

SUMMER 2009

BRIGADE



FIRE. READY. ACTION.

Helping Victoria Prepare



ALSO: PRE-SEASON UPDATE DVD, INCIDENTS, TRAINING

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Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM



From the Chairman

Partnerships are the embodiment of just about every aspect of what we do in CFA. From partnerships, collaboration is developed and with that comes cohesion and common purpose.

It's an essential part of the CFA ethos and the annual fire season heightens our common objective of protecting and serving our local communities. The events of the last fire season have so clearly shown how essential it is to work closely with both our communities and with the other agencies. This is why it's important now to build on the partnerships we have both within the emergency services sector and across the range of other agencies that we interact with in preparing communities and suppressing fire.

In recent months the cooperation between the agencies has been excellent as we face together the challenges of the fire season and improving the way we go about our business now and in the future. We have strengthened ties with not only our colleagues in the police and emergency service agencies, but also across a host of other agencies like VicRoads, the Department of Human Services, and local government, just to name a few.

The Board is resolute that partnerships are crucial to ensure a unified approach to the future delivery of fire and emergency service to achieve a better prepared and safer Victoria in the future. The partnerships you have developed in your community as a member of CFA are influential. I encourage you to continue to forge close ties with all those other individuals and organisations that also deliver vital services of all kinds into your communities.

On the subject of partnerships, I am pleased to report that our partnership with the Myer Foundation has been brilliant. Thanks to its very generous support, several hundred new water tanks have now been installed at CFA fire stations across Victoria. The result of this program is even better than we originally expected. Thanks to cost savings attributed to 'works in kind' provided by many brigade members, this has allowed CFA to expand the tank program from the original 443 installations to a total of 485 (see story on page 22).

The Myer Foundation 2009 has not only been a generous benefactor but has also been a strong and loyal advocate of CFA through the difficulties we have faced this year. Again, I think this sort of relationship demonstrates the enormous benefits that can be achieved when we partner with others within both the public and private sectors.

In a further boost, the Victorian Government has provided in our budget an extra \$2 million to extend the CFA water tank program. This means we now fit water tanks and other water saving devices into the bigger CFA fire stations including integrated stations in the greater Melbourne area and in provincial cities.

On behalf of the Board I wish you and your families an enjoyable festive season and, above all, a safe fire season. ■

Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM
Chairman



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Cover: A series of activities involving CFA members in the lead-up to the fire season.

Change of address

If you need to update your address details to receive *Brigade* magazine, please phone the FIRS RMS Project Officer on 1800 62 88 44.

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



Visit www.cfaconnect.net.au for more details on the stories published in this edition of *Brigade*



ISSUE 2 OF 2
OCTOBER 2009

Pre-Season UPDATE

State Government
Victoria
Department of
Sustainability
and Environment



"Now more than ever, it is important to read the content of this update and discuss it with others..." - CFA and DSE Chief Officers

Team and community

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Background situational awareness involves an awareness of fire behaviour, weather, terrain and the ability to think ahead. The potential for human error increases when situational awareness is not maintained. The erratic fire behaviour during the 2009 fires, where many crews became entrapped, reinforces the importance of Dynamic Risk Assessment and maintaining situational awareness.

Crew Leaders must remain vigilant at all times, including when things seem slow and tasks are routine, because this is when burnovers often occur. They must not become involved in the hands-on firefighting activities because a momentary distraction may lead to critical information observations being missed.

During the 2009 fires, high wind speeds and intense fire activity moved fires rapidly and caused spotting many kilometres ahead of the main fire. During these fires, planned escape routes were blocked before crews had time to leave. With little warning visibility was reduced to a few metres meaning the fire could not be seen and driving was too dangerous. A decision to leave an area of risk must be made early, or alternatively don't go there in the first place!

Dynamic Risk Assessment and Situational Awareness must be continually maintained by all crew members, shared with others and used to ensure firefighter safety. If you see something or hear information critical to firefighter safety – speak up!



command and out to the community. We also need to maintain our focus on managing the incident.

In the midst of the preparations for what is likely to be another very active fire season, I urge you all to remain focussed on safety. I also encourage all of you to attend pre-season briefing sessions as these will be important in explaining the changes that will apply this season.

Peter Farrell
DSE Acting Chief Fire Officer

Russell Rees

From the Chief Officer



I am pleased to present this year's Pre-Season Update DVD, which is contained within this issue of *Brigade*.

This DVD contains vital information about the many changes that have taken place this year, so it is important that you all take the time to view it. I hope you will watch it now and then review it again with your colleagues later in the season.

We will be working under a host of new arrangements this summer, and every member of our team needs to be aware of these changes and what they mean for how we go about our day-to-day business.

The changes that have been introduced since last summer not only affect how we communicate with our communities and the information they receive, but also command and control arrangements, and operational matters.

As always, our focus this year is not only ensuring that our communities are as safe as possible but that we also have the systems and structures in place to support our firefighters at all times. Your safety is paramount.

The substantial spring rains and record November temperatures have confirmed our expectation that we are once again facing a long, hot summer with an elevated level of bushfire risk.

While the state has prepared as never before, anxiety in bushfire-prone communities is understandably high. We need to encourage everyone to channel this energy into positive actions, and support them to make appropriate decisions for their circumstances.

Our members have worked incredibly hard in the past few months to ensure we are ready for whatever challenges we will face this summer. It has been a mammoth effort and I have never been prouder to be Chief Officer of this organisation.

I know that if we all work together and continue to support one another we will achieve our aims and get the best outcomes for our communities. ■

Russell Rees
Chief Officer

"The outcomes of these activities will enable the organisation to move forward in a more strategic and effective manner." - CFA Chief Officer Russell Rees

In this section of *Brigade*, we summarise CFA incidents and examine the total number of incidents for each region. All statistical information has been extracted from CFA's Fire and Incident Reporting System (FIRS).

Brigades are reminded to submit their fire/incident report details as soon as possible after their attendance at an incident. Brigades on strike teams also need to submit a report. FIRS Call Centre open 8am – 11pm, 7 days **1800 628 844**

Summary

Date range July - September 2009

	Estimated loss	Estimated ha burnt	Incident count
Bush and Forest		47	29
Car Fires and MVA			1,081
False Alarms			1,473
Grass Fires		27	35
Hazardous Materials			459
House Fires	\$13,941,895		335
Industrial Fires	\$22,398,700		54
	\$36,340,595	74	3,466

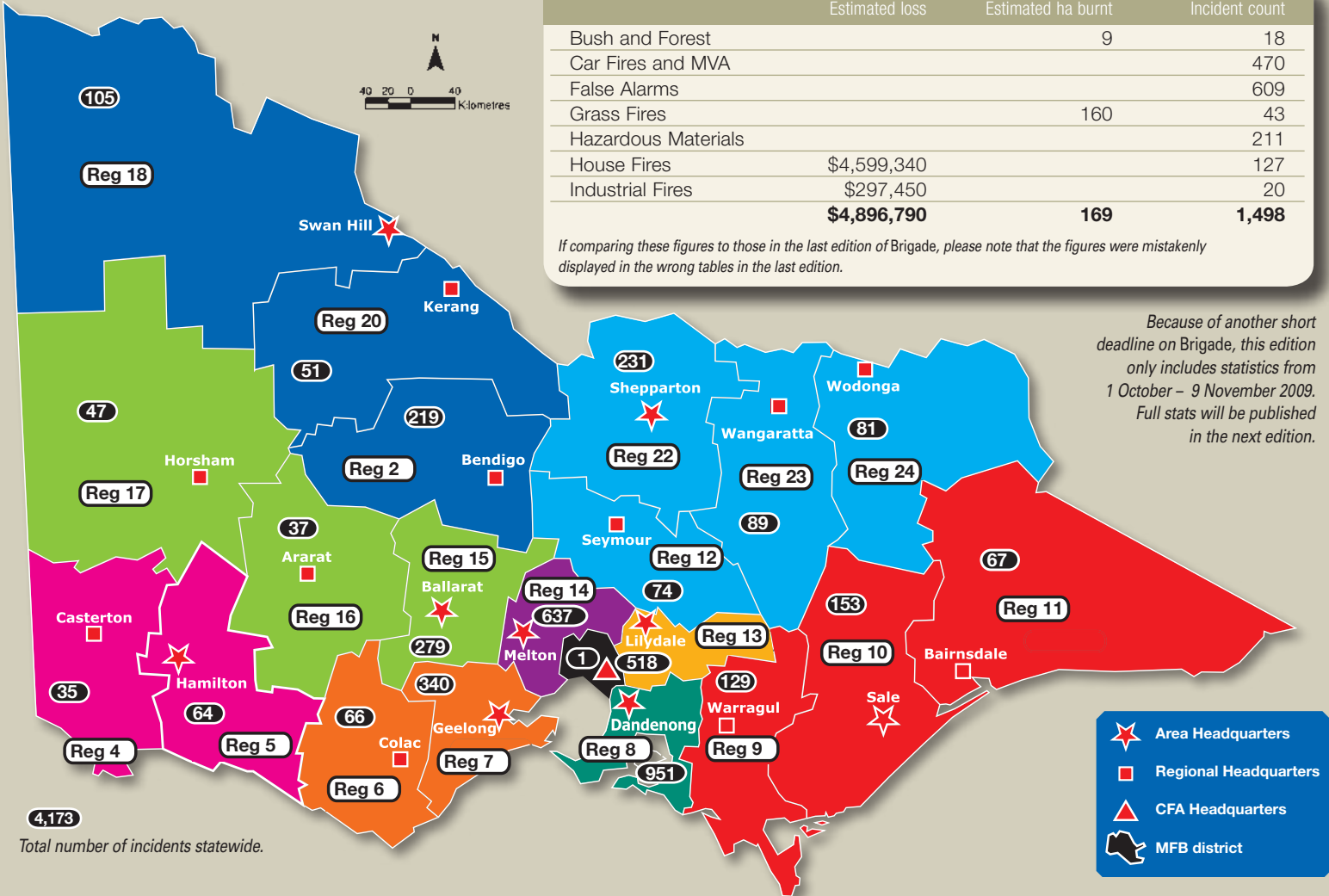
Summary

Date range October - November 2009

	Estimated loss	Estimated ha burnt	Incident count
Bush and Forest		9	18
Car Fires and MVA			470
False Alarms			609
Grass Fires		160	43
Hazardous Materials			211
House Fires	\$4,599,340		127
Industrial Fires	\$297,450		20
	\$4,896,790	169	1,498

If comparing these figures to those in the last edition of *Brigade*, please note that the figures were mistakenly displayed in the wrong tables in the last edition.

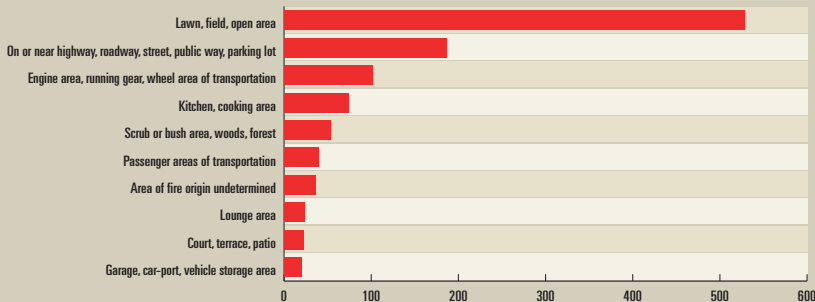
Because of another short deadline on *Brigade*, this edition only includes statistics from 1 October – 9 November 2009. Full stats will be published in the next edition.



4,173
Total number of incidents statewide.

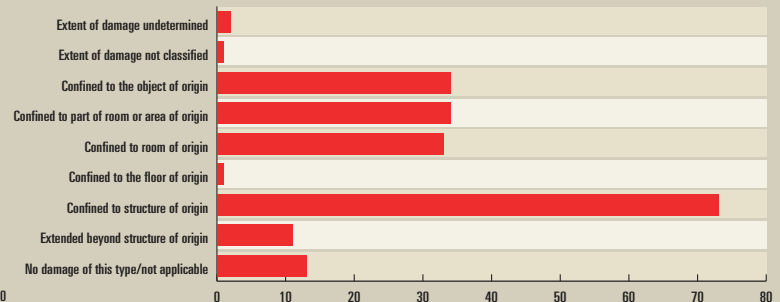
Top 10 fire starts

1 October – 9 November 2009



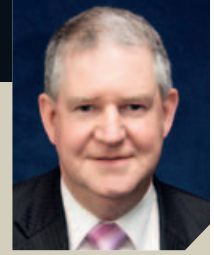
Extent of flame damage

1 October – 9 November 2009



Please note these stats only include incidents up to 9 November 2009.

Mick Bourke



From the CEO

Seizing Opportunities to be Ready for the Future

Victoria today is different in many ways from what it was when CFA was formed six and a half decades ago. The social, economic and environmental landscapes have changed: Victorians are highly mobile and have greater access to information through rapidly evolving technology.

Traditional boundaries are continually challenged by increasing population, community needs and expectations, and learning to live with a changing climate. CFA is operating in a new era and, as it has in the past, will ready itself to meet the future needs of Victorians.

Government departments and agencies are adopting the state regional boundaries and aligning with local government area boundaries for planning, operational and administration purposes.

CFA partners, including Victoria Police, Victoria State Emergency Service and the Departments of Justice, Human Services, Transport, and Education and Early Childhood Development, have already aligned or intend to align with the state regional boundaries and local government boundaries.

We are moving to these boundaries to be ready for the future. This move will provide CFA with an opportunity to strengthen its position as an essential state-wide emergency service and align its service delivery with other government services.

As we continue to learn from the findings of internal and external reviews into public expectations and needs in large-scale emergencies, the findings of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission are providing CFA with new directions to prepare for future opportunities and challenges.

The Bushfire Preparedness Program currently being implemented by CFA (see feature on page 6) has been shaped by the Royal Commission's preliminary findings. The Program's many initiatives are already positioning CFA to provide better services to Victorians.

These factors and other independent findings provide us with a strong platform for change and the CFA Board at its 28 September meeting made two significant decisions that will strengthen CFA's position in the future:

1. CFA will introduce before this fire season a command and control structure for bushfires in Victoria which is geographically aligned with the state regional boundaries and the local government area (LGA) boundaries.
2. The adoption of the state regional boundaries and LGA boundaries for planning, operational and administration purposes except where the Board resolves the adoption of alternative boundaries for operational purposes on the recommendation of the Chief Officer.

CFA's alignment with the new boundaries will allow 'the Chief' Russell Rees to comply with changes to the *Emergency Management Act*, the State Emergency Response Plan and the intent of the recommendations of the Interim Report of the Bushfires Royal Commission.

This alignment will strengthen the coordination across government agencies of emergency management preparation and deployment; and strengthen our position as the lead state fire-control agency during major bushfires in the future.

The program to move to these new boundaries and trial the command and control improvements is being called "Ready for the Future". We have to have the revised Command and Control arrangements implemented as soon as possible and the revised LGA/state regional boundaries by 1 July 2010. We are unlikely to move CFA administratively and structurally to the revised state regional and LGA boundaries during the fire season.

