer at any time without notice. Vehicles must be delivered some month of purchase. No additional manufacturer concessions apply to these offers.

# New recruits join workshops

**Mya Perez and Laura Ross are among the newest recruits to join CFA's fleet maintenance team.**

In September 2017, Mya (pictured below) joined Horsham's workshop as an apprentice mechanic, a role she says she's thoroughly enjoying.

"This field of work is something I've always been interested in. I like roles that are hands on," Mya said.

"I've loved learning about these vehicles and how they operate. I've found learning about engines to be really fascinating."

Mya's main role straight after joining Horsham workshop was to service fire trucks ready for the fire season.

"I've been in the workshop every Thursday and Friday, working hard to finish servicing the trucks for this year," she told *Brigade* magazine in December 2017.

"I've also been able to travel to other workshops in District 17, which is a great opportunity to meet others performing the same role as me."



Travelling around the state can be a big part of the role for CFA's fleet maintenance team, and newly-recruited casual driver Laura at the Ballarat workshop is really enjoying her time driving some of CFA's finest vehicles.

"Getting to travel around the state and meet people from all the different workshops is something I really enjoy about the role," Laura said. "I've already visited most of the workshops at least twice."

As a driver, Laura will drive some of CFA's state-of-the-art vehicles.

"Over the last couple of months I've mainly been driving the 4.4c tankers as well as a couple of Scania's," she said.

"I'm looking forward to driving some of the other vehicles in the fleet as well.

"If it's not a driving day, I'll be cleaning the trucks and helping out around the workshop."

Laura said she was attracted to the role because it was something different and that she hopes to learn some new things.

"I hope to get involved with some other workshop activities as the heavy tanker program comes to an end," she said.

STORY RACHEL JENKINS:



## Community's response to bushfire

**New research by the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC has found many people continue to underestimate the risk of fire.**

The research, carried out after major bushfires in NSW in 2017, investigated preparedness and responses by affected communities. The study found that while the majority of people understood the danger of fires at the highest fire danger level, many didn't appreciate the risks to life and property on days that are not in the highest category. It also found that in some areas there was a mismatch between the expectations of the community about the ability of fire services to fight large and

destructive bushfires, and what was possible given the dangerous conditions.

Participants greatly valued the smartphone app and fire services website for warning information. Information was said to be easy to understand, useful and sufficiently localised. A majority (88 per cent) found fire danger warnings about Catastrophic conditions (called Code Red in Victoria) easy to understand, with 63 per cent using them as a trigger to discuss the threat with family, friends or neighbours. Almost two-thirds used social media to access information about fires in their area.

The research also confirmed the tendency for people to wait and observe the fire directly

before getting ready to defend themselves or confirm the need to leave even after receiving a warning.

Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC CEO Dr Richard Thornton said this research builds on similar research conducted after major bushfires in recent years.

"The research will assist fire agencies around Australia with their community engagement, and is only possible through the national approach taken by the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC," said Dr Thornton.

Read more about this research at [bnhrc.com.au/hazardnotes/45](http://bnhrc.com.au/hazardnotes/45).

STORY NATHAN MADDOCK

# Spotlight on BASOs

Dealing with a stream of never-ending requests from brigades may sound like hassle, but you only need to spend two minutes talking to a brigade administrative support officer (BASO) to realise how rewarding the role is. Three BASOs told their stories.

Stories by Duncan Russell

## Sandy McNicol, District 7

**“Recently I was invited to Little River Fire Brigade’s low-key 80th anniversary picnic on the captain’s property. It was a lovely surprise when, during the speeches, they presented me with a bunch of flowers and publically thanked me for the support I’d given them through the year. It was totally unexpected.”**

This anecdote sums up what Sandy McNicol loves about her BASO role for the Anakie and Leigh catchment.

“It’s the most rewarding job I’ve ever done. So much gratitude for work I find fulfilling.”

Sandy works hard to support her 16 brigades, but finds administration work easy – probably because she’s well-organised. “You definitely need to be super organised and stay on top of things, as you have to track everything coming in and going out. I use an Excel log to monitor my contact with volunteers and the assistance they need.”

Sandy joined CFA as a volunteer in 2005. Her love of community safety work in schools led to an 18-month casual employee role with Community Safety in Districts 6 and 7. She then accepted a three-month BASO role, followed shortly after by a six-month BASO stint on the Bellarine Peninsula. This continued as contracts for three years.

“In 2011 due to personal circumstances, I regretfully had to say goodbye to this job that I really loved for other permanent employment.” said Sandy.

However, in 2015 Sandy applied for and was successful in gaining a permanent BASO role in District 7, and she hasn’t looked back since.

“I enjoy coming to work every day. I’ve developed wonderful relationships with many people and made a lot of friends.

“A high percentage of volunteers I support are farmers who work seven days a week, and yet they find time to volunteer for CFA. They are giving to their community, so anything I can do to help them is a pleasure.”

Sandy receives a wide range of requests from brigades, which can be as simple as doing a flyer for them, chasing up community safety information, helping with taking equipment to be repaired, or finding the right path to report problems with radios or trucks.

“But I don’t know from day-to-day what will come up on email or on the phone. It’s always interesting.”

A BASO’s role, though, isn’t always about sorting out brigade requests. “Sometimes I just listen to volunteers. They just want someone to hear them. And if someone is going through a tough time, I’ll try to stay in regular contact to see if they’re OK.”

Sandy’s level of involvement with the Rokewood Fire Brigade annual dinner in November 2017 shows her commitment to the job.



“There were a few hiccups in the planning, so I helped out at the last minute,” Sandy said. “I wrote the service award spiels and helped with the invitations.”

But that’s just part of the story.

Sandy and Operations Officer Mark Collins suggested to the Leigh Group deputy group officers that Group Officer Ross Wilson and his wife Carolyn (who’s the group’s communications officer) were deserving of the National Medal. After the group agreed, Sandy completed the application and got it approved. The whole venture was kept as a surprise, including the attendance of two of their sons at the Rokewood dinner where Ross and Carolyn received their medals.

So how does Sandy see the future panning out? “I want to be a BASO for the next six or seven years until I retire.”

## Chanel Forbes, District 14

**“Some people think BASOs just do stores orders and deliveries, but the role is so much more than that,” said Chanel Forbes. “I believe being a BASO is one of the most influential positions in CFA because of the relationships we build with the frontline.”**

“My favourite part of being a BASO is getting to know the members of the brigades I support. I like being able to see the positive changes a BASO can make.

“In my catchment, there are two rapidly-growing municipalities, Wyndham and Melton. I’m proud of how well the two brigades have been keeping up with demand as they moved from being rural to being urban.

“Mt Cottrell Group is one of the busiest catchments in the state. I report to four operations officers, which is like having four dads. It feels like a family and we work hard to ensure our brigades and group receive the best possible service.”

Chanel’s BASO career started in District 16 where she supported 32 brigades across three groups. She then worked as a BASO in District 15 before she started her permanent District 14 role in 2014.

“There’s a common misconception that brigades that respond less need less catchment team support. But having worked in three districts, I think the level of support is the same; it’s the type of support that’s different.

“District 16 is predominantly rural and brigades respond to fewer incidents, so I wasn’t organising PPC or water replenishment very often. I did more grant writing and travelling. District 14 brigades are responding every week so I order more equipment for them, and there are many award functions and events.”

Chanel’s favourite time of year is when the district carries out Section 29 inspections.

“I really enjoy seeing how brigades have improved over the year. It’s like a health check. We look at the viability of brigades, which helps us with catchment planning and determining how best to use our time.

“Section 29s are also great for building relationships, and in District 14 we try to make it a meaningful process as much as we can.”



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIN

## Lisa Brettschneider, District 20

**After being made redundant, Lisa Brettschneider was looking for a new career, and “this one popped up. I have fireys in the family, so the BASO role appealed to me,” said Lisa.**

Lisa’s father and brother were previously firefighters with Fire and Rescue NSW and her husband is a remote area firefighter with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Lisa is the BASO for the Campaspe catchment covering 22 brigades, three groups and 4,500km<sup>2</sup>.

“My catchment is really big and our district office is in Kerang, so I’m on the road a lot.”

Lisa has been in the role for only two years.

“It was overwhelming at first trying to wrap my head around the new role and understand all the acronyms that exist.

“I was really thrust straight into it all, as there was a Total Fire Ban day in my second week on the job and I worked in the district control centre. It was an eye-opening experience and

good to see how the team worked with our members.”

Unsurprisingly, what Lisa likes most about the role is “not being stuck in a rut of repetition. No two days are the same. I could be organising water and batteries one minute, and writing a grant application the next. Or I might be arranging for the assistant chief officer to present awards at a station, or flying to Mildura to work in the incident control centre.

“Our brigades have secured a number of grants for equipment and building works that will further benefit our brigades. I’ve also been lucky enough to take part in the presentation of many service awards to our valued members.

“I’ve got to know some great people who commit to keeping our communities safe,” Lisa added.

The first two years have been very busy to say the least, but she’s looking forward to what lies ahead.



## Learning from insights – structural near misses

CFA is committed to continuous improvement, and one way to do this is to look at lessons identified from our experiences and share them across the organisation. It's important to identify and explore the successful decision-making displayed by members, as well as the areas for improvement.

Recently, CFA has identified trends in injuries sustained at structure fires, especially during internal attacks. The following information draws on lessons identified from a number of operational incidents in Victoria. By identifying these persistent challenges, we believe responders may be better attuned to the challenges and more able to address them in their planning and training processes.

### Thermal imaging camera

A thermal imaging camera (TIC) allows firefighters to assess the environment they are working in, such as: being able to see through smoke to assess the extent of a fire or to find casualties; improving the safety of firefighters; locating the fire or hot spots in walls, roofs and other objects; confirming the fire has been completely extinguished; and reducing property damage and overhaul time.

In recent incidents, it has been identified that:

- TIC equipment must be serviced according to the manufacturer's and CFA's recommendations
- training is required from accredited CFA instructors on how to use a TIC
- TIC training notes are available from the subject matter expert on Brigades Online.

Brigades should discuss with their district headquarters if they want to buy a TIC, as they need to be approved, serviced and repaired by CFA.



### Training

Brigades are required to carry out training and exercises on a regular basis to maintain and enhance the skills and knowledge of firefighters. Brigades can gain the required skill set for structure fires by attending one of the statewide training grounds.

By attending training grounds, you are able to:

- perform skills maintenance
- acquire new skills that the brigade may need based on its risk profile
- build on teamwork with team members and other brigades.



### Water

A challenge that has emerged from several incident investigations is the importance of understanding how to operate old and new pumpers. There is a large leap in technology from a mechanically-operated pumper (Vernier control knob) to an electronically-operated vehicle with touchscreen control. The newer model can seem quite complicated to those who are not familiar with the technology.



Some things to consider:

- Pump operators should have a good understanding of hydraulics. Issues to consider include: how to compensate for variable flow branches; pressure loss at the branch due to friction; head pressure (height of the branch compared to the pump +/-); size of hoses; and pump capacity.

- CFA uses a number of different branches. For internal attack, branches should have selectable stream shaper and selectable flow. This will adjust the water stream from jet to fog, and deliver the volume most suited to the task. This also provides a maximum level of firefighter protection.
- Pistol grip and shut-off handle. As branch technology improves, pistol grip branches give a firefighter better control over the nozzle and direction of water streams. The shut-off handle will give a firefighter better control over water flows onto the fire, increase efficiency and water usage, and limit unwanted damage to the property.