To support the Ready for the Future program, we've established three separate projects that are in their very early planning stages.

STATE COMMAND AND CONTROL PROJECT

This will reorganise our State Control Centre and Operations Directorate support/service delivery to support CFA's (and the Chief Officer's) lead role in fire preparedness and control of fire response for Victoria.

AREA OF OPERATIONS PROJECT

This will deliver capability/availability of Area Fire Controllers for regional preparedness and emergency management control. This includes aligning this effort for preparedness and planning with LGAs and the state regional boundaries.

BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT PROJECT

This will reorganise CFA state-wide to shape to LGAs and state regional boundaries.

Each of these projects needs consultation, people, detail and issues to be carefully scoped and completed. That planning work is in progress now and we have asked for feedback from our General Managers (GMs) and Operations Managers (OMs) to ensure key issues are considered and addressed now. Your views too are greatly appreciated and can be fed back through the regional GMs and OMs or directly to me.

With my Directors, I will draw deeply into the organisation's bank of knowledge to ready CFA for the future. Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria and the United Firefighters Union have been consulted on the new direction and I will continue to work with them and other stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for CFA and Victorians.

I will keep you posted as we continue to ready CFA for the future. ■

This column was originally published in two parts on CFA Connect under 'Mick's Blog'. You can read the original blog posts and member comments in response at www.cfaconnect.net.au



Bushfire Preparedness Program

BY SOPHIE JACKSON

CFA GETS INTO ACTION

As the weather heated up in October, CFA members got into action for Fire Action Week, showing their commitment to inform and educate the community in the lead-up to the fire season.

Fire Action Week was launched on Sunday 11 October, coinciding with the launch of three new CFA tools: the Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool; the Bushfire Survival Kit; and the Community Meetings Online System on the CFA website.

Victorians also got their first taste of the new Fire Ready advertising campaign and Victorian Premier John Brumby addressed the state on prime time television, encouraging everyone to Prepare. Act. Survive.

Meanwhile, around Victoria there were an unprecedented number of Fire Ready Meetings - from Woodend to Wannan, Stawell to Kangaroo Flat, at local markets, fetes and in community halls.

CFA and MFB also teamed up with Bunnings, which hosted Fire Ready Presenters in 44 stores across the state.

On Thursday 15 October ABC Radio joined in on the action and hosted a state-wide fire awareness broadcast. The broadcast was a great success, with appearances from Chief Officer Russell Rees and Director Community Safety Lisa Sturzenegger, to name just two.

Many brigades held their own local events and fire expos, including the Southern Mitchell Fire Expo in Kilmore and the Great Ocean Road Fire Expo in Lavers Hill, which was opened by Ms Christine Nixon APM, Chair of the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction & Recovery Authority.

"It was great to see all the hard work and effort that went into Fire Action Week to prepare the community for the coming fire season. CFA had a great presence at the local, regional and state level," Lisa Sturzenegger said.

"It shows how determined CFA members are to work with the community and ensure that they are fire ready." ■



PREPARE.
ACT.
SURVIVE.

Your FireReady Kit

You need to be prepared for bushfire
Use this kit to prepare your Bushfire Survival Plan

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.
FireReady

Danger Ratings

What Should I Do?

Leave early in a bushfire prone area the safest option is to leave the night before. Leaving is the safest option for your survival if you live in a bushfire prone area – activate your Bushfire Survival Plan – Now. Prior to leaving – check your Fire Ready Kit for the weather and fire situation in any way you can: through CFA website, local radio, TV and newspapers.

Best option is to leave early in the day if you live in a bushfire prone area. If your Bushfire Survival Plan is so leave. Only stay if your home is well constructed and you can actively defend it. For the emotional, mental and physical impact of defending your property – leave. If you live in a bushfire prone area and you plan to leave: finalise your options and your Bushfire Survival Plan – Now. Prior to leaving – check your Fire Ready Kit for the weather and fire situation in any way you can: through CFA website, local radio, TV and newspapers.

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Lisa Sturzenegger
Director Community Safety



By now most of you would have heard about or been involved in the Bushfire Preparedness Program, which is made up of 42 projects designed to prepare Victoria for the coming fire season.

With regular updates published on *CFA Connect*, this year's pre-season updates, extra briefings and the high-profile media coverage, the Program has reached nearly every part of our organisation in some way or another.

Seventeen of the projects fall under the Community Safety function at CFA and although each is a project in its own right, they link closely with each other and with the projects that other directorates and organisations are delivering. Combined, they will ensure that Victoria is fire ready and they support our 'Bushfire Safety System'.

Many of Community Safety's projects aim to inform the community about bushfires and help community members develop an effective Bushfire Survival Plan.

The Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool is helping residents to understand the level of risk to their property, the preparation and mental capacity needed to stay and defend and when they should leave early. The FireReady Kit supports this tool, providing an up-to-date and comprehensive information resource, including information on preparing property, leaving early, staying to defend and the new Fire Danger Ratings.

For the first time, residents can book into a local Fire Ready Meeting or Community Fireguard online, where they can discuss their Bushfire Survival Plan and seek advice from the experts. This year there will be an unprecedented number of meetings, which have been enhanced to incorporate CFA's updated key messages and advice.

Staff have been busy assessing Neighbourhood Safer Places, which are *places of last resort* for those people whose Bushfire Survival Plan has failed and have no other option. Others have been working with vulnerable groups – like children – the culturally and linguistically diverse and our tourists to ensure they receive the fire ready message.

And this is just to name a few!

This feature gives us a small snapshot of some of the brilliant work taking place as part of the Program and highlights the dedication of staff and volunteers. To deliver these projects in such a short timeframe is a credit to them and I look forward to building on this work in the future. ■

FIRE READY MEETINGS FOR BRIGADES

Brigades in Westernport are incorporating Fire Ready Meetings into their busy schedules this season so that they can experience a Fire Ready Meeting for themselves.

All 74 brigades in Westernport, including two Coast Guard Brigades, were given the opportunity to participate in a Fire Ready Meeting before the fire season. Regional headquarters even signed up for its own meeting.

Community Education Coordinator Belinda Ainley says the meetings were a good way to make sure that members understood CFA's community messages.

"Staff and volunteers are interacting with the community all the time. We felt that offering Fire Ready Meetings for brigades would be a good way to explain the new messages so they felt comfortable passing that information on," she says.

"Brigades also found it useful to experience a meeting, as they are often directing the community to attend or fielding questions about them."

The meetings have been well received and many brigades have been making the most of them, bringing partners and family along as well. And they're not the only ones to benefit; presenters are gaining lots of insight about local issues and community concerns from brigades.

"We're hoping these meetings help all our people understand what CFA is telling the public and how our messages have changed," Belinda says.

The meetings form part of a broader project, which will see an unprecedented number of Fire Ready Meetings and Community Fireguard Groups in the lead up to and during the fire season. It is just one of the many ways CFA is working to ensure Victoria is fire ready. ■

DESTINATION FIRE READY

BY SOPHIE JACKSON

Every summer around Victoria, tourists and holiday makers enter into holiday mode, a relaxed mental state where the only things that tend to cross your mind are fish and chips on the beach, reading your favourite book, sampling the vintage chardonnay at your favourite winery or making sure the kids are having the time of their life.

Bushfires tend to be the last thing on your mind and when it comes to local knowledge, you're thinking tourist attractions and restaurants rather than local roads in and out or bushfire hazards.

CFA has long acknowledged that a relaxed state of mind combined with tourists' usually-limited local knowledge makes them a group vulnerable to the effects of bushfires.

CFA is partnering with Tourism Victoria to inform and educate the people within the tourism sector in bushfire prone areas and protect this valuable, yet vulnerable group.

Beth Davidson, a long-term CFA volunteer and former Board Member is the project officer.

"The initial focus of the project is to work with tourist operators, such as accommodation providers, marketers, Visitor Information Centres and popular tourist attractions so that when it comes to the risk of bushfires, they are well informed and equipped to deal with tourist concerns," she says.

"A series of information sessions will be held before Christmas and the holiday season to inform operators about CFA's new fire safety messages as well as specific tourism business continuity information, such as cancellation policy and insurance considerations."

"We are encouraging tourism businesses to think about how they'll keep their customers informed and safe and plan for what they would do on a Code Red day or if fire threatened. It's a daunting task for tourism businesses as they don't want to scare off customers and lose their livelihood, so we're aiming to provide as much support to them as possible."

To begin with, the project will focus on the 52 identified high risk areas where there are significant tourist populations.

Di Schulze owns an accommodation business in the Otway Ranges and was one of ten tourism operators who took part in a series of tourism fireguard workshops. The workshops aimed to help participants manage the safety of their clients and businesses during bushfire season.

"We need to make sure that we keep our guests as safe as possible. Working in a group of like-minded operators with CFA Fireguard Coordinator Kim Stanley Eyles has been a great exercise in developing our business's fire safety plans with the specific needs of our guests in mind," Di says.

"We'll continue to work with the CFA to develop solutions to the many unique issues within our duty of care as tourism operators."

The project will also provide a range of products, such as fridge



Lorne/Great Ocean Road
Photo: Andrew Paoli, Tourism Victoria



Puffing Billy
Photo courtesy of Tourism Victoria

magnets, door hangers, information for hotel compendiums and brochures for operators that include CFA's key messages and advice.

Beth emphasised that the products form part of a strategy to reach a wide range of visitors.

"From international visitors with little English, visitors from interstate, within Victoria and even visitors from 30km down the road, they have varying levels of knowledge about bushfire safety and will need different levels of information through different channels," she said.

"As an example, consider visitors that choose to stay in holiday houses. Some people rent them from real estate agents, others own holiday houses and some people are staying at their friend's or their family's house. This project is exploring ways to reach all of those different types of visitors, whether that is a simple fridge magnet with advice for every holiday house or through real estate agencies. There will be a range of products for a range of people."

The work taking place with Tourism Victoria is part of an ongoing effort to ensure tourists' safety during the fire season. CFA hopes to continue working with the tourism industry next year and further develop emergency management plans, better educate business operators and ensure Victoria is a fire ready destination for everyone. ■

Fire safety signs

BY LAUREN O'CONNOR

Acting Community Education Coordinator Outer Metro Norwest Area Graeme Bisby recently gave a presentation where many in the audience weren't listening.

But that didn't mean they weren't hanging on his every word. Graeme's audience was the Werribee Deaf Club, and his presentation was being communicated via sign language.

"I hadn't presented to an audience of deaf people nor had I delivered a session through a sign interpreter. I was a little nervous, but the group was so friendly and so eager to absorb what I was presenting that the nerves quickly went away," he said. "Although the presentation began at 7.30pm, I was still answering questions at eleven o'clock."

Most used the help of an Auslan (Australian sign language) interpreter. One woman, who was both deaf and blind, had an interpreter who translated Graeme's responses to her questions via touch.

Graeme said the deaf and hearing impaired faced unique challenges in fire situations.

"Because deaf or hearing impaired people can't hear the beep of a normal smoke alarm, they rely on specialty devices, which either pulse bright light or vibrate to alert them of danger. The group was very eager to learn more about these sorts of devices and other ways to improve their safety," he said.

Patricia Shields, fundraising officer for the group and instigator of the information night, said the group was very happy with the presentation. "A few of them were still talking about it weeks later," she said. ■



Graeme and the Auslan interpreter

Safety dock

BY BLAIR DELLEMIJN

CFA put on a good show at the latest Community Safety Day, once again held at Docklands in October.

The CFA tent was up, with members giving advice on fire safety and what CFA does in the community, much to some people's surprise. Kids could also make up their own badges to show. Also on hand was the Mobile Education Van, giving advice on Home Fire Safety.

Narre Warren North brigade brought down its new Light Pumper (pictured above), which the kids certainly enjoyed, and Peninsula Group brought its Field Operations Vehicle. ■

In from the CALD

In the lead up to this fire season, there has been much discussion about Bushfire Preparedness projects targeting at-risk communities. These range from new warnings and fire danger ratings to the Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool and the expansion of the Community Fireguard program. In the initial roll-out, these projects target English speakers who can read; decision makers who are mobile and able to see and hear.

One of these projects – Programs for Diverse Populations – has identified yet another level of risk in the more vulnerable communities spread across the state. These are people with special needs and those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

The long-term aim of this project is to improve bushfire safety information and preparedness for vulnerable people in bushfire prone areas. This will be achieved not just by improving the accessibility of CFA information and programs, but also through its delivery.

As a single example, an early estimate tells us that there are more than 900 vision-impaired people alone spread across the 52 highest bushfire risk townships. It's also interesting to note that Auslan, the sign language of the Australian deaf community, is one of the top 30 languages used in Victoria outside of metropolitan Melbourne. We have to work hard to extend our reach.

Learning and behaviour change happen bit by bit. Just giving people specialised information doesn't necessarily lead to active decision making or active relocation.

The initial phase of this project has seen collaboration with other Bushfire Preparedness Program projects to work out how to improve accessibility. Language translations of the new bushfire preparedness documents and accessible formats of the new online tools are a first step.

There has also been liaison with key organisations, peak bodies and government departments to establish common ground. As this project unfolds, it will take an integrated approach with CFA Areas, municipalities, other government agencies and non-government organisations in the community services sector. Ultimately, this work will help formulate the CFA Disability Action Plan.

Working with CFA members and Areas will help establish efficient and effective ways of meeting local needs. This may include meeting specific local ethnic group and language needs, or providing support for workshops that help people complete Bushfire Survival Plans.

The project aims to minimise its impact on current workloads, while being aware that working with brigades who are connected into their communities is the only way it can be done well. ■



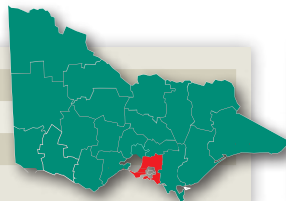
Rear side van panel

Photos: Keith Pakenham



An explosive wake-up call

Incident name: Chelsea Heights van explosion
Region: 8
Date: 22 September 2009
Brigades: Patterson River, Edithvale



CFA crews were called to the scene of a massive explosion after a tradesman's van blew up and damaged homes in Chelsea Heights as an apprentice went to unlock it with a remote control.

Greg Christison, Incident Controller from Patterson River brigade, said CFA crews received multiple calls from distressed residents.

"En route it was fairly evident we were attending an incident of some significance," Greg said. "The explosion had caused significant structural damage to the properties surrounding the van, with the two houses closest the worst damaged."

"It (the explosion) was so severe it ripped apart the van, causing debris to be strewn all over the place. Bits and pieces of the van ended up on roofs up to 60 metres away."

Four trucks from Patterson River and Edithvale brigades and around 20 firefighters brought the resulting fire under control within twenty minutes. Greg said it was fortunate no residents were harmed. "Fortunately it occurred early in the morning when most residents were asleep," he said.

"The immediate area of the van was extensively damaged; approximate damage for the scene was around \$100,000."

The council surveyor who attended estimated the buildings to be structurally sound.

Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and WorkSafe all attended the incident.

The cause of the incident is subject to ongoing police and fire investigation.