An internal firefighting crew should have a good understanding of what is an appropriate flow for the task and what is sufficient to maximise their safety.



### Personal protective clothing (PPC)

It has been identified from numerous investigations that there is a lack of understanding of the importance of wearing appropriate PPC and that the PPC is the last line of defence.

- Any PPC is the last line of defence and should not be the primary protection measure relied on by members.
- The distress signal unit (DSU) has an in-built, rate-of-rise heat alarm. This is designed to alert the wearer that the DSU may fail at the current temperature. This will activate at far higher temperatures than deemed safe for firefighters.
- All members issued with a structural PPC ensemble must consider that the protection offered by their PPC may also affect their ability to evaluate the temperature of the environment they are operating in.
- Care and maintenance of PPC is critical to ensure it performs as designed. Holes, tears or abrasions in any PPC may allow the ingress of flame, heat, steam or smoke resulting in potential injury to the wearer.
- The minimum mandatory requirement for the cleaning of structural ensembles is once a year irrespective of whether it has been worn.
- The cleaning of structural ensembles by CFA's authorised cleaning and repair contractor also incorporates an integrity check designed to identify any faults or degradation of the PPC. Any faults identified outside of the cleaning process can also be rectified by submitting the appropriate form and sending the PPC ensemble to the authorised cleaning and repair contractor.

- Flash hoods are a component of structural PPC and must be worn when using compressed air breathing apparatus (CABA) when conducting an internal attack. However, to give extra protection to the firefighter, flash hoods should be considered for all types of firefighting where CABA is required to be used – for example, vehicle fires and large industrial bin fires.



For more information about PPC:

- Brigades Online: Go to Fire & Emergencies > Protective Equipment > Structural (New) > PPC Care and Maintenance (pdf)
- *Standing Operating Procedure 5.03 Protective Equipment 11.03 Personal Protective Clothing*
- *SS03 Provision of Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) Procedure*



## Structure fire tactics and tasking

There's evidence to suggest that firefighters all too commonly approach structure fires with an aggressive interior attack strategy, overlooking significant fireground elements during their advances. But with a little strategic patience on arrival, better decisions can be made for an improved and safer tactical plan of operation.

- BA operators
  - Should work in pairs
  - Should have a hose line for protection
  - Should have a portable radio for communications
  - Should identify secondary path of escape.



- Internal structure firefighting techniques
  - When using water, beware of the environment you are working in. For example, when placing water on a fire in a room, it will cause a large amount of steam. At 100°C, 1 litre of water will quickly turn into 1,700 litres of steam and fill a room.
- Fire behaviour
  - Fire behaviour can intensify dramatically after the introduction of oxygen, so firefighters need to be aware of the impact of opening doors and windows when trying to access the seat of the fire or when ventilating.
  - Fire intensity can also increase during the firefight if a flash over occurs. Flash over is a situation where all available fuel in a compartment or room has been heated to its auto-ignition temperature, and can ignite almost simultaneously along with the build-up of unburnt smoke and gases.
- Ventilation
  - A ventilation plan must be considered and incorporated into any strategies.
  - Ventilation plans must be communicated to everyone on the fireground.
  - Ventilation can be used at any time in the RECEO process.
  - Consideration to ventilation high on a structure will help remove the heat, toxic gases and smoke from the structure, giving firefighters better visibility when operating inside a structure and improving the survivability of casualties inside.



PHOTOS: KEITH PAKENHAM AFSM

- Multi-storey considerations
  - Internal tactics should incorporate the completion of a primary search and knock down of any seats of fire on lower levels before proceeding to upper levels.
  - Situational awareness of structural integrity is critical.
  - Secondary paths of escape should always be identified when operating internally, particularly on upper levels.
- Briefings and tasking
  - All incident personnel (including crews tasked to internal operations) must be briefed in accordance with JSOP 03.06 in a SMEACS consistent format.
  - All personnel have a responsibility to ensure they are briefed and understand their tasks before they start.
- Warning signs (identifiers)
  - Structure fire with minimal external signs.
    - Smoke colour and density.
    - Smoke layer height.
  - Structure fire where self-ventilation from fire damage had not occurred.
    - Lack of visible flame.

## Size-up

A series of investigations has identified that something that often gets overlooked and short changed before and during entering a premises is size-up. Size-up is the ongoing evaluation of the problems confronting firefighters in a fire situation. Factors to consider:

- Chief Officer's *Standard Operating Procedure 9.28 Strategies and Tactics* should be followed for all operational activities.
  - This includes conducting a full size-up (incident appreciation) by the incident controller at the earliest opportunity.
  - Tactical prioritisation using RECEO – rescue, exposures, containment, extinguishment and overhaul.
  - Apply and maintain a dynamic risk assessment process (JSOP 8.02).
  - Determine and implement incident objective(s).
  - Maintain situational awareness and ensure all fireground personnel continue to be informed of the objective, strategy and tactics being used.

## Conclusion

Structure fire injuries and near misses are on the rise and it's vital to always maintain a good situational awareness of the dynamically changing environment. Some of the concerns identified may sound obvious, but it's crucial that all members focus on the fundamentals at all times. Hopefully, this will lead to training and dialogue that will improve operations.



# California Deployment, October 2017

## Overview

California experienced some of the largest and most deadly bushfires in history during 2017.

On 8 October 2017, nine fires started around Santa Rosa which then merged into three major fires known as the Central LNU Complex. The fire burnt over 45,000 hectares through some of California's richest wine regions in the Sonoma and Napa Valleys. The fire also heavily impacted on the rural/urban interface with over 31,000 people evacuated as the fires destroyed over 7,000 structures (including 6,500 houses) and tragically claimed the lives of 42 people.

Victoria has a strong and ongoing relationship with California, in particular Cal OES (the Governor's Office of Emergency Services) and Cal Fire. An agreement to support California has been in place with the Californian Governor's Office of Emergency Services since July 2015. This partnership allows the exchange of personnel, resources, knowledge, skills, and mutual support in the event of an emergency.

A contingent of 34 Victorian emergency management personnel departed on 18 October 2017 for a 21-day deployment to California.

The team included personnel from CFA and Forest Fire Management Victoria (which includes the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Parks Victoria members). The contingent was known as AusVic Crew 1 for the duration of the deployment.

AusVic Crew 1 formed part of a contingent of over 10,000 firefighters from 384 fire agencies covering 14 US states.

After the 21 days of deployment, Emergency Management Victoria had a formal debrief with AusVic Crew 1 to capture lessons learned from the preparation, deployment and post deployment experience.

## Successes identified

### Preparation

- Expression of interest process
- Pre-deployment processes and arrangements
- VISA instructions provided
- Pre-travel briefing.

### Deployment

- Training provided by Cal Fire
- Teamwork
- Facebook for family
- Pre-deployment briefings
- Accommodation and transport



### Post deployment

- Timing of flights and transport
- Clear instructions and itinerary
- Formal debriefing
- Teamwork
- Exiting customs as a team
- Being allowed to see the country.

## Lessons identified

### Preparation

- Understanding of fatigue management in country
- Removal of duplicate documentation
- Fitness test should be conducted at the time of the expression of interest.

### Deployment

- Staying in the same motel as the entire contingent
- Provision of phone data or local SIM cards
- Field liaisons with prior deployment experience
- Fatigue management.

### Post deployment

- Details about accommodation prior to departing base camp
- Same flights for all personnel
- Clearer information on timings
- Travel from base camp to accommodation.

Other notable observations that impressed our Victorian firefighters was the ability for field-based supervisors, such as our sector commanders, to be able to electronically record key observations and progress of work to help develop the incident action plan.

Having two or three designated teams in fire sectors focusing on tree hazard identification and mitigation meant firefighters could focus on suppression, blackout and overhaul.

Drop points on the fireground were another key feature that crews used during their deployment. These were numbered, marked locations where crews met, collected resources, information or supplies, and where plant and equipment were stored.

## Conclusion

Victorian firefighters have long been regarded as capable of responding to emergencies outside Victoria. The 34 personnel deployed to California once again showed the strength of our relationship with the US, allowing the exchange of personnel, resources, knowledge and skills.

## Phillip Island MotoGP

The MotoGP is one of the largest annual international sporting events in regional Victoria and has huge economic and social significance to both Phillip Island and the wider Bass Coast Community.

CFA has been involved with the MotoGP since 1988. With crowds of more than 100,000 over three days, CFA brigades in the area provide vital protection before, during and after the event.

The following factors contribute to the success of the event:

- Each year the MotoGP involves six months of detailed planning with the Australian Grand Prix Corporation, CFA and other emergency services.
- A CFA Operations Management Plan is prepared every year and explains in detail the requirements and responsibilities of CFA during the event, on and off the circuit. The operational plan must be read in conjunction with the Chief Officer and District Standing Orders.
- CFA runs the event using conventional AIMS and command structures.
- A detailed risk assessment is completed for the event which highlights risks to CFA and the event and looks at risk mitigation.
- Firefighting vehicles and crews are in attendance on the track from 7.30am to 7pm every day and are strategically placed for rapid response. The number and type of vehicles is revised each year to meet the risk presented by the event.
- CFA works closely with Cowes Event Management and Bass Coast Shire Council to deal with the increased risk primarily resulting from the influx of people onto the Island and, in particular, the public areas of the Grand Prix circuit and the Cowes township.
- CFA runs an operations officer as MotoGP commander and a deputy each day, as well as safety officers both infield and outfield. The safety officers undertake detailed fire and risk audits on behalf of the Australian Grand Prix Corporation.
- CFA has a representative in the Emergency Control Centre for the entire event and this role provides direct intelligence to the MotoGP commander about any incident during the event. CFA uses the Patterson River mobile communications vehicle as an operational command post.
- In the week before the event, CFA undertakes dangerous goods and structural fire safety audits of the site in consultation with WorkSafe and Bass Coast Shire Council.

- CFA crews are a mixture of volunteers and career staff and are required to have certain competencies. For example, all members are compressed air breathing apparatus (CABA) qualified.
- Briefings are held for each CFA crew at the start of each shift by the event commander using SMEACS framework. A briefing is also conducted after activities each day. Each morning a familiarisation tour and training drills are conducted to ensure crews are aware of their role and responsibilities.
- The Grand Prix Corporation's Emergency Management and Operation Plans and the Municipal Emergency Management Plans are tested as an exercise on the Thursday before the event, at which time the Operations Plan forms the basis for CFA participation in the exercise.
- The event is also supported by the Cranbourne DMO workshops, CFA Communications Department, CFA ICT Department, District 8 Headquarters and PE section with the provision and servicing of equipment to support the event. ESTA and the FSCCs also support the implementation of temporary turnout arrangements for the event and the use of dynamic pager cap codes.
- The welfare of the CFA crews is managed very well by CFA and the Grand Prix Corporation, and the crews are well catered for by members of Phillip Island Fire Brigade.
- Hydration is well managed and maintained for all crew infield and outfield of the circuit. The Grand Prix Corporation provides drinks and water to all emergency services.
- Extra pallets of foam are brought onto the island before the event to ensure an abundant stock is available in case of an emergency.

The following lessons have been identified as areas for improvement:

- Fatigue management is still a concern with 14-hour shifts (excluding travel time which can add an hour or two to the day).
- Continuously striving for improvement in planning and adapting to ongoing changes.

### Conclusion

The Phillip Island MotoGP is an integral part of the Bass Coast Shire calendar and in October 2017 the MotoGP once again ran a successful event without a hitch. The ongoing commitment and support by the brigades in planning and preparing for such a major event and the potential risk is commendable.



# High-angle rescue near Buchan

## Summary

On Saturday 24 January at 12.27am, a call came through Triple Zero (000) reporting a man had fallen down a sink hole about 20 metres down a cliff off Jamieson Track, in Slocombes Cave Reserve.

The man was exploring the caves with a group of friends. They had entered a small cave opening in a paddock and climbed in approximately 20 metres to a ledge. The man then dropped his torch and, while trying to retrieve it, he lost his footing and fell around 15 metres and landed on another ledge about three to four metres above the cave floor. The man lost consciousness for a period of time, but was conscious and talking with his friends when emergency services arrived.

## Overview

As the rescue crew from Lakes Entrance Fire Brigade arrived on scene, they were met with Ambulance Victoria (AV), Victorian Police (VicPol) and the group of cavers.

The rescue crew first of all:

- established reliable communications (as this was limited due to the location)
- determined a safe path to and from the cave entrance
- provided initial lighting and secured the cave opening
- liaised with AV and VicPol to gather information and make an assessment of the incident and determine resource requirements.

Following this, a sitrep was passed onto the technical rescue crews and VicPol Search and Rescue who were on the way to the scene.

A safety line was secured to allow initial medical assessment of the man by AV and to provide information about potential further requirements. The paramedic stayed with the man until Melbourne-based rescue services arrived at the scene.



An emergency management team (EMT) was established to ensure information was shared between all agencies and stakeholders involved. When the technical rescue crews arrived, they were briefed and subsequently conducted their own assessment and developed a plan which was then communicated to the EMT.

Technical rescue crews set up rope systems ready for the arrival of VicPol Search and Rescue. On their arrival they were briefed and final preparation and packaging was done to extricate the man. A CFA rope technician and Search and Rescue were lowered to the floor of the cave and secured the man onto a fall safe stretcher. The incident was called under control at 4.18am.

The man was taken to hospital some eight hours later, after a rescue operation that was made complicated by the narrowness of the shaft.

## Lessons identified

The following contributed to the positive outcome:

- The initial dispatch of a multi-agency response that recognised the seriousness and complexity of the incident.
- The early escalation of additional emergency services resources.
- Establishing the EMT early and subsequent information sharing and collaborative decision making.
- Crews and agencies worked together and communicated their requirements and actions.
- The use of local knowledge.
- Rotation of crews, where possible, to reduce fatigue (due to the duration of the job and time of night).
- Crews carried out a debrief following the incident to capture immediate lessons learned.

The following lessons have been identified as areas for improvement:

- Provision of additional rope rescue equipment and training to Lakes Entrance Rescue crews to facilitate safer, more expedient initial access in order to assess and treat a patient until the technical rescue crews arrive.
- Improved provision of aircraft (helicopters) so that specialist teams can reach remote locations more quickly.
- Due to poor communications (only available via Dispatch channel and some SMR) the first crew to arrive wasn't able to send photos or video to incoming technical rescue crews to give them a heads-up before they arrived.
- Emergency Management Victoria states the control agency for a cave rescue is Victoria Police. However, in remote areas it may be beneficial to allow tech rescue crews to begin extrication without delay as long as they have sufficient resources, training and are a rescue provider. At this incident, there was a delay because crews had to wait for Search and Rescue to arrive.

## Conclusion

The incident was a team effort across four emergency services. The good work from those involved resulted in the man being transferred to Bairnsdale by road then airlifted to Melbourne for further assessment.

After reading this case study, consider what actions you would take in a similar situation and think about the following questions:

- How would you undertake a risk assessment?
- What high-angle risks exist in your response area?
- How do you develop relationships with other emergency services in your area?
- How do you tap into local knowledge?



## The rise and rise of rehab units

“The rehab and health monitoring equipment were a great discussion point between a lot of the crews on scene who’d never heard of CFA having them or knew anything like it existed.” This comment from a grateful CFA firefighter at a recent incident not only reinforces the value of our rehab units, but also shows that their importance needs to be promoted.

The increased awareness of firefighter health and safety, especially since the 2009 fires and the Hazelwood mine fire, has significantly increased the expectations and demands for health monitoring and rehabilitation. For example, the Emergency Management Victoria standard for managing carbon monoxide emissions requires health monitoring for large, extended or complex fires that produce significant carbon monoxide and particulates.

CFA now has 16 rehab units run by volunteer brigades and one team at CFA Headquarters.

The brigades have recruited new members with health qualifications to take up this role, and members who no longer want to be involved in firefighting can have a new role in the brigade helping with the rehab unit.

These rehab units are making a real difference. There has been a reduction in the number of heat-related incidents and a significant reduction in claims for hospital treatment in the past two years – the period of rapid growth in the number of rehab units around the state.

As well as supporting CFA firefighters at an incident, these units have been requested to support DEWLP, MFB and Victoria Police over the past two years. Feedback from other agencies has been very positive and complimentary.

All members of rehab units are trained in firefighter cooling methods, hydration practices, and first-aid injury management. The health professionals are additionally trained to use health monitoring equipment approved for use in this role.

Brigades supply their own rehab equipment and transport vehicles, and CFA supplies the medical monitoring equipment and training for brigades.



PHOTO: GLEN FINLAY

### ENDORSEMENTS

“Just a quick note to say thanks for arranging Mernda CFA to attend our event at Catani Gardens today, especially in this heat. While we had some sceptical police members to start with, they all commented on how effective the forearm cooling was in reducing heat discomfort.

We only had one member who was sent home from the event due to heat stress, which is an exceptional result given the large number of police who attended.”

**Acting Senior-Sergeant Glen Finlay,  
Victoria Police**

“I was fortunate enough to be assisted by the Golden Square rehab at a fire at Bendigo. It was a 40 degree day, and the fire – a stack of pallets – was particularly hot. Most members were in structural gear, and the pace of the firefight was quite frenetic.

As a direct consequence, heat stress took an early and significant toll. Golden Square set up in the shade of a tree and shade awning, and also had an electric fan operating. The assistance was exemplary.”

**CFA Acting Operations Manager  
Peter Lucas**

### Where they are based

All health and rehab teams operate in volunteer brigades as an additional resource for the district. The rehab units support our members during operations with cooling techniques, health monitoring, rehydration, snacks and shaded rest areas.

We have units at District 7 HQ Brigade, District 22 HQ Brigade, District 23 HQ Brigade, District 24 HQ Brigade, Mernda, Yellingbo, Dandenong, Smythesdale, Rochester, Golden Square, Yallourn North, Paynesville,

Wonthaggi, Mildura, Maffra, and CFA HQ Burwood East.

### When they should be called

Districts have developed pre-plans and standard operating procedures for using the rehab teams. They can be used at structure fires, hazmat incidents, grass and scrub fires, bushfires, and any incident that may be long in duration, be in extreme conditions, or involve a large number of personnel.

STORY PETER LANGRIDGE

# Healthwatch program expands

**This year, the Healthwatch program enters its tenth year providing free and confidential health checks for volunteer brigades. As a new addition to the routine health check, all brigades this year will be able to take part in an interactive 45-minute BackFit workshop.**

When you have a CFA health check:

- we check your height, weight, waist, blood pressure, blood glucose, triglycerides and cholesterol
- we have a friendly chat with you to learn more about your health
- you can enjoy a free meal after the health check (the meals are organised by the brigade and reimbursed).

Sprains and strains are the leading cause of injury at CFA, and a large proportion of these are related to the back. BackFit is an injury prevention program delivered after the Healthwatch health check. The interactive workshop explains the importance of back care, posture and correct manual handling practices. There are also demonstrations of simple and effective exercises to help get you moving better and reduce your risk of injury.

Every participant will receive their own copy of the BackFit Manual, and the brigade will be given a foam roller and spiky balls to help members with their ongoing back care.

For more information or to book a Healthwatch and BackFit session, visit [esohealthwatch.gov.au](http://esohealthwatch.gov.au), call **9262 8856** or email [healthwatch@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:healthwatch@cfa.vic.gov.au).



Healthwatch Support Officers Michael Cameron, Regan Tait and Vicky Pentney

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CHIRNSIDE PARK FIRE BRIGADE

STORY REGAN TAIT

## Aerial IDs trialled on private vehicles

**At a District 16 Health and Safety Committee meeting in February 2016, there was a discussion about communicating with private vehicles on the fireground. One committee member proudly said all private vehicles in Westmere Group had been checked at the start of the fire season and they all had suitable UHF radios.**

Westmere Group has more than 400 private vehicles, and a large number of those are ex-CFA tankers. It's one of the largest groups in the state, with 19 brigades looking after more than 400,000 hectares of farmland in western Victoria.

The Westmere Group representative suggested to the committee that because of the recent introduction of aircraft assigned to pre-determined dispatch in West Region, placing aerial identification stickers on private vehicles would help aircraft identify them in District 16.

The Health and Safety Committee unanimously agreed it was a worthwhile initiative, and a motion was raised to take the idea to the district planning committee (DPC) for endorsement. The DPC and Operations Manager Bernie Fradd supported the idea, and soon after Chief Officer Steve Warrington agreed to a trial during the 2017-18 fire season.

The trial consisted of 100 private vehicles in Westmere Group. A working group was established to set minimum standards for vehicles participating in the trial, such as at least 2,000 litres, a CFA-compatible UHF radio, roadworthy condition, and owners must have their vehicle inspected annually. Stickers were ordered and placed on the vehicles.



PHOTO: TIM BLOMELEY

There's also a database that lists the vehicle type, the owners' contact details, their aerial ID number, and the location they're attached to.

Congratulations to District 16 staff and volunteers who put in a lot of effort over and above their everyday work to get this trial up and running. A review of the trial is being carried out.

STORY DAVID MACFARLANE

# Record-breaking challenge



PHOTO: PETER WALTERS

**More than 80 inspired teams from all corners of the state stepped out last year in the fourth annual Get Moving Challenge. The competition was fierce but played out in great spirits by all those who took part.**

Amazingly, this year's teams managed to smash the 2016 challenge total by more than 10,000,000 steps despite fewer teams participating. Collectively, the organisation totalled an astounding 244,381,644 steps. That's 195,500 kilometres – the equivalent of walking around Australia 13 times.

In the 2017 challenge, CFA introduced the Unsung Hero award, a nomination-based accolade aimed at recognising individuals who truly encapsulated the spirit of the challenge. Attributes of an Unsung Hero included: doing the little things to improve their activity levels; actively encouraging others in their team to be more active; and showing dedication in getting the most out of themselves during the challenge. Nine inspiring members were nominated by their peers, and their individual stories were shared through the Get Moving Facebook page as well as in weekly update emails throughout the competition.

With a phenomenal six-week total of 1,550,884 steps at an average of 258,481 per week, Gillian Grigg from Keysborough Fire Brigade was 2017's 'Most Active Individual'.

"A typical day in the challenge involved a 6am walk with my housemates; a walk at recess with some of my students; a half-hour walk at lunch with more students and some staff; and then another walk at night with my housemates," said Gillian. "I also met up and walked with other brigade members sometimes."