Four homes had to be evacuated after the explosion occurred just after 6:00am. ■

Heritage home history

Incident name: Ryrie Street house fire
Region: 7
Date: 12 October 2009
Brigades: Belmont, Corio, Geelong

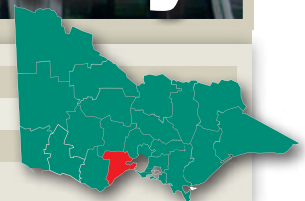


Photo: Aneta Alford

A heritage-listed house in Geelong, considered a landmark by the local community, attracted much more attention than it usually would in early October.

CFA crews were called to the unoccupied building on Ryrie Street after it erupted in flames early on a Monday morning.

The two-storey weatherboard house was fully engulfed by flames with heavy smoke easily visible from kilometres away, causing peak hour traffic to slow to a crawl.

Firefighter Mick McGuinness, Duty Officer at Geelong brigade on the day, said the dilapidated state of the building made it too dangerous for firefighters to enter.

"Because of the chimneys and the danger of roof collapse and floor collapse there was no internal firefighting possible," Mick told *The Age*.

"It's made it very hard to extinguish. We had to fight the fire externally."

Mick said the house had a history of arson.

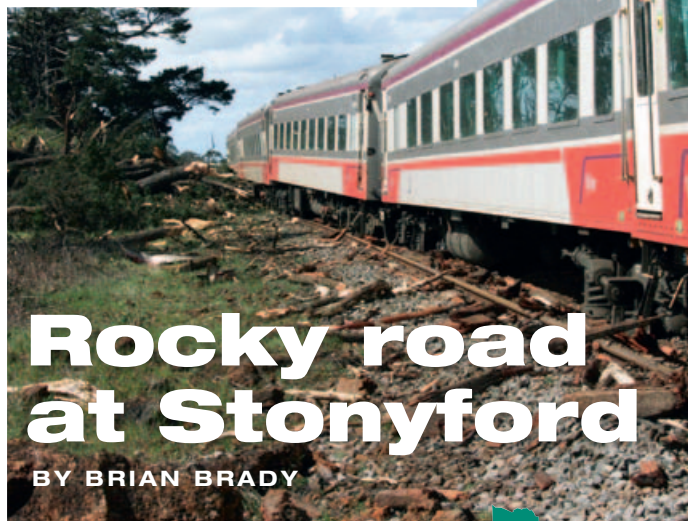
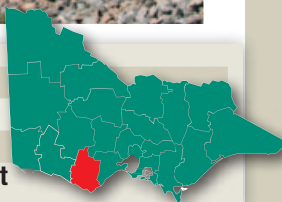
Six units attended and it took about 20 minutes to get the fire under control.

The Bendigo aerial appliance was also called in to support the firefight, attacking the blaze from the roof of the house.

Victoria Police attended to block traffic along both Ryrie St and Sydney Pde within half an hour of the fire starting, causing major disruptions to the morning roads.

The cause of the fire is under ongoing police investigation. The house was ordered to be demolished by the local council. ■

Photos: Peter Edwards

**Incident name:** Train derailment**Region:** 6**Date:** 12 September 2009**Brigades:** Camperdown, Weerite, Pomorneit

The Melbourne to Warrnambool passenger train struck three large cypress trees in September, completely derailing the train, with the leading engine tipping over and slewing across the path of the following carriages.

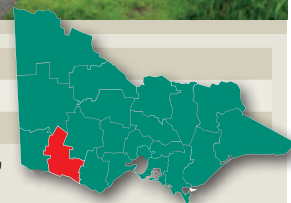
The trees fell across the tracks after a severe wind storm passed through the area about an hour before, and went unnoticed because the location was a sparsely populated area.

There were approximately 80 passengers and four crew aboard the train but only two minor injuries were treated on-scene by Ambulance Victoria crews.

Details of the location of the derailment were initially sketchy due to its location in stony country without many landmarks nearby. However, Victoria State Emergency Service and Victoria Police were clearing trees from the nearby Princes Highway only a few kilometres from the derailment so the emergency services response was very quick.

Passengers were guided down a ladder placed at the rear of the train and escorted along the track to waiting buses to continue their journey. A diesel leak of approximately 1,000 litres was dealt with by CFA crews who were on-scene for three hours.

It took four days for heavy lift recovery equipment to access the derailment site because a road had to be cut through the terrain. ■

**Incident name:** Hamilton Hwy Tanker Rollover**Region:** 5**Date:** 9 September 2009**Brigades:** Ballarat City, Burn Brae, Caramut, Hamilton, Hexham, Mortlake, Penshurst, Warrnambool, Woorndoo.

Around 50 CFA personnel sprang into action to attend a truck Hazardous materials (Hazmat) incident at Muston Creek, Purdeet on the Hamilton Highway between Caramut and Penshurst in early September.

On arrival, Mortlake brigade crew donned splash suits and Breathing Apparatus in case they had to do a snatch and grab rescue of the driver, but were told he had already been transported to Hamilton Hospital.

The semi-trailer tanker was transporting molten sulphur (a by-product sourced for making fertilizer) from Altona to Millicent in South Australia

According to Incident Controller Henry Barton, it appears the driver took evasive action to correct direction, which caused the truck to jack-knife and take out the concrete bridge guard railing before finishing up on its side.

"Molten sulphur began to leak, cascading down the embankment and into the creek," Henry said. "A crew was sent in to assess the situation and establish the extent of the leak."

Specialist advice was needed and Chemtrax, the company that dispatched a salvage crew and equipment, would take four hours to arrive.

"Heavy haulage was also required as the situation did not allow the use of mobile cranes to be located and operated in a safe manner," Henry said.

Molten sulphur is transported in a liquid state under temperature because, once exposed to the ambient temperature, it begins to solidify forming a crust similar to lava. As it continues to cool it becomes hard, which means it can be managed far more easily, but still has a high element of risk. "This process worked in the salvage crews' favour. They could not decant the product given the severity of the damage done to the fittings on the tank," Henry says.

The longer the cleanup took, the more stable the content became, minimising the risk. Crews worked until 1.30 am the next morning. Excavation, soil replacement and VicRoads temporary barricading also continued into the early hours.

"A job well done by all CFA personal present," Operations Officer Ian Kellett said. He also praised the other agencies that participated including Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, Victoria State Emergency Service, VicRoads, Moyne Shire, Environment Protection Authority, and Chemtrax Salvage. ■



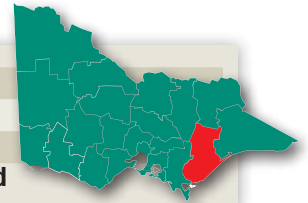
On defence in Maffra

Incident name: Maffra house fire

Region: 10

Date: 31 July 2009

Brigades: Boisdale, Maffra, Newry, Stratford



Bitumen burns

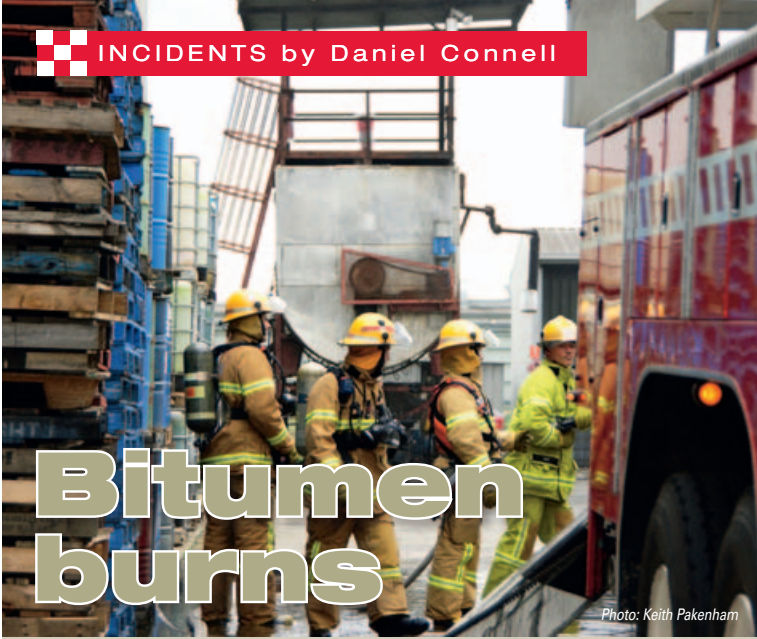


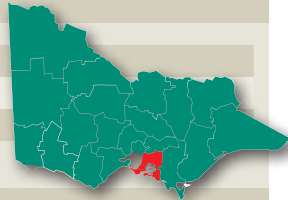
Photo: Keith Pakenham

Incident name: Dandenong South factory fire

Region: 8

Date: 22 July 2009

Brigades: Dandenong, Hallam



Ever-changing and hazardous, the Dandenong Industrial 2 Precinct – previously known as the Dandenong Offensive Industrial Zone – is a diverse and vital industrial landscape.

Factories vary from bio-waste to chemical processing and, in mid July, it was a bitumen tank at the Transpacific Bituminous Products factory that required CFA brigades on scene.

Dandenong and Hallam brigades responded to the incident on Cahill Street at around 10:00am. Thirty workers were evacuated and Incident Controller Daryl Owen from Dandenong brigade said the nature of the call meant firefighters approached the blaze cautiously.

“When we arrived we found a 20,000 litre tank containing approximately 7,000 litres of bitumen, which was well alight,” he said. “The bitumen was flowing out into the bunted area, towards tanks containing other hazardous chemicals – mineral turpentine and xylene.”

The crews identified the surrounding tanks and the adjoining factory as the main exposures, and worked quickly to contain the fire.

“Firefighters initially attacked the blaze with water hose lines to protect the factory and adjoining storage tanks. We then set up the Dandenong platform and extinguished the remainder of the fire with B-class foam.”

A waste product truck pumped the bunted area clear, eliminating any potential runoffs to the streets.

Daryl said one worker sustained injuries during the fire and was taken to hospital.

“He was working on top of the tank at the time, and sustained injuries when he was trying to climb down the ladder.”

The fire extended into the rear of the factory and destroyed a forklift, while the bitumen tank itself was severely damaged, along with surrounding infrastructure.

Representatives from the Environment Protection Authority and WorkSafe attended the incident. The injured man was taken to the Alfred Hospital. ■

An early 1920s home was completely destroyed by fire in Maffra in late July. Operations Officer Wayne Petford said the house was fully engulfed on arrival. “The crews were faced with a fully alight house once on scene,” he said. “There was little crews could do to prevent the destruction of the house; the roof collapsed within 15-20 minutes after the first brigade arrived.”

Four brigades were called out to the house. A salvage unit from Maffra brigade was also on scene but was not required. It was around three and a half hours before the incident was deemed safe.

“Due to the intensity of the flames, crews immediately went into a defensive attack and concentrated their efforts on running deliveries and preventing exposures from being involved,” Wayne said. “The roof started to collapse before the crews even had a chance to start the fire attack; the fire was just too intense.”

Two stone chimneys were the only part of the house left standing. Investigations were underway to determine the cause of the fire. ■



Photo courtesy of Dandenong Fire Brigade

CFA on hand in Dandenong

ADandenong factory worker's hand was trapped in equipment in early September.

“We were confronted on scene with a worker who had his hand trapped in a 19 millimetre gap between two rollers on a vertical arrisline rolling machine,” Incident Controller Peter Lucas said.

Although quite uncomfortable, the man was conscious and breathing and able to assist his rescuers. In tight working conditions, Dandenong firefighters helped to ease the man's hand out of the equipment.

“Firefighters assisted by using airbags and wedges to undertake a controlled movement of the rollers once they had been unbolted,” Peter said. “The patient was released within about 15 minutes of our arrival.”

Police were also present at the incident and WorkSafe was notified. ■

Springvale burnout

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

A Holden Commodore sedan flipped over and caught alight after hitting a power pole in late July. The accident and fire in Janine Road, Springvale blocked traffic for an hour.

When the car hit the base of the power pole it smashed the sump from the engine, dumping oil on the roadway. The two male occupants were able to scramble from the vehicle as the fire took hold.

Springvale brigade sent its pumper and tanker for the fire attack and Dandenong brigade responded its rescue because it was first thought the occupants may have been trapped inside.

Police and Paramedics also attended the scene. The driver of the car was helping Police with their enquiries at Springvale Police Station.

Fire Officer Barry Nash from Springvale brigade was the Incident Controller. ■



Flames dished up in Traralgon

BY TERRY GOODWIN

Photo: Wayne Petford

An early morning fire destroyed a Traralgon café in late July. Streeteats, in Franklin Street, Traralgon, was destroyed in the fire which started about 3.25am. Neighbouring shops also suffered smoke damage.

Police said the cause of the fire was not known and investigations were continuing. Traralgon CFA Incident Controller Trevor Hair said firefighters contained the blaze in about 45 minutes.

CFA crews from Traralgon, Morwell and Traralgon West responded with support from Dandenong Aerial Platform. The platform was used to help fight the fire from above because the structural damage made the building too dangerous to enter.

Appliances to respond were Traralgon Pumper, Traralgon Tanker, Traralgon BA Support, Traralgon West Tanker, Morwell Pumper and Dandenong Aerial Appliance. ■



Warrnambool's hot seats

BY MATHEW DEANS

Warrnambool Fire Brigade responded to Warrnambool's Capitol Cinema after there was a fire reported at the premises at approximately 7.10am in early August.

Smoke and flames were reported coming from the historic building, with large amounts of black smoke covering parts of Warrnambool.

Firefighters gained access to the fire through the front door, allowing them to undertake an aggressive attack on the fire, which took around 45 minutes to bring under control.

An Aerial Platform was called in from Ballarat to assist in tackling the intense blaze.

Approximately 30 firefighters were on scene. ■

Psychological Preparedness

This article was prepared by CFA's Diversity Unit.

The devastating events of last fire season may have had the effect of making some people feel powerless or anxious about the coming fire season. Aside from the importance of physical preparations, the role of psychological preparedness can be just as important for coping with the inherent uncertainty and stress of living with bushfires.

Although most people will recover from a natural disaster, it must be remembered that not everyone recovers in every situation. People can have different levels of resilience depending on their life circumstances.

For those who were involved in the 2009 fires, it is not unusual to feel anxious or worried about entering the next bushfire season. Yet at the same time, too much anxiety can get in the way of adequate physical preparations.



Photo courtesy of Sarah Black

WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPAREDNESS?

When we are able to understand, anticipate, recognise and manage our anxieties and other emotional responses, we will feel more confident and in control to successfully cope in an emergency situation. In the context of the approaching fire season, psychological preparedness can play a critical role in improving your ability to carry out standard physical preparedness advice, cope with stress and reduce the effects of post incident distress.

Furthermore, psychological preparedness is not about being emotionally invincible but about understanding how we are likely to react in a stressful situation and employing strategies to better manage those psychological responses while attending to emergency responsibilities.

WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) has outlined three essential skills to psychological preparedness under the acronym AIM. They include:

- 1. ANTICIPATE** that you and others may experience some anxiety, fears and concerns as your community enters another fire season. These emotions are normal and necessary, but recognise that they can also get in the way of other important preparations.
- 2. IDENTIFY** specific physical feelings associated with anxiety and other uncomfortable emotions (e.g. muscle tension, sweating, difficulty breathing, headaches, fatigue) and any troubling thoughts (eg. I can't cope, we're going to get hurt, we will lose everything). Being able to identify such feelings and thoughts will put you in a better position to practically manage them.
- 3. MANAGE** those identified responses so that you can stay calm, think clearly and establish a plan. Be mindful not to use denial as an unhealthy way to reduce anxiety as this can cause you to put off important practical preparations. Rather, use practical anxiety management techniques such as:
 - Controlled breathing. Breath slowly and calmly.
 - Positive self talk. "It's ok to feel anxious but I can cope."
 - Talk to a counsellor especially if you feel overwhelmed.
 - Do some physical exercise.
 - Remember that anxiety is a common temporary experience that will dissipate.

Learning how to psychologically cope in a bushfire season is a significant means toward maintaining your mental health in a stressful situation. However, in addition to these skills, we can continue to strengthen our resilience by developing the following actions, thoughts and behaviours.

WAYS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

Develop a strong social network

Try to stay connected with your community and find caring and supportive people around you. Good social networks can act as a buffer in times of a natural disaster because you are able to share a common burden with others. Aim to encourage and reassure one another during these times.

FURTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES CAN BE OBTAINED FROM:

PPC Worldwide (formerly OSA)

Counsellors and psychologists

03 9600 4949 or 1300 361 008 (local call cost)

More information about PPC: www.au.ppcworldwide.com

Converge International

Chaplains and psychologists 1800 337 068

More information about Converge:

www.convergeinternational.com.au

CFA after hours welfare support

1800 628 616

Australian Psychological Society

www.psychology.org.au

Helpguide

www.helpguide.org

Develop a sense of control

Resilient people generally feel they have the power to make choices and take actions that will affect their ability to cope.

Make goals

When you feel overwhelmed by a crisis situation, take a step back to assess the circumstances. Think of different solutions before setting smaller, more manageable goals that you can realistically achieve.

Take action

Anticipate your needs, form a plan and then take practical steps to achieve what you need to do.

Be flexible

Flexibility is an important part of resilience. Accept that things don't always go to plan and some circumstances can't be changed. Learn to be adaptable and seek out new directions.

Learn to be optimistic

Being optimistic is not about ignoring your problems but keeping them in perspective. Despite the challenges you may face, aim to remain hopeful and positive about the future.

Build your self-esteem

Build confidence in your abilities to solve problems by reminding yourself of your strengths and past achievements.

Look after yourself

Don't neglect your physical and mental health. Take care of your health needs with good nutrition and regular exercise and make time for activities and hobbies you enjoy.

While developing psychological preparedness and resilience are important steps for coping with the forthcoming fire season; it is also essential to know when to seek professional help for ourselves, families and colleagues. People can benefit greatly from the help of psychologists, counsellors, chaplains and CISM peers who have been trained to deal with crisis situations. ■



Remembering, Preserving, Reflecting

BY SARAH BLACK

As a new fire season approaches, for many the last is still scorching, as lives continue to be rebuilt and still blackened forests serve as a daily reminder of horror and tragedy.

For others, paddocks are green again and the bush provides hope as charred trunks become covered in gentle, green regrowth.

Away from last season's fire-affected land, communities that escaped recall their near misses, the frightening nights spent watching the distant glow of fire and the waiting for the next fire update on ABC radio, or wondering if friends and family are safe.

For many people, it has taken all the cool and time of winter before they have been able to tell their stories.

People who faced their first big fires as firefighters – no longer as members of the public only able to wait, wonder and watch – saw stories they had heard of fire come to life, and experienced things they could not even have imagined.

For all the firefighters, family and friends waited at home, anxious to see them return and hear their stories.

Seasoned fireys went to battle with memories from past campaigns sitting on their shoulders, and came home with new ones. And some were as unable to tell their tales as the overwhelmed rookies.

I have observed my own reactions, the stories I have had to tell and the changing forms I have used to tell them; photography, writing, talking. I have observed those around me.

And I hope as the weather warms and farmers discuss when hay will be cut and we wait for the sodden ground and moist leaf litter to dry out and crunch underfoot once more, that people have told their stories and processed the experiences of the last fire season. All their experiences, from the terrifying to the awe inspiring and mundane.

Because the next fire season is here and nobody knows what new challenges, losses or victories it will bring. All we know is that it will bring more stories to tell, to process; adding to the extraordinary journey that is life. ■

Beeac bands together

BY BRIAN BRADY

Brigades in the Beeac Group met at the Colac Airfield in Irrewarra to participate in five scenarios in mid-October.

Subjects covered were: safety around helicopters; familiarisation of light aircraft and dealing with an aircraft incident; B class foam and Hazmat; and grass fire attack. Brigades from Gerangamete, Birregurra, Yeodene, Yeo, Colac, Beeac, Barwon Downs, Weering/Eurack and Irrewarra attended.

A BBQ lunch at Irrewarra Fire Station completed the morning's training. ■

Sebastopol support is Dereel thing

BY JAMES WITHAM

Sebastopol Pumper and LPG Support attended a combined training session at Dereel Fire Station in late July.

In the near future, Sebastopol (R15) will be supporting Dereel (R7) to structure fires in its area (just under 30 kilometres away) in the form of a Pumper to supply additional pumping capacity (where useable), Breathing Apparatus sets and wearers, Structural Firefighting qualified personnel and various equipment.

This training session was held in preparation for this arrangement and proved to be worthwhile with both brigades getting a chance to meet a few new faces and share information on equipment, capabilities and local area layout and risks.

Our thanks again to Dereel brigade members for their hospitality and we look forward to working with them more often in the future. ■



Bright sparks

BY SARAH BLACK

Bright Tanker and Pumper, fully crewed, left the station, ambling around town waiting for the pager message. All we knew was it would be a real fire exercise and we were to respond as if it were a real call out. Debates were had as to where and what it would be.

Eventually the call came in ... car fire, fully involved and the location. Bets were won.

Radio traffic flowed as the two crews turned out. For one person in our crew it was the closest thing to a real incident he'd had, having not yet done his Minimum Skills, so it was a great opportunity to answer his questions of what to expect and what to consider on the way.

Up on the hill above the industrial estate in Bright, fire glowed in the night. Arriving on the scene we discovered two cars, fully involved, the result of a 'collision'. The guys did a great job setting them up realistically!

A search of the scene resulted in a 'casualty' being found, which was pulled clear, appropriate first aid administered and ambulance attendance requested. You have to love those hardworking manikins, the things we put them through!

Before we got stuck in with hoses we had the opportunity to empty a number of out-of-date fire extinguishers on the fires. We've seen them work brilliantly on small fires but realised they are ineffective on well established ones.

Like many rural brigades, callouts are few and far between, so the opportunity to experience the real nature of fire and the effects of different applications of water – i.e. fog or jet, foam or no foam – are rare too. An exercise like a simulated car fire is an invaluable experience. There is no trauma of real victims being involved and the fire can be reignited, to give more people a go on the hose.

With the cars fully extinguished, the 'incident' was closed down and the crews headed back to the station to debrief.

A great exercise, spectacular, interesting and a great learning opportunity. *Note: Dangerous and toxic materials were removed from the cars prior to ignition.* ■

Kiewa's Kyokushin connection

BY AARON WALLACE

An important part of firefighting is fitness and self discipline. Some members of the Kiewa fire brigade have taken up Kyokushin Karate to help maintain a high level of fitness and gain further skills in self-discipline.

Sempai Daniel Wallace from Riverina Martial Arts puts our members through a range of fitness and self defence manoeuvres.

We train with Sempai Daniel Wallace for an hour and a half every Friday night and our members are already starting to feel the benefits of this training. Our brigade currently has four senior members and two junior members attending. ■

Rescuing Region 14

BY BLAIR DELLEMIJN

CFA and VICSES came together for the Annual Region 14 Road Rescue Combined Drill at Melton in August.

Now in its second year, the day consisted of: lessons on new rescue techniques with New Car Technology; displays of new tools by the people at PT Rescue and Holmatro; a rescue demonstration from the Bacchus Marsh SES Rescue Team; and rescues undertaken in real-world scenarios. A fantastic lunch was put on by the Melton Fire Brigade Auxillary.

Many thanks go to the members of the Region 14 Rescue Committee, PT Rescue, Holmatro, VICSES, and members of Plenty and Melton brigades who took part in a fantastic day of learning. ■



Juniors' joint venture in South West

BY PETER WALL

North Hamilton and Hamilton Junior fire brigades came together for training at the Western District Training Ground (WDTG) recently. The two brigades did a number of drills including extinguishers, fire blanket use, power line down, search & rescue and domestic gas cylinder. A great day was had by all juniors and some excellent skills were gained.

The juniors then tucked into an excellent tea from the WDTG crew. A big thanks to the South West Area Training Department and the crew at the WDTG for making the day possible. ■

MFB makes Melton gasp!

BY BLAIR DELLEMIJN

Melton Fire Brigade prides itself in getting up-to-date training and information. So this is why an invitation was sent to Deer Park MFB to bring its Ladder Platform to the Melton Fire Station in early October.

As it was put through its paces, CFA Fire Officer Cory Woodyatt gave a brief run down on what it can be used for and how, if the need arose, it would be called upon to be used at an incident in the area. The two MFB members demonstrated what the platform can do, with a lot of gasps as it was extended to its maximum height of 37 meters.

The MFB firefighters were more than happy to answer the many questions and show everyone around the appliance. Another great example of two fire services working together. ■





Practice makes perfect

DSE and Parks Victoria members demonstrate the use of rake-hoes and axes

BY ANDREW BITTO

Sunshine beating down despite a 5.30am wake-up call on a Sunday, off I head from my overnight stay in Shepparton to the small, dry town of Tungamah for the fifth annual Interagency Cross Border Wildfire Exercise.

It's 7.30am, yet the Tungamah football ground is brimming with Victoria State Emergency Services (VICSES), Victoria Police (VicPol), Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)/Parks Victoria and Ambulance Victoria crews as well as a plethora of CFA trucks continually streaming in through the gates. Anyone not aware of the event taking place today would no doubt think a serious full-scale incident is taking place. And in many ways, it is.

Carefully designed to balance command and sector delegation tactics in emergency management with practical skills to fight wildfire, the Interagency Cross Border Wildfire Exercise is treated like the real deal. Tungamah was chosen to host the event as the most central location to the sixteen participating brigades in Regions 22 and 23.

Importantly, the exercise includes members across multiple agencies working together to effectively handle various emergency scenarios. Crews continue to arrive for the next half hour including a few from the NSW Rural Fire Service, while I make my way over to this year's Incident Controller, Jeff Nunn.

"Everything is done by the book," Jeff tells me. Looking around, everyone is in their correct, full gear and appropriate tabards in accordance with the Australian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS).

After a briefing at the Incident Control Centre, we are handed an official SMEACS (Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration, Command/Comms, Safety) briefing sheet and maps of the surrounding area, and are ushered over to each fill out a T-card, which is used for identifying and organising the deployment of all personnel and units. All units and members are to be accounted for by VICSES using the T-card system at the gates, and this works effectively throughout the day. Armed with a CFA car, before long we're off to observe a number of exercises under a warm sun.

DRY FIREFIGHTING TECHNIQUES AND HAND TOOLS

With the help of DSE and Parks Victoria, this exercise is designed to teach members how to use the tools effectively where there is minimal or no accessible water.

They also get an opportunity to hone skills in axe wielding; chopping off burning outer fuel layers of logs and smothering them into the ground to starve them of oxygen. This is a typical DSE firefighting tactic in the absence

of water. A DSE member mentors the group, wielding an axe like a master, showing the best techniques and angles to chop.

RUNNING GRASS FIRE SUPPRESSION

Graeme Dickie runs Sector B, which is allocated to the running grassfire exercise.

Approaching a large, brown-grassed paddock, the strike team forms a semicircle of three or four trucks, and they follow a soccer ball around by spraying it with the fire hose.

"The main thing is to get the tanker tactics happening ... about 15 to 20 seconds on the ball, concentrating on the conservation of water and on accuracy," Graeme tells me.

"The ball will go every which way, which a firefront does, but the thing is to get the synchronisation happening – get in with the first truck, have a hit, then the second truck cleans up what they miss while the first truck falls back to the rear."

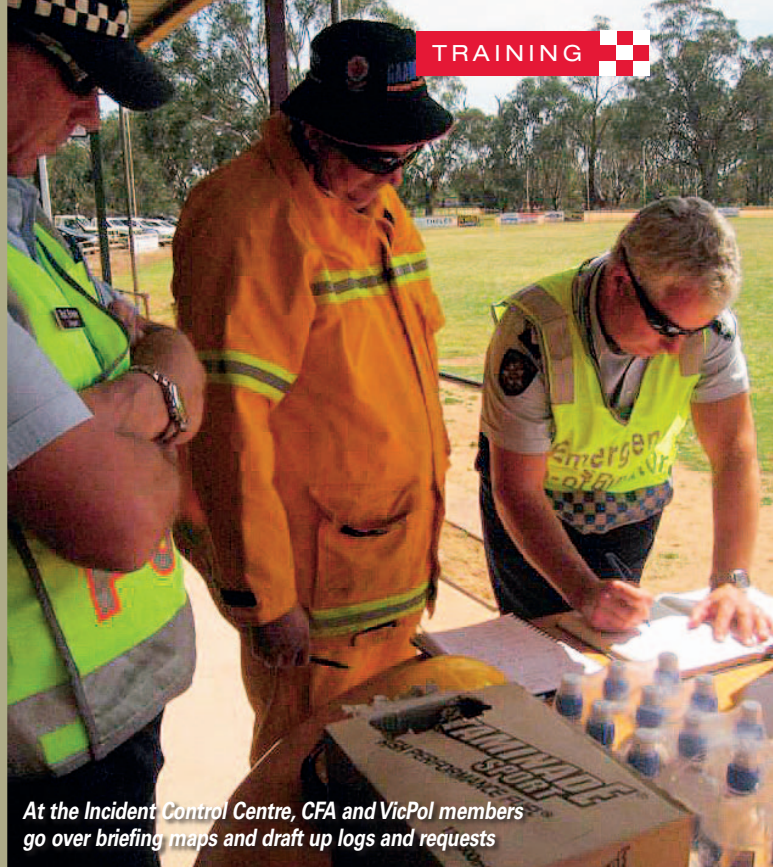
There is an even mix of new and experienced members and it becomes apparent that the full-scale practice is doing everybody good. The exercise is a safe opportunity to have any mistakes corrected.

Graeme follows the exercise with a positive debrief encouraging members to pass on what they've learned to other troops in their brigade



Max Grinter and John Lazzarotto from Cobram East and Boosey brigade

Photo by Les Garbutt



At the Incident Control Centre, CFA and VicPol members go over briefing maps and draft up logs and requests

and to try, as much as they can, to regularly keep up the practice within their brigades on a smaller scale.

REFILL POINT – PUMPING AND DRAFTING

Crews are busy filling a collar tank from the main water tank, using a quick-fill, and the emphasis is on water conservation and timeliness.

A high-spirited Max and John from Cobram East and Boosey brigade are more than happy to have their photo taken after their pumper is filled. “Between me and Max we’ve got nearly 90 odd years [experience], so what do we need all of these other guys for?!” John jokes.

I tell them if they’re not careful they’ll make it onto the front cover of *Brigade* magazine.

ICC AND THE STAGING AREA

“The big emphasis is to make sure all our guys write everything down,” Jeff tells me.

Even as he is speaking, full logs and reports are being drafted and discussed all around me. A CFA member is in tactical discussion with a Victoria Police officer on the best way to order extra materials for the Incident Control Centre (ICC). Strategies are being discussed around a large map printout.

“Police are out there doing actual traffic management plans on some of the jobs just

so they get a feel for what they’d be doing in a real incident involving CFA and other agencies,” Jeff says.

Halligan, or ‘Hooligan’ tools as they’re colloquially known, and the Hurst Rescue hydraulic ‘Jaws of Life’ are in action as VICSES demonstrates a motor vehicle accident exercise. I’m intrigued by the way they quickly secure the vehicle to prevent it from tipping, and duct tape the rear window before smashing it in sections to safely gain entry.

Throughout, Ambulance Victoria members emphasise the importance of checking for danger and not recklessly attempting to rescue trapped victims before the area is made safe. Victoria Police gives tips on how to approach and work at a potential crime scene without disturbing evidence.

FOCUS OF THE EXERCISE

During the past four annual exercises, there have been Hazmat scenarios, an evacuation of the state forest, and fire investigation exercises. However, generally most exercises haven’t changed much over the years – they’re honing in on skills that you just can’t practise enough. The benefits of organising similar exercises at least once a year across the state are obvious.

“We’re always trying to put plenty of exposure out there about what we’re doing,” Jeff says.

Catering is taken care of by the Lions club, which puts on a fantastic BBQ and the event is supported by GAAM Emergency Products, which showcases a vast array of impressive emergency equipment. GAAM also provides sponsor bucket hats for all participants, which everybody wears after the exercises wrap up and the BBQ lunch begins, sun beating down.

As I commence the long drive home at the end of the day, I reflect on the simple truth that new members practise until they get it right, experienced members practise until they can’t get it wrong.

Going into a long 2009/2010 fire season that is potentially more dangerous than the last, it’s reassuring to see such a passion and focus from our members on keeping their tactics and skills polished.

It’s also very encouraging and inspiring to see such open communication and friendly cooperation across all agencies. There are no ‘us and them’ competitive mentalities – the Interagency Cross Border Wildfire Exercise cements a united emergency service whose members all know at the back of their minds that while enjoyment and fun is being had training together, it’s all for one very important cause – to preserve people’s lives and property in times of need. ■

YOU'VE EARNED IT



Emergency Memberlink is a key recognition program that thanks members for their contribution and dedication to CFA and creating safer communities.

Through Emergency Memberlink, members can receive discounts and benefits on a wide range of products and services. In excess of 250 offers are now available, with new benefits being added regularly.

Details of the offers can be found in the Emergency Memberlink Guide which is sent out with all new Memberlink Cards and on the Memberlink website www.emergencymemberlink.com.au. Be sure to visit the website regularly to keep up to date.

There are several ways you can access your Memberlink benefits. These include:

- Show your card and save – discounts and benefits available upon presentation of your Memberlink Card at businesses throughout Victoria, and some nationally.
- Online Shopping – goods below RRP delivered state-wide.
- Purchase Cards – Safeway/Caltex and Coles Gift Cards available through your Memberlink team at 5% discount.
- Discount Vouchers – time limited, special offers updated regularly. Members can download these vouchers from the Memberlink website or call the Memberlink Team.

For anyone without a Memberlink Card, you can call the Memberlink Team on **1800 820 037** or register online.

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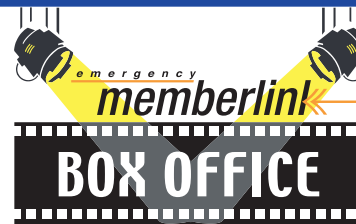


Gift Card Value	Memberlink Price
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\$100	\$95
\$250	\$237.50

To purchase your Gift Cards visit

www.emergencymemberlink.com.au or call 1800 820 037

Conditions and exclusions apply. For full card terms and conditions visit the Memberlink website.



Spendless runs the Memberlink Box Office. Members can pre purchase movie, theme park and attraction tickets saving you \$\$\$.

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All tickets are mailed. You then swap your ticket/voucher at the cinema or theme park. Discounts are not given or recognised by the cinemas/attractions directly.

Tickets can be purchased by visiting the Memberlink Box Office page on the Memberlink website or by going to Spendless directly.

The Spendless team also has over 25 years experience in electrical appliance retail and has strategic alliances with over 30 of Victoria's top retailers. They do more than just sell you appliances, they give you an unbiased opinion on what's good, bad or indifferent, advise if products are obsolete and check all pricing with their contacts. The service is as easy as placing an order over the phone 1800 352 600 or you can view a great range of top brand name appliances and special merchandise at www.spendless.net.au/memberlink

MEMBERLINK PROVIDERS

Full listing and more information call **1800 820 037** or visit www.emergencymemberlink.com.au

**Conditions apply and offers are subject to change. Valid to 31 December 2010.*



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Special Rates



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A joint initiative of CFA and SES



Rebel Sport is Australia's largest sports store providing great products, great prices and great service. Members qualify for a discount on full priced purchases at Rebel Sport stores throughout Victoria.

Terms and conditions apply. Details on the discount are available by presenting your Memberlink card to staff at any Rebel Sport store or by contacting your Memberlink team on 1800 820 037. For store locations visit www.rebelsport.com.au



Fletcher Jones showcases a range of business and casual pieces for both men and ladies.

Members are being offered a 15% discount on all full retail price items at all Fletcher Jones stores.

To access this benefit, you must hand a referral letter to the Fletcher Jones staff. This letter contains a special customer reference code, which will ensure you receive your discount. This letter is available to print from the Memberlink website, or by calling the Memberlink team on 1800 820 037. For store locations visit www.fletcherjones.com.au



Ray's Outdoors is a global leader in the leisure, lifestyle and outdoor entertainment industry.

Members now qualify for a VIP Discount at Ray's Outdoors*.

You must show your Memberlink Card to qualify for this discount.

*The VIP Discount excludes gas refills, interest free purchases, gift vouchers, fishing licenses, embroidery, advertised lines or in-store specials.

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Trade Pricing

Tanks for the hard work

BY EBRU YAMAN

The Victorian Government has committed \$2 million to the extension of a successful Myer Foundation-funded program that has already seen 85 new water tanks fitted at CFA facilities across Victoria.

The original initiative, made possible by the Myer Foundation under its 2009 Commemorative Grants Program, has been completed on time and under budget thanks to the labour and skill provided by local brigades.

By using the plumbing, site preparation and construction expertise among CFA members, money saved with donated volunteer services meant more than 40 extra tanks have been fitted to other brigades to date.

The Brumby Government, recognising the value of the project and the commitment of CFA volunteers, has matched the initial Myer Foundation grant dollar for dollar.

The benefits of the project include:

- a 'first fill' volume of water for firefighting emergencies
- water for brigade training
- water to clean vehicles and equipment, which means brigades won't have to travel to remote locations for cleaning. This will reduce firefighter fatigue, demands on volunteers' time and fuel consumption
- demonstrating to the community that CFA handles water in a responsible manner
- the ability for rainwater tanks to be filled with recycled water in the event of a prolonged drought. CFA has investigated the use of Class A recycled water and found that it poses no risk to firefighter health.

This program forms part of CFA's broader Sustainable Water Program and is coordinated by CFA's Asset Management Directorate. Brigades interested in the water tank program should contact the Asset Maintenance Coordinator at their Area HQ.

CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy said the Myer 2009 Commemorative Grants Program funding of the project was a wonderful gesture that not only supported volunteers but additionally paid a "double dividend" by giving something directly back to their broader communities through this environmentally-sustainable project. ■

AFAC examines the issues

BY WAYNE CHARLTON

In September, I was fortunate enough to be one of around 70 CFA staff and volunteer members who headed to the Gold Coast for the 2009 Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) Conference, incorporating the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Conference.

There were more than 1,000 delegates and a large number of national and international speakers. For me, the topics of firefighter cardiovascular health, management of heat stress, the response to flooding in Queensland, Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) use, volunteer expectations and 'Generation Y' reflected the diversity of issues facing emergency services.

Also of particular interest was the display of appliances and equipment from the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. This included the new \$1.5 million "about to be commissioned" Mobile Control Centre, which includes 30kVA power generation capability, satellite, WiFi, VOIP and Next G communications, FLIR and regular video capability, printing capability to A1 and electronic command and control/ICS software. They also displayed one of two Type 4 Medium urban pumpers fitted with CAFS which are currently in use. ■

For more information on this year's conference, visit www.afac2009.org.au.



Narre Warren Firefighter Tony Bundock (right) and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Deputy Chief Officer, Mark Sanderson

International audience

BY TONY BUNDOCK

Narre Warren Firefighter Tony Bundock recently presented at a Wildfire Forum for the United Kingdom (UK) based Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service.

The forum was designed to allow UK fire agencies in the east of the country to discuss the issues of wildfire as a growing threat to rural areas.

Tony's presentation outlined how CFA's structure operates at state, region and brigade levels, and also highlighted the events he experienced with Narre Warren brigade on 7 February.

"Although you don't associate the UK with the same weather conditions that we have in Victoria, there is a surprising amount of fuel at certain times of the year," Tony said. "The UK harvest was approaching its height, and there were thousands of hectares of standing cereal crops in a totally cured state."

Chairing the forum was Suffolk's Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mark Sanderson. "Tony's presentation gave us all a great insight into the strategies and tactics used in Australian wildfire fighting," Mark said.

"As all of our firefighters are either full time or retained, we were amazed that the majority of CFA firefighters are volunteers. This really demonstrates great community spirit that goes towards making CFA such a great organisation."

Tony also spent time with 'White watch' at the Princes Road Fire station, seeing how Suffolk Fire and Rescue operated at a brigade level. ■



Vic Communities the true Winners

BY ANN MOODIE

The recipients of the 2009 Fire Awareness Awards were announced at a ceremony held at the RACV Club in Melbourne in October.

A new award category to commence next year was also announced at the ceremony. The inaugural Community Preparedness Award will recognise and highlight positive actions taken by a community group or individual within Victorian towns or municipalities to improve their bushfire preparedness.

The Fire Awareness Awards were developed to publicly recognise the success of fire safety initiatives by individuals, fire agencies, groups and organisations, and are a joint initiative of Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB), CFA and the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), proudly supported by RACV Insurance.

MFB Commander Frank Stockton said that while it's great to be able to salute the terrific efforts of the award recipients, the true winners are "the communities that benefit from each and every one of the projects submitted."

RACV Insurance General Manager Paul Northey said RACV Insurance was proud to be involved with the Fire Awareness Awards, and congratulated all the recipients.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron and Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Innovation Gavin Jennings were among the presenters at the awards, which also recognised the valuable contributions of Fairfax Community Newspapers, ACE Radio 3WM, VicDeaf, Parks Victoria, DSE, and CFA. ■

FIRE AWARENESS AWARDS 2009 – WINNERS

RACV Insurance Fire Safety Grant

Teenagers in Emergencies
• Maffra Secondary College

RACV Insurance Award for Excellence

Community Services Training Packages Project
• MFB

Media Award

Wimmera Summer Fire Awareness Media Campaign
• ACE Radio 3WM
• CFA
• DSE

Community Award

'Bellows' - Bullengarook Community Newspaper
• Margaret Boyd

Education Award

Teenagers in Emergencies
• Amy Foster, Jessica Bedggood, Tim Liddell and Sam Montague, Maffra Secondary College

Fire Services Award

Wilson's Promontory Fire Community Engagement
• Parks Victoria
• DSE

Fire Services Award

- Highly Commended
'Now Hear This' - Enhanced Fire Safety for Deaf Children
• MFB

Teenagers granted a double win

BY ALISON APRHYS

The Maffra Secondary College Students who produced the *Teenagers in Emergencies* booklet this year received a double accolade when they took out the Education Award and then the RACV Insurance Fire Safety Grant at the Fire Awareness Awards in October.

Maffra Secondary Students Amy Foster, Jessica Bedggood, Tim Liddell and Sam Montague took out two categories at the recent 2009 Fire Awareness Awards.

Maffra Secondary College teacher David Montague said that the teenagers were absolutely thrilled with their win. He explained that the Education Award is presented to a primary, secondary, TAFE or tertiary educational facility that has developed and successfully implemented an initiative to educate students and the wider community about fire safety or fire prevention.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron said the *Teenagers in Emergencies* creators were very worthy winners. "These community-minded Year 9 students responded to the information needs of local teenagers in order to prepare for and respond to emergencies, including bushfires in their community," he said.

The excited teenagers also won the RACV Insurance Fire Safety Grant. "The \$10,000 grant is to assist a community group, school, not-for-profit organisation, volunteer or individual, to develop and undertake a new fire safety initiative, or to further develop an existing fire safety initiative that will reduce the number or impact of fires in Victoria," Minister for Environment and Climate Change Gavin Jennings said.

The \$10,000 grant will enable the recipients to distribute the *Teenagers in Emergencies* booklet more broadly to teens across the Gippsland region, as well as enabling Year 7 and 8 students at Maffra Secondary College to participate in a practical exercise day, where they will learn basic fire and flood safety skills.

"Teenage power should never be overlooked," David said. He said that the booklet had received fantastic feedback. "It's written in an effective teenage text that addresses them as empowered individuals. Teenagers who read it tell us they feel as though they are empowered to act in a proactive manner, rather than waiting for something to happen and then reacting." ■



Amy Foster, Jessica Bedggood, Tim Liddell and Sam Montague with their award certificates. Photos on this page courtesy of 'On Location Photography'





Junior champs are champs

Championship Committee Chairman Don Robertson (left) and Secretary Colin Watt accept the Award from Sue Lakerman, Manager of Bakers Delight Hamilton, sponsor of the award

BY AMBER FLETCHER

Hamilton Fire Brigade won an award recently for its efforts around the State Junior Urban Championships. Southern Grampians Shire Council announced the winners of the 2009 Powercor ACE Radio Southern Grampians Business Achievement Awards at a ceremony in July.

The Awards recognise businesses and groups that have achieved excellence in their performance and provided outstanding service to customers.

Hamilton Fire Brigade 2009 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, State Urban Junior Championship won the Festivals/Events Category. Chairman of the Championship Committee Don Robertson and Committee Secretary, Colin Watt accepted the award. ■

Safety campaign recognised

BY MARTIN ANDERSON

CFA has been recognised at the National Safety Awards of Excellence for its Seatbelt Safety campaign. The campaign, including a safety video, was aimed at changing attitudes towards seatbelt use in fire vehicles, particularly on the fireground. The video was sent to all CFA brigades and is being distributed to 35,000 brigades in the United States as part of an American safety campaign.