When asked about the things she liked most about the competition, Gillian's response typified what it's all about. "The enthusiasm and support it brought out in my family, students, work colleagues, friends and fellow Keysborough CFA members was amazing. The members, in particular, were all so wonderful in motivating me.

"I highly recommend people getting involved in the next one. The more teams there are, the more fun it is. Working together with people not just

on the fireground is important, and this challenge is a great opportunity to build relationships and support one another to do our best."

This year's winner of the Most Active Team award, The Thaggi Tenderfoots (pictured above), made it back-to-back wins for Wonthaggi Fire Brigade.

"Wonthaggi Fire Brigade's involvement in the step challenge started from the very first challenge, and each year we have had two teams involved due to the strong level of interest from our membership," said Peter Walters, Wonthaggi brigade member and District 8 BASO. "We pick names out of a hat to vary the teams each year.

"The teams have always worked together in going for group walks after brigade training nights and on other occasions. This year we used our 'in-house' Facebook page to advertise walking groups, so all brigade members were welcome, no matter their team or whether they were participating in the challenge. The challenge created healthy competition and plenty of good-natured banter, which made it a fun experience.

"Get involved! It's a great team builder for the brigade and, importantly, it's fun. Make a friendly competition in-house between two teams or with a neighbouring brigade. Don't worry about your number of steps, just have a go. Do some extra walks you wouldn't normally do, have a crack at the challenges, or organise a walk after a meeting/training for a chat and a laugh with your members."

## Award winners

Hats off to the winners of the hotly-contested achievement awards in Get Moving 2017.

**Most Active Individual:** Gillian Grigg (Keysborough Fire Brigade)

**Most Active Team:** The Thaggi Tenderfoots (Wonthaggi Fire Brigade)

**Most Improved Team:** Ballan Crunchers (District 15 HQ)

**Most Improved Individual:** Jessica Ngo (Burwood HQ)

**Most Consistent Individual and Team:** Mark Cartledge (Ballarat Fire Brigade) and Between a Walk and a Hard Pace (Burwood HQ).

# The danger of fungal infection

**In June 2016, Glenaladale Fire Brigade member John Hine contracted the potentially fatal fungal infection Cryptococcal disease after cutting Redgum firewood at his farm. Cryptococcal fungus is so uncommon that, on average, only six to 10 people are diagnosed in Australia each year.**

The symptoms are similar to influenza, with fevers, headaches, muscles aches and tiredness, and spreads via the spinal cord to the brain. Initially, it was feared John had cancer, but on further investigation it was discovered he'd inhaled the fungus. Chainsaw operators exposed to the air and dust around plant debris are at risk. John (pictured with HSE Adviser Samantha Sunderland and Glenaladale Fire Brigade Caption Rick O'Haire) took over 12 months to recover.

According to research, this fungus is especially associated with eucalyptus trees, most notably the River Redgum. The Bluegum and Blackwood timbers, soils and some bird droppings are also potential sources of the fungus.

The best way to prevent Cryptococcal disease is not to inhale the fungus. Although the likelihood of contracting the disease is low, the consequences are potentially very serious. Educating those who operate chainsaws or collect firewood for their home fires is a key to prevention. The simple precaution of wearing a P2 face mask might prevent exposure.

Late last year, after encouragement from Rick and John, the District 11 Health, Safety and Welfare Committee made a resolution to urge all chainsaw operators to wear a P2 mask during operations. As a consequence, P2 masks will be provided as standard personal protective equipment for CFA chainsaw operators, and information will be included in an operations bulletin later this year about equipment and clothing standards when using a chainsaw.

John and his brigade members are pleased that their experience is now being shared across CFA and through local media.

"It's that realisation that makes you see no-one is invincible," said John. "But it's certainly preventable. I was relieved to hear that my story is reaching others and hopefully preventing more cases like mine."

STORY LOUISE HAUGHTON AND SAMANTHA SUNDERLAND



PHOTO: LOUISE HAUGHTON

## What it means to be fit for duty

**Fit for Duty is one of Chief Officer Steve Warrington's five challenges in the CFA Plan, and it's currently being developed by South West Region.**

The aim of Fit for Duty is to empower all members to safely and effectively carry out high-risk activities and ensure members are physically and psychologically capable of performing their roles. To achieve this, the Fit for Duty team wants to ensure volunteers contribute to the development of the program by giving their feedback.

The Fit for Duty team is currently meeting with Class 4 and 5 brigades across South West Region to ask members for their insights into health and wellbeing needs at individual and

brigade levels. The team is also working with Deakin University to develop a tanker-based assessment, which will be used within a suite of task-based risk standards to measure both physical and psychological wellbeing.

The program will be piloted in South West Region, and will give brigade members the skills, support and equipment they need to achieve an appropriate level of fitness for the tasks they perform. Although the program is initially focusing on Class 4 and 5 brigades, the aim is to eventually include Class 1, 2 and 3 brigades across the state with a measure that is appropriate to their risk.

Steve Warrington has been actively promoting the Fit for Duty program. "It's important we

consider the physical and psychological aspects of the work we do and how we can take care of ourselves and each other into the future," he said.

Feedback from brigades so far has been extremely positive, with a common message being that this concept has been a long time coming. Members are also pleased that CFA is consulting with brigades about how Fit for Duty should develop.

If you'd like more information or want to give to feedback, contact [fitforduty-feedback@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:fitforduty-feedback@cfa.vic.gov.au).

STORY EMMA CORT

# Rebecca Jones, Kingston Fire Brigade, District 15

faces of  
CFA



## What are your CFA roles?

I'm a firefighter. I've done structure firefighting, plantation firefighting, Class A foam and crew leader.

## Why did you join?

I joined Creswick with a friend in 2011 because they have a Juniors program and I thought it would be something fun. I liked the sense of teamwork and the practical side of it like navigating and draughting water. I like to get out and do stuff.

I moved to Kingston Fire Brigade when I turned 16. My dad Ian is in Kingston and my little brother Andrew has just come through Juniors and joined Kingston at 16.

## What was the first incident you attended?

It was at our neighbour's. We live near the satellite station and me, dad and my old Junior leader were first on scene to a grassfire in a paddock heading towards the house and a row of trees. I was on the branch and we stopped it at those trees.

A couple of days later our neighbour came over. She thanked us for the work we did and I really felt like we'd made a difference.

## What incident has had the greatest impact on you?

The first vehicle accident I attended was a garbage truck that veered off the road into trees. We were the second or third truck on scene and we couldn't even see the cab because there were trees all over it. A local farmer with a tractor came and pulled the trees off but the driver was trapped for an hour.

We had to wait for the rescue crew to arrive from Daylesford. It was my first feeling of being helpless. For a while we couldn't see any movement, so it was good to see him eventually walk out of the truck to the ambulance.

## What CFA training have you got the most out of?

I really enjoyed the crew leader course which I did with my dad. You see a big-picture view of the fire – it's not about putting this bit of water on this bit of fire. You have to think about the consequences of decisions and be aware that everything is always changing, including fire behaviour, so you have to be constantly reassessing.

We looked at aerial views of fires including some local fires and had to decide where to put tankers, how many you need and whether to use a direct or parallel attack.

## Who have been your mentors in CFA?

My dad is definitely a mentor. He's been a member for about 10 years and was out on Black Saturday. I saw it on TV and I was petrified of fires, but dad has always been willing to teach me. I think he enjoys having me and my brother in the brigade now.

Our captain Robt Haughie has always been really supportive and believed in me. Because I'm a woman and reasonably young, some people ask me what I'm doing in the fire brigade, but our captain sees me as equal to everyone and he welcomes the contribution everyone is willing to make.

## What has been the highlight of your time in CFA?

It's the camaraderie and being part of a massive extended family. I've gone on local strike teams and to training in Ararat and Longerenong, and whoever you meet you have things to talk about. It might be 1am and you're at a house fire, but you have things in common with people you might not even know.

INTERVIEW BY LEITH HILLARD



# CFA action plan tackles rural decline



PHOTO: RAELENE WILLIAMS

**In the summer 2017 issue of *Brigade* magazine, we looked at rural decline, its impact on our brigades, and what we're doing to address it. In this update, we talk about a new action plan that's been developed following workshops.**

Across Victoria, many communities are increasingly impacted by rural decline, retraction and ageing. These impacts are impacting CFA's frontline service delivery, as available operational and support volunteers are declining and our current volunteer workforce ages. To ensure CFA has the capability to protect life and property in these communities, service delivery innovations are essential.

To address these challenges the CFA Rural Decline and Retraction Steering Committee (consisting of CFA representatives from across North West and West regions and staff from RM Consulting Group) carried out a range of activities, including a literature review and a series of facilitated workshops with key internal and external stakeholders in July and October 2017.

The first workshop brought together CFA volunteers, operational staff and Community Safety staff from districts which are being heavily impacted by rural decline, retraction and ageing.

In the second workshop, CFA was joined by external stakeholders including Victoria Police, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Department of Health, Department of Education, Victorian Farmers Federation, local councils, SES, Regional Partnerships, RMIT, Birchip Cropping Group and Emergency Management Victoria. They discussed the common service delivery challenges and explored opportunities where collaboration may help to drive significant change.

In late November, based on the information gathered at the two workshops, a Rural Population Decline, Retraction and Ageing Action Plan was developed. The Action Plan aims to set the strategic direction for rural decline work in CFA and emergency services more broadly.

The Action Plan proposes a series of initiatives to better understand and address the issues. The goals of the Action Plan are:

- community-led service delivery that increases resilience in rural communities
- inter-agency collaboration
- development of key partnerships with external agencies and organisations
- developing a positive culture within CFA brigades.

Within the plan there are four key action areas:

- Supporting change to allow adaptive and community-led service delivery. This action area focuses on working with the community to better understand the changing environment while developing innovative solutions to meet the individual need.
- Building partnerships to enable collaborative service delivery. This includes a recommendation to create a cross-agency rural decline strategy.
- Developing our leaders to ensure a welcoming and inclusive workplace. It's recognised that carrying out volunteer leadership positions can be challenging, and we want to support the development of our current and future leaders.
- Vehicles, technology and training. Through vehicle suitability assessments, understanding of alternative vehicle options and contribution to research and development activities, we aim to provide a local input from the Wimmera and Mallee regions.

To support the adoption of the Action Plan there will be some additional activities during 2018 to help CFA better understand the impacts of rural decline, retraction and ageing at two distinct levels within CFA.

The first will involve working with selected communities to gain an understanding of the local changes, challenges and impacts on the community posed by rural decline, retraction and ageing. This key activity is about providing local opportunity to contribute to an adaptive and community-led service delivery. Through this work, CFA will establish partnerships with external organisations that are also focused on addressing service delivery in rural Victoria.

The second key activity looks to ensure we have an organisational focus on this emerging issue. We will bring together various sectors within CFA to improve organisational collaboration and to support clear direction and focus across all areas of CFA to support volunteers and communities in areas experiencing decline, retraction and ageing.

Volunteers attending the ESF Volunteer Leaders Forum at the end of April will also have an opportunity to contribute to the program through rural decline workshops being hosted by Volunteer Sustainability Regional Managers Karen Marini (North West Region) and Raelene Williams (West Region).

# Rowville's new slip-on

**What do you do when your current slip-on is 17 years old and no longer up for the job? You get your volunteers to organise barbecues and trivia nights, rattle tins at local events, and rely on the marvellous support of the Rowville community.**

The Land Rover Discovery, acquired in 2001, has done some amazing service, including travelling all over Victoria and once supported South Australia during one of its worst fire seasons. But in 2015, the brigade decided it needed a new slip-on and set out to raise \$100,000.

Over a few months and several meetings, a committee thought about the future needs of the brigade and came up with a design.

Fast forward to February 2018, and the brigade has taken delivery of an Iveco 4x4 Daily. Some of the reasons this truck was chosen include:

- the ability to carry more people in comfort
- increased water capacity (550 litres)
- new Davey diesel pump
- larger storage lockers for more equipment
- allows for future upgrades such as crew protection system
- Better off-road ability due to 24 gears, larger tyres and greater ground clearance
- More safety features.



PHOTOS: MATT BELL



The Daily is a dual cab configuration with an all-new ECE-R29-rated cabin, along with a revised Euro 6-rated engine. It has a truck-derived chassis with side members made from special steel with a 5mm thick C section, and permanent all-wheel drive transmission with three available differential locks.

"It's a huge benefit for the local community because it has the capability to go anywhere, and can be used as a first-attack vehicle in

places where a tanker can't go," said Chairman of the Slip-on Development Committee Pat Van Kalken.

"We'd like to thank Andrew Webb from CFA Engineering for his support, and the Rowville community, especially local businesses, for their financial contributions."

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL

# Greta brigade finds new Juniors

**Twenty years ago, there were several kids at every farm in the Greta community, south of Wangaratta. But now, the school bus at Greta travels half its route before collecting a single student. For the local brigade, with a long successful history in rural competitions, this was a problem.**

As Greta Fire Brigade members watched the make-up of their community change, leading to fewer youngsters available to join the brigade, they knew something had to be done. So local volunteers decided to hold a community event in a neighbouring area to recruit more youngsters.

The nearby communities of Oxley and Milawa have a different situation. These towns are growing rapidly and the two schools are thriving. Both towns have a lot of new housing and, importantly, plenty of young families. This rapid growth created an interesting situation that isn't common in small communities – CFA wasn't well connected with this new community group. The residents socialised and worked in Wangaratta, only 14km away, and didn't consider themselves at risk of fire. They had never considered volunteering with CFA.

In mid-January 2018, with the temperature still well over 40°C at 6pm, it seemed unlikely that many people would attend the Oxley Family Fun Day. Thankfully, the trees provided a bit of shade, and cars started pulling up.

Many local residents came along to discuss their local fire safety concerns with the community safety team on site. Members of Oxley Fire Brigade met a few new residents and recruited three new members who were available when they needed them most.

The day was also successful for Greta. The kids that came along had a lot of fun, and four decided to join Greta brigade and compete in the Juniors competitions. The brigade expects more will join in the future.

By working together across brigade boundaries, all the brigades benefitted.

STORY CRAIG HEARSON



PHOTO: CRAIG HEARSON

# Upwey's big birthday party

**Upwey Fire Brigade is the first in the Dandenong Ranges to celebrate 100 years, and has a proud and prominent record of service, innovation and strong membership.**

Brigade members were thrilled with the success of its centenary festival at the end of February.

The weekend events began with a historical and memorabilia afternoon tea for current and ex-members, followed by a formal reception for 200 people on Saturday evening. As well as brigade members, the reception was attended by Emergency Management Commissioner Craig Lapsley, District 13 Operations Manager David Renkin and Operations Officer Andrew Booth.

The current brigade captain and former captains spoke at the function about their memories and challenges during the periods of their leadership, which was a fascinating way to discover more about the brigade's history.

The procession down Main Street on Sunday featured a variety of old and new fire trucks, former and current brigade members, and even a fly-past by a helitak. The annual billy cart races gave the onlookers something else to cheer about. Then the fire station was opened to the community so they could look at the historical and memorabilia display.

One of the brigade's former captains, Ron Blood, was the first group officer of the Dandenong Ranges Group and contributed to the introduction of the 'Gunga Din' fitting (named after the water carrier in Rudyard Kipling's poem) which enabled pumpers to draw water from multiple tankers without interruption. This fitting and one of the associated fittings, a 63mm-50mm twin female, were later adopted by CFA.

The brigade was also prominent in the introduction of HF radios in the local area and, more recently, was the first fully volunteer brigade to use thermal imaging cameras and other specialist equipment.

A book about Upwey brigade (written by a local historian) and a one-hour video featuring media and local brigade footage were also released over the weekend. They can be purchased by emailing [book\\_sales@upweycfa.org.au](mailto:book_sales@upweycfa.org.au).



STORY CLIFF PANCUTT

# New brigade for Ballarat

**Operations at a temporary fire station for career firefighters went live on 8 December 2017 in Ballarat suburb Lucas. A new, permanent fire station will be built this year.**

The permanent station will have four engine bays and 10 bedrooms.

District 15 Operations Manager Brett Boatman said Lucas was one of the newest suburbs in Ballarat, with significant residential and infrastructure growth, so increasing service delivery in this area was a priority for the community.

"The population in Lucas has grown to more than 7,000 since it was established in 2011, and with new housing developments, a shopping centre and other infrastructure developments underway, it's likely the number and complexity of emergency incidents will increase," Brett said.

"Firefighters will have access to modern facilities and the latest emergency management equipment, including a new heavy pumper and trained personnel and equipment to respond to emergency medical response incidents."

Until the new station is ready, Lucas firefighters' home is a modified warehouse in Delacombe. The fit-out includes portables, plumbing, electrical and IT infrastructure and temporary walls.

"Building a brand new fire station is a complex and time-consuming process, so these temporary arrangements allow us to bring additional career firefighters into the area to service the community while the bricks and mortar are laid," Brett said.

STORY BRIE SNARE



PHOTO: BRIE SNARE

## Champs – have your say

You're invited to complete a survey to share with us your experiences of being involved with the Championships and competitions. The survey ([surveymonkey.com/r/championships1](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/championships1)) closes at the end of April and all responses are confidential.

# Wodonga West annual awards

**At the Wodonga West annual awards in December 2018, Max Gray and Kerry Smillie were recognised with life memberships, and a brigade meeting room was named in honour of the brigade's founding families.**

Max's CFA journey started in 1955 at Ararat as a volunteer and he transitioned to staff in 1966. Max's firefighting career saw him stationed at Geelong City, Traralgon, Wodonga and Bendigo before becoming a volunteer at Wodonga West when he retired. Max has held many roles at Wodonga West including lieutenant. He's currently the apparatus officer.

Operations Manager Paul King spoke fondly of his long association with Max.

"From the very first time I met Max, when he was officer in charge of Wodonga Fire Brigade in 1979, I looked up to him as a wiser, courageous and generous officer who treated his people with respect and fully encompassed what we now know as the CFA values," Paul said.

Past Captain Kerry Smillie was also honoured with a brigade life membership. Kerry led the brigade for 12 years through its transition



PHOTO: MARK SLATER

from a small rural brigade to a busy brigade responding up to 300 times a year. Current Captain Ross Coyle, described this period as the greatest period of change in the brigade's history and Kerry's legacy.

The brigade also acknowledged the contribution of generations of the Coyle family by naming the meeting room at the new station The Coyle Family Meeting Room in their honour.

Wodonga Group Officer Terry Darmody said the Coyle family had been part of CFA for close to a century.

STORY TONY CATTERMOLE

# New comms for the north-east

Wangaratta Fire Brigade is about to put its new state-of-the-art mobile command vehicle (MCV) to work. It replaces an MCV that's in its 32nd year of operation. As well as covering north-east Victoria, it may well travel interstate in the future with a taskforce to ensure efficient communications.

The vehicle is one of two new MCVs, with the other being stationed at Patterson River.

The custom-built body sits on an Iveco Eurocargo chassis, and the electronics onboard were supplied by British company Excelebrate Technology and CFA Comms.

The MCV features a full suite of integrated command and communications systems including access to CFA software via mobile satellite or broadband. Information is displayed on four large touch screens in the rear of the vehicle and one on the outside for external briefing of personnel.

In the front section of the vehicle are communications systems that can handle three CFA radios, UHF, aircraft and SMR trunking radio simultaneously.

Other features include a standalone mobile phone system, a suite of cameras (mast camera, two deployable cameras, and two body cameras), and a 1.8-metre 2000W halogen floodlight on the roof.



The unit can run off 240v power and has a built-in 18kva generator, but can also operate on its back-up 880 amh battery system.

All these features allow the MCV to be used in command and communications functions at most emergencies that CFA brigades respond to, and being on the fireground means it functions as a mobile local command facility.

This MCV can be used by other emergency services if required.

STORY PAUL SCRAGG



PHOTOS: PAUL SCRAGG

## CFA launches Spirit of CFA Awards

The inaugural Spirit of CFA Awards were launched on 16 February 2018 by Chief Executive Officer Dr Paul Smith and Chief Officer Steve Warrington.

The awards, which are proudly supported by BankVic and the Victorian Government Valuing Volunteers Program, were initiated to publicly recognise outstanding achievements and significant contributions by CFA staff and volunteers on a daily basis to CFA, local communities and the State of Victoria. The awards further enhance CFA's values and strategic priorities which are identified in CFA's Annual Plan.

CFA believes this new award scheme has the potential to positively impact members, and improve CFA's standing in the community as an organisation of choice for volunteering and employment. Recognising achievements is an important element of a healthy workforce.

Local communities, organisations, government agencies, brigades, districts and regions are encouraged to nominate individuals or teams for an award. We're especially interested to hear about the quiet achievers in CFA who go about their daily work without any thought of being recognised.

The award categories are:

- Youth Award (proudly presented by BankVic)
- Seniors Award
- Living the Values (Gold Award)
- Inclusion and Fairness Champion Award
- Excellence in Community Engagement Award
- Excellence in Interagency or Group Cooperation Award
- Excellence in Partnership Development Award
- Excellence in Sustainability Planning Award
- Excellence in Innovation Award

To be eligible for the awards, nominees need to reflect CFA values and have made a significant contribution to CFA and the community within the past two years (1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017).

Nominations for this year's awards closed in early April and the winners will be announced at a presentation event in May 2018 in Ballarat.

Thank you to supporting partner BankVic for its sponsorship and presenting the Youth Award.

For more details visit [cfa.vic.gov.au/spiritofcfaawards](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/spiritofcfaawards).

STORY ROZ LONG



# Upper Ferntree Gully's video success

In early December 2017, Upper Ferntree Gully Fire Brigade won the innovation category in the 2017 Fire Awareness Awards.

The four-part series of fire awareness and preparedness videos on the brigade's Facebook page covers bushfire risk, bushfire plans, community alert sirens, and back to school.

Upper Ferntree Gully volunteer Emily Peel had the idea of making a video that was specific to the local area. She pitched the idea to Captain Peter Smith and Second Lieutenant and Community Safety Officer Daryn Redman, who encouraged her to write a script.

"I wrote a script intending it to be one video, but it was way too long," said Emily, "so we decided to split it up. I wanted the videos to be three or four minutes each.

"With the first one, about making a bushfire plan, I thought it was important to show Peter giving a summary of the key issues. We have four trucks and there are around 2,000 homes in the area, so we can't protect everyone."

The aim was to give people targeted and relevant information so they didn't need to search through the comprehensive information on the CFA website.

"I wrote scripts for all the videos, filmed myself with a camera on a tripod, then spent quite a few hours editing them. I wanted the videos to appeal to local people, so I included many local landmarks."