The awards are an annual event organised by the National Safety Council of Australia. CFA was nominated in the GIO Best Communication of a Safety Message category.

Congratulations to the Commonwealth Bank, which won the overall award for its Safety Day campaign.

Congratulations also to the CFA members who took part in the Seatbelt Safety campaign. ■

Werribee excels at road rescue

BY LAUREN O'CONNOR

“Werribee CFA” – the crowd must have tired of hearing those words at the Australasian Road Rescue Challenge. That name was called out not only as the third placed team overall, but also as the winner of the ‘Entrapped Rescue’ section, second-placed in the ‘Controlled Rescue’ and winner of the ‘Best Medical Team’.

Made up entirely of volunteers from the Werribee brigade, the team competed against many others from across Australia and beyond.

“You are judged on the quality of first aid, the quality of command and on safety. Every event is timed and every event has a different degree of difficulty,” team leader Rob Mitchell explained.

Competing each year requires a great deal of training and support. The team is partially reliant on sponsorship from CFA and others, but the members also fund some of the costs of competing themselves. But according to Rob, the effort is well worth it. “The main reason is the advanced training you get – it’s the only time we get to cut up brand new cars and learn about the latest techniques and equipment. We try to bring what we’ve learnt back to the brigade.”

While the team’s membership has changed over time, Werribee brigade has competed in the Challenge every year for ten years and is set to compete for an eleventh in 2010. ■





Female members from Plenty Fire Brigade (l to r) Nada Gavrilovic, Nicole Marcon, Victoria Gibbons and Katherine Webber. Photo: Alison Aprhys

Fun, Fearless and Female

BY AMBER FLETCHER

Plenty Fire Brigade is a long way from Sydney, but that's where I found myself talking to brigade members Nicole Marcon and Katherine Webber about their trip to our northern neighbour. The two represented CFA volunteer female firefighters at the 'Cosmopolitan [magazine] Fun, Fearless, Female Women of the Year Awards' in late September.

"I said: 'You're speaking if we win'," Nicole tells me as she looks at Katherine. "Then we heard Sarah Murdoch saying 'and the winner of the Fun, Fearless, Female Outstanding Contribution Award is ... Volunteer Female Firefighters from CFA for the Victorian Bushfires.' We couldn't believe it," Nicole says with a giggle.

As we chat I can still feel their excitement and it's hard for me not to be jealous of their whirlwind trip. Drivers taking them everywhere, hair and make up, hotel rooms and dinner with celebrities.

"I thanked Cosmo and accepted the award on behalf of all female firefighters that go out on trucks and get up at ungodly hours of the morning to turn out," Katherine says. "It was really nice that a Sydney based magazine recognised CFA as a whole, and nine months after the fires."

Bubbly and enthusiastic, Katherine and Nicole's strong bond is obvious and I learn that the brigade also recently rewarded them: Katherine as Firefighter of the Year and Nicole with the Captain's Award.

"We're the only two females to win either award," says Nicole. "Girls rock!"

We chat for a little longer about recruiting more females into CFA and how they came to join. Obviously passionate, they are really keen to get more women involved, and even starred in a recent recruitment campaign.

And after meeting these two, the future looks bright for CFA's female firefighters. After all, they are Women of the Year. ■

EIMS Mapper takes the prize

BY LEITH HILLARD

The Geographic Information Services (GIS) team was all dressed up with a place to go in September. At the 5th Annual Victorian Spatial Excellence Awards, the innovative Emergency Information Management System (EIMS) Mapper was declared the winner in the 'People and Community' category. The awards recognise the outstanding achievements of individuals and organisations in Victoria's spatial information industry.

The EIMS Mapper, a joint development between CFA Operations and GIS in Community Safety will be deployed in Incident Control Centres (ICCs) and Divisional Command Points, and will be used by mobile mapping resources such as Ground Observers during the coming fire season. It provides a range of basic mapping functions as well as a number of operational assessment, fireground visualisation and mobile mapping capabilities. The Mapper is designed for use during the first four hours of a bushfire, before specialised and more sophisticated geospatial information services and support can be brought in.

It was most thoroughly tested at the Pakenham ICC on 7 February where the Bunyip fire was being managed, and the functionality of the Mapper has been further improved since this live pressure test.

"Of course it's been a torrid year for everyone at CFA," GIS Manager Mark Garvey said. "We hope that the success and usability of the Mapper will help build up some positive energy as we head into this next fire season." ■



The GIS team at the awards

Photo © Tim Mullane - www.sustainableimage.com.au



As it was

BY LEITH HILLARD

It was the mid-1930s and Alan Sandlant, aged 20-something, had knocked off after another tough day logging in the Mt Cole State Forest near his Lexton home. Some forestry officers spotted Alan and his employees and commandeered them to fight a firefront at Harvey's Flat near the head of the Wimmera River.

"We had no tools and no water. There was no follow up with food. We had to walk about two miles to the fire in the white stringybark forest."

Alan was put in a small group with one two-gallon water bag and a mug between them and rake-hoes provided. "We stayed there all night and even slept. That's when the fire snuck slowly towards us. One of the State Forestry rangers, a savvy bushman, walked to the river in the middle of the night to collect water and was away a couple of hours.

"By daybreak it was too dangerous and we were told to abandon ship. I got home in time for the Sunday school picnic. Our families were very worried because there was no communication, but they knew we were experienced bushmen. We had country know-how. It wasn't sport but we did it because we had to and it gave us a lot of satisfaction."

Several weeks later a letter unexpectedly arrived from the Forestry Commission with 13 shillings and sixpence payment for the night's work. "That was a quarter of a week's wages. What a thrill to be recognised!"

Alan, a jack-of-all-trades, was a founding member of Lexton brigade and served as president for 16 years. He has watched the brigade wear out about five trucks. Aged 90, he remains a member – almost 70 years later – and the family tradition continues with the recent induction of his grandson.

"CFA knits a town together," he says. "It's all about, 'What can we do?'" ■

Blast from the past

BY ALISON APRHYS

The moment you walk through the door of the Fire Services Museum of Victoria (FSMV) at the Old East Melbourne Fire Station, you are transported back to the days when firemen (and they were all rugged he-men back then), sported bristling moustaches, brass helmets were the go and horse-drawn firetrucks the very latest in vehicle technology.

Run by a small group of dedicated, knowledgeable and friendly volunteers, the FSMV is a fascinating must-see for all CFA members and their families.

"The Fire Services Museum of Victoria is the only museum of its kind in Australia that is housed in an old fire station," says volunteer guide Ken Heddle. A former MFB senior firefighter, Ken is also a longstanding member of Werribee Fire Brigade and he is justifiably proud of the museum and the people involved.

As we walk around, Ken explains that the museum houses the largest collection of firefighting memorabilia and related items in Australia. At 10,000 strong, the collection is extraordinary and covers the history of firefighting in Victoria. There are also many items from international fire services that provide an interesting contrast.

VINTAGE VEHICLES

For some visitors the museum is simply the entrée; they can't wait to get down and dirty at FSMV's Fire Vehicle and Appliance Restoration Workshops at Newport.

Open to the public by appointment, it is a must-see and Bob Flynn and the guys down there are delighted when any CFA members past or present come by to look through the four massive sheds crammed with Dodges, Austins, Befords and the odd Dennis, Leyland and Fargo – not to mention what seems like a million spare parts.

"We always welcome appliance enthusiasts," Bob says. What an understatement! He explains that some of the volunteer restoration team even have their own trucks, some of which are kept at the facility. "Some appliances are available for hire for special occasions such as weddings, birthdays, funerals, promotional events and Santa runs," he adds.

So the next time you are in Melbourne, make time to see the fascinating collections at the FSMV. But beware, I popped by for just a short visit and walked out the door more than two hours later! ■

Fire Services Museum of Victoria
 39 Gisborne Street, (Cnr Victoria Parade),
 East Melbourne, 3002
 Contact Phone/Fax: (03) 9662 2907



A lazy morning

BY ANDREW CURRIE

As I drove to Whittlesea, via Kinglake, my first thoughts were: I am going to get very wet today. Parked the car and unloaded my bike and gear. Found the CFA tent as the skies opened up and let us have it. Watched the 120 kilometre riders (crazies) set off in the rain, hoping it would stop for us 70 kilometre riders (lazies).

Our turn came and we were off. Thought I was doing ok, averaging 30kph, just setting my own pace, until all the fast riders flashed past like I was standing still.

Around 15 kilometres in, I came to the first hill, and thought now the fun stops, but got up the first few hills ok, passed a few of the CFA brothers who shot off from the line, and then we hit the first of the downhills, hitting speeds of 60 kph down these wet windy roads to look over my shoulder to see a large group sitting off my back wheel; no pressure!

Got into St Andrews to a warm welcome (St Andrews brigade) and a cold drink, and a chance to top up the water bottles. Set off for the Will Walker hill climb challenge, but not before a steep ascent that sorted a few people out.

Started the hill climb challenge, and it was a long windy narrow road, and a long slow ride ahead. Met at the top by some cheering locals and into the recovery stop in Kinglake.

Off again out of Kinglake and another steep drag out of town, and then onto the rolling roads towards the finish, down the steep hill I drove in on, hitting around 70 kph in the wet, getting passed by more speedsters, and then cruised the last 15 or so kilometres to the finish in just over three hours.

Met up again with the others that had finished and went for a photo shoot, then back to the car and the 30 minute wait to get out of the carpark.

All in all, a very enjoyable day. ■



Chief Officer Russell Rees, Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron, and Minister for Community Development Peter Batchelor join CFA members after the ride



Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services Danielle Green with Captain Koala

Riders on the storm

BY AMBER FLETCHER

More than 70 CFA members took part in the Degani Kinglake Ride on Sunday 13 September with more than 3000 riders in all taking part in the second annual event.

The 120 kilometre and 70 kilometre categories began in Whittlesea and led the fields through the towns of Yan Yean, Arthurs Creek, St Andrews, Kinglake, Castella, Glenburn, Flowerdale and Kinglake West before finishing back in Whittlesea.

The weather caused a challenge for all of the participants with rain falling for much of the morning. Despite the conditions early on, the weather improved and participants were able to enjoy the day.

The event helped raise funds for CFA and was part of the launch of the 'Vital. Valued. Victorians.' campaign. Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron and Minister for Community Development Peter Batchelor helped to launch the new promotional material including a television commercial.

Congratulations to all those CFA members who took part and thanks to everyone who helped support the local area and CFA.

The ride is planned to run again next year. ■



Andrew Currie (front) during the ride



On top of the world

Josey Sensi competing in the Ultimate Firefighter (Individual) event
Photo courtesy of Michelle Collens

BY ALISON APRHYS

According to the CFA Team that travelled to the World Police and Fire Games in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in August, it was an incredible 10 days.

Dandenong Leading Firefighter Josey Sensi, Frankston Firefighter Felixa Boyd and Officer in Charge Warrnambool Fire Brigade Henry Barton made up the CFA contingent.

“It was bigger than the Olympics this year with more than 10,000 athletes,” Felixa says.

“One of the first events was Stair Race, which involved doing the event wearing full firefighting gear (Breathing Apparatus included) and then without PPC,” Josey says. “I was in a team with three MFB guys Ray, Steve and Sam and we entered in each category.”

In the highly contested event, the Victorians did extremely well, taking out bronze medals in the Full Gear Individual and Full Gear Team events, the bronze in the No Gear Team and the Gold medal for the No Gear Individual. “It’s very popular with the Spaniards, who take it very seriously,” Josey says. “Many services will give their members promotion, money and even houses for medal wins!”

Henry competed in various track and field events including winning a medal in the triple jump. Felixa and Josey also participated with over 300 competitors in the ‘Grouse Grind’, a tough 2.4km run up the 853m high Mt Grouse. Josey took out a bronze in the individual and her team-mate Felixa took a bronze in the team event.

But their mettle was tested in the final event, Ultimate Firefighter (UF) which is acknowledged as one of the hardest competitions of the Games. The UF components included:

1. a hose drag, roll, carry
2. ladder throw, stair runs, hose hauls and axe use
3. Kaiser force machine and 82 kg dummy drag
4. high rise kit chainsaw stair run and carry

“While I won a silver medal, Felixa excelled in three out of the four components coming 1st in two and 2nd in one,” Josey says.

“The Games were fantastic; it was a time where we were reminded that we are part of a team that encompasses not only the rest of Australia, but the world,” the team says.

Josey, Felixa and Henry are already thinking about the 2011 event, which will be held in New York. ■

Firefighters in pursuit!

BY DAVE GORMAN

Dave Gorman, Cranbourne Fire Brigade, and Anita Faras, Frankston Fire Brigade, recently took part in ‘The Great Melbourne Pursuit’.

Starting in QV Square in the Melbourne CBD with another 125 teams we had to solve clues that would then lead us to locations around the city to complete a variety of stages.

Only your feet and public transport were allowed to be used to get you around the city; anything else meant disqualification.

Some of the challenges we faced were to jump off the 10-metre board at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, a soccer dribbling challenge in the F1 Pitts, Bouldering (rock climbing horizontally instead of vertically), a spot of Martial Arts training and some Parkour along Southbank. Parkour is the art of jumping on/off/over and balancing on man made objects.

Our placing was 4th in the mixed category and 5th overall. We missed a place on the dais by a few minutes. Pretty good for the first time!

Check out a more in-depth report on *CFA Connect*. Just search the words ‘The Great Melbourne Pursuit’. ■



Dave and Anita plan their route

The CFA/CORP Health Triathlon Team Challenge is on again at the end of January next year. Look for further details in the next edition of Brigade magazine or check out CFA Connect and search for ‘CFA/CORP Health Triathlon Team Challenge’.



Six years of starting anew

BY DARREN PADGETT

For six years now, staff from Region 8 and CFA Training College – Bangholme have been volunteering their time to help the kids from the Operation New Start Program. In August, 25 students from Casey, Frankston and Dandenong schools were again at Bangholme as part of the program.

The day with CFA focuses on decision making, self-esteem and reliance on the team, in line with the Department of Education/Victoria Police program for students “in danger of leaving the school system.”

So we begin with a little theory then progress through team-building drills in the ‘Temple of Doom’ to the five person fog attack. It’s a very full day with all the kids being presented with a certificate at the end.

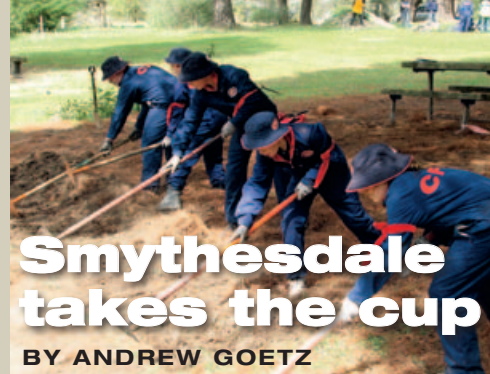
Fire Officers Darren Padgett, Greg Christison and Firefighters Sean Marshall and Sam Webb all offered their time along with the Training College, which supplies PAD operators and the consumables on the day for free.

‘A day with the fire fighters’ is still the most popular part of the program.

In late August, Police Chief Commissioner Simon Overland presented each of the students with a course graduation certificate, indicating how important the Police believe the program is in offering kids in crisis a ‘New Start’. We CFA members are rapt to play our continuing part in their growth and success.

Thanks to Fire Officer Peter J Lucas from Dandenong who has been the program coordinator since its beginning and to all the staff who have kindly volunteered their time to help out.

If you would like to help out with this program in the future, please contact Fire Officer Darren Padgett at d.padgett@cfa.vic.gov.au ■



Smythesdale takes the cup

BY ANDREW GOETZ

The Smythesdale Junior Fire Brigade held the Second Annual Midlands Junior Cup at the Smythesdale Gardens in September.

The aim of the day was to unite Junior CFA brigade members from across the Midlands area in a day of friendly competitions and to use the skills they have learnt as Juniors including leadership, basic firefighting, suppression and first aid.

Teams of five, made up of both boys and girls from Elaine/Morrison, Gordon, Greendale and two teams each from Bacchus Marsh and Smythesdale competed on the day with Bacchus Marsh taking out the event and the cup for the second consecutive year.

Smythesdale Junior Fire Brigade had a strong presence with a total of 12 Junior members making up two teams and two members, Daniel Goetz and BJ Owens, volunteering to make up the numbers in two different composite teams.

When asked why they volunteered to go on different teams, BJ’s response was that “when you’re a Senior Member and you go away on strike team duty, you may be put with a crew you are unfamiliar with.”

“It was the right thing to do and we are all part of CFA,” Daniel said.

After months of planning Lisa Henning, Junior Leader from Smythesdale brigade and co-coordinator of the event, and her team of Junior Leaders were rewarded with plenty of happy smiling faces and a lot of “I can’t wait until next year” comments coming from both the Juniors and Leaders.

Andrew Goetz, also a Junior Leader at Smythesdale, said: “The Junior Members from Smythesdale worked hard all year and displayed a strong commitment to the brigade.”

The day was made up of eight rotational events including Communication and Map Reading, Entrapment Procedures, First Aid, Fire Plugs and Standpipes, Fire Extinguishers and Fire Blankets, Drafting, Running Edge, Knap Sack and Rake Hoe.

The event also enforced the fact that the Junior Members are part of a much larger emergency service organisation working towards long-term common goals within Victoria. ■



Emerald Junior Brigade members on the TEAC Oval after the game

Junior footy stars

BY BRONWYN HUNTLEY

It was a typical Melbourne day for the football – cold, wet and overcast. But even so we all set off for our trip into TEAC Oval Port Melbourne to see the clash of the titans – Port Melbourne versus Williamstown.

We arrived late for the President's lunch – a note to self to never be late for such a function again; apart from making a grand appearance we missed the President's speech and almost the soup!

I was asked to make a speech – hmmm what to talk about at such short notice. I took the opportunity to talk about why the partnership between VFL and CFA is so valuable to us both.

For CFA it builds greater awareness of what we do as an organisation. From traditional firefighting to car accidents, and the story that delighted our table the most – rescuing a child from a catflap!

For the VFL it is an opportunity to see how we have developed female participation in CFA. For those I spoke with from the VFL this was of great interest because they are trying to boost numbers in the Women's League.

After lunch it was out to watch the footy and listen to the passionate supporters provide guidance, advice and some abuse to the opposition. At half time, Captain Koala spread the word distributing footballs and frisbees.

At the final siren we hurried on to the ground for our Juniors to present the Firefighter Award to the player voted Best-on-Ground. What made it more exciting was it was live on ABC1 TV. After the broadcast of the presentation we had confirmation from one of our Junior's parents that they looked great on telly! ■

Bronwyn is a member of Emerald Junior Fire Brigade.

Bayswater gets a bath

BY SIMON NEILL

In early August, 18 brave firefighters from Bayswater brigade took up the challenge to play 55 North Bayswater Auskick footy kids in a match that is now likely to become a yearly event.

Around 350 parents and local supporters turned up to see a huge defeat of the boys and girls in yellow: 3 1 (19) to 0 1 (1).

Auskick organiser Rodney Stafford said the morning was a huge success and would love to see us back next year. Brigade members responded by saying they were hampered by the full structural gear and will be back next season to even the score. ■

Partnership's grand finale

BY AMBER FLETCHER

CFA's partnership played a major role in the VFL Grand Final played on Friday 25 September at Etihad Stadium. Members from Riddells Creek and Truganina brigades handed out footies to the crowd and ensured CFA's presence was felt at the game. During half-time of the pre-final TAC Cup game, the little league came on wearing CFA guernseys and were beamed onto the big screen outside the ground.

Then it was time for the Roosters to take on the Bullants. CFA crews abseiled down the stadium with the footballs, and ran them to the umpires. Then one lucky CFA member tossed the coin just before the game began.

Chief Officer Russell Rees, along with Captain Koala and CFA members, was on the ground at the end of the game to help with the presentation of the CFA Cup. This went to North Ballarat Roosters 14.7.91 after they beat the Northern Bullants 10.8.68.

The partnership between CFA and AFL Victoria will continue with more activities planned for 2010. ■



Chief Officer Russell Rees presents the Roosters' Orren Stephenson with the Best-On-Ground award

Stay alert; avoid theft

BY STEVE SAGAR

Over the last 12 months, equipment valued at approximately \$70,000 has been stolen from CFA brigades. Most equipment thefts occurred from fire stations, firetrucks and support vehicles engaged in operational activities.

We're asking brigade members to be pro-active in all areas of station and vehicle security. Depending on the type of fire station, some or all of the basic checks below should be followed to ensure that:

1. station doors are suitably strong and have good quality deadlocks installed
2. station entry is secure at all times so that members of the public cannot enter undetected
3. windows are adequately secure, preferably with locks and possibly security grills if at ground level
4. all other entry points such as skylights, vents, ducts and other points of intrusion are suitably protected
5. good quality locks are used on all external gates/doors
6. the station's external perimeter has adequate security lighting
7. an alarmed or monitored electronic security system is installed if required
8. cash is not kept at the station or is securely locked away
9. laptops are locked up out of sight, and desktop computers have security cables attached
10. all lockers, desks and storage bins holding equipment are locked
11. keys to access parts of the station are locked away
12. the personal belongings of brigade members are not left at a station
13. sheds used to store equipment have sufficient strength and suitably strong locks to resist entry.

Concerning vehicles, no expensive or desirable equipment should be left on display when a vehicle is parked or unattended for any period of time. Laptops and GPS units need to be removed or locked out of sight. Wallets, mobile phones and cash should be removed. Transport vehicles parked overnight should be garaged in secure or well illuminated locations.

When a theft or loss occurs, the Brigade Management Team should review the internal systems and controls and undertake steps to reduce future risk.

All suspected thefts, criminal losses and damage to property should be reported to the Finance and Administration Manager at the CFA Area Office who will notify local police for further investigation. ■



BRIGADE

CFA volunteers help mates

BY PETER BEATON

The state's volunteer firefighters have nearly completed the task of helping one special group of people affected by the Black Saturday fires – some of their own members.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) has been distributing nearly \$800,000 among the firefighters who lost their homes or other assets to the fires.

VFBV Chairman Gary Lyttle said: "More than 100 volunteers lost their homes, many while they were fighting fires elsewhere. Nearly 200 others lost significant assets, including whole businesses."

"The VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund is a way local brigades and generous members of the community have been helping those volunteers."

The VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund has now distributed most of the funding available, with assistance of up to \$7,000 in many cases, depending on the nature of the loss.

"If you live in a fire affected area, this is a sign that your local volunteers have not been forgotten, and if you live elsewhere, it is a sign that your community and your local brigade have been able to help too," Gary said.

The VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund is overseen by legally appointed trustees, the recipients have been nominated by local brigades and the cases researched by staff from CFA regional offices.

With the job largely completed, the Trustees have retained a small portion of the fund to deal with any cases that are yet to come to light. ■

iECC gets a name change

BY GEOFF CONWAY

The iECC is now known as the State Control Centre or SCC. A proposed name change for the iECC had been under consideration for some time with discussions that have included all four agencies and Victoria Police.

The name change reflects, and is consistent with, new command and control arrangements.

It is also consistent with amendments to be made to the Emergency Management Manual for Victoria. All documentation will be amended to reflect this change. ■

Courage remembered

On the morning of September 11 2009, CFA Recruit Course 1/2009 and MFB Recruits #100 stood alongside each other as a sign of respect for those lives lost in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City in 2001.

Of the more than 3000 deaths that day, 411 emergency workers who responded to the scene died as they attempted to rescue those inside. The New York Fire department lost 341 firefighters.

Leading Firefighter Greg Kinross delivered a heartfelt speech, which summarised the feelings of all those present. "The Courage and sacrifice shown by the FDNY (Fire Department City of New York) firefighters will never be forgotten," he said. ■

BY JANINE HAMMOND

Support with a smile

BY SHARON REILLY

A smile, a handshake and a welcoming hug is how we were greeted when we arrived at the Marysville Fire Station. We came from Murchison, Mooroopna, Rushworth and Undera brigades and we went to Marysville to show support and friendship to the local brigade.

Murchison Captain Jon Crowley made a small presentation of red and white wine from Longleat Wineries of Murchison. He also presented four saw horses on behalf of Bailleston Captain Ian Burrowes, whose father made them for the Tool Library.

After a superb lunch, we boarded the bus for a quick look around the town. We all knew how devastating the fires were but to see it for yourself and have explained to you the efforts that went in on the day just left you numb.

Back at the station we said our goodbyes. A big hug for Captain Glen Fiske and a huge thankyou to John and Judy Ratcliffe for a great day. Just seeing you rebuilding your lives and letting us help just a little has sparked a friendship that will last a lifetime!

A big thankyou goes to Peter and Jodi Jacobson for their kind donation of the coach for the trip and to our coach driver Dan who kindly donated his time. It's these kinds of people who made a great day all round!



Marysville's John and Judy Ratcliffe



Pulling up their socks

BY DAVID GAMBLE

Acheron brigade members with their newly issued socks

American company Redhead has donated 2,000 pairs of socks and 500 insoles to Regions 12 and 13 members of brigades in the fire affected areas. The total retail value of this very generous donation is around \$90,000.

Australian Distributor and Managing Director Simon Turner (recent Acheron Brigade Recruit) says that the socks are extensively used by American Firefighters.

Area Finance Officer [Brigades] John Munday has been distributing the socks to the targeted brigades as he tours the two regions. "They are extremely comfortable and very popular with firefighters," John says. The socks are 85% Australian Merino wool.

Marysville brigade members with Y Service Club Bendigo's David Coles (left) and Colin Lambie



From one Marysville to another

BY ALISON APRHYS

Two members from the Y Service Club in Bendigo presented a cheque for \$3,733 to members of the Marysville Fire Brigade in October on behalf of their colleagues in Marysville, New Brunswick, Canada.

Colin Lambie, Area President, Y Service Clubs International, South Pacific Area and David Coles attended the presentation, which was held at the Marysville Fire Station.

David, a former Canadian resident, presented the cheque to Communications Officer Pauline Harrow on behalf of the brigade. "I am happy to present this cheque to the Marysville Fire Brigade from Y Service Club in Marysville, New Brunswick, Canada," he said.

Pauline, whose husband Trevor was a former long-serving Captain at Marysville, made a gracious response. She said that the members were very grateful for the hard work by their northern hemisphere namesakes. "We thank the people of Marysville in Canada for their very generous cheque," she said. "It's really nice that people from so far away are showing that they care."

Colin said the Y Service Club of Marysville, Canada decided to raise funds for the Victorian community when they saw the level of devastation. "The Canadian club was assisted in their efforts by other Y Service clubs in their region," Colin said.

Ursula Kelly with her donated artwork



Art of Gold

BY WENDY CORMACK

Renowned Gold Coast artist Ursula Kelly felt compelled to offer a tribute to those whose lives had been devastated by the Victorian bushfires by donating two artworks to CFA.

After contacting CFA Headquarters, Ursula and fellow member of the Royal Queensland Art Society, Michael Hooper, were placed in contact with Yarra Valley Group's Deputy Group Officer, Andrew Webber.

Ms Kelly's artworks portray photographs published in Queensland newspapers during the height of Victoria's devastating fires. One stirring piece is titled 'Hanna's Boots', while the other represents the famous photograph of CFA member David Tree and 'Sam the Koala'.

The artworks were lovingly transported to Victoria by Mr Hooper, then presented to Deputy Group Officer Andrew Webber and Group Officer Roly Rak during an informal presentation at the Woori Yallock Service Centre, where they will be hung.

Ms Kelly has some of her works hanging permanently in Canberra, NSW, Queensland and Europe.

Teddies join Yarra Valley brigades

BY WENDY CORMACK

Residents of Camberwell Gardens Aged Care facility donated a number of hand-knitted teddies to brigades of the Yarra Valley Group in September.

The ages of the knitting group ladies range from 90 to a spritely 98 years young.

Brigade Support Officer, Wendy Cormack, has a personal connection with the aged care facility and had spoken with its Activity Co-ordinator, Faye Stewart, about how the brigades are able to emotionally support a child after a house fire or motor vehicle accident with the gift of a 'Teddy'.

TRU support

BY KRIS PERKOVIC

South Morang and Yallourn North brigades recently met with staff from TRUenergy to receive generous donations from the gas and electricity supplier. TRUenergy donated a total of \$116,342, split between both South Morang and Yallourn North.

TRUenergy's Managing Director, Richard McIndoe, says the donation is the company's way of saying thanks to the great work of CFA, especially on Black Saturday and its aftermath.

TRUenergy call centre manager, George Company, said staff were pleased they could support CFA.

"Employees themselves contributed so generously to bushfire relief efforts and TRUenergy then matched those contributions. It makes me tremendously proud of our people and the organisation."

The company operates a power generating facility at Yallourn and a customer service centre in South Morang. Donations to both brigades follow TRUenergy's philosophy of supporting communities in which it has a presence.

Region 9 Operations Manager David Sherry said the donation would be distributed between Yallourn North brigade and the Narracan Group of brigades. "The brigade and Group will carefully evaluate how to obtain the best outcome from this generous and unexpected donation," he said.

South Morang Captain Lindsay McHugh said the brigade would use the donation to purchase a command and control car.



TRUenergy staff with CFA members at South Morang Fire Station

The idea of knitting the teddies for CFA was taken to the residents of Camberwell Gardens who embraced it with vigour. "These residents have been knitting all their lives; being able to knit to help others gives them such pleasure," Faye said.

The Yarra Valley Group of Fire Brigades would like to thank the residents, facility volunteers, staff and management of Camberwell Gardens Aged Care Facility for their generous donation.



Government supports Grampians

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Premier John Brumby officially opened the \$5 million CFA Grampians Regional Office in Ballarat in August. Mr Brumby said the new office would coordinate CFA activities and support the Grampians Region, from Ballan to the South Australian border, and act as the Regional Emergency Coordination Centre for Region 15.

Mr Brumby said CFA Grampians Regional Office supports the State Government's commitment to provide services and employment opportunities to provincial Victoria.



Prom date shines

BY MATT GAGE

The new Region 9 'Prom Country Office' was officially opened in Leongatha by CFA Board Member Robert Spencer in October.

Members from South Gippsland Group, Leongatha Group and the South Gippsland Shire Mayor were present for the opening. Gippsland General Manager Malcolm McKenzie spoke of the dedication and hard work that had gone into the project to achieve a great result.

Operations Officer Simon Bloink will be based in the new office with a number of staff including BASOs and Training Managers.

The office will allow Operations and Admin staff to operate from a more central point for brigades within the South Gippsland region. Previously this office was run from the back of the Leongatha Fire Station, which simply ran out of room!



Powelltown Captain Les Hart and Minister Cameron

(l to r) Tammy Lobato MP, Warburton Captain Tony Van Meurs, Ex-Captain Barry Marshall & Minister Cameron

Satellites launched

BY WENDY CORMACK

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron officially opened two satellite stations at Powelltown and East Warburton in September.

During the opening of Powelltown, Gladysdale Chairman Kevin Sanders acknowledged the support of local businesses and community members who donated funds to ensure the brigade had a permanent facility.

Kevin also announced that, after a public meeting, the Gladysdale brigade would revert to its original name of some 40 years ago 'Little Yarra Fire Brigade'. The name Little Yarra better reflects the communities the brigade supports.

Invited guests were then asked to make their way to the new East Warburton Satellite Station to help Warburton brigade celebrate its official opening.

General Manager Yarra Area Lex de Man introduced Millwarra Primary School teacher Nino Birch and students to sing the national anthem.

Warburton Captain Tony Van Meurs thanked the Minister and other dignitaries for their attendance. Ex-Captain Barry Marshall provided an overview of the brigade's history.

Tammy Lobato MP, Member for Gembrook, was then invited to present the keys to Warburton's new Salvage vehicle to the brigade Captain. This vehicle was purchased largely by community donations.

Morning tea was provided by Gladysdale Firefighter and caterer Pam Dartnell while Hoddles Creek Red Cross supplied a scrumptious lunch. Thank you!



An Airey visit

BY LEITH HILLARD

Premier John Brumby and Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron were greeted with great enthusiasm by local school children and various agency representatives at Aireys Inlet Fire Station in October. Also gathered were some delighted members of Aireys Inlet and Wurdale brigades looking forward to officially getting the keys to their new tankers.

While Aireys Inlet was presented with a heavy tanker, Wurdale brigade received its long-awaited ultra light purchased with the help of a Community Safety Emergency Support Program grant. It's ideal for the backroads work carried out on the north side of the Otways by this brigade in the Winchelsea Group, and will soon be housed in its new double bay station complete with meeting room and other facilities.

New Ultra Light Tankers

BY ANN MOODIE

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron announced plans to roll out 42 new CFA tankers funded by a \$5.25 million Special Bushfire Initiative in September.

Minister Cameron said the new tankers have enhanced features and will replace the older 'Slip On' tankers. "The tankers include a 550-litre water tank, a foam system and rotating work lights," he said. "On board, there will be a range of hose lengths, a chainsaw, fuel containers, tools and first aid kit to provide vital equipment to a total crew of two.

"The body is made from 640 kilograms of lightweight aluminium and is equipped with upgraded suspension to carry up to 3.9 tonnes.

"I am also pleased to announce a further 11 Ultra Light Fire tankers to be produced next year as part of the third round of Community Safety and Emergency Support Program (CSESP) funding."

Minister Cameron said the new fleet of 42 Ultra Light Tankers will give CFA a total of 69 new tankers. These follow 16 tankers already used by CFA, which were funded through the second round of the Community Safety Emergency Support Program.



Photo: Keith Pakenham

CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy with Jenny Calvert-Jones from the Calvert-Jones Foundation



GPS granted trial

BY ANN MOODIE

The Calvert-Jones Foundation has provided a grant of \$50,000 to CFA to trial a GPS vehicle tracking system. The grant will go towards a research project enabling all CFA vehicles to be tracked via GPS technology on the fireground.

This will help CFA in monitoring the location of vehicles during an incident, with live testing undertaken by the Mansfield Group.

The Calvert-Jones Foundation, founded in 1997, is a small charitable foundation that concentrates its efforts on community projects, health, education, the environment and animal welfare.



Traralgon West gets extra support

BY TERRY GOODWIN

Traralgon West's Ron Holman and Bob Lorenz with the new Support

Traralgon West brigade took delivery of a new Support Vehicle in October. At a ceremony attended by members of Traralgon West along with members of Traralgon, Morwell, Churchill and Traralgon Group, Captain Ken Wells was on hand to receive the keys from Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services Danielle Green.

The new support will see plenty of service in transporting members in support of the Traralgon West Tanker as well as towing its trailer, which contains a Quick Fill Pump and a Floating Collar Dam. It will also be available for use as a Forward Command Vehicle and Strike Team Leader Vehicle.

The vehicle was purchased with funds from the CSESP program and the brigade's own fundraising along with a donation from the Keith Chenhall Foundation.

Traralgon West Brigade is located at the Latrobe Regional Airport and has use of the facilities of the Morwell SES Unit. The brigade has approximately 25 members and is the primary response brigade for the Latrobe Regional Hospital, Latrobe Regional Airport, five car dealerships on the western approach to Traralgon, and the rural area of Traralgon West. The brigade averages about 190 calls a year.



Loyalty honoured at Framlingham

BY DAVID MCGINNESS

A presentation night was held at the Warrnambool RSL with around 40 members of Framlingham brigade attending, along with members of their families.

Following our meal, Henry Barton, Operations Manager Warrnambool Fire Station, and Colin Lynch, Captain Framlingham brigade, presented service medals to some of our longest serving members and also those members who have left the local area.

The small community of Framlingham, located in Region 5, approximately 30 kilometres east of the city of Warrnambool, was one of the first to endure the devastating flames of the Ash Wednesday fires in February 1983.

Most of the award recipients are members who were living in and around Framlingham when the fires struck, many of whom lost properties and livestock. Their commitment and dedication to the brigade has been duly recognised by the presentation of their service medals.

Narre Warren's cutest new members

BY DAMIEN BAKER

Narre Warren recently gained three very cute new members. Lachlan Turnham, Lara Jones and Lachlan Davey were all born within a month of each other between 10 June and 17 July.

All babies and their proud associated firefighter fathers are doing very well.

Though often joked about around the fire station, there are no plans at this stage to install three baby capsules to the rear seat of the Narre Warren Pumper!



(l to r) FF Mark Turnham with Lachlan (DOB 10th June), Lt Andrew Davey with Lachlan (DOB 17th July) & FF Adrian Jones with Lara (DOB 15th June)

Talking up Torquay

BY JOHN MONAGLE

Six members of the Torquay Fire Brigade were presented with awards at the brigade's Annual Dinner in September. Brigade Captain Ben Spargo said that the awards acknowledged the outstanding commitment of each recipient and that they had made a significant contribution to the brigade, their community and CFA.

He added that all members of the Torquay Fire Brigade were delighted to see their colleagues' hard work and dedication rewarded.



Torquay Brigade members at their Annual Dinner

Charter Guarantees Volunteer Voice

BY PETER BEATON

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) presented Premier John Brumby and Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron with framed copies of the Volunteer Charter in October.

The CFA Volunteer Charter was first concluded by the State Government with CFA and the then two separate rural and urban volunteer associations in December 2001. It was the first of its type in the world.

Premier Brumby and Minister Cameron reaffirmed the CFA Volunteer Charter last year in an official ceremony marking the official launch of the united Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria.

The handing over of the framed copies to the Premier and the Minister had been delayed by the tragic 2008/09 fire season and its aftermath.

"The Premier and the Minister have demonstrated time and again their support for CFA volunteers and through the Volunteer Charter their commitment to full consultation with us before making decisions that affect Volunteers," VFBV President Gary Lyttle said.

"The Volunteer Charter is an important guarantee to CFA volunteers that they have a critical role in the process of making decisions on the future of CFA and bushfire fighting arrangements," he said.



Maffra Fire Brigade Members Justin Carrolan, Alex Coleman and Ryan Wheeler at the Maffra Secondary College Careers Expo

On display at Maffra

BY JUSTIN CARROLAN

Maffra Secondary College held its annual VCE/Careers Expo night with a range of Universities, TAFEs, apprenticeship providers and community organisations – including CFA – participating.

On hand to provide information about CFA and the school CFA Youth Crew were Maffra Captain Ron Pitt, Lieutenant Ron Graham and ex Youth Crew members Justin Carrolan, Alex Coleman and Ryan Wheeler – all from the Maffra Fire Brigade. A fantastic display of 'what CFA is about' and the benefits of being a volunteer in the community were displayed to students and their parents.

The Youth Crew at Maffra Secondary College is run by David Montague (Valencia Creek brigade) and has been operating for approximately 12 years. It has been the starting point for many younger firefighters in the surrounding areas and will no doubt be the beginning for many in the future.

Etihad competition winner

Congratulations to Kellan Fiske of Marysville brigade, the winner of the 'Nominate a CFA Member' competition. Kellan was nominated by Luke Comisso, for his outstanding commitment to CFA, his brigade and his community in the face of tragedy.

The winning nomination reads:

"Marysville firefighter Kellan Fiske showed remarkable courage throughout the Black Saturday fires. Kellan was a member of the crew who was out on the first truck and worked hard in extremely dangerous conditions to save the town from the southern side of Marysville. Despite the tragic loss of his mother and younger brother Delton, Kellan's commitment to CFA, his firefighting mates and the local community saw him determined to stay on duty, and he helped to save and assist many more people. His compassion for those around him during this horrific time was an inspiration to many others."

Kellan has won a trip for two to a European city of his choice. This prize is provided by Etihad Airways.

CFA Connect thanks all those who contributed. It was moving to hear so many inspiring stories about the members who are CFA.

You can read all the nominations on CFA Connect in the forum.

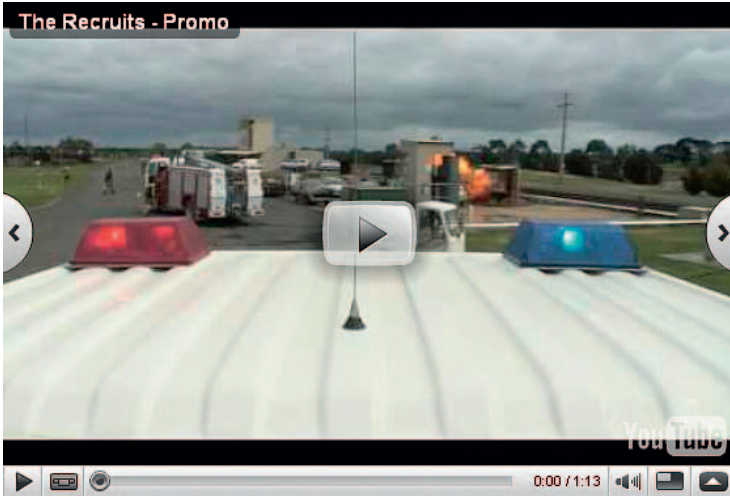


Melton gets all 'dolled up'

BY BLAIR DELLEMIJN

Once again, Melton brigade members got 'dolled up' for their recent Pre-Season Dinner Dance. Over 100 people attended this year's gala event held at the Melton Fire Station in October. Recipients who attained their service medals told of how the town and brigade had changed so much since they became members.

Dignitaries invited to attend the event included VFBV Vice President Hans Van Hamond, as well as Councillor Broden Borg of the Melton Shire Council.



Recruits Doco Hits the Mark

BY MARTIN ANDERSON

A series following career firefighter recruits through their 16-week course has been viewed more than 25,000 times in eight weeks on CFA's Official YouTube channel, CFA TV.

The documentary was produced by CFA Public Affairs with the full support of CFA Training College – Fiskville staff and instructors.

The following are some examples of comments posted on CFA TV.

"I've enjoyed watching all 8 episodes and I think it was a great idea to give potential career firefighters an insight in to what is involved in the recruitment process. Great Job!!!"

"I love these videos it is so good to have this to show hopeful recruits in the future show what the training is all about I cannot wait until I am eligible to apply and hopefully make a career out of this :) keep them comin."

Online fans

facebook

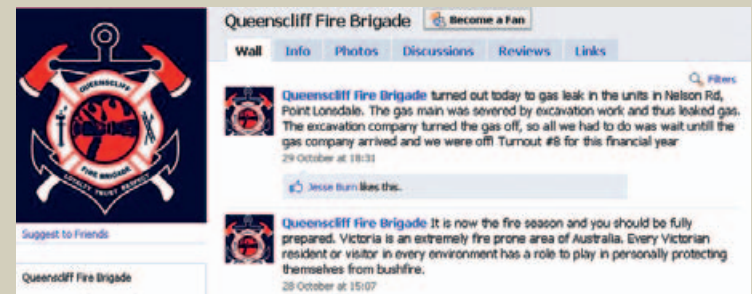
CFA's facebook page now has more than 57,000 fans! Join up today!



Queenscliff gets technological!

BY JESSE BURN

Queenscliff Fire Brigade now has a facebook page. It is a great way for the community to contact the brigade, and participate in comments, photos and videos the brigade may upload onto the page. To go to this page, search for 'Queenscliff Fire Brigade' in facebook.

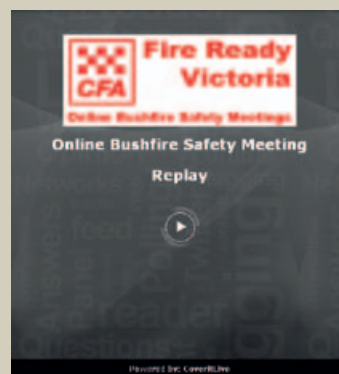


Bushfire Meeting Action Replay

BY MARTIN ANDERSON

CFA held its first ever live online bushfire safety meeting in October. The meeting attracted 214 people who posted 175 comments and questions in just under one hour.

You can watch a replay of the meeting on *CFA Connect*.

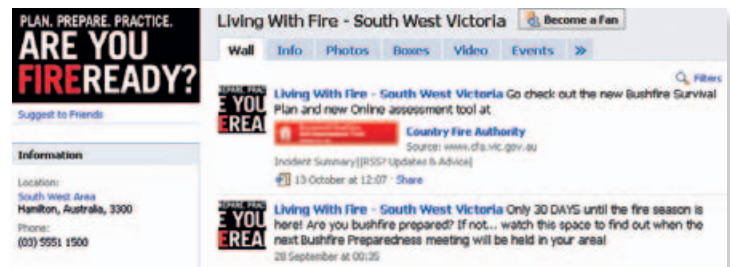


South West faces off

BY PETER WALL

CFA South West Area has launched a Living With Fire facebook Page. The page will include information on fire safety, upcoming events, presentations and links to sites where you can get more information. We encourage CFA members to promote the page to all their friends on facebook.

To visit the page, search for 'Living with Fire South West' in facebook.



Visit www.cfaconnect.net.au for more details on the stories published in this edition of *Brigade*

The 47 years

INVERLOCH

A PHOTOGRAPHIC DIARY OF A CFA FIRE STATION

Compiled by Keith Pakenham



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