PHOTO: DUNCAN RUSSELL

Emily also designed some specific content, such as a map of the area showing all the local schools and positions of community sirens.

She was really proud to attend the awards night and win the innovation category.

"All the submissions were of a high quality and we didn't expect to win. When the winner was announced, it didn't register at first that we'd won."

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL

## Bunnings barbecue raises \$60,000 for CFA

Once again, Victorians headed to their local Bunnings store in February to buy a snag to support CFA and SES volunteers.

More than \$126,000 was raised on the day, with just over \$60,000 donated to 41 CFA brigades.

Monbulk Fire Brigade, who took part in the barbecue (pictured right with Bunnings' staff) raised around \$3,260 to go towards the purchase of a thermal imaging camera.

Monbulk Captain Simon Schroder thanked the Bayswater Bunnings store for its support and for allowing the brigade to take part in the event.

"It was an exciting day for our brigade," said Simon. "Members of the brigade's Auxiliary ran the event and were supported by firefighters on the day. Our tanker proved popular with the children as well as their parents.

"In addition to fundraising activities, we set up an information stand and talked to residents about fire safety."



CFA thanks Bunnings and its customers for their ongoing support and for providing members with the opportunity to raise funds for their brigade.

STORY NANCY THOMPSON

### New logo request form

If you need the CFA logo artwork for brigade shirts, marquees or other brigade-related products, you can now order it by visiting CFA Online here: [cfa.vic.gov.au/logorequest](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/logorequest)

You can also use this form to request Fire Service Star and CFA emblem artwork.

# Community day welcomes career firefighters to Lara

Lara Fire Station enjoyed a day of food, fun and family entertainment on 10 December 2017 to welcome career firefighters to the community. Twenty-five career firefighters joined volunteers at the station from 8 December, along with a new pumper and tanker.

Around 100 people came along to Lara brigade's community day to enjoy a free morning tea and giveaways, while the children bounced away on the jumping castle, played a giant Connect 4 game and tried their hand at putting out a fire on a simulator.

There were drill demonstrations, and community safety information was on hand to update community members about the latest fire safety messages.

Attending the event were City of Greater Geelong Councillor Anthony Aitken, Emergency Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley and CFA South West Assistant Chief Officer Rohan Luke.

Following the public event, around 60 volunteer and career firefighters and their families got together for a welcome barbecue to get to know each other in a social setting.

Lara Fire Station Officer In Charge Geoff McGill said the event was a success in terms of recognising the contribution of volunteer members and introducing career firefighters to the brigade in a positive way.

"Our volunteers are so dedicated to the Lara community, responding to around 350 incidents a year," said Geoff. "CFA has increased support for volunteers in line with community growth by integrating the brigade."

"It was so good to see everyone mingling in a low-key environment."

Lara Fire Brigade First Lieutenant Roger Buckle agreed the day was a success, adding it provided an opportunity to showcase the latest equipment and facilities at the station.

"We had a lot of people come through during the day to see renovations at the station, while meeting the new career firefighters and chatting with volunteers," Roger said.

"The community day was a way we could reflect on our rich history, and look forward to building a strong future to protect the community we are so proud to serve."



# Members who wear more than one hat

Some people serve the community in their day job as well as in their spare time. *Brigade* magazine talked to three volunteers who are also police officers.

Stories by Duncan Russell

## Ken Dwight, Woods Point, District 23

**Once a thriving gold-mining town, Woods Point now attracts trail bikers and four-wheel drive enthusiasts. Among the handful of small buildings lining the high street is a one-member police station run by Leading Senior Constable Ken Dwight, who's also the town's third lieutenant with the fire brigade.**

"The community is my job" just about sums up Ken's commitment to Woods Point and the surrounding area. He's been a police officer and CFA volunteer for almost 30 years and an SES volunteer for around 20 years.

"I pretty much do everything along with the other brigade members and our ambulance ACOs [ambulance community officers], but I'm usually the first port of call," said Ken. "It's the best job I've had in the police force."

"The nearest SES units are Marysville and Mansfield, so I'm usually the first at an incident. The SES rarely gets up here so we do our best."

According to Ken, being a CFA member helps his police work.

"Being an experienced bush and urban firefighter is a great benefit to my role as a police officer. When you work in the regions, you become more a part of the community by being a firefighter. You work with and get to know the local people, and that helps me as a police officer."

"I can't always be someone's best friend when being a policeman, but I have to get on with people and being a volunteer helps."

Ken has been at Woods Point for 13 years, so played an active role in the 2006 fire that threatened the town, as well as the 2009 fires.

"In December 2006, I looked out of the window just as lightning struck the top of the ridge across the river from my office. Luckily, choppers put that fire out, but there was a terrible battle with the Mt Terrible fire. It just kept going relentlessly."

"It came over the hills from the north-west and came towards the river. It got right up to the back of houses."

"During the fire, I was doing everything I could. I helped the brigade and was running around warning people throughout my patrol area."

"After the fire, Woods Point was a green teardrop surrounded by black." If that wasn't enough to deal with, a few months later, Woods Point was hit with floods.

"We lost the main road and we were cut off because of landslides. It was a mess," said Ken.

But despite being involved in everything – or perhaps because of it – Ken would like more people to wear two hats.



"I work alone and rely a lot on CFA and SES members, and I love it. I'd encourage other police officers to have a go and join a CFA brigade. I've learned a lot as a firefighter and in road rescue with CFA, and it's a great experience."



## Brian Dalrymple, Warragul, District 9

**“There’s definitely a benefit from being both a CFA volunteer and a police officer. Lots of pros,” said Brian Dalrymple, captain of Warragul Fire brigade for the past three years and a senior constable at Trafalgar.**

“Trafalgar’s response zone is fairly rural. It includes Trafalgar, Yarragon, Willow Grove and Thorpdale, and some smaller communities. Many people in these areas are CFA members, so I have a fair bit of credibility with the community because of my involvement with CFA.”

Brian recognises that CFA believes in doing effective community engagement, and he’s adopted that attitude in his police work.

“I stop and talk to kids on the street and do kinder visits,” he said, “I go to a local primary school once a month to engage with kids. I talk to them about laws, bike safety, stranger danger, littering and respectful behaviour.”

Brian is also passing on crucial CFA knowledge to his police colleagues at Warragul and Trafalgar, as well as Highway Patrol and officers from two smaller stations.

“Police don’t have much training in wildfires, so every year at the start of the fire season I run several wildfire awareness sessions at Warragul Police Station for police officers in the area.

“It’s important for police officers doing traffic management points to know about hazardous trees, so I also ran a hazardous trees session which ended with a detailed discussion.

At Warragul brigade, Brian has a committed management team with many skills.

“I’ve got a strong brigade with five lieutenants who have enough experience to handle anything and everything,” Brian said.

“A major highway runs through our police response zone and there are many regional and rural roads, which means there are quite a few serious accidents. In these areas, CFA is often the first agency on scene. I know CFA is not just about fighting fires; at an accident we can provide first-aid, use a defibrillator, set up traffic control, anything really.

“You can ask a CFA volunteer to do pretty much anything and they’ll have a go.”



PHOTO: PETER HOLMAN

## Stuart Johnston, Mallacoota, District 11

**“My primary role is the police and when I’m working I become an emergency response coordinator,” said Stuart Johnston. “I’m happy to stand back and look at the bigger picture, but when I’m not working I’m also happy to get on a truck to fight fires.”**

Between 2011 and 2015, Stuart did two two-year stints as Mallacoota Fire Brigade captain. He’s also a station commander/sergeant in charge at Cann River, and has been a police officer since 1985.

“I’m the only fire investigator in this end of the world, so as a police officer I can be called to a fire if it’s suspicious, but then switch into the fire investigator role for CFA.

“One night when I was working for the police, I saw the glow of a fire which turned out to be a car. I called the brigade. After the fire was extinguished, I grabbed some BA from the truck and looked inside the car to determine if it was suspicious.”

Stuart can see how his police role benefits his CFA role.

“As a sergeant, I’m managing welfare and ethics. Part of the Police Code of Conduct and Ethics is a guide to ethical decision making called SELF, which stands for scrutiny, ethical, lawful and fair. It’s easy to transfer this to CFA and the running of a brigade.

As the population soars during the Christmas period, more police officers are drafted into East Gippsland.

“People from other locations bring their behavioural standards to Mallacoota and we sometimes need to coach them so they understand what it means to be in a small country town. If they cause trouble, they are likely to be identified and will be dealt with.

“From a CFA viewpoint, these holiday-makers may not understand their obligations regarding camp fires, for example, especially in the

Fire Danger Period. We have local brigade volunteers who carry out community engagement by setting up displays in the main street and running fire awareness sessions. This works well.”



PHOTO: ANGUS WEBB



## Finding a role that suits your interests

**Community safety coordinators, vegetation managers, equal opportunity officers – CFA members are using their work skills and interests to support their brigades and communities in many different ways. *Brigade* magazine talked to four volunteers with diverse roles.**

It was a chance meeting with Chief Officer Steve Warrington that led **Michele Abbott** from Truganina Fire Brigade on the path to her current role with the brigade. “Back in 2013 Steve challenged me to bring Truganina to the forefront of community safety,” Michele said.

Today, Michele holds the position of multicultural liaison officer (MLO) in the brigade, the only known volunteer MLO in the state. She works closely with an ever growing and ever diverse community on the urban fringe.

“It’s a challenging role, but so rewarding. Ninety per cent of the children I work with are from non-English-speaking backgrounds,”

Michele said. “I love hearing their stories and helping them understand what CFA does – and it’s starting to pay off. We’re building confidence in the uniform and the community is more comfortable in approaching us as they understand we’re here to help.”

**Libby Burnett** from Barwon Heads Fire Brigade uses knowledge gained from her role as a senior corporate affairs executive to plan, develop, and deliver social media content through the Barwon Heads brigade Facebook page.

“Posting locally relevant content, such as ‘Faces of Barwon Heads’ (brigade member profiles) and ‘Throwback Thursday’ builds the brigade’s profile in the community,” Libby said. “This, in turn, supports community safety messaging, fundraising activities and open days. Recently, we posted about reduced speed limits around emergency services using a photo taken at a local incident. It reached over 8,500 people.

“I’m only in Barwon Heads on the weekends,

**Top left:** David Farthing

PHOTO: KATIE DAWSON

**Top right:** Michele Abbott

**Bottom left:** Joseph Nasr on the left

**Bottom right:** Libby Burnett

but undertaking a role such as this allows me to actively participate in my brigade wherever I am by using my corporate affairs skills.”

She also uses these skills in her role on the Bellarine Group Community Safety Committee where she manages the media portfolio. “I recently developed a presentation for the committee using data from the 2017 Sensis Social Media Report, which provided an overview of who uses social media and when and how brigades can best use it to engage their community.”

“Understanding what a brigade needs and the skills members bring can support the brigade, its members and the community,” said **David Farthing**, the equal opportunity [EO] officer (and secretary/treasurer) at Rye Fire Brigade. “At the last brigade election, the BMT recognised that the physical needs of our members were taken care of through OH&S, but the mental wellbeing could be better supported. So the EO role was developed to become the first point of contact if members needed to chat.”

Edithvale Fire Brigade has a large and diverse membership base, and **Joseph Nasr**, the brigade’s manager of people and culture, believes it’s important to give strong support to its members.

“Three years ago, we took the time to have a look at our structure. We put in place additional support roles and redefined existing positions, allowing the captain and lieutenants to manage readiness and response,” said Joseph. “My role is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of members, conflict resolution, recruitment and encouraging diversity throughout the brigade, as well as overseeing leadership development, facilitating volunteer pathways, and succession planning.

“It’s a really interesting role. It has its challenges but is very rewarding. Watching new recruits succeed and move through as a cohort, liaising with members to support them in their family/work and brigade commitments, and keeping in touch with members is very satisfying.”

There are many brigade roles that support the broader objectives of the brigade, help with recruitment, retention and recognition of members and deliver enhanced services to the community.

# Project to fire up women

Grants have been made available in North West Region (NWR) to develop local initiatives that support and celebrate the contributions of female volunteers. Called the Firing up Women Small Grants Program, so far seven initiatives have been funded.

The grants also recognise the passionate people who genuinely care about the work they do in their local communities.

An initiative of the NWR Volunteer Sustainability Team, the project was funded with support from the Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability grants program. The Firing Up Women Small Grants Program invited brigades and groups to apply for funding in response to the low representation of women in the region, particularly in leadership roles.

In late February, the first of the projects got underway with Goornong Fire Brigade holding the first of two workshops in their Empowering Women in Small Rural Brigades project (pictured).

"I started out with an idea and ended up becoming part of an amazing group of women!" said Goornong brigade Secretary Christine Carty.

"I'm so humbled by the achievements of the women who attended the workshop, what they were willing to share and how they supported each other. We had lots of laughs, learned from each other and we found out that we are not alone anymore.

"It felt so empowering to have a sense of belonging with other women who understand my journey as a female firefighter. After today, I finally feel that it's OK to allow myself to be proud about being a female firefighter."

Other brigades to be funded under the Firing Up Women program include Riddells Creek, Taradale, Malmsbury, D14 HQ Brigade East, Dumosa, plus Gannawarra and Waranga groups. All are planning events over the coming months.



"I was really impressed with the quality of the applications we received," said North West Region Assistant Chief Officer Gavin Thompson. "It showed brigades understand women are underrepresented in CFA. It's exciting to hear about the great work our brigade members are doing in their local communities and their ideas about how things can improve."

STORY BETH TAYLOR

# Eildon's smoke alarm initiative

**Following a devastating fire on the Murray River at Echuca that destroyed 10 houseboats in December 2017, Eildon Fire Brigade and District 12 Headquarters set up a houseboat safety initiative. With more than 800 houseboats on Lake Eildon alone there's huge potential for disaster.**

As part of the initiative, District 12 Community Education Coordinator Matt Ahern gave Eildon Fire Brigade 800 9-volt smoke alarms to hand out to houseboat owners on Lake Eildon.

"Houseboats are not required under legislation or by maritime regulations to have smoke alarms installed," said Matt. "Yet in most cases houseboats have many more risks associated with them such as their lightweight construction materials, on-board flammable liquids (petrol/diesel), generators, LPG and barbecues.

"All of these risks, combined with people sleeping and living in a small space, are a recipe for disaster."

Eildon brigade members approached the five boat clubs at Lake Eildon and offered them a free smoke alarm for each houseboat. These 9-volt alarms were no longer needed by CFA's smoke alarm replacement program, because CFA now supplies and installs only 10-year lithium battery alarms.

"As houseboats fall outside legislation, Eildon brigade thought this was an opportunity to make them safer," said Matt.

"Fire safety is important no matter where you live, work or play – even on houseboats," said Eildon Fire Brigade Captain Nicki Lund (pictured). "Over the Christmas holiday period, we made sure everyone who was enjoying their time on a houseboat on Lake Eildon was safer, with the gift of a smoke alarm."

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL



# Twenty-five years of Challenge

**Celebrating 25 years of leadership and teamwork, participants of Challenge 2018 recently graduated after 12 days of rigorous physical activity, networking and education.**

After time in the classroom, a different type of challenge began when participants spent seven days in and around the Snowy River doing white water rafting, caving, hiking and abseiling. Limited to the bare necessities of life, the group had to sleep rough. The absence of mobile phones gave many participants a new understanding of what it's like to lose touch with the outside world.

For the past 25 years, CFA has given members the opportunity to participate in the Challenge program, allowing individuals to gain vital leadership skills and to prioritise their personal development. CFA's



values are instilled in the program and participants are encouraged to set goals and discover their own guiding principles and how to put these into practice.

Uulani Miller, a volunteer from Gruyere Fire Brigade said taking part in the program was an inspiration. "Our facilitator showed us how to embrace who we are and how to be confident," Uulani said. "She wanted to test our agility and have a deeper understanding of different types of people, learning how to respond in different situations so we become strong and compassionate leaders."

For Hamilton Fire Brigade volunteer Liam Kavanagh, it was an honour and privilege to attend Challenge 2018.

"We were pushed to our limits both physically and mentally. The program was life changing," said Liam. "I learned a lot about myself and my limitations and I was amazed at my own strength as I was able to see just how far I could go.

"We entered Challenge 2018 as a group of strangers and departed as a team. Through our determination and the support we received, I will hold my head high and be proud of the work I do with CFA now and in the future."

STORY NEVA LAW



PHOTOS: SUPPLIED BY BRUCE TABERNER



**Bretrac Engineering** manufactures Australian-made, high-quality fittings and fixtures, including PPC hanging units (pictured), hose storage units (fixed and mobile), shelving and much more.

We make to order to a brigade or unit's individual needs or space requirements, using plain steel, stainless steel or aluminium. Plain steel products can be finished in zinc, chrome, galvanised, or powder coated in a colour of your choice.

Delivery can be arranged in Victoria or Australia-wide if required.

We employ a number of CFA members, so understand the needs of emergency service brigades and units.

Contact us to discuss your needs or to obtain a no-obligation free quote at competitive prices.

**Bretrac Engineering**

**15 Selby Road,  
Woori Yallock 3139.**

**(03) 5964 6477**

**bretrac@bigpond.com**



ADVERTISEMENT

# EMR reunion in Rowville

**It was a special morning on 30 November 2017 when CFA career firefighters from Rowville Fire Brigade and paramedics were reunited with a man whose life they helped save earlier in the year.**

Emergency medical response (EMR) is a joint program between Ambulance Victoria and Victorian fire services, where firefighters co-respond with Ambulance Victoria to medical emergencies to help treat unconscious, non-breathing and pulseless patients.

The EMR program is designed to improve survival from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.

On 15 May 2017, Andrew O'Neill was found by his wife Julie unresponsive in bed. After calling Triple Zero (000), Julie moved Andrew to the floor with the help of their son and started CPR, with guidance from the phone operator, until emergency services arrived.

First responder and Rowville Station Officer David Black said early intervention is key and the earlier CPR can be started the better.

"Once we arrived on scene our crew of four took over administering CPR from Andrew's wife and used a defibrillator to reestablish a pulse," David said.

Ambulance Victoria paramedics arrived within minutes and worked with CFA firefighters for almost an hour to revive Andrew. He was

treated by paramedics and taken by ambulance to hospital for further treatment.

Andrew said the incident came as a shock, particularly considering he had been kicking the football with his son just 40 minutes earlier.

"I was feeling a bit unwell. I just thought that perhaps I was tired so I decided to go to bed and rest," Andrew said.

"About an hour-and-a-half after going to bed, my wife came to check on me, and that's when she found me unresponsive.

"If Julie hadn't checked in on me then and there, I probably wouldn't be here today. For her to actually check if I was breathing was very lucky."

Andrew spent 10 days in hospital following the incident, two of which were in an induced coma.

The morning tea at Rowville Fire Station was an opportunity for firefighters, paramedics, Andrew and his family to get to know one another and for firefighters and paramedics to explain what happened on the night of the incident.

"It's great to be involved in a positive outcome, especially when the member of the public involved is willing to make contact," David said.

"Firefighters take on many and varied roles. If a firefighter arrives at your door for

a life-threatening medical emergency, it's important not to turn them away. Every second counts in emergencies."

Reflecting on the incident, Andrew said it's hard to put into words how he feels.

"It's not very often you get to meet a bunch of people who don't know you but who saved your life," Andrew said.

"If the systems weren't in place for them to be there so quickly, then anything could have happened.

"It's a really surreal feeling knowing you can be here one minute and not the next."

Andrew said he's recovering well and is enjoying getting back to the things he loves.

"It's been great spending time with my family. I've been able to get back out on the boat and go fishing with my sons."

EMR is a Victorian Government funded program being rolled out to all CFA's integrated brigades over three years (2016-19).

"It's fantastic to see the EMR program being implemented and supported by the Victorian Government," said David. "It's money well spent as far as I'm concerned when we have positive results like we have had with Andrew."

STORY RACHEL JENKINS



**Left:** (from left to right) Station Officer David Black, Leading Firefighter Peter Decker, Firefighter Matt Dawson, Andrew O'Neill, Paramedic Kevin White

PHOTO: RACHEL JENKINS

# The power of a photo



**Sally Patterson is a Lismore Fire Brigade firefighter and the secretary/treasurer of Lismore Group. She's also very handy with an SLR camera and loves recording the work of her CFA colleagues.**

"Photography has a language of its own," said Sally. "It captures a split second that's gone forever, but when the photo is shared it can make people remember what they've long forgotten, or give people a glimpse of something they haven't seen or experienced before."

**Above:** Hot fire training with foam at Peshurst  
**Below:** A costly lowloader/crane fire  
**Below right:** Break burning standing phalaris

"A photo always remembers the little things. I like the way photos visually document the continued changes implemented by CFA in the way members approach firefighting today."

Sally selected three of her favourite photos to share with *Brigade* magazine readers.

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL



# Real training in a virtual world

Ongoing development in virtual reality (VR) technology is rapidly changing how we learn new skills and, for a number of years, CFA has been offering increasing levels of experiential learning using computer simulation.

CFA highlighted both VR and computer simulation learning in interactive displays at the Urban Junior State Championships at Warrnambool in February, the Urban Senior Championships in Bendigo in mid-March, and will also be showing the technology at the Rural Championships in Warrnambool 7-8 April.

On display was the range of simulators we currently use. In addition, attendees at the Champs had the opportunity to use a VR system developed by FLAIM Systems from Deakin University, known as FLAIM.

The FLAIM immersive virtual experience puts the user into a fire situation and provides haptic feedback through such things as realistic jet reaction effects and fire scenarios. It can be used to engage the community and let them feel what it's like to be a firefighter in a fire scenario. The system can also record heart and breathing rates, stress level, body temperature, and branch flow rate. Onlookers can view on a large screen what the user is seeing and experiencing.

At the Champs people who tried the VR system were given structural jackets, and they were asked for feedback to help CFA further develop the use of VR. We were interested in knowing whether these tools would help community members understand what it's like being a firefighter, and whether they could be used to identify future firefighters.

To watch a video of the VR and computer simulation in action, go to <https://youtu.be/GZpFPlaEa38>

STORY AARON STOCKTON



PHOTO: AARON STOCKTON

# BA training in Emerald

**With Emerald Hall due for demolition, seven brigades took the opportunity to do some training in late January 2018.**

After VicFire was notified, three smoke machines were fired up and the hall complex quickly filled with smoke. Then the action began for members from Emerald, Cockatoo, Menzies Creek, Sassafras-Ferry Creek, Kallista-The Patch, Bayswater and Yellingbo brigades.

Visibility inside the hall was extremely low. You couldn't see your feet, and getting down low wasn't any better. There were also a lot of hazards inside the hall, including tables, ladders, marquees, stairs, and the old stage.

After entering the building, crews had to rely on proper search techniques and careful foot placement to find their way around the hall to locate one of the rescue dummies.

The exercise was also an opportunity for members not yet qualified in breathing apparatus (BA) to experience wearing BA. These newer

members were mentored and supervised inside the building by a qualified wearer. For some, it was their first time in a smoky environment.

Bayswater BA and Yellingbo rehab unit were at the control point area, and Emerald Salvage ran the BA cleaning station.

As the hall is in a highly visible location on a busy roundabout, a Facebook campaign was conducted beforehand to advise the community about the possibility of smoke in the area.

Overall, the exercise ran very smoothly and was a great learning experience for a lot of members performing roles they had not previously done. As crews exited the building, there were plenty of smiles and a sense of accomplishment from participating in the exercise.

To watch a video of the training go to [facebook.com/emeraldfirebrigade/videos/2061054267268854](https://www.facebook.com/emeraldfirebrigade/videos/2061054267268854)

STORY ADRIAN TRIMNELL



PHOTO: RYAN LEWIS



PHOTO: GLENN SNASHALL

# How Juniors changed Josh's life

**Before fourteen-year-old Josh Barker joined the Juniors at Warrnambool Fire Brigade, he was a quiet boy who was happy to keep to himself. But all that changed when he became a member of the running team.**

Simone Kinross, the Junior Development Leader at the brigade, is proud to have recruited Josh to the Juniors and has really enjoyed watching him develop.

"Josh came to the open day for our new station and I started talking to him about fire safety," said Simone. "I then asked his age and told him he was the perfect age for the Junior Program.

"We had a chat about the program and he started the next week!

"I love to watch the kids grow and change. Josh is a lovely kid. Cheeky, but lovely.

And he's changed so much. His confidence has grown and he's much more sociable.

"He's so supportive of everyone. He's happy to help other kids one-on-one, and takes them under his wing," continued Simone. "He picks things up quickly and shares his knowledge with other Juniors.

"We can no longer rely on generations of the same family keeping the brigade going. We need kids with no previous association with the brigade – like Josh."

Josh, pictured below, and with his friend Declan Gibson (on the right of the photo), jumped at the chance of joining the brigade.

"I decided to join the team after seeing the Junior members demonstrate at our local fire station open day," said Josh. "I knew I would enjoy it, and since joining the running team I've loved everything about it.

"I love being part of a team and participating in competitions. I've made new friends by going interstate and through representing CFA at Relay For Life, and I love having Simone as a coach. She just makes everything so fun and that's why I enjoy it so much.

"Simone suggested I apply to represent CFA at the Australian Fire Cadet Championships in Sydney. I was very lucky to be one of 12 kids given the great opportunity to go to Sydney in October 2017. I had such a great time and have made some great friends for life. I learned a lot and feel like I gained in confidence."



PHOTOS: SIMONE KINROSS

Josh's proud mum, Lyn, is seeing her son turn into a "fine young man". "Josh has grown so much since becoming involved with CFA," Lyn said. "He was a boy who never really enjoyed contact team sports like footy, but since joining the Warrnambool Junior Running Team, and having Simone as a coach, he always looks forward to training and competing and being part of a team.

"He's met some great kids with similar interests and it's wonderful seeing him have such a good time, enjoying himself, and participating in something that he really loves doing."

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL



# New Juniors in the south-east

*Lisa Peters from the Volunteer Sustainability Team describes how she helped get two new Junior brigades off the ground.*

**Late last year, on behalf of the Volunteer Sustainability team, I had the absolute pleasure of attending two inductions for newly-established Junior brigades in South East Region. Trafalgar and Nar Nar Goon brigades recruited Junior leaders late last year and their new groups of youngsters began the program in February.**

I helped facilitate the two induction sessions and was impressed by the brigade members' positivity and important feedback. The excitement at the meetings was infectious and the level of enthusiasm was high. Even though the information about regulations and procedures was a little dry, the members absorbed everything patiently and attentively.

These volunteers are committed to make their new programs a fantastic place for young people. Program schedules have been developed for both brigades, and they really have a drive and passion to encourage and include young members at their brigades. Their programs will be informative and interactive.

The Junior Program is an excellent opportunity for young members of the community to attend a fun program and learn a new set of skills in firefighting, leadership and social interaction. These programs can also have a significant impact on the viability of brigades, particularly in rural areas where succession planning can be a challenge. As youngsters from families new to an area get involved in the program, it may encourage the parents to come along and find out what it's all about.

Nar Nar Goon brigade volunteers Kerri-Ann and Mark Simpson recently joined the brigade, but are longstanding CFA volunteers who ran the Juniors program at Hastings Fire Brigade for many years. Together they bring so much knowledge, understanding and experience and have five Junior leaders to help run their program. They have great ideas and new innovative sessions for the Junior members. Kerri-Ann said she "enjoys watching the Juniors learn new skills and develop strong confidence in a fun and happy environment".

Kerri-Ann and some of the new Nar Nar Goon Juniors are pictured at the ice-breaker games night.

Melissa Mussared-Horne and Mark Walshe at Trafalgar brigade, supported by their Captain Danny Mynard, are keen to start the program. They've already spoken with the local high school and will contact the local primary schools to encourage youngsters to join the program.

Danny started his firefighting career as a Junior. "I learned so much as a Junior. The skills I developed have helped me as a volunteer and in my personal and professional life," he said.



# Through the ages – Yallourn North/Yallourn





9

- 1 Yallourn Fire Station, 1935
- 2 Yallourn Fire Station, 1948
- 3 Yallourn trucks, 1980s
- 4 Training exercise, 1990s
- 5 Original Yallourn North members, 1955
- 6 Members at open cut mine
- 7 Junior running team members
- 8 Brigade trucks, 1980s
- 9 Current Yallourn North Fire Station
- 10 Rehab unit on scene
- 11 Female brigade members
- 12 Support members, 1985
- 13 Brigade at power station
- 14 Brigade Ford pumper
- 15 Community education



10



11



12



13



14



15

# Emergency Memberlink



Your Emergency Memberlink program is a way for us to recognise your commitment and contribution to emergency services and Victorian communities.



By using Emergency Memberlink, you can receive discounts and benefits on a wide range of products and services in Victoria and interstate.

Details of the offers and full terms and conditions are on the [emergencymemberlink.com.au](http://emergencymemberlink.com.au) website.

To get a Memberlink card, phone 1800 820 037 or register online at [emergencymemberlink.com.au](http://emergencymemberlink.com.au)

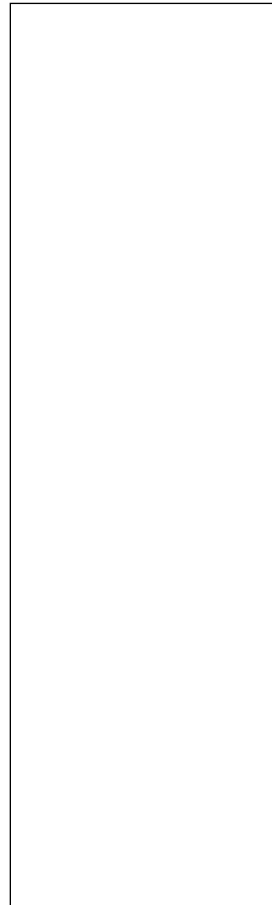
The Memberlink team welcomes feedback about the Memberlink Program and your suggestions about new benefits you think would be of value to you, your family and your colleagues. Phone the team or leave a message on the Facebook page: [facebook.com/emergency-memberlink](https://facebook.com/emergency-memberlink).

## POPULAR OFFERS

- **ADA's Reward Gear** program has a 15% online discount on clothing, camping gear, navigation equipment and everyday essentials.
- Join now and get six weeks free with **Bupa Health Insurance**.
- 10% discount at **The Athlete's Foot**.
- Book a **Contiki Holidays** trip and receive a 5% discount.
- Corporate fleet pricing on Kia vehicles at **Mantello Kia Fawkner**.
- Commercial pricing through **The Good Guys Commercial Division**.
- 20% discount on all **Silver Cross** prams and strollers bought online.
- Great savings on cleaning products from **Kärcher Australia**.
- Save between 10% and 40% on the best available rates at **Wyndham & Ramada** hotels and resorts.
- Discounted passenger fares on **Spirit of Tasmania**.

- Exclusive discounts and offers through the **JB Hi-Fi Family & Friends Program**.
- Pre-book tickets and receive 10% discount on regular excursion train fare, steam & cuisine luncheon and evening dining experience on **Puffing Billy**.
- Discounts available on a range of pre-purchased **Gift Cards** including Woolworths, Coles, Myer, Kmart, Target, Supercheap Auto, Rebel Sport, JB Hi-Fi, Ray's and BCF.
- **Searoad Ferries** offers 10% discount on ferry travel between Sorrento and Queenscliff.
- 15% off the best rates of the day with **Thrifty** car rental.
- **Health Haven Bendigo** has a \$20 discount on a range of natural therapy one-hour treatments.
- **Experience OZ & NZ** offers at least a 10% discount on popular tourist attractions, activities and tours.
- 20% off all food, beverages and retail items at **Zambrero Restaurants**.
- \$50 off your next new booking when you spend over \$1,500 at **Flight Centre**.
- Save money on pre-purchased movie and attraction tickets through the **Memberlink Box Office**.
- \$20 off when you spend \$79 or more on a **RedBalloon** gift or experience.
- **Mantra Group Departure Lounge** offers up to 50% off accommodation at Peppers, Mantra and BreakFree properties.
- 20% off flowers, bouquets and arrangements from **Petals Network**.
- Exclusive access to trade prices through **Harvey Norman Groups & Associations Division**.
- Save 40% on **AIG Travel Insurance**.
- 15% off premium Active Plus membership at **Goodlife Health Clubs**.
- Special offers on **Elgas** LPG bottled gas.
- Products at wholesale prices at **Plantmark**.
- 10% discount on day entry into **Sovereign Hill** for members and their immediate families.
- **Isubscribe** offers 10% off the list price of any magazine subscription.
- 20% off admission at **Werribee Park**.

If undeliverable  
please return to:  
Printelligence  
11 O'Hara Street  
Blackburn  
Victoria 3130



*Brigade* magazine is published by CFA Communications & Government Relations, PO Box 701, Mt Waverley Vic  
**Manager Member Communication and Engagement:**  
Brad Thomas

**Editor:** Duncan Russell  
duncan.russell@cfa.vic.gov.au  
03 9262 8978

**Graphic designer:**  
Mark Hammond

**Print manager:**  
Printelligence

Articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of CFA. The Editor reserves the right to edit articles.

You can update your address or email details, or cancel *Brigade* magazine, by clicking on the 'Update your details' icon on [cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au) or by calling 1800 628 844.

CFA encourages the dissemination and re-use of information in this publication. The State of Victoria owns the copyright in all material produced by CFA.

All material in this publication is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 international licence with the exception of any images, photographs or branding, including CFA and government logos. In some cases a third party may hold copyright in material in this publication and their permission may be required to use the material. See [creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0).

Material obtained from this publication is to be attributed as: © State of Victoria (Country Fire Authority) 2018



PRINT  
POST  
100010934

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA