

Brigade

OUR COMMUNITY • OUR CFA



cfa.vic.gov.au

CFA members step up during floods



Diamond Creek's proactive BMT



Tree-changers become firefighters

Brigade magazine is published by CFA Communications & Stakeholder Relations, PO Box 701, Mt Waverley Vic

Manager Member Communication and Engagement:
Brad Thomas

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

Graphic designer:
Mark Hammond

Printer:
IVE Group

Articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of CFA.

The editor reserves the right to edit articles.

You can update your address or email details, or cancel Brigade magazine, by clicking on 'view my profile' on the home page of members.cfa.vic.gov.au or by calling 1800 628 844.

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

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

Material obtained from this publication is to be attributed as: © State of Victoria (Country Fire Authority) 2022



Useful resources

Brigade cfa.vic.gov.au/brigademag



news.cfa.vic.gov.au



facebook.com/cfachiefficer



twitter.com/cfa_updates

CFA intranet:
members.cfa.vic.gov.au

Free CFA images for download:
digitallibrary.cfa.vic.gov.au

Community engagement material:
cfa.vic.gov.au/cecontentportal

CFA templates for download:
cfa.vic.gov.au/templatetoolkit



MAIN PHOTO: TRACEY WHITESIDE

Summer 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

LEADERS' NEWS

04 Leaders' columns

INCIDENTS

06 Floods devastate Victoria
09 Incident statistics

STATEWIDE NEWS

- 10 Emergency Services Memorial officially opened
- 11 Fiskville Redress Scheme
- 11 Fiskville remediation and Health Surveillance programs
- 12 New state duty officer role
- 12 New assets to help brigade recruitment
- 14 Diversity and inclusion at CFA
- 14 Videos to engage communities
- 15 Vehicle induction videos launched
- 15 Marking Ash Wednesday 40 years on
- 15 VFBV survey now open
- 16 Three women serve on Diamond Creek's BMT
- 17 A lesson in rehab
- 17 Tap and go fundraising trial
- 18 Women of CFA Facebook page
- 18 Online Women Captains' Forum
- 19 How biodiversity advisers support planned burns
- 19 Mobile Engagement Units launch

QUARTERLY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

20 Essential operational information about driving, strike teams, flood and storm operations and hose testing and repair

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

26 Case studies about tackling a bushfire in difficult terrain, electric scooter fire and an injury while repairing a hose



FEATURE

32 Community engagement at CFA



HEALTH MATTERS

- 35** Be SunSmart
- 35** Injury compensation claims

BRIGADE NEWS

- 36** Faces of CFA
- 37** New series 'Brigades of CFA' promotes brigades
- 38** Tree-changers support their community



- 39** New stations at Dimboola and Warracknabeal
- 40** How aircraft have been used by CFA through the ages
- 42** Learning ignites passion at Toomuc
- 42** Junior leaders empower youth



- 43** Bairnsdale station officially opened
- 44** How Lilydale Auxiliary supports the brigade
- 45** Whittlesea welcomes young members
- 46** Through the ages – Diamond Creek

MEMBERLINK

- 48** The latest and most popular member offers from Memberlink



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Natalie MacDonald

Firstly, a huge thank you to the many thousands of volunteers and staff who have been working so incredibly hard over the past weeks to deal with the impacts of the floods which have devastated many parts of the state.

There is no better demonstration of CFA's 'all-hazards' approach than to witness the thousands of members on the frontline sandbagging, pumping water and assisting with evacuations or working behind the scenes, day and night, to help their communities.

An emergency like this requires a statewide effort and an organisation-wide effort with many staff also providing logistical support to keep vehicles, stations and other infrastructure operational, coordinating resourcing needs, undertaking shifts in incident control centres and, generally, dealing with an inexhaustible number of requests for assistance.

Many of our members are facing their own challenges and have been impacted directly by the floods. I urge you to take advantage of the available government assistance and make use of CFA's own wellbeing services which can connect you and your families with a range of support.

Currently, there are a number of important reviews underway across the emergency services sector which will help CFA plan how we deliver our services to the community into the future.

As part of the Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan, the Department of Justice and Community Safety will be undertaking a review of the operational capability and capacity requirements of fire services, including CFA and Fire Rescue Victoria. The aim is to ensure that current and future changes to demand for fire and non-fire services can be delivered by both agencies under the new model. This work will help inform the future funding requirements for the fire services, which complements the work CFA is already doing as part of our financial sustainability program.

The Fire District Review Panel has also recently finalised its methodology for the FRV fire district review. The panel will assess whether there has been a change in fire risk which would warrant a change to the current FRV boundaries and, therefore, CFA's districts. The panel will be considering a range of data to assess changes in fire risk and will provide CFA with the opportunity to make a submission before any determination of changes is made by the Minister. Further information about the risk assessment methodology can be found at www.vic.gov.au/fire-district-review-panel.

Finally, I'm pleased to advise that as of November we have undertaken 128 workshops to roll out the Behavioural Standards, with more than 1800 members participating to date. Feedback has been extremely positive and the roll out of these sessions continues to be a very high priority.

I wish everyone a safe and happy festive season and thank you all for everything you do for Victoria and beyond.

CHIEF OFFICER



Jason Heffernan

As we start summer, CFA is in the unusual position of preparing for, and managing, the weather extremes of fire and flood. The flood recovery effort is likely to continue into 2023 as members work alongside our emergency services partners on a range of response, relief and recovery activities.

At the same time preparations for the fire season are underway across the state and in some areas, in the north of Victoria, Fire Danger Periods are overlapping with flood-impacted zones.

Many of our members and brigades who were directly impacted by the floods, and are in the process of recovery, still continued to turn out to assist others in their community.

On average during this emergency, there were about 100 CFA members and more than 30 vehicles working on flood response each day, as well as a continual rotation of members through our incident control centres and the State Control Centre. By the end of November some 10,700 individual days of contribution by CFA members had been recorded. This tremendous effort clearly demonstrates the value of CFA across Victoria.

While there continues to be a strong focus on water quality and the health and environmental impact of the floods, member fatigue is a key concern leading into the fire season. It is important to remain aware of your level of fatigue as this impacts all the activities we do.

As firefighters we live by the Dynamic Risk Assessment and for our own health and safety use the IMSAFER mnemonic: (I) Injured, (M) Medication, (S) Stressed, (A) Alcohol or other drugs, (F) Fatigue, (E) Expertise, (R) Review. If you identify a fatigue issue, you should manage it immediately. Safety is one of CFA's values.

Since our last edition of Brigade magazine we've also had some major announcements including:

- the launch of the Fiskville Redress Scheme which will allow many CFA members and other emergency services personnel to get the assistance and support needed for any potential health effects from attending the former CFA training facility
- the operation of the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) which streamlines the former six danger levels to four Fire Behaviour Indices. For the first time, it provides a nationally-consistent way to quantify anticipated fire behaviour, with agreed calls to action for each level.

The printing of this publication brings about the close of my second year as your Chief Officer. I can honestly say I am humbled each day by the commitment and duty our brigades and members demonstrate to the communities we protect. I am proud to be your Chief Officer and it drives me daily to do all I can do to ensure CFA's success.

DCO NORTH EAST REGION



Ross Sullivan

It is a great relief for many of us to welcome the longer and warmer days. However, the La Niña weather pattern has brought the rain and we have seen major floods across the state. October was the wettest on record and we have seen major flooding in many towns across North East Region. Our members were at the forefront of the flood events in the region, providing vital support to their communities during their time of need.

To our dedicated team of brigades and staff in North East Region and the rest of the state, I thank you for what you do and for being there for others. It was awe inspiring to see the commitment and dedication shown by our volunteers across the region as they continued every day to serve their communities and respond to emergencies.

The commitment to the 2019-20 fire season was recognised in a small way through the awarding of the National Emergency Medal. I want to sincerely congratulate all those in the north-east who have been recognised in this way. I also acknowledge all the hard work put in by the districts that have conducted their award presentations.

As we all know, fire prevention is as important to our organisation as emergency response. It's great to see that more than 200 members from brigades in the north-east attended four community engagement forums in our region in recent months.

The effects of COVID-19 cannot be taken lightly. They will be felt across all parts of our communities. As CFA members prepare for the fire season, for many of our smaller brigades this will mean coming together again after a time of reduced activity. The safety of our people, as always, remains our highest priority.

As we go through our normal preseason preparation, I encourage everyone to familiarise themselves with CFA's recently released Behavioural Standards. These standards give us all solid guidelines about what is expected of us. Collectively, we have an opportunity to shape the future of CFA and ensure it is a safe, respectful and welcoming place.

The newly-developed Succession Planning Framework and Toolkit is being introduced to CFA leaders across the north-east. This framework is designed to support brigades through the normal transitions they need to make if they wish to progress and remain viable. I'm excited to see interest in this important framework and toolkit grow.

I also encourage everyone who drives CFA vehicles to understand how the changes to the driving SOPs affect them. Driver fatigue is a big risk to our people. This can happen on a fireground or travelling long distance to deliver community education sessions. Please take the time to understand the procedures and help keep yourself and your fellow volunteers safe.

GROUP OFFICER DISTRICT 2



Andrew Jan

Set in the high growth region of the Macedon Ranges, Coliban Group consists of seven brigades ranging from class 1 through to class 4. Coliban Group brigades attend a wide variety of incidents including in high-profile areas such as the Cobaw State Forest, Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre and the main traffic corridors linking Melbourne to Bendigo and Daylesford.

As a fresh-faced group officer in my second week on the job, the majority of my group footprint was devastated by the 2021 June storms. With brigades and citizens completely cut off and unable to access vital road arteries, we relied heavily on local CFA members to coordinate and undertake the road clearing efforts in their own patches. Due to storm-related communication issues, we relied solely on CFA's radio network to relay information from communities to the Divisional Command at Kyneton Fire Station and vice versa.

Hosting the local DivCom and working closely with other agencies really drove home to me the importance of not only having people appropriately trained in the AIMS structure, but also the need for ongoing training and reviewing of qualifications.

The resulting reviews of the storm event made it very clear how I wanted to be remembered as a group officer – I wanted to unite brigades across the group and create some formalised operating procedures that would direct the Coliban Group into the future. I am still very new to the group officer role having just begun my first full two-year term. However, I've been fortunate to have some amazing people around me. They have helped me to identify some key issues that I believe form the vital foundations for all groups to succeed.

Some of the key focus points for me are effective communications across all levels, upskilling leaders and future leaders, breaking the mould of tradition and being open to new ideas, and establishing some group operating procedures.

After talking to a variety of members both within Coliban Group and the surrounding area, it became apparent that there's a lack of formalised common operating procedures within groups. We are still in the early stages, but we have circulated documents such as an endorsement process for IMT personnel, developed a process for selecting long-haul strike team crews when multiple rotations are required, and clarified the responsibilities of the group duty officer.

I encourage feedback and ideas from the group management team and we constantly review how we operate and make adjustments where needed, with input from captains and brigades. I look forward to progressing into the future and seeing what this role has in store for me.

Thousands of CFA members help during floods

CFA volunteers and staff made a significant contribution to the interagency flood response in Victoria which began in October. Our people filled vital roles on the frontline in northern Victoria as well as working in incident management teams across the state.

Following the wettest August since 2010 and above-average rainfall in northern Victoria in September, the ground was saturated. We then had the wettest October on record. Most of the flooding in northern Victoria was caused by high water levels in the Goulburn, Loddon, Campaspe, Avoca and Ovens rivers and parts of the Murray River. Communities around the areas of Rochester, Shepparton, Echuca, Wangaratta, Seymour, Bendigo, Charlton, Kerang and Skipton were heavily impacted.

Wherever people needed help, CFA members were there to assist. The response from our members to the flood crisis was phenomenal. Side-by-side with VICSES, the Australian Defence Force and community members, our volunteers carried out a wide range of roles including sandbagging, constructing levees, using tankers and pumpers to pump water away from homes, helping wash out and clean houses, and assist with rescues and evacuations.

Thousands of CFA volunteers supported the flood response, which included strike teams from other areas of the state including Gippsland, the north-west and the metropolitan area. Unfortunately, the homes of many of our members in the flood-affected areas were impacted by floodwater. Some members couldn't prepare their own homes in time because they were

helping their community. In Rochester, 43 of the 48 brigade members' houses were flooded. A number of fire stations and fire trucks were also affected by floodwater.

In Echuca, emergency services had to act fast before the expected high tide mark hit. A 2.5-kilometre mineral earth levee was built in two days using excavators and bulldozers, and a similar-length sandbag levee was built along the Campaspe River to protect houses.

Echuca Fire Brigade First Lieutenant Alex Green played a vital role in keeping the water at bay.

"The water came up the Campaspe River from Rochester and went through the centre of town," Alex said. "We did a lot of sandbagging beforehand. The flooding was 60cm higher than the predicted peak so we had a bit of a fight.

"We pumped out water as we went. It beat us for a little while but using a strike team of heavy pumpers we pumped out all the water and managed to save houses.

"Pumps were delivered from all over the state and we put them in strategic places around town.

"The community has been absolutely astounding. They came out in spades and delivered. Every time I put up a Facebook post asking for help to sandbag, they were there."

The Scoresby Hose Layer, with its 2.3 kilometres of 100 millimetre hose on board, also helped with the flood response at Echuca. It worked with Fire Rescue Victoria pumper strike teams to pump water back into the river.





True camaraderie between brigades

“After returning from a three-day deployment as a strike team leader to Rochester, I reflected on the resilience of Rochester Fire Brigade members whose town and fire station were devastated by the floods.

It was obvious that despite being tired and under stress, Rochester brigade members still provided strong leadership and assistance to the community.

I noticed an ageing CFA flag flying at the front of the fire station. As a Doreen Fire Brigade vehicle was returning the next day with a fresh strike team, we arranged a small care package for Rochester brigade members, which included a new CFA flag.

I’m very pleased that the new flag is flying high as a sign of resilience and hope and reflects the spirit of CFA members – especially the ones at Rochester.”

Robert Bury, Captain Doreen Fire Brigade





ROAD RESCUE CREWS TAKE TO THE SKIES

CFA, VICSES and Shepparton Search and Rescue adapted to the flood conditions across parts of Victoria by assembling a helicopter-based road crash rescue team to respond to incidents in isolated communities.

An interim helicopter-based road crash rescue arrangement began on 20 October and responded from Mangalore Airport for the duration of the floods.

This joint rescue team (pictured above) enabled volunteers to reach incidents in isolated locations that were difficult for ground crews to access.

VICSES Chief Officer Operations Tim Wiebusch said the service used local SES and CFA members with road crash rescue skills and qualifications.

“A multi-agency team of five members rotated through shifts and responded to locations across the state where roads may have been cut off and communities isolated,” Tim said.

“These members are highly skilled and trained to the same level, and they were ready to respond quickly to flood-affected communities that needed their services.

“Crews were equipped with the most effective, agile and lightweight battery-operated rescue equipment to allow for increased capability,” he said.

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said this joint arrangement is another example of Victoria’s volunteer emergency services organisations working together as one and putting community at the centre of everything they do.

“There were many communities across Victoria that were difficult

to access on the ground and the air-based road crash rescue team had the equipment required to fly over water and attend incidents on their own or provide support to our ground crews when necessary,” Jason said.

“In many ways this was a groundbreaking effort by our crews to adapt in an emergency and provide continued service to our communities.”

PEER SUPPORT DURING THE FLOODS

Two of many peers, Gloria Turner and Vella Leonard were based in Echuca to support CFA volunteers, their families and the local community.

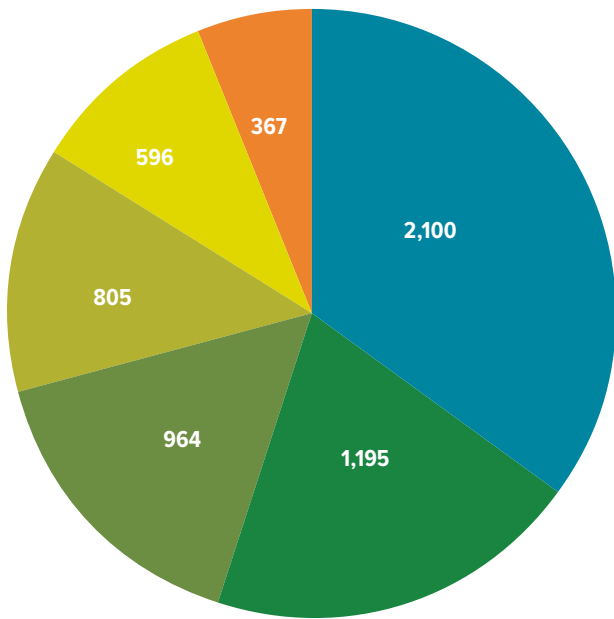
“Our first aim was to embed ourselves into the operations,” Gloria said. “Our role was to check on our crews. Women are happy to talk. With men, you really need to talk to them privately and older guys find it hard to open up. But they got used to having us around and they did open up.”

“And with the other agencies, the guys came up to us to chat to talk about what they saw out there, which was really good,” Vella said. “We also saw some local community members near tears, so we spoke to them to give reassurance and let them know we were there to help.”

“Our swift water crews who rescued people in difficult situations were affected emotionally. There was a lot of sadness, but we were happy to be there to give them the opportunity to talk and see how we could help,” Gloria said.

“CFA has its **1800 959 232** Wellbeing Support Line and we encourage CFA members to use it. Don’t think you’re 10 feet tall and bullet proof because it will come back to bite you.”

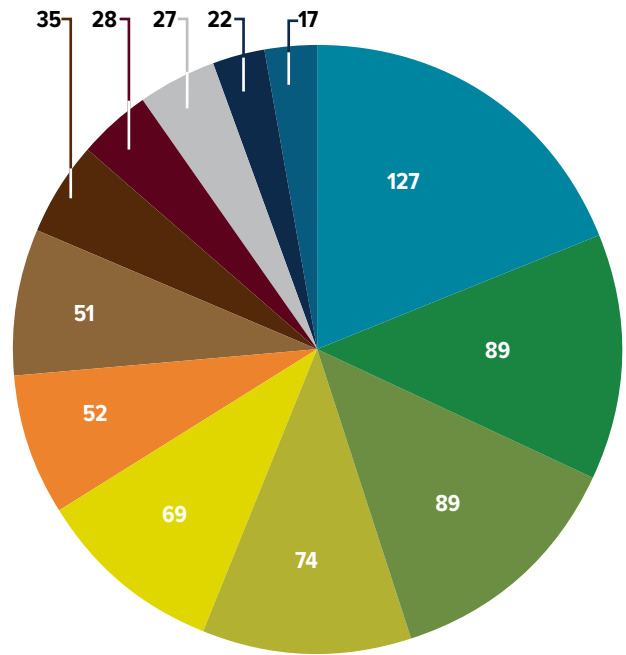
INCIDENTS BY TYPE



Service calls*	
Motor vehicle accidents/rescue/EMS calls	
Fire and explosions	
False alarms/false calls	
Good intent calls	
Hazardous condition	

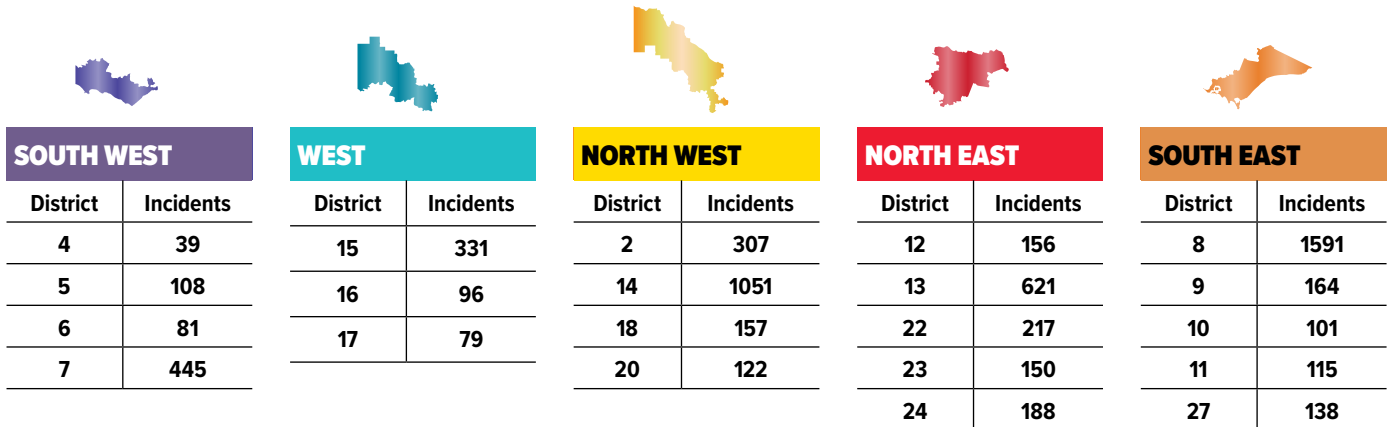
* Includes 1812 callouts supporting FRV and 2 supporting other agencies

ORIGIN OF FIRE



Paddock/open area/lawn	
Kitchen/cooking area	
Undetermined	
Engine area/running gear/vehicle wheel	
Road/car park	
Chimney/flue	
Rubbish area/rubbish bin	
Scrub/bush area	
Lounge	
Garage/carport	
Part of vehicle	
Bedroom	

INCIDENTS BY DISTRICT



Brigades are reminded to submit their incident report as soon as possible after attending an incident. Brigades on strike teams also need to submit a report to the Service Delivery Reporting Centre (SDRC). Call 1800 628 844 between 8am and 10pm.

Emergency services memorial officially opened



PHOTO: EDDIE SEAH

Family members of our fallen firefighters gathered in early September to mark the official opening of the Victorian Emergency Services Memorial in Melbourne's CBD.

The memorial at Treasury Gardens includes fallen members from CFA, MFB/FRV, VICSES, Forest Fire Management Victoria, Ambulance Victoria, Life Saving Victoria and Marine Search and Rescue. CFA was represented at the opening by Chair Greg Wilson, CEO Natalie MacDonald, Chief Officer Jason Heffernan and General Manager Infrastructure Services Anthony Ramsay (pictured above).

Jason helped to officially open the memorial alongside Emergency Services Minister Jaclyn Symes and Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp.

Jason said the memorial was a special place for families of our fallen firefighters and the broader community to take a moment to remember those who lost their lives in the line of duty.

"CFA managed this project on behalf of the emergency services, so it was important to ensure the memorial was in a suitable and accessible site which was made possible thanks to support from the City of Melbourne," Jason said.

"CFA worked closely with Emergency Management Victoria and the families and brigades of our fallen members to ensure we reflected the wishes of those involved.

"I truly feel this memorial provides the necessary solemnity required for people to continue to honour and respect our 80 firefighters who sacrificed their lives while protecting their communities.

"It takes a very special type of person to volunteer or work for an emergency service. They often put themselves at risk or are confronted with traumatic and emotional incidents

which can have lifelong impacts. But they selflessly continue in this field because they want to save and protect their local communities.

"I have no doubt all emergency services families are very proud of their fallen loved ones, and hopefully this memorial is a fitting place to honour the sacrifices they have made."

Geelong West Fire Brigade firefighter Jason Thomas tragically lost his life along with four other firefighters at a bushfire in Linton in 1998. His brother Paul said the pain doesn't go away.

"When I heard about the Linton bushfire I knew he'd be there. He was always one of the first on the truck," Paul said.

"For the loss of those five men, the sacrifice they made has saved others.

"The number of changes CFA has made since that tragedy has been incredible and there has never been another loss of a CFA firefighter in the same circumstance because of those changes."

Paul said he was grateful families were involved in the process of finding a location and designing the new memorial.

"The location and accessibility of this new memorial is perfect and it means everyone can appreciate it, not only CFA but all emergency services who have lost their loved ones," Paul said.

The original plaques from the CFA Firefighter Memorial at Fiskville, built after the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires, have been included in the new memorial site in a crypt.

Audio stories about each fallen firefighter can be found on CFA's website: cfa.vic.gov.au/about-us/who-we-are/history/roll-of-honour.

STORY AMY SCHILDBERGER

Fiskville Redress Scheme

The Fiskville Redress Scheme has now been launched. Administered by the Department of Justice and Community Safety, it is open to people who have been impacted by activities at the former Fiskville Training College, including people who worked or trained at the site and those who lived at the site or in the vicinity.

The scheme is administered by the Department of Justice and Community Safety, which has a dedicated support team to answer questions and help people through the application process. Details of the scheme and how to apply can be viewed at

vic.gov.au/redress-fiskville. You can also email fiskville.info@justice.vic.gov.au or phone **1300 315 198**.

CFA welcomes the introduction of this scheme to ensure support is provided to those impacted by the events at Fiskville over a number of years.

“On behalf of CFA’s Board and Management, it is important that we acknowledge the significant issues of the past in relation to the management of this facility,” CFA Chair Greg Wilson said.

“CFA is deeply sorry for any potential harm to volunteers and staff and other attendees at the time and the many

people from the local community who supported CFA at this important site.

“We know and acknowledge that these practices of the past are still impacting people today and that is why we are so pleased to see the Redress Scheme announced.”

Improvements have been introduced in CFA’s governance at all levels, in safety management for our members and in environmental management. Our Health Surveillance programs have also been supporting members with potential impacts and we will continue to offer this important service.

Supporting our members’ health



Remediation of CFA’s Fiskville Training College was completed in March 2021. It was the first remediation project of its kind and followed the Environment Protection Authority (EPA)’s current approach to managing and remediation of PFAS-impacted sites. The remediation of the site cost \$57 million.

The works included the demolition of all training props, containing and treating all impacted water and decommissioning all dams onsite, sampling extensively across the site and collecting and containing all the impacted soil in a structure that covers approximately 25 hectares, located in the former PAD area.

There is an environmental management plan in place and regular inspections are conducted. An independent EPA auditor monitored, inspected and assessed the works during construction and the auditor has verified that the site has been cleaned up and that it is safe for a range of uses.

A proactive voluntary Health Surveillance Program is offered to CFA members identified as having a medium to high risk of exposure to chemicals at Fiskville between 1971 and 1999. This includes PAD supervisors and operators, full-time instructors and regional and volunteer instructors. An annual medical assessment is offered to

these individuals which includes a health questionnaire and a full medical examination. The program is confidential in line with the Health Records Act 2001.

Individuals not identified within the initial at-risk groups may be offered the opportunity to participate based on medical advice. If you have any queries or would like to register for the program, email healthsurveillance@cfa.vic.gov.au or phone **0427 906 153**.

CFA also offers voluntary registration for the FEM Health Surveillance Program. While personal protective equipment, service procedures, FEM Bulletins and Chief Officer Operations Bulletins were designed to protect our people, fire equipment maintenance (FEM) activities may have exposed members to PFAS/PFOS chemicals. If you have any general enquiries or would like to register for this program, email fem-healthsurveillance@cfa.vic.gov.au or phone **0427 906 153**.

If you want to enquire about your medical assessment and paperwork for either program, contact JobFit (formerly Modern Medical) on **9869 2020**. All enquiries are confidential.

New state duty officer role

To give CFA volunteers additional support, the role of the state duty officer (SDO) has been redesigned and implemented in a new format with an assistant chief fire officer (ACFO) on duty 24/7 all year round.

This position operates out of ESTA Ballarat and works in conjunction with the emergency management sector during service delivery to the community. The role works closely with the fire service communications controllers (FSCCs) and reports directly to the CFA state agency commander as the conduit into the state control arrangements and the Chief Officer.

The initiative allows operational staff in districts to be on the ground helping brigades and groups to perform the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery functions in their catchments and provide support knowing that the SDO has them covered.

The main responsibilities of the state duty officer are to:

- monitor the state for activity that may impact CFA, such as unpredicted or unforeseen events, weather events, service delivery issues, reputation impacts, media impacts on CFA, significant multi agency requests and reporting requirements
- liaise with the FSCCs

- provide direct support to the fireground with operational and technical advice
- activate additional resources, including specialist resources and command personnel when required
- notify CFA senior management of significant issues relating to CFA
- support districts, particularly outside business hours. For example, issues related to vehicle breakdowns, station faults, welfare issues, injuries and unforeseen service delivery management
- request fire investigations when required
- perform the traditional RDO role for all districts outside normal business hours, Monday to Friday.

A district duty officer (DDO) will still be nominated by the districts in the field, but the first call for SDO assistance will be from either FireCom or the FSCC. The SDO will endeavour to assist the brigade or group in the initial stages and will activate a DDO if required.

This new initiative doesn't prevent the district from taking full control of its area of responsibility from the SDO at any time.

'Give us a hand' recruitment campaign

A variety of resources with the slogan 'Give us a hand' have been created by CFA to help regions, districts and brigades with volunteer recruitment and activities.

These materials, which consist of templates such as posters, newspaper adverts and social media tiles, are part of a larger campaign to support volunteer recruitment. The templates are the first part of a two-part strategy to support brigades and present CFA as a great organisation to volunteer with.

The templates have been designed to complement the current CFA visual style and branding of *Our Community Our CFA* publication.

These materials have been designed to be flexible so that brigades can customise them to suit their local needs. Images can be swapped and there are four text blocks to choose from that allow you to add your brigade name and the roles you're looking to fill. We've used a central QR code on the material so that all enquiries are filtered through the Volunteer Recruitment Hub. This will minimise the need for brigades to manage enquiries directly.

We know there are some effective recruitment materials that brigades have created to meet local needs, and the new optional 'Give us a hand' templates are not intended to replace them. They are meant to be an off-the-shelf solution for brigades and regions who need support with recruitment.

These templates are on the Template Toolkit on Members Online: members.cfa.vic.gov.au/tools/template-toolkit.

If you have any feedback about the material email cfapromotions@cfa.vic.gov.au. To find out more, contact your regional volunteer sustainability manager or BASO.



Hey, are you getting the info you need?



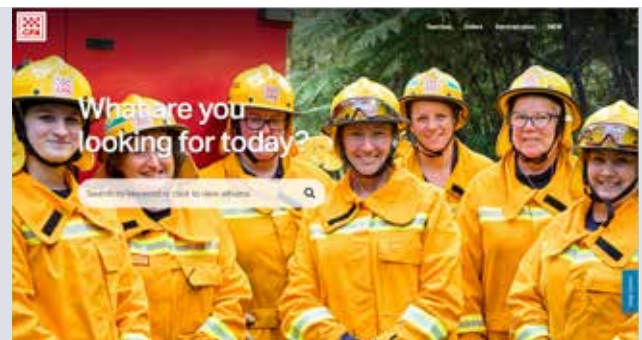
Make sure you're keeping up to date with all the information by managing your subscriptions on **Members Online – members.cfa.vic.gov.au**

- CFA regularly contacts volunteers and staff to keep everyone up to date with the latest CFA news.
- It's important to update your details when your email address or phone number change.
- Click on 'manage my profile' on the home page of Members Online to update your details.
- You can also manage your email subscriptions and select the information you prefer to receive.



Share your stories news.cfa.vic.gov.au

- CFA volunteers and staff can upload stories and photos to the CFA News and Media website.
- Reach a wide audience.
- Write about your brigade's successes – fundraising activities, community engagement, incidents, training, recruitment or service medal presentations.
- To find out how to submit a news article log in to news.cfa.vic.gov.au using your Members Online login details. There's a link to a video that explains how to upload a story at the top of the 'Submit a news article' page.



CFA Digital Library cfa.vic.gov.au/photos

- Choose from thousands of high-quality images – with new ones added every month.
- Browse the featured albums or search the library.
- Download images free of charge and use them in your posters, social media and presentations.
- If you're new to the library click on 'Register'.
- If you have any photos that might be useful for us to store in the library email digital-media-team@cfa.vic.gov.au.

Bartlett, helping your brigade protect life and property

Flexitanks



- Flexitanks are ideal for many firefighting applications
- Tank sizes range from 500L - 24,000L capacity
- Each unit is supplied with a ground sheet, which also acts as a carry bag
- Fully detachable, fitted lids are available
- 200mm high floating rim available, which is helicopter capable

Road Safety Products

Bartlett also manufacture a number of different road rescue safety products such as:

- Emergency Tarpaulins
- Rescue Training Dummies
- Road Rescue Protective Covers & Screens
- Glass & Sharps Protection Kits & Clear Hard Protection Screens



Bartlett
Industrial Textile Product
Manufacturing

Free Call 1800 115 440
172 Ring Road Ballarat, Victoria.
www.bartlett.net.au

Diversity and inclusion at CFA

CFA is in the process of developing its first Diversity and Inclusion Framework, which builds on the positive steps taken over the past few years by brigades, groups, districts, regions and HQ and draws on the development of our first Gender Equality Action Plan.

The framework also supports our implementation of the External Review of Culture and Issues Management which recommended that CFA should increase its diversity and inclusion across all levels.

CFA Chief Executive Officer Natalie MacDonald believes the framework is the next important step for CFA in helping us create a great environment to volunteer and work.

“It has been pleasing to see the commitment of many of our members to improve our approach to diversity and inclusion. While we know we have more work to do, this framework should help us prioritise our activities and support the things that make the most difference,” Natalie said.

Everyone benefits from a diverse and inclusive organisation and we all have a role to play. We want to attract and retain a sustainable membership, and that means creating an inclusive and respectful environment where all members can thrive and grow.

The framework will outline our commitment to achieving our vision of a diverse, inclusive, and respectful organisation that embraces difference. It will outline a program of work over the next few years to ensure we are delivering the required leadership, capability, processes, and practices to foster an organisation where everyone feels valued and able to contribute their best.

The Diversity and Inclusion team has consulted with hundreds of CFA members about what should be included in the framework. We thank all members who shared their personal experiences and stories during consultation. There will be an opportunity for all members to review the Diversity and Inclusion Framework and provide online feedback via YourSay CFA in coming months.

The framework aims to bring together many of the activities that are already happening across the organisation and aims to ensure that information flow is improved about what is working and what is not. It will be supported by an implementation plan to help us deliver the outcomes.

If you would like to know more or have questions, you can email the Diversity and Inclusion team: diversityandinclusion@cfa.vic.gov.au.

STORY SARAH MEMBREY

Videos to engage communities

Following the 2019-20 Black Summer Fires, CFA talked to fire-affected people in communities across Victoria to listen to their experiences and identify lessons to improve our operations.

Putting the community's experiences at the centre of our programs led to CFA's Lived Experience Project, where we videoed personal testimonies from people whose lives and livelihoods were affected by the devastating 2019-20 fires. These stories are becoming a key resource in CFA's community engagement programs and activities.

These videos are raw, personal perspectives on many topics covered in our community education programs including: how people understand fire risk; how they prepare; decisions they make on high fire danger days; what it's like to experience a fire; the impacts of fire; and fire planning and decision-making.

The stories range from holidaymakers who spent New Year's Eve sheltering on the beach in Mallacoota to business owners and farmers defending their livelihoods. We listened to people who moved from low-risk to high-risk areas who had never experienced a fire before, as well as people who had lived through many fires. We heard from young families and senior couples, as well as those who live in the bush and those on the edge



of town. All these experiences paint a vivid picture about what it's like to live through a fire and how a person's ability and circumstance influences how they experience fire.

Importantly, sharing the experiences of communities has allowed us to put the community at the centre of our work and improve the quality and relevance of our research.

The stories also provide us with a range of examples to engage other community members who have not yet experienced fire first-hand, and ask them questions about how they perceive risks, decisions, their level of preparedness and actions that are appropriate for them.

These videos form an easy-to-use resource and a great conversation starter for volunteers to start discussions with community members and facilitate a discussion about fire preparedness and action that can be taken before a fire starts.

We're grateful to all the people who agreed to share their stories with us and we thank them for contributing to a valuable resource for volunteers to use in the near future in building fire resilience in the Victorian community.

To view the videos go to members.cfa.vic.gov.au/communitycontentportal and click on 'Access the CFA Content Portal'.

STORY CHRISTINA HANGER

Vehicle induction videos launched

A new instructional video series has been developed for members to familiarise themselves with our most common vehicle types. The videos provide a visual walk around of each truck and a description of its key features.

The videos are available at members.cfa.vic.gov.au/brigades-operational/operational-vehicles/vehicle-inductions. You can also access vehicle specification sheets.

The videos cover six vehicles, taking viewers through each vehicle's key cabin features and safety, stowage, crew deck (if fitted) and pump area and pump panel.

- Scania medium pumper
- Isuzu medium pumper
- Light pumper
- Medium tanker
- Heavy tanker (4.4C)
- Heavy tanker (3.4C)

The videos are important for members who haven't used these vehicles before and members who wish to better familiarise themselves with the vehicles. While not replacing formal training, they enable our members to better understand the operation of the vehicles they may turn out on, as well as provide insight into the vehicles' protection systems.

The next stage of the project will be to place QR codes on each brigade truck to allow members to access the videos and supporting information in real time.



Ash Wednesday anniversary

The 40th anniversary of Ash Wednesday, one of the most significant bushfire events in Australian history, is 16 February 2023. There were more than 180 fires, including eight major blazes across many towns and regional communities across the state. It is estimated that more than 16,000 firefighters battled the fires. Forty-seven Victorians lost their lives including 14 CFA volunteers.

CFA will commemorate this anniversary with a state-based memorial service on Sunday 12 February 2023 at the Ash Wednesday Bushfire Education Centre in Cockatoo. This venue was chosen after consultation with key groups including VFBV and past and present members who fought the fires in 1983.

There is limited capacity at the venue so CFA is taking expressions of interest from those who would like to attend. We strongly encourage affected communities, individuals and family members who are interested in attending to fill in the form on Members Online as soon as possible. Go to members.cfa.vic.gov.au/campaigns-events/ash-wednesday-40th-anniversary.

The event will be livestreamed so you won't miss out if you're unable to attend.

VFBV survey now open

Volunteers are encouraged to participate in the 2022 VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey, which is now open. Together with the VFBV, CFA uses the results of the annual survey to help shape volunteer support and programs.

It also informs CFA about key issues and matters that are important to volunteers. In 2021, almost 2,700 CFA volunteers took part.

You can complete the survey by visiting surveymonkey.com/r/cfavolsurvey2022.

The survey takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete. All answers and comments are confidential.

For more information visit the VFBV website: vfbv.com.au.





PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM / ASA

Diamond Creek's proactive BMT

Diversity in brigade leadership is bringing fresh perspectives, skills, knowledge and experiences to Diamond Creek Fire Brigade.

Diamond Creek members above from far left Fiona Macken, Belinda Harris and Antoinette Ribchester believe what benefits CFA members ultimately benefits the communities they serve and the organisation more broadly.

The three hold Lieutenant roles within their brigade management team (BMT) and like their fellow BMT members they are committed to supporting the brigade's efforts to build a safe, inclusive, friendly and encouraging culture.

While they know having three women lieutenants in a BMT is rare, they see it as an opportunity to highlight the benefits of stepping up into leadership positions at CFA.

A brigade member for 15 years and lieutenant for five, Fiona said diversity in brigade management meant that decisions were more likely to reflect the broader brigade membership.

"While I love that we have strong women representation among our operational leaders, I am primarily happy that three skilled, knowledgeable, passionate people stood up and took on these leadership roles as I know that ultimately our brigade is better off as a result," Fiona said.

"Encouraging diversity in our leadership means a broader range of experiences, views and values are brought to BMT discussions, and it also gives confidence to members that they will be represented.

"Greater diversity also means the brigade is likely to have and/or build strengths in a number of areas, making a well-rounded, healthy brigade with something for everyone."

Antoinette, who has been a member of Diamond Creek for five-and-a-half years and its Junior leader for five, agreed saying, "diversity is about the contribution you can make.

"I'm glad I can contribute in some way to what is a strong brigade with an amazing culture where everyone is made to feel welcome and part of a team," she said.

"The three of us contribute to that culture in different ways with varied skills, knowledge and experience which is priceless to not only the brigade, but to CFA."

Belinda, who has a background in paramedicine, put her hand up to be a member of the BMT after being a member for five years.

"I joined the BMT this year as a lieutenant because I wanted to contribute further and support the brigade beyond being an operational member," Belinda said.

"My goal is ensuring we have a functional brigade with a focus on member welfare. As the brigade's new personnel manager, I also assist with the mentoring and recruitment of new members.

"It's amazing being part of such an inclusive and welcoming brigade and meeting so many different people who are now lifelong friends."

Fiona, who is also the brigade's community safety coordinator, said although it can be hard to make change, history has shown that change can bring a myriad of benefits.

"Some of the initiatives we've seen include an increased focus on welfare such as ensuring there are sanitary items at the station and in our trucks, stronger use of social media to engage our community, and increased local partnerships and events," Fiona said.

She encouraged members to put their hand up for leadership opportunities within their brigade.

"We shouldn't be afraid to try new things, give new people opportunities and to make incremental, meaningful changes to improve brigade culture and diversity.

"If you're reading this and feel as though you don't identify with the majority of your BMT members, maybe that's a sign that you should be stepping up and bringing a new, diverse view of the world to your BMT."

Antoinette agreed saying that it was important to have faith in yourself and have the confidence to "give it an honest go".

"Give it a try and if it doesn't work out or it's not the right fit, you can always take the opportunity to upskill or step back from the role.

"Remember that there are plenty of people around you who have either been in a similar situation or who are able to guide you through. Don't be afraid to ask for help."

STORY: SHAUNNAGH O'LOUGHLIN



A lesson in rehab

Students from Monash University's School of Rural Health visited Paynesville Fire Brigade in early September to learn about the vital role health monitoring plays to support firefighter health and safety. Eighteen students and three teachers attended the station.

The second-year medical students enjoyed a presentation from brigade member and team leader of the Paynesville rehab unit Darryl Sutton about the role of CFA's rehabilitation units during the fire season. Members of the brigade's rehab team then took the budding health professionals through a full firefighter health check.

"The students were amazed at what goes on behind the scenes," Darryl said. "Sometimes we have to refer volunteers to peer support or hospitals. We do a lot that people don't see."

"The students were very enthusiastic and keen to learn what we do. One of the students is a member of Beaconsfield brigade and she said she learned new things about CFA."

"It was a good session and we all enjoyed it."

The visit was organised as part of a program that encourages medical students to experience rural community life. Throughout the program they learn about emergency procedures for fires, floods and other disasters and gain an appreciation and understanding of small communities and how they work together with limited resources.

The students took a lot away from the visit including gaining a greater appreciation of the toll firefighting can take on health and safety, as well as the important role rehabilitation and health checks play on the fireground.

Tap and go fundraising trial

CFA is trialling the use of EFTPOS 'tap and go' payments for fundraising and donations to assess how mobile payment systems can support members in their fundraising activities. We expect this system will be a simple and efficient way for brigades to receive payments and reduce the amount of manual handling and cash payments.

"During COVID-19, the move to cashless payments has become more common and CFA is keen to see how we can support this," Manager Brigade Finance Policy & Strategy Josh Ball said.

"Tap and go technology would not replace the receipt of cash payments entirely but could be an alternative for when people don't have cash on them but want to support a brigade by purchasing something at a CFA fundraising event or make a donation."

"It's about offering options so that brigades don't miss out on potential revenue."

The EFTPOS pilot will take place over three months at a small number of brigades that have previously expressed interest in trialling the technology. During the trial, brigades will use the terminals in their fundraising activities and to receive donations. Brigades will still need to issue the appropriate tax-deductible receipt and transfer donated funds to the Trust bank account.

The system cannot be used to process other payment types such as member reimbursements and fire equipment maintenance.

The platform does not charge monthly terminal leasing fees, though there is a 1.8 per cent fee levied on each transaction processed through the terminal.

CFA is aware that many brigades would like to use this option and we will provide an update about the trial when it's complete, with a view to extending it to other brigades who would like to use this technology.



Connecting CFA's women

The Women of CFA Facebook group went live in early August and has quickly gained a strong following with more than 650 women from brigades, regions and districts across the state now actively participating in conversations.

The private Facebook group, which is open to women who volunteer or work for CFA, aims to increase opportunities for them to connect, share ideas and generally find out what's going on in other areas.

The Facebook group is one of the initiatives of the CFA Women's Advisory Committee which was established last year by the CEO and Chief Officer.

Members have discussed a broad range of topics including training, forums, women's activities such as the first Women Captains Forum, the new workwear and even the challenges of responding in the middle of the night.

Board member Dawn Hartog was a driving force behind the establishment of the group which is modelled on the success of a DELWP Women's Facebook page.

"It is wonderful to see the launch of the Women of CFA Facebook page. Much like the creation of the Men's Shed, this type of initiative provides a space for our members to share skills, knowledge and experience in a focused and relatable environment," Dawn said.

"It's not meant to be the only space for the women of CFA, but one of many we draw upon that make up our wider CFA experience.

"To be able to create a space where our women feel supported to ask the questions they might not have felt comfortable to ask in a bigger environment, and to be able to discuss women-specific issues openly, I truly feel will create a more confident and supported membership."

The Facebook group is managed and administered by several dedicated volunteers, including Sarah Murnane and Bernadette Holmes.

"It's been great to see what women are doing in other districts," Sarah said.

"I have loved watching the page grow. We are getting more and more posts and so many great women encouraging one another. It has been really inspiring to see women reach out to each other for discussion and collaboration," Bernadette said.

The new group has also provided another way for CFA women to receive information about courses and other opportunities they weren't aware of and to celebrate the achievements and successes of other women.

"I have been really pleased to see the discussions, camaraderie, humour, opportunities and ideas that have already come from those who have joined, in the short time that the page has been live. We really have some truly incredible members in CFA," Dawn said.

To ensure that the Facebook page is open only to our women volunteers and staff, members will need to answer a few basic questions on the membership form when joining.

For more information contact socialmedia@cfa.vic.gov.au

Women Captains' Online Forum

As a key initiative of the Women's Advisory Committee, the inaugural Women Captains' Online Forum was held in mid-August.

Designed to better support women captains in their role, the forum was also an opportunity for the group to network, learn from each other, share knowledge and experience, and break down silos across districts and regions.

Developed by a small working party comprising women captains nominated by each region and representatives from CFA's Organisational Development team, the forum's theme was 'celebrating women captains'. The four-hour event brought together women captains from across the state. They heard from CFA's CEO Natalie MacDonald who spoke about the importance of improved gender diversity in our brigades.

Attendees heard from three very eloquent, knowledgeable and passionate women captains who talked about their personal leadership journeys. Each speaker emphasised the importance of being themselves as leaders and described how they had navigated the challenges and opportunities of being a volunteer leader, including challenging others' thinking about the value of women in brigade leadership roles.

Participants also learned more about the composition of CFA's current cohort of women captains including their backgrounds, leadership pathways and the 'firsts' that they had experienced as women in their brigades. Professional development opportunities and a selection of tools and resources to assist with leading teams were also discussed.

The forum concluded with a Q&A panel session led by Chief Officer Jason Heffernan, which gave participants the opportunity to ask questions about a range of topics relevant to women leaders in CFA.



This forum is one of a number of initiatives designed to support improved gender diversity in CFA. This includes the Women in Leadership Mentoring Program, Women of CFA Facebook page and the pilot Women's General Firefighter course.

STORY TRACEY RUSE



Fire safety goes mobile

Community donations from the 2019-20 fire season have been used to buy eight new custom-fitted Ford Transit vans that will help CFA engage communities and ensure residents are as prepared as possible for fires.

Every CFA region will have a Mobile Engagement Unit (MEU) and an additional three units will be available on request.

“There are many features that will be a great benefit for CFA members including a large TV screen on the side of the vans which shows high quality digital content and our campaign messaging,” Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said.

“Computers, a PA system and an awning attached to the side of the van will also be incredibly beneficial for CFA members having conversations with our communities.

The vans also have a solar power system, whiteboard, fridge, USB ports and a PA system.

“CFA’s mission is to protect lives and property and the best way to do this is to prevent emergencies occurring in the first place. Ensuring people have the right information is a key part of that.”

CFA Board Member Dawn Hartog said it would not have been possible to get these vehicles without the generosity of the community.

“We were extremely grateful and humbled by the outpouring of support and donations over the extreme 2019-20 fire season,” Dawn said. “We are proud to see the results of that generosity now benefiting CFA volunteers and the community with the delivery of these mobile engagement units.”

One of the MEUs was used for the first time at the Yea Show in late November 2022.

STORY MARK BLACKMAN

How biodiversity advisers support planned burns

“By understanding the ecosystems we work in, whether grassland or forest, and their biodiversity (from orchids to cockatoos to grasshoppers) we can reduce fire hazards while still maintaining the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and microorganisms that maintain balance and support life,” CFA Biodiversity Adviser Dale Tonkinson explained.

“Fire, and also a lack of fire, changes ecosystems and the biodiversity present. This sometimes favours weeds and other times favours endangered native plants or animals.”

CFA has two biodiversity advisers – Sharon Merritt provides advice for CFA’s western regions and Dale provides advice for the eastern regions. They give specialist advice to regional vegetation management staff to help ensure our activities comply with legislative requirements and maximise our ability to address bushfire hazards in conjunction with landholders and other fire agencies. This often involves field visits to discuss and develop best practice for a range of situations and different sites.

The State Vegetation Management team has documented the results of some of these visits and produced case studies that will be included in a revised edition of the CFA Fire Ecology Guide (which will be released soon). The case studies also support regional Vegetation Management and Community Based Bushfire Management engagement staff in CFA, DELWP and local government. Biodiversity advisers presented some of these case

studies at the recent International Association of Wildland Fire Conference in Melbourne.

Our biodiversity advisers are also delivering fire ecology training sessions to regional staff. The training considers how seasonal timing, intensity and frequency of fuel management treatments protect biodiversity values and achieve better hazard reduction. Regional staff then work closely with brigades and landholders to better select the timing and intensity of fire to produce outcomes that reduce fuel loads and improve the ecosystem by favouring native plants over weeds.

Vegetation Management Support Officer Ritchie Redpath, who is based in south-west Victoria, attended a biodiversity training session at Enfield and Dereel.

“The training was exceptional,” Ritchie said. “The knowledge and insights shared provided another layer of understanding for the landscapes we work in. The activity of identifying species in the woodland area was a real challenge and a reminder of how much is out there.

“Fire regimens, seasons, intensity, etc, were discussed at the grassland site – this really got people thinking about how often to burn and that a patchy burn can be a good result too.”

STORY DANIEL IDCZAK

QUARTERLY OPERATIONAL UPDATE



Chief Officer's Message for 2022

In recent months, thousands of CFA volunteers and staff have responded to the ongoing flood emergency across Victoria. They have selflessly given their time when their communities are in need, despite many of our members facing the threat of flooding themselves.

Despite the challenges, our people have turned out in force to support the Victorian State Emergency Service (SES) and other emergency services, by filling sandbags, rescuing people, working behind the scenes and helping manage response activities in incident control centres across the state. We thank each and every one of you for your efforts.

Due to the recent flood activities, members may go into the fire season already fatigued. As we may experience an extended Fire Danger Period in some parts of the state, members are reminded of their responsibility to monitor and manage their fatigue leading up to and during the fire season. For more information about fatigue, read 'Know the signs of fatigue' on the next page and visit the link provided.

Given we are expected to face above average rainfall over the next month, this edition of the Quarterly Operational Update focuses on flood and storm operations and how our members can maintain their safety during these events.

Supporting this material is content from the online September edition of the Quarterly Operational Update including:

- driving SOP updates
- strike teams
- hose testing, repair and maintenance changes.

This content will provide timely reminders and support members to prepare for the delayed Fire Danger Period we will experience in the coming months.

I encourage all members to consider how the information shared in this operational update can be incorporated into brigade, group and district operations, training and exercises.

As flood operations ease and the fire season approaches, I would like to remind members that the minimum safety requirements of the Chief Officer remain unchanged. This includes currency in:

- General Firefighter/Minimum Skills training
- Hazardous tree package
- Entrapment drill.

I would like to acknowledge the valuable work that each of you contributes during what can be extremely difficult circumstances and acknowledge the impacts that these contributions have on you and your families. Thank you to our CFA members for your continued commitment. Keep yourself and your loved ones safe as we move into the fire season.

Use this QR code to access the quarterly operational update material and other topics of interest or alternatively go to www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/brigades-operational/quarterly-operational-updates



Importance of after-action reviews

An after-action review (AAR) is a key component of post-incident activities, including incident where CFA supported other EM agencies. The purpose of an AAR is to identify key observations, learning opportunities and good practice to ensure learning and improvement occurs.

The spirit of an AAR is one of openness and learning. It is not about fixing or allocating blame.

Lessons are not only shared by the individuals involved but can also be documented and shared more widely in CFA for continuous improvement.

The best way to share AARs is to send them to the catchment officer and emailing them aar@cfa.vic.gov.au.

Many products are developing by sharing these lessons such as the Quarterly Operational Update, case studies, training programs and much more.



Driving updates and tips

Driving is a major function of CFA's response and service delivery, whether as part of operational response, in pool cars or even travelling to work or the fire station. For this reason, it is important members have a thorough understanding of driving doctrines and are aware of the risks and expectations, including paying attention to your wellbeing and watching for signs of fatigue. The following provides key information that members need to consider.

Review of driving operational doctrine

- A review of driving-related operational doctrine and training material was recently undertaken to consider changes to legislation, lessons from previous events and contemporary practice.
- This included benchmarking the Section 12 Chief Officer's Standing Orders (SO) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) against other Australasian emergency services organisations, identifying good practice and opportunities for improvement.
- Given the nature of the changes and the regular, critical role CFA members undertake while driving CFA vehicles, revised doctrine was approved and released as interim doctrine while conducting broader consultation.
- Training materials are currently being updated to reflect the changes, in particular the 'Policy and Legislation' PUAVEH001 component of the course Drive Vehicles Under Operational Conditions.

To view the interim doctrine, scan the QR code or visit this link

www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/qou-driving SOP



Know the signs of fatigue

- To identify whether you are fatigued, you need to understand the signs of fatigue. These may include but are not limited to:
 - excessive yawning
 - long blink times/double blinks
 - memory lapses
 - head nodding/microsleeps
 - increase in errors or near-misses
 - being easily distracted.
- CFA members are required to notify their crew leader, incident controller and/or manager if they believe they are fatigued and may be unfit to drive.
- Crew leaders, incident controllers and/or managers have a duty of care to ensure drivers under command and/or control do not drive if they are showing signs of and/or are impaired by fatigue.
- CFA has a variety of tools available to help monitor and assess fatigue, one of which is the prompt IMSAFER.

For more information about fatigue, scan the QR code or visit this link

www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/qou-fatigue



Lessons identified: driving and collisions

- As driving is a daily occurrence in CFA, there have been a number of collisions over the years and a variety of lessons have been identified. Here are some general trends that have been identified from collisions involving CFA vehicles:
 - In about 90 per cent of CFA insurance claims, CFA was at fault.
 - There has been an increase in the number of incidents involving CFA vehicles colliding with either fire station doors or buildings.
 - There has been an increase in the number of injuries to firefighters on the crew deck of tankers.
 - At campaign fires, most damage and/or injuries occur after the first three days because of several factors including fatigue or replacement crews who may not be as familiar with the vehicle or terrain.

For more information scan the QR code or visit this link

www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/qou-collisions



Wellbeing

- CFA is committed to support the mental health and wellbeing of our people and their families.
- Mental health and wellbeing are just as important as physical health.
- CFA has a number of resources to help all CFA members and their families know where to go and how to reach out for support when needed.
- Support includes external counselling services, peer support, chaplaincy and pastoral support and the Organisational Wellbeing team.
- These services can be accessed 24/7 by calling the Wellbeing support line on 1800 959 232.

For more information scan the QR code or visit this link

www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/qou-wellbeing



Storms and floods

CFA has been assisting VICSES during the current flood operations. It is important that CFA members understand the tasks they may carry out, the associated hazards and how to maintain safety.

In Victoria, there is an 'all hazards, all agencies' approach which means when the community is in need, we all contribute. During storm and flood response, the contributions of support agencies including CFA, DELWP, FRV, Parks Victoria, Bureau of Meteorology and local councils are vital.

Agencies supporting VICSES may be asked to perform a range of activities, including roles in an incident management team or hands-on roles in the field such as:

- community flood protection
- evacuation support
- community connection
- reconnaissance
- ground observer
- incident data collection
- impact assessment
- sandbagging
- tree removal
- transporting goods
- traffic management.

Doctrine

A strong grasp on Operations Bulletin 2022/003 'Supporting Flood Response and Recovery Operations' (go to members.cfa.vic.gov.au/floodsopsbulletin) and Safety Alert 90 'Flood Recovery at CFA Locations' (members.cfa.vic.gov.au/floodssafetyalert) will help members stay safe at these incidents.

The Operations Bulletin requires members to support the control agency (VICSES) in a safe, effective and coordinated manner, and to be aware of, apply and be fully conversant with the content of the bulletin. The bulletin includes information about the following key points:

- Establishing effective liaison and communications with the control agency.
- Wearing appropriate PPC.
- Crews must be aware of the dangers of fast-flowing water and driving in flood affected water.
- Undertaking vehicle checks including cleaning.
- Travelling on the back of vehicles.
- Maintaining good hygiene.
- Managing fatigue and stay hydrated.
- Be aware of hazards associated with flood-related damage to structures and the risk associated with asbestos.

During recent flooding a number of CFA locations were impacted by floodwater resulting in high-risk hazardous conditions. At each flood-affected location, the risk must be assessed to ensure the safety of our people. CFA members should use the table in Safety Alert 90 which identifies common hazards that may be encountered during flood recovery activities at CFA locations, and follow the actions required against each identified hazard.

On arrival

Where planned activities occur, supporting emergency management agencies should establish contact with a VICSES incident controller or IMT.

To support effective liaison and communication between agencies on scene, the following steps should be taken:

- Crews must complete a T-card on arrival.
- Crews register at the staging area or VICSES unit.
- Obtain a briefing – including any new hazards and safety considerations.
- Confirm reporting lines – for a Level 1 incident it is usually to the incident control point via the incident controller, and for a Level 2 or 3 incident it is usually through the sector or divisional commander who will pass it to the ICC.
- Understand the communications plan including the communications systems that apply between VICSES and CFA to ensure that updates, progress and safety concerns can be received and reported in a timely manner. This is best supported when an emergency management liaison officer is placed at sector, divisional and incident command points to establish the links required.

Requests for assistance

Requests for assistance (RFAs) may come direct from a member of the public while you are involved in storm or flood response. For example, while you are clearing a tree from a driveway to a property a neighbour may approach you to ask for a tree to be cleared from their property. If a direct request is received, it is important that VICSES is made aware as soon as possible of any activities being undertaken.

Without a record of RFAs, incident controllers will not be aware of the tasks being undertaken by crews. This presents a number of hazards and risks because the incident controller needs to know where crews are at all times. If possible, the public should be asked to phone 132 500 to ensure all RFAs are recorded and prioritised.

Any life-threatening situations should be directed immediately to 000.



Rescues

Victoria Police is the control agency for water rescue and any incidents involving water rescue must be reported to the VicPol Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) by phoning 03 9399 7500 or 1800 135 729.

Hazards

Dynamic risk assessments should be conducted regularly throughout the response, in line with JSOP 8.02.

Hazards may include:

- prevailing weather conditions
- trees and branches
- electricity/solar power
- gas supply lines
- debris/asbestos
- communication cabling
- slippery surfaces
- unstable structures
- lighting conditions
- undulating ground.

CFA personnel must report any hazards, injuries or accidents through our systems including CFA Safe. However, it is also important to inform the VICSES crew leader or safety officer of any hazards, incidents or accidents you see while operating at a flood or storm event. These can then be recorded, monitored and followed up to achieve better safety outcomes for personnel from all agencies.

Working with trees

- Park vehicles away from electric lines and trees.
- Remain observant and do not put yourself or others at risk.
- Establish a safety zone around the operation.
- Wear full PPC/E, including chainsaw chaps, hearing protection and approved eye protection.
- Continuously review the DRA. The appointment of a safety officer and spotters is critical to safety.
- If the tree has landed on a building, consider the danger of asbestos and respond appropriately.

Electrical hazards in floods

- In major floods where properties, streets and houses are submerged, the power authority must turn off the power and declare it safe before entry.
- All electric and telephones lines, iron roofs and wire fences should be considered a hazard until declared safe by appropriate power authorities.
- The area surrounding large, high voltage lines is considered unsafe and requires a safe working clearance (or 'no-go zone').
- You should always consider that power lines may be hidden under water, particularly in rural areas where the spans between poles are greater.
- Never assume power lines or electrical apparatus are deenergised in storm or flood conditions. Always check that the power company has proven them dead.
- When working around solar panels, consider that PV arrays and storage batteries produce voltage even when isolated. Covering the array is a way of reducing the voltage output.



Driving in floodwater

If you are required to drive through floodwater to assist SES response, consider the following hazards that may be present when conducting a DRA:

- Damaged road surface.
- Signs covered or washed away.
- Large objects on the road.
- Damaged or washed away bridges.
- Waves caused by other vehicles.
- High velocity water flow.
- Falling or fallen trees.
- Submerged debris.
- Unknown speed of water.
- Unknown depth of water (vehicles should not drive through water that is higher than the centre of the wheel hub).
- Members should avoid crossing floodwater where possible because of the risks. A vehicle can float in as little as 15 centimetres of water.
- When wading into slow moving, shallow floodwater, consider the hazards and always perform a DRA.

Whether you are involved in activities on the ground or in an incident management team in an ICC, CFA members provide vital assistance to VICSES and it is important that all members understand the type of support CFA offers and ensure they know how to keep themselves and other members safe during these responses.

For more information, including an online training package from SES and case studies that explore the lessons learned from incidents that CFA crews have attended go to

members.cfa.vic.gov.au/stormsandfloods



This information sheet has been developed from the information contained in VICSES's training package which is available on the CFA Learning Hub.

Strike teams and deployments

A strike team is a group of three to seven vehicles of similar type deployed to a large incident and managed by a strike team leader (STL) in a field command vehicle (FCV).

Strike team composition

Each vehicle will have a crew of four or five operational members led by a crew leader. The FCV usually has three members: the STL, the STL assistant and a suitable driver.

All members need to be at least 18 years old and must hold minimum bushfire skills (GFF), current entrapment drill and hazardous trees training and comply with COVID-19 requirements.

Personal preparation

Deployment to a bushfire can be one of the most satisfying and rewarding experiences of your life and yet it can also be a very stressful time for you, your crew and your family. The fire front can move at a frightening rate and wind and weather changes can be disastrous. Conditions can be most distressing because of heat, high winds and an unfamiliar territory.

During a major rural fire, you may not be involved in your own brigade area, or on your brigade truck, or be working with brigade members you know. Your own personal preparation will be the major factor in how you perform.

Physical and mental fitness and capabilities

Be aware of your own limitations and check your:

- fitness level
- heat stress
- physical strength
- physical disabilities
- tiredness, fatigue, etc.

After a long day at work you need to assess if you are physically and mentally fit enough to tackle a possible major and prolonged incident.

Notify your captain or crew leader if you have any special considerations they need to be aware of, or if you can't perform a task you have been assigned. It's safer for you and your crew to be honest about your ability to perform a task.

Assess how you are feeling about the role and other aspects of your life outside CFA that may impact your mental health. Ask yourself whether you should limit your availability.

Talk to your family and employer

Before the fire season, we encourage you to talk with your family and employer and set some ground rules. This will reduce the potential for confusion and unrest if a significant fire occurs.

Here are some suggestions for your conversation with your family:

- Can you be away from home for possibly three to five days?
- Will your family need support while you are away?
- What are the financial implications?
- Who can they ring in the event of an emergency?
- Are there any important family events scheduled?
- Does your family understand what a strike team deployment is?
- Will your children be worried about you?

Here are some suggestions for your employer conversation:

- Explain the role of a CFA volunteer firefighter
- Provide employer with the Employer Information brochure
- Ask if you are able to leave work for a fire/incident
- What impact does this have on your employer and your workplace?
- Is this annual leave, leave without pay or paid leave?
- What is the impact on other employees in your workplace?
- How much time can you take?
- How much notice do you have to provide before leaving work?

Further considerations

- There must be mutual understanding and agreement between you and your employer regarding the length of time you may be away from your employment.
- Always check with your employer before nominating for a strike team and ensure you have the appropriate rest before returning to work.
- If your employer requires evidence of your participation on a strike team, a letter can be arranged through the district office.
- CFA does not encourage members to deploy on consecutive strike teams. You are required to have three or four days' rest between deployments. This is for your own health and safety and that of the team working around you.
- Where possible members of the Wellbeing team will be available either at staging areas or within the incident area. If during or after a deployment you need assistance, please use these services. CFA is not only concerned about your physical safety, but also your emotional safety. Talk to your STL or catchment team who will arrange support for you confidentially.

For more information about strike team deployments, including a printable packing checklist use this QR code or this link

www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/qou-striketeams



Hose testing, repair and maintenance changes

Background

Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) has reviewed the current systems and processes for testing fire service hose (hose) across CFA and changes have been made to take into account practicality, best practice and legislative responsibilities. The areas reviewed include:

- hose testing SOP 5.04
- hose repair work instructions
- training materials
- manually operated BAND-IT devices
- vulcaniser requirements
- terminology

These changes ensure the best repair for the hose systems is achieved, maximising safety across the organisation.

Hose testing SOP 5.04

SOP 5.04 outlines the correct way to complete hose testing in CFA. It was recently reviewed and updated.

The changes to the SOP, which will be released soon, include terminology, frequency of testing, safety requirements and hose testing procedures.

Hose repair work instructions

Until recently there was no centralised hose repair information available to all brigades. A full suite of work instructions (WI) has been created to identify and list the required steps for the patching, coupling and testing of CFA's hose in line with manufacturers' best practices and safety processes.

To view the work instructions, use this QR code or link

www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/qou-hosetesting



Training materials

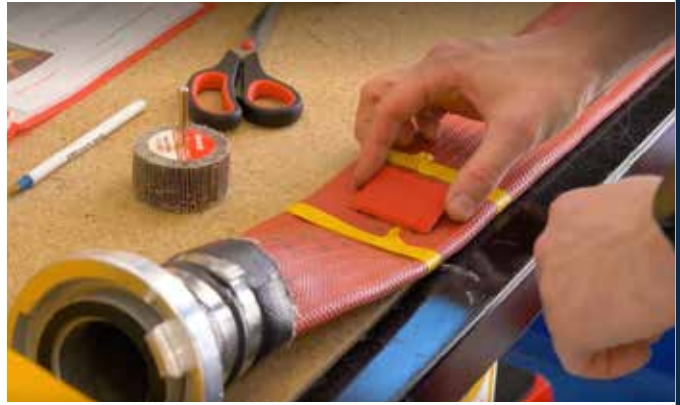
As part of the upgrade to the FEM training system, a hose testing and repair e-learning module is being developed and will be available soon to all CFA members who undertake hose repair. Adopting the standalone training module 'Hose testing and repair' as an attainable qualification for members would ensure that consistent repairs, standardised methods and safety is maintained statewide.

Vulcaniser requirements

Brigades have commonly used one vulcaniser to perform hose repairs on both types of hose. As each hose has different requirements, a work instruction has been created so that members can ascertain whether their vulcaniser meets the requirements for both hose types, a single hose type or no hose type.

Terminology

For some time, CFA members have referred to our hose as either 'canvas' or 'Duraline'. Canvas hose has not been used in service for a considerable time and Duraline, whilst previously bought by CFA, is a brand name and not the only extruded hose on the



market. After extensive consultation the following terminology was agreed:

Extruded hose will be used as an all-encompassing term for all extruded hose, replacing the commonly used Duraline.

Fabric hose will be used as an all-encompassing term for our fabric jacketed extruded type hose, replacing the commonly used canvas.

Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM)

A part of CFA's history since 1947 and operating under a range of names over that time, the Fire Equipment Maintenance program currently involves 262 brigades across the state.

This participation also forms a large part of CFA's industry engagement, with over 48,000 industry sites visited by our FEM representatives each year, servicing almost 500,000 pieces of equipment.

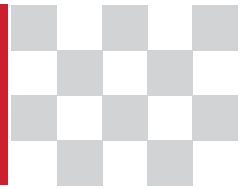
In addition to the industry engagement and community safety achievements that resulted from these fire prevention works, a review of the FEM business highlighted other key benefits of CFA's involvement in this program. Over the past five-year review period, FEM brigades:

- received an average of \$3.2 million each year
- purchased 70 field command vehicles using funds from FEM work
- used FEM funds to contribute \$4.4 million to support VESEP applications
- purchased \$4.05 million worth of equipment with a value over \$5,000
- contributed almost \$3.1 million to capital works including station extensions.

These figures highlight how CFA FEM activity makes a significant contribution to brigades to support operational response.

FEM brigades will be aware that a review into FEM is being conducted as part of the Audit and Finance Committee's Internal Audit Plan.

Thank you to all FEM brigades. If your brigade is interested in participating in FEM contact the FEM team on 1300-363-661 or fem@cfa.vic.gov.au



Firefighting in difficult terrain

Summary

In January 2022 Camperdown and Cobden groups faced two difficult and strenuous firefights in extremely challenging terrain. The groups identified several lessons for firefighting in difficult terrain concerning aircraft, early detection, sectorisation, and resourcing.

Incident overview

In the space of just over two weeks, the Camperdown and Cobden Groups in District 6 experienced two challenging fires in what is referred to locally as the 'Stony Rises'. The first fire was started by lightning on 9 January 2 kilometres from Beals Road, Tesbury, and the second fire occurred on Australia Day just 500 metres from the location of the first.

When members were notified of the fires, they immediately knew they would be faced with a number of challenges because of the terrain. The word 'stony' does not do justice to this landscape of rolling hills scattered with stones and lava flows (called barriers), interspersed with trees and old stone fences made from volcanic rock.

The amount of rock and stone in the area made access incredibly challenging and the fences dividing the landscape and lack of tracks made moving around the fireground even more difficult. Because of this, members were forced to wait until the fire reached them and rely on aircraft to undertake suppression activities in the early days of this intense firefight.

During the first fire, crews quickly requested aircraft support despite it not being triggered by the Fire Danger Index (FDI). Aircraft support was approved because of the inaccessibility of the Stony Rises and the State Air Desk deployed an aircraft from Colac to the fire within 30 minutes.

The lightning at Tandarook on 25 January (the second fire) was a narrow, quick band and came from an unusual direction of north-east to south-west). Over 30 lightning strikes occurred in a five

square kilometre patch. Most lightning strikes take two or three days to result in a fire, however on this occasion it only took 12 hours. Lightning is the cause of most fires in the Stony Rises, so members had monitoring processes in place after stormy weather passed through to enable early detection of any fires.

A member arrived at the fire tower at 9am to monitor for smoke. By 11am smoke was sighted in the Rises. It was first thought that the same fire had reignited. However, it was soon determined that the second fire was 500 metres from the first and was actually at Tandarook.

During the second fire two aircraft (a Helitack and an air attack supervisor (AAS) light helicopter) were dispatched initially because FDI triggers were met. The aircraft were deployed quickly and started on the fire using the lake to fill up. This allowed for a quick turnaround of two minutes. After fighting the fire for an hour, a request was made for another Helitack. The incident controller was asked why they needed the additional aircraft and after they had explained they were having difficulties holding the fire, the request was approved immediately.

Early plans were made to establish a consistent water supply and catering for crews because it was clear the incident would continue for at least a week. Options such as bulk water tankers were explored but they were difficult to source, potentially due to it being a public holiday. Also, sectorisation occurred early with two sectors established – northern and southern.

During the evening on the first day, a request was made for a larger Helitack with known capabilities (Sikorsky S-61) to be available for the following day. Although this Helitack was not available, an alternate large Helitack with a firebombing bucket was deployed. Initial planning for the day assumed the Sikorsky S-61 would be used, so plans were adapted when the alternate Helitack was dispatched.

Single engine air tankers (SEATs) dropping retardant were particularly effective compared with



foam. The retardant had good penetration through the canopy and foliage and pilots could direct it accurately.

Having two similar incidents occur so close together meant the brigades involved were able to identify common trends and key factors to firefighting in this difficult terrain. Some parts of their response worked well and should be maintained, and other aspects could be improved for future operational response in challenging terrain.

What worked well

- **Aircraft:** Several aspects about the aircraft response to this incident worked well, including early aircraft response, essential intelligence from the air attack supervisor who provided strong situational awareness, clear tasking to aircraft and a strong understanding of the capability of the aircraft.
- **Resourcing:** The group identified several resourcing issues that were vital to the success of the incident. Decisions were made quickly in respect to water supply and vehicles that were necessary to support the incident. A hoselay trailer and two collar tanks were on scene early, with 1100 metres of hose laid, sourcing water from cattle water systems. Incident control also made early requests to DELWP for support from dozers to assist with gaining access and creating tracks in the challenging terrain. This partnership with DELWP was critical to the success of the campaign. They worked seamlessly with CFA crews, as has always happened with mutual support.
- **Local knowledge:** Due to the multitude of tracks and complexities of firefighting in the Stony Rises, the use of local knowledge was vital in tasking and knowing what to do and how to do it. The aim was to include local members in any strike team and paired experienced members with more junior brigade members. It is imperative to have people with local knowledge on the fireground to provide direction and support to enable strong decision-making based on prior knowledge and experience.

Lessons identified

- **Aircraft:** Members identified some challenges with the aircraft response, including challenges with not being wholly familiar with the endurance of certain aircraft before refuelling, and delays in the response of aircraft because of the approval process. As early aircraft response was identified as a vital factor in this difficult terrain, it is important members understand the approval processes for aircraft support and consider this when deciding when to request support. Although there were some challenges, using a radio command channel to liaise with the air attack supervisor was very successful. This allowed detailed intelligence about the fire perimeter and behaviour to be supplied to the incident controller, in the absence of fireground traffic.
- **Sectorisation:** The terrain and access issues meant that tracks had to be established in addition to existing tracks to make sectorisation and access easier. At times, it was difficult to know where the tracks were and how to communicate this to members who were unfamiliar with the area. When this was established, the sectorisation was effective and



essential to the smooth command and control of the incident. Sectorisation should always be considered in the early stages of an incident because this will enable enough time to work through any challenges that may make defining sectors difficult, such as access and tracks in this fire.

- **Shift planning:** Working in the Rises and any other challenging terrain is difficult and it was difficult to persuade volunteers in the area to assist with blacking out in the rocks. It is an undesirable and arduous task and people are not willing to commit to a 12-hour shift. Brigades and groups are encouraged to consider other alternatives to shift planning, such as the shorter 'farmer's shift' allowing for an earlier finish time to reduce the members' commitment. This shift is better suited to the lifestyle and work schedule of the local demographic. Crew welfare was also an issue with some cramping because of the difficult terrain and steep climbing while carrying a hose.

Questions for your brigade

- Does your brigade have any areas within your response area that have difficult terrain and/or poor accessibility? Do you have pre-incident response plans for these areas?
- Do you have knowledge about the aircraft support available in your district and region? Do you understand the capability and the limitation of the aircraft and how you would task them effectively during a fire?
- How does your brigade plan to share local knowledge during larger incidents in your primary response area?

Conclusion

This case study provides lessons that can be applied across the state in various incidents involving challenging terrain, even if that terrain is not necessarily like the Stony Rises. Clear plans that outline basic principles such as early sectorisation and resourcing options will be beneficial no matter which brigade you are from.

Thank you to District 6 and the groups involved for their participation in the AAR process and assistance developing this case study. If you have any lessons to share, email lessons-management-centre@cfa.vic.gov.au

Bacchus Marsh electric scooter fire

Summary

On 3 May 2022, Bacchus Marsh Fire Brigade received a callout at 6.30pm to a fire caused by a lithium-ion battery-powered electric scooter. The fire occurred in the garage of a house in a new estate.

Incident overview

The owner of the scooter returned home from work and was in his garage, which is attached to the dwelling. The owner had left his electric scooter on charge during the day. When he heard the battery making an unusual sound, he unplugged the charger. The battery then exploded causing a fire. The owner called his wife, who immediately called Triple Zero. The owner began filming the fire on his phone for several seconds before using a garden hose to extinguish the fire.

On their way to the incident, members began planning how they would approach it. They planned with the worst scenario in mind, that being the garage fire spreading to the rest of the structure. It was decided that once on scene they would use BA operators to remove the scooter from the garage to extinguish it away from the building, given the large amounts of water needed to extinguish a lithium-ion battery.

The Bacchus Marsh tanker arrived to find the occupants had evacuated the property, were uninjured and had extinguished most of the fire. The scooter was destroyed. Bacchus Marsh pumper, Bacchus Marsh tanker, Parwan tanker, and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) pumpers 56 and 53 responded.

As planned, the scooter was removed by BA operators and taken to a clearer area at the end of the court where it was fully extinguished. Some small items in the garage were smouldering but were quickly extinguished and it was clear that smoke had spread from the garage into the house.

Two teams were established. The first team focused on clearing and ventilating the house with a PPV fan and atmospheric monitoring. The second team focused on the scooter, which had lithium batteries as its power source. This involved a hose line from the tanker, connected to a hydrant and the use of a thermal imaging camera (TIC). When it was cool, they opened the battery compartment.

Warning

1. It is not recommended to remove the battery in any circumstance. Members should focus on cooling the battery with water and use a TIC to monitor it.
2. It is also not recommended to cut open or pierce battery packs. Cutting can cause another thermal runaway event or ignite trapped vapour. Cutting open the battery compartment poses a risk of electrocution and secondary ignition from stranded energy.



Thermal runaway

Thermal runaway is a chemical chain reaction in lithium-ion batteries and occurs when a battery cell short circuits and starts to heat up uncontrollably. In lithium-ion batteries this can create a flammable and toxic vapour, with temperatures exceeding 1000°C. Igniting vapours and can be violent or explosive.

A lithium-ion battery may go into thermal runaway for various reasons, including when involved in fire, being crushed and overcharged.

Read the **thermal runaway information sheet** for more information.

Watch the video of the scooter fire Bacchus Marsh members attended taking note of:

- 00:05: jet-like flame as battery cells bursts and vents flammable gas
- 00:20: a loud pop and a 'whooshing' noise as more cells vent
- 00:32: popping and sparks and parts of the battery become projectiles.

Thank you to the owner for supplying this video to Bacchus Marsh Fire Brigade. The video can be viewed using this QR code or this link.



<https://youtube.com/shorts/aXtOtHhuRcM?feature=share>

What worked well

- **Identification of fire type:** The owner clearly identified there was a fire with a lithium battery and that was communicated to crews in attending vehicles so they could pre-plan.
- **Evacuation:** Evacuation by the residents ensured they were away from the toxic/flammable gases and smoke.
- **Reducing the spread of fire:** The decision was made to remove the scooter from the garage and extinguish it in a different area to reduce the spread of fire in the garage.
- **The establishment of two teams:** The brigade set up one team to deal with the scooter and one to concentrate on the ventilation of the premises.
- **Ventilation:** Early and effective ventilation of the premises by the brigade, including atmospheric monitoring, minimised damage to the home.
- **Knowledge of the technology:** It was important for crews to understand the explosive potential of a lithium-ion battery in thermal runaway.
- **Water source:** It takes a large quantity of water to extinguish a lithium-ion battery, so it is important to source enough water.
- **Debrief:** There was a debrief after the incident to discuss what worked well and what was learned.

Lessons identified

All brigades should familiarise themselves with:

- the management of lithium-ion battery fires

- the variety of mobility and other products that use lithium-ion batteries for power supply including power tools, e-scooters and e-bikes
- the potential explosive energy with thermal runaway
- the associated hazards with the smoke and gases produced by such a fire.

Questions for your brigade

- Is your brigade up to date with the latest information regarding lithium-ion battery fires and thermal runaway?
- Does everyone in your brigade understand the management of lithium-ion battery fires and the associated hazards?

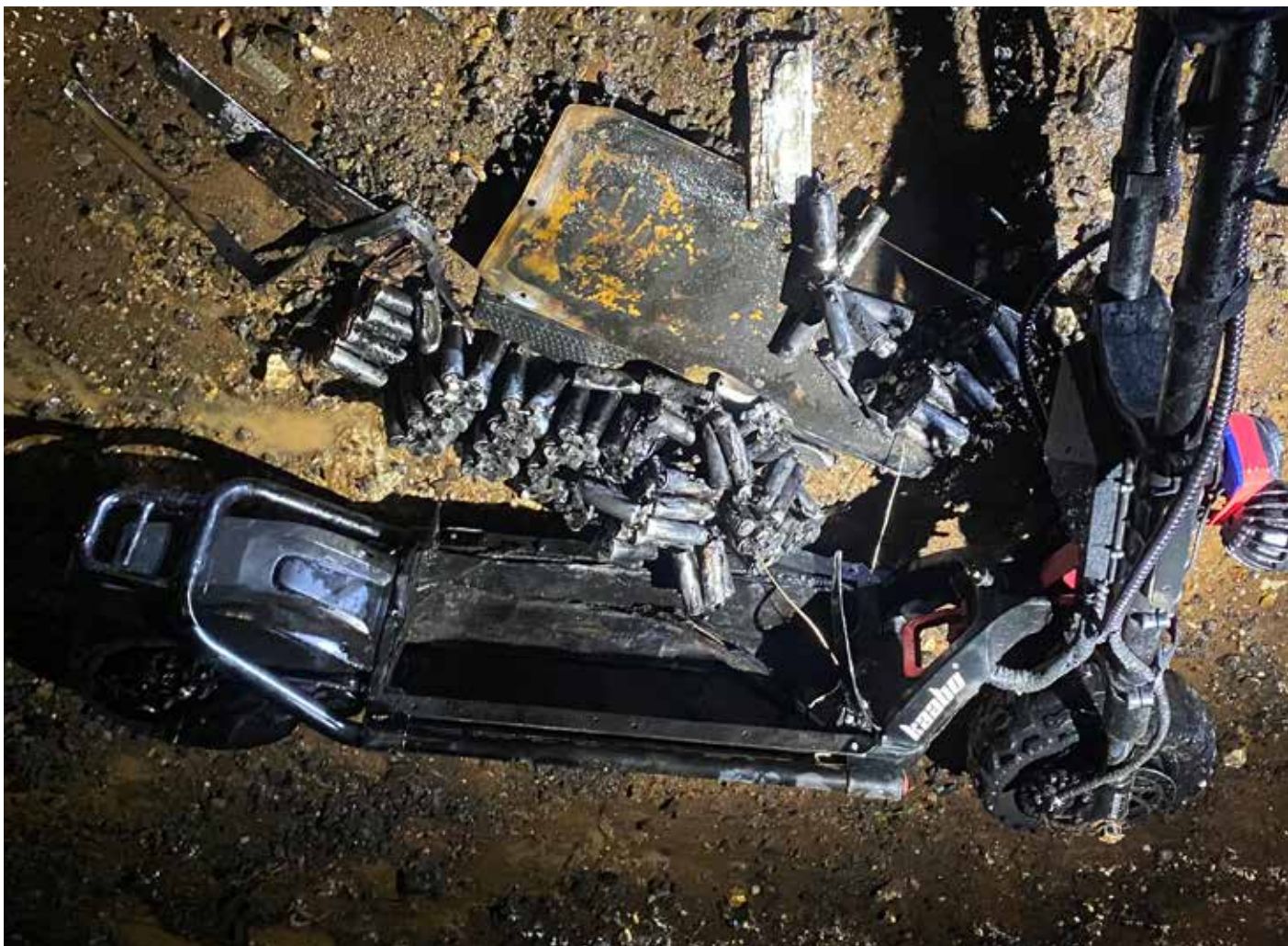
Conclusion

Lithium-ion batteries are widely used, and thermal runaway is becoming more common. This case study demonstrates an example of thermal runaway that was contained quite quickly. There are significant risks to firefighters and the public when these types of fire occur. It is essential all brigades have the knowledge and skills required for these types of fires.

Thank you to the members of the Bacchus Marsh Fire Brigade for sharing their experiences and lessons. If you have any experiences to share email lessons-management-centre@cfa.vic.gov.au.

Further reading

- Thermal runaway information sheet
- Alternative energy intranet site
- EV FireSafe – what is thermal runaway?



Caroline Springs hose repair injury

Summary

On 3 January 2018, a firefighter sustained injuries to his face and eyes when a hose burst during routine hose testing at Caroline Springs Fire Brigade. This case study was developed from an internal investigation to raise awareness about the dangers and more importantly to explain the new changes to hose repair and maintenance.

Incident overview

On Wednesday 3 January 2018, an incident occurred in the rear yard of the Caroline Springs Fire Station. The station officer was conducting hose testing of CFA-supplied fabric service hose on his own. Present in the rear yard of the fire station was firefighter one (FF1) and FF 2. Both firefighters were conducting an inventory on the field command vehicle (FCV) nearby. A leading firefighter (LFF3) was conducting office work inside the station. The shift had repaired some service hose that morning as a team, teaching FF1 how to do hose repair on service hose. This hose was due to be tested prior to being put back into service. The repair was conducted using the method currently adopted by CFA firefighters. CFA has always conducted the repair and testing of service hose at station level and repairing hose is a skill taught to new firefighters.

It was a hot, dry day in January and the concrete was dry. The station officer (SO) connected the two lengths of 64mm service hose to the pumper and charged the hose with water. He took the hose up to the test pressure of 1400kpa. FF1 left the inventory check and walked over to assist the SO with the hose testing. The hose was under pressure and the pumper was operating to charge the hose. FF1 was asked by the SO to check a leak that was evident by wetness on the dry concrete. FF1 was wearing his eye safety glasses. While FF1 and the SO were crouched over the hose in a squatting position conducting a visual inspection of a previous patch, the hose gave way at the seam of the repair. FF1 received a burst of water to his face, knocking his safety glasses from his face allowing the water stream to hit both eyes. FF1 lost vision in both eyes for about 30 seconds and had blood in his tears. The SO shut down the pumper and FF2 ran over to assist FF1. LFF 3 came out of the station and FF1 was walked to the medical centre next door to the fire station, where he received medical treatment. FF1 made a full recovery.

Investigation

An investigation into the incident was conducted and concluded the following:

- FF1 had donned safety glasses, helmet and PPC.
- The hose remained under full pressure and flow while FF1 inspected the hose.
- As he inspected the hose, it burst resulting in the injuries.
- The hose had been repaired on station that morning.
- The repair was conducted by FF2 instructing FF1 and an excessive amount of adhesive had been used.
- The excessive adhesive meant the hose had been heated for longer than usual, resulting in an extra seam being made in the hose and causing the rubber lining inside the hose to delaminate.
- The hose burst at the weakened delamination point.
- The hose repair instruction sheet on the wall of the station workshop was an unofficial and unapproved CFA document authored in 2006 by another brigade.
- CFA had no organisation-wide formal process or teaching standard for the repair of CFA service hose.
- The hose was being tested to 1400kpa as is detailed in Chief Officer Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 5.04.
- CFA service hose is to be tested and repaired where necessary on station and each hose must be tested annually.
- CFA has a variety of hose testing units around the state, with some units being static and others trailer-mounted. These units vary in design.
- CFA Safety First principle SPADRA was not followed appropriately.



Lessons identified

- CFA at the time did not have a formal process or work instruction for hose repairs and the process followed by the members in this case was based on instructions on the wall of the workshop.
- There was no recognised CFA training for hose testing. Reliance was placed on undocumented knowledge.
- The Chief Officer SOP 5.04 was published in 2011 and did not have a review date. The SOP referred to documents which were not referenced in the attached Schedules and members were not aware of the reference material.
- Hose testing procedures varied across the organisation and there were differing levels of compliance with SOP 5.04, Ops Bulletin and Safety Alerts. Issues arise when there are multiple documents covering a single task or process.

New hose testing, repair and maintenance changes

In 2022 Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) reviewed the current systems and processes for testing fire service hose across CFA and changes have been recently made taking into account practicality, best practice and legislative responsibilities. The areas reviewed include:

- hose testing SOP 5.04
- hose repair work instructions
- training materials
- manually operated BAND-IT devices
- terminology
- vulcanising requirements.

Hose repair work instructions

Until recently there was no centralised hose repair information available to all brigades. A full suite of Work Instructions (WI) has been created to correctly identify and list the required steps for the patching, coupling and testing of CFA's service hose in line with manufacturers' best practices and safety processes. They include:

- use and application of BAND-IT clamps and machines
- installation of external lug couplings
- patching of fabric jacketed type service hose
- patching of extruded type service hose
- setting the Stenor Merlin
- vulcaniser requirements.

To view the work instructions, use this QR code or link

www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/qou-hosetesting



Note

- Members should always engage in regular training in hose repair and testing to ensure they have the necessary skills.
- When testing a hose, where possible there should be one member at the rear of the pumper to quickly reduce water pressure if necessary.
- Members should follow SOP 5.04 and remain outside the test area (NO GO ZONE) until the delivery is isolated and the pressure is reduced.
- Conduct hose testing with a minimum of two members and ensure that communication between members involved is effective. Even when conducting a task that you are familiar with, it is important to undertake a dynamic risk assessment (DRA) and not become complacent.

Safety

Regardless of whether you are hose testing, repairing or providing maintenance the safety of members is paramount and must comply with the following safety requirements.

	Wearing of gloves recommended- sharp edges may be present
	Hearing protection required if using air tools or compressors
	Eye protection must be worn when using machinery
	Ensure all guards and covers are in place and closed prior to use

Questions for your brigade

- Are all the members of your brigade properly trained in hose repair?
- Do you perform a DRA each time a hose repair is necessary?
- Are you familiar with the new hose maintenance work instructions?

Conclusion

This incident highlights the importance of skills maintenance, effective communication, teamwork and safety principles. All brigade members should be trained in the correct processes for hose repair. Conducting a risk assessment before the incident may have prevented injuries. Fortunately, the injured firefighter fully recovered and there was no permanent damage to his eyesight.

Community engagement at CFA

STORY BY HQ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM



PHOTO: EDDIE SEAH

When brigade members talk to people in their community they build relationships. Brigades carry out a range of community engagement activities to build awareness of fire risk and help people understand the fire prevention and preparedness actions needed to stay safe.

Running community education activities helps people gain the knowledge and understanding they need to prevent fires and respond appropriately if one starts.

Community engagement benefits the community because people:

- know how to prevent fires
- are better prepared for fires
- know what to do if one starts
- understand the roles of CFA volunteers
- can ask CFA volunteers questions and raise concerns.

Community engagement benefits brigades because:

- it reduces the risk to lives and property
- it reduces the demand on brigades
- it reduces the risk to firefighters
- it is an opportunity to recruit new members and fundraise
- it builds trust with the community.

There are endless ways brigade members can engage and work with their communities. CFA has formal programs that can be delivered to community members and a range of resources

and training courses aimed at CFA members to increase their confidence and develop their own ideas.

CFA's new 30-minute e-learning module, Introduction to Community Engagement, explains:

- what community engagement means at CFA and why it is important
- how community engagement supports operations
- consideration of local fire risks and at-risk community members
- the tools and people who can support CFA members with their community engagement activities.

In the table, opposite, is a list of CFA's engagement resources and how you can access them. In addition to those in the table, CFA has a number of programs aimed at different communities and children. To find out more about which programs would suit your community, contact your district community engagement coordinator.

Promote your event

Don't forget to let your community know what you are up to. Just go to the CFA website, cfa.vic.gov.au/about-us/whats-on, and list your brigade events. You can also promote this web page to your community through your Facebook and Instagram pages.

Tools and resources

Name	What is it?	Who is it for?	How to access it
Community Engagement Content Portal	The online one-stop shop for all community engagement assets including: -Social media resources - publications - videos - program information - user guides	Brigade members who want to improve their online engagement skills	Members Online: members.cfa.vic.gov.au/communitycontentportal SharePoint link: cfa.vic.gov.au/cecontentportal
Introduction to Community Engagement	A short online training course that explains why community engagement is important and what tools and resources are available to support CFA members	All brigade members	CFA Learning Hub: members.cfa.vic.gov.au/learninghub
Smoke Alarm Installation Program	An online training course that shows the process and method for smoke alarm installation when doing so on behalf of CFA	Brigade members who want to install smoke alarms in the homes of community members	CFA Learning Hub: members.cfa.vic.gov.au/learninghub
Engaging Communities Online	An online training course to support brigade members to engage with communities online	Brigade members who want to improve their online engagement skills	CFA Learning Hub: members.cfa.vic.gov.au/learninghub
Activity Reporting Tool	A mobile-friendly CFA application to report the 'what, where, who' of your community engagement activity	Brigade members who want to describe how they are helping to keep their community safe from fire	Access ART and training materials on Members Online. members.cfa.vic.gov.au/tools/community-engagement-and-reporting
Fire Safety Essentials	CFA's entry-level fire safety program that aims to challenge community members to recognise their personal risk and how to survive fire	Delivered by a trained CFA presenter to community members with no or little awareness of bushfire/ grassfire risk	Contact your district community engagement coordinator to request a session
Fire Safety Planning Workshops	This program provides community members with the knowledge and skills to develop plans to prepare for summer and survive fire	Delivered by a trained CFA presenter to community members in high risk bushfire and grassfire areas	Contact your district community engagement coordinator to request a session
Property Advice Visiting Service (PAVS)	CFA members visit homes in high-risk areas and have tailored conversations with household occupants about their risks	Community Members and households in high-risk areas, as identified by CFA Risk Mapping Tools	Contact your district community engagement coordinator to find out more
Prevent, Detect, Escape – home fire safety for people at higher risk	An online learning module that teaches people how to prevent, detect and escape from residential fires. It focuses on fire safety for people at higher risk.	People and organisations who deliver in-home care and provide support services	CFA website: members.cfa.vic.gov.au/elearning
Bushfire Safety for Workers	An online learning module that raises awareness of bushfire risk for people who travel and work in high-risk areas	Community members who work or travel to high-risk bushfire areas over summer	CFA website: members.cfa.vic.gov.au/elearning

Community Engagement Content Portal – the first place to look

The Community Engagement Content Portal is CFA’s one-stop shop for all your community engagement and campaign resources. It was developed to better enable brigade members to engage with their communities. Looking for content about the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System? The Content Portal has more than 40 new AFDRS resources to choose from.

By using the Content Portal as your go-to resource, you can be assured that what you’re sharing with your community is up to date and in line with CFA official advice.

There are more than 900 resources on the Content Portal organised into six libraries. These include program resources, publications, multimedia and campaign resources. The portal also includes a collection of tutorial videos, case studies, podcasts and user guides to support your engagement and build your capability.

We’ve developed two instructional videos designed to help you to navigate the portal. These are available on Members Online: members.cfa.vic.gov.au/communitycontentportal. You must use your CFA member email address to log into the portal. If you need more help, contact your district community engagement coordinator.

CFA Activity Reporting Tool

Our Activity Reporting Tool (ART) is the best way for brigade members to record their community engagement activity. All information recorded in ART is analysed so that we have a better understanding of brigade activity across the state and how brigades are helping their communities to prepare for fire.

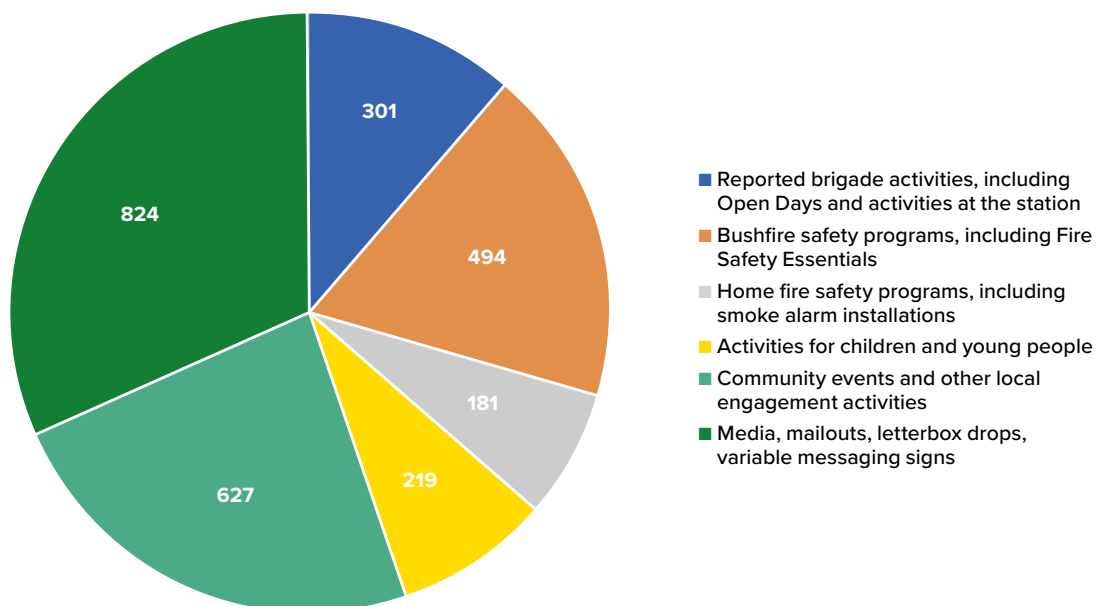
To use ART on your smartphone or tablet go to Members Online: members.cfa.vic.gov.au/tools/community-engagement-and-reporting.

In the past three years, CFA brigades have reported more than 2,500 community engagement activities in ART. The pie chart, below, shows the types of activities.



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIN

Brigade community engagement activities since July 2019



Skin cancer: be SunSmart

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the major cause of skin cancer. UV damage also causes sunburn, tanning, premature ageing and eye damage.

Tanning is a sign your skin cells are in trauma, and even if your tan fades the damage remains. As a CFA member, you may spend extended periods of time outside when UV levels are high. Regional Victorians are also 40 per cent more likely to be diagnosed with melanoma than Victorians living in major cities.

The people most at risk are those who have:

- a personal or family history of skin cancer
- a large number of moles
- a compromised immune system or are on immunosuppression medication
- a fair skin type and skin colour
- a history of bad sunburns
- spent a lot of time outdoors unprotected or work outdoors
- used solariums and/or sunlamps.

WHAT CAN YOU DO

Check your skin. Get to know your skin and what's normal for you. New spots, or spots changing in colour, shape or size should be checked by your GP.

Protect your skin by:

- wearing clothing that covers as much skin as possible
- using SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen
- wearing a broad-brimmed hat that shades the face, ears and neck
- staying in the shade when possible
- wearing sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard for UV protection.

Keep sunscreen handy and reapply regularly, particularly if you are working hard and sweating. Remember the top of your ears if they're not covered. Before using sunscreen check the expiry date and look at the ingredients. If it is old or the contents look watery, lumpy or gritty throw it away and use a new one. It also may be less effective if it has been exposed to high temperatures.

You can also check the UV rating each day. The free SunSmart app takes away the guesswork by telling you when the UV is 3 and above with sun protection recommended for your location. You can download it from the App Store or Google Play.

For more information, go to members.cfa.vic.gov.au/programs/health-services.

STORY KATIE WILLIAMS



Employee and volunteer compensation claims

The Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Act 2019 provides compensation for both CFA employees and volunteer firefighters in relation to 12 specific cancers contracted while under CFA service.

Firefighters who are diagnosed with one of these prescribed primary site cancers on or after 1 June 2016, and who meet the corresponding qualifying period and key criteria, may be entitled to compensation under the legislation.

Claims submitted under the Act are determined and managed by WorkSafe and CFA's WorkSafe insurer Gallagher Bassett, though CFA can support CFA members through all stages of the claims process.

To lodge a claim, complete a Worker's Injury Claim Form which can be downloaded from Members Online (members.cfa.vic.gov.au/workerinjuryclaimform) or from the WorkSafe website and send it to either WorkSafe, Gallagher Bassett or CFA for processing.

The time following a cancer diagnosis is a challenging one for the impacted person and those around them and the focus during this time is rightly on the person's health. Making decisions on whether to lodge a claim can impact your emotional and mental wellbeing. You can request support for both you and your family by ringing the Wellbeing Support Line on **1800 959 232** to access to psychologists, social workers and registered counsellors. This line is available 24/7.

In addition the Injury Recovery and Support Services Team will support you through the claims process and act as a liaison between you and the WorkSafe insurer during the life of the claim.

CFA employees and volunteers still retain the right to submit compensation claims for cancers not covered under the Presumptive Rights Legislation. For information about how to submit one of these claims or if you would like more information about presumptive rights cancer claims, contact the Injury Recovery and Support Services team by emailing injuryrecovery@cfa.vic.gov.au or phoning **03 9262 8244**.

STORY DENISE BERGLES



Faces of CFA

BOBBIE-LEE NELSON, PORTLAND FIRE BRIGADE, DISTRICT 4

What is your CFA role?

For the past eight years I have held the role of District 4 Air Base Manager for the Aviation Firefighting Fleet along with the position of brigade community safety coordinator.

Why did you join?

When I was a member of Coastguard, all emergency services were called for a search and rescue of vehicle occupants who were thought to have driven off a cliff in Portland. CFA members on the cliff top tried to communicate with us in the water and I had no idea what language they were using.

CFA radio 'speak' was something I hadn't heard before, so I attended the fire station and asked for some training. When I realised that firefighters do so much more for the community than just putting the wet stuff on the red stuff, I signed up.

What incident has had the greatest impact on you?

The Charlton floods left me with a lifelong memory seeing a sheet of corrugated iron leaning up against a tree spray painted with 'thank you' and a piece of cardboard with 'thank you, you are angels' written in lipstick. It hits home to see the compassion and spirit of people who've lost everything and reminds us of why we take that extra step to help.

Who have been your mentors in CFA?

Ian Hamley has been my greatest mentor. His dedication, passion and experience have been invaluable. Ian's instruction on plantation fires, crew safety and pump operation is tried and tested.

Garry Mallen and Stuart Richardson's many years of experience in the fire service have served not only me but the whole brigade.

What have been the highlights of your time in the brigade?

My biggest highlight was having the opportunity to work with the LATS (large air tankers) at Avalon Airbase. The knowledge I gained from the pilots and crew about strategies, operation and tactics was invaluable. It was an honour to sit in the pilot's seat and be shown the internal workings of the aircraft.

During the Black Summer fires, I was deployed to Corryong to run the airbase where the aerial incendiary firebombing operation from a helicopter was being run. This was a field of operation I had never experienced, but again the crews were more than willing to impart their knowledge.

The Kaladbro peat fire was another experience I will never forget. I was thrown into the deep end as I had no prior experience of this sort of fire. I will never forget the tuition and guidance I received. I was rewarded with a three-day stay in Melbourne, a ticket to the Australian Open in a corporate box and the honour to be a flag bearer in the Australia Day March.

How do you motivate your brigade members?

I try to encourage members to step out of their usual roles and experience another field. For example, from being a front-line firefighter to doing community safety or loading bombers. Firefighting is more than just holding a hose. We can keep each other motivated this way.

What lessons are you most keen to pass onto other members?

Look, listen and learn. Knowledge is not a burden to carry. What you learn in another area can save not only your life but others as well.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I enjoy collecting ammunition cartridges, gardening and working on my museum of old tools.

New series promotes brigades

Our new series, **Brigades of CFA**, is an opportunity for CFA to share stories about our brigades. We'll look at their history, the interesting and varied activities they undertake and the great work they do in their communities.

Each week on the CFA website and on Members Online (members.cfa.vic.gov.au) we will share a story from a different brigade. It could be a feature article, video, photo collection or another format. Extracts from the first two profiles, about Drouin West and St Arnaud brigades, are featured below.

If you think your brigade has an interesting story to tell and would like to be featured in Brigades of CFA, submit your story idea at members.cfa.vic.gov.au/about-cfa/brigades-of-cfa. A member of CFA's Communications team will then contact you.

Investing in their youth – Drouin West

Drouin West Fire Brigade's Juniors Program (pictured below), which has been around for more than 20 years, encourages local young people to get involved in the brigade. Now, the program has evolved into something much larger, with 10 Junior leaders providing training and support to the 13 Junior members.

Jodie Wills is the Junior Coordinator at Drouin West, having been a brigade member for about two years and in a leadership position for the Juniors Program for 12 months.

"I got into the brigade because my husband was involved in CFA," Jodie said. "My children were in the Junior brigade and I thought if I was to come along I might be able to give some ideas and to help."

Jodie said it's crucial to teach our Junior members foundational skills from a young age.

"It's so important to invest in our Juniors, because if we can actually get them in from a young age, they have more experience for when they become a senior firefighter."

Jodie's son, Riley, is a Junior member at the brigade. "The best parts about being a Junior member are learning how to put out a fire and learning new skills every week," Riley said.

"I also love all of the friends that I've made during my time as a Junior member. They're a great bunch of kids and I feel lucky to have them as my friends. I definitely plan on becoming a senior firefighter."

Essential FEM services – St Arnaud

St Arnaud Fire Brigade in the Wimmera has been providing fire equipment maintenance (FEM) services to local businesses and facility owners for more than 30 years. This vital service ensures fire safety equipment such as on-site fire extinguishers and hoses are properly maintained and functioning correctly.

Brigade captain Rod Wilton said FEM services have several benefits. "The ability for the FEM work to be done locally supports the community to get their essential services maintained at a reasonable cost and also enhances the services we provide as a brigade," Rod said.

"Through our FEM service we provided matching funding towards a new field command vehicle which we secured through a Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program grant.

"We have also purchased a defibrillator, thermal imaging camera, chainsaws and other equipment as well as a generator as a result of our FEM work."

Through their visits to local businesses and facilities, brigade members also build relationships with people in their local community.

"FEM visits provide our members with the opportunity to share fire safety messaging as well as gain important knowledge about local premises and schools, so if there is a fire call or other emergency our members are familiar with the layout of the building and the likely response strategy," Rod said.





Operational move

A couple who made the tree-change from the northern suburbs of Melbourne to Monbulk were welcomed by the local brigade – and are now qualified firefighters.

In the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, Richard and Kathryn Ferguson decided to move away from the hustle and bustle of the CBD for a more well-rounded lifestyle, one that took them both back to their rural roots and the sense of community they had known growing up.

“Moving to a new area, we wanted to be part of the community and make connections right away.” Richard said. “We both had a history of volunteering through sporting clubs and coaching, but wanted to volunteer for a community-focused organisation.

“As soon as we signed the papers for our new home, we contacted Monbulk brigade to join as volunteers.”

Becoming operational firefighters wasn’t the plan for Richard and Kathryn, at least not right away, but the opportunity to join an upcoming General Firefighter course was too good to pass up.

“Initially I didn’t see myself becoming an operational member” Kathryn said. “I didn’t know how I would go being involved at a fire or incident, but I knew I wanted to volunteer and be involved with the brigade.

“The brigade encouraged me to do the operational training to see how I went. If I decided it still wasn’t the right fit for me, the background knowledge from the training would support other aspects of volunteering.

“Despite my early reservations, I’m so glad I jumped in as my confidence has grown and I love being an operational member.”

With support from the brigade and assessors, Richard and Kathryn passed the General Firefighter assessments and are now operational members.

“It was daunting at the time, but I think it also helped not having to wait too long to make the decision,” Kathryn said. “And now we will be able to support the brigade as operational members during the upcoming fire season.”

Richard admits attending their first callout – a suspected house fire – was a bit chaotic and nerve-racking.

“The pager went off at 10.30pm, the cat went flying off the bed and we threw on some clothes and jumped in the car,” Richard said. “Since then, we have assisted at a chimney fire and a few rescue call outs”.

Kathryn recently attended her first going fire, supporting a neighbouring brigade at an escaped burn off.

“They knew it was my first real fire call and encouraged me and another new recruit to jump on the hose. It was great to finally be involved and use what I had learned in my training in a situation that wasn’t overly fraught or difficult.”

Completing General Firefighter has opened the doors to future training for the pair, who are keen to continue their learning and development.

“There are so many training opportunities at CFA, I wish I had the opportunity to join 20 years ago,” Kathryn said.

“Next we are looking to expand on low structure, general rescue and first aid this year and plan to go on to complete road rescue and ropes rescue.”

Richard said joining CFA gave purpose and meaning to being part of the Monbulk community.

“We’re both so thankful for our brigade’s encouragement and support, Richard said.

“We’ve already done things we could never have imagined doing. We’ve learned a lot about ourselves and what we’re capable of.”

“There is such camaraderie and we have felt welcome from day one,” Kathryn added. “Members have gone out of their way to welcome us and introduce us to people.

“It’s hard to believe only a short time ago we were living in the city. Now we’re part of a community, we’re firefighters, we’re learning new skills and giving back.

“It’s been a short journey so far, but it’s been exciting.”

STORY: SHAUNNAGH O’LOUGHLIN



New stations in District 17

Construction on new stations for Dimboola and Warracknabeal brigades, just north of Horsham, is nearing completion. The cost of the Dimboola station is \$2 million and Warracknabeal station is \$2.2 million.

At Dimboola (pictured above) internal works are progressing, with external cladding and roofing recently completed. When complete, the new station will have a three-bay motor room with space for up to four emergency vehicles and a dedicated turnout area according to Dimboola Captain Ash Wallace.

“Brigade focus is now around interior fit out and preparation for the move. Current timelines mean this will occur during fire season, so a key part will be ensuring a seamless transition to our new home,” Ash said.

“Once again, I’d like to express the brigade’s gratitude to the local community and to everyone who helped with the project. Their support allowed the project to move from conceptual plans on paper to its current state.”

Meanwhile, nearby Warracknabeal brigade (pictured below) is equally as excited about their new station. The main structure for the motor room is up, roofing and external cladding is almost complete and internal fit-outs are progressing well.

After many years of planning and preparation, the project is fast becoming a reality, and the structure looks fantastic according to Warracknabeal Captain Cameron Whelan.

“Even though it will be a few months before we move in, the brigade and community can get a good sense of how the new building looks and feels,” Cameron said.

“The brigade has had many compliments about how beautifully the new fire station and nearby police station complement one another aesthetically.”

Both brigades expect to move in and be operational from their new locations in the new year.

STORY NAOMI GALVIN





How aircraft have been used by CFA through the ages

1929

The Victorian Forests Commission negotiated with the Air Board for aerial reconnaissance and detection of fires. First fire detection flights by Air Force Westland Wapiti bi-planes in 1929. These patrols became a regular fire season operation.

1931

First aerial photography operations for the Forests Commission. Mosaics of 15,000 acres of forest were produced.

1932

First use of radio communication between the aircraft and ground forces.

1939

First experiments in 'bombing' fires using chemicals in cartons being dropped from aircraft. This work coincided with early water bombing experiments in the US.

1946

Experiments in aerial spraying to prepare fire breaks.

1947

Further trials in firebombing using Consolidated Liberator and Avro Lincoln heavy bombers and North American Mustang fighter aircraft to drop chemicals in metal tanks designed to burst on impact.

1949

First use of a helicopter for fire control work in Australia. The Sikorsky was the only helicopter in the country at the time and was used for reconnaissance, mapping and to deploy people and equipment in rugged forest areas.

1949

First recorded aerial drops of food supplies to an isolated firefighting crew. A specially-designed container provided aerodynamic lift to cushion the ground impact.

1961

The Forests Commission constructed the highest airfield in Australia (5,300 feet) on the Snowy Ranges.

1964

Development of rappelling as a method of lowering firefighters from a hovering helicopter.

1965

High performance twin engine aircraft chartered for cloud seeding as a fire prevention method in dry forests.



1966

First year-round contract for a helicopter service, using a Bell 47G.

1967

First organised operational control of bushfire by firebombing in Australia. Two Piper Pawnee agricultural aircraft used 15 loads of fire retardant slurry.

Infra-red heat sensing techniques were introduced with an image converter.

First use of television from aircraft to ground control by Lower Yarra Group.

1968

Aerial ignition techniques used to start a back burn using a helicopter.

Aerial fuel reduction burning commenced as routine fire protection.

Voluntary use of private planes as fire spotters by owners and pilots was pioneered by brothers Len and Ken Gibson (Hastings brigade members), which led to regions and groups adopting the idea.

1973

First use of aircraft by CFA to control a fire by back burning.

1983

16 February (Ash Wednesday), over 40 aircraft used in all aspect of fire control operations.

Advances in infra-red technology enhances efficiency in firebombing and mapping operations.

CSIRO Project Aquarius studies the efficiencies of Douglas DC-6, Bell 205 helicopter and agricultural fixed wing aircraft for firebombing.

1985

Largest single aerial firefighting operation in Australia to combat fire caused by lightning strikes in north-east Victoria. For more than three weeks 20 helicopters and 16 fixed-wing aircraft battled the fires.

Above left: 1929 RAAF Westland Wapiti biplane
Left: Canadair CL-415 Superscooper
Above right: Aerospatiale AS-350BA Ecureuil (Firebird)
Right: Erickson Air Crane

1994

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources deployed six rotary wing and seven fixed-wing aircraft, 50 aviation support staff and 14 pilots to NSW at the request of the Department of Bushfire Services NSW. Aircraft flew for almost 450 hours in 10 days.

1996

AFAC (Australian Fire Authorities Council) conducts trials into the performance of the Bombardier CL415 water scooping/firebombing aircraft.

Department of Conservation Natural Resources becomes the Department of Natural Resources & Environment (NRE).

1997-98

NRE contracts the largest contingent of aerial firefighting in anticipation of a severe fire season: six light helicopters, four medium helicopters, 10 fixed-wing firebombers, one infra-red line scanning fixed-wing aircraft and one light twin engine reconnaissance aircraft.

The Erickson Air Crane large helicopter was first contracted for the summer fire season.



2003

The National Aircraft Firefighting Centre was established to allow for the deployment of firefighting aircraft – both fixed-wing and helicopters – to any state at short notice.

2019

Following trials in 2018, night firebombing helicopters were deployed for the first time in Australia when Coulson helicopters were sent to the Rosedale fire in Gippsland and operated overnight.



Learning ignites passion

When Isaac Ling was six months old, his dad joined Toomuc Fire Brigade. Now, at 17 years old, Isaac has been a member himself for almost a year – and as the eldest sibling of five, a family tradition could be in the making.

Isaac's dad, Tse-Sheng, claims that having a 17-year-old son in the brigade makes him feel old. But Isaac revealed, "It's often a competition to see who can get out the door first when the pager goes off."

Being around CFA his whole life, Isaac sees membership as a fun way to serve his local community. Volunteering in the Santa Run at Christmas is a community engagement activity that Isaac enjoys.

"It was great to be able to see the excitement we bring to the community at Christmas by bringing lollies and Santa on the fire truck around to the kids," Isaac said.

Protecting lives and property is something Isaac takes seriously and he welcomed the opportunity to do General Firefighter training and learn about leadership and teamwork.

"It's important to have good leadership skills and to be able to follow instructions to make a good impact for the team."

To advance his firefighting skills and experience Isaac participated in the Cadet Pilot Project, attending training camps in Ballan and Sale. As part of Cadets, he experienced drills such as five-person fog attacks, search and rescue from a smoke-filled building and simulations of being an incident controller.

Toomuc Fire Brigade Captain Andrew Ferrari acknowledged that it was important to engage with CFA's younger members.



"Not only are they the future of CFA, but it's also a breath of fresh air to the brigade as it brings out the knowledge of the older members who then engage more actively with the younger members," Andrew said.

Learning from others and taking every opportunity to develop new skills through CFA has had an impact on Isaac's plans for the future.

"I have changed my career goals to continue learning about firefighting and pursue it as a career. I am now planning to be a firefighter for the Australian Defence Force or Fire Rescue Victoria. While I am working towards that I will keep volunteering for CFA and increase my skills and knowledge."

STORY JEN CLEMENT

Junior leaders empower youth

At the 2022 Junior Leader Forum in mid-September, 50 Junior leaders joined with the Youth and Child Safety teams to discuss best practice in youth engagement and explore future options for the Junior Volunteer Development Program (JVDP).

The weekend started with a deep dive into the HeartWood Framework for Community Youth Development. HeartWood is a community youth development organisation that provides programming, training and support to help youth reach their full potential. Providing our Junior leaders with the tools to positively engage young people benefits brigades and the wider CFA with the unique perspectives, energy, enthusiasm and skills they bring.

"It was a great learning weekend and the tools we now know about will help us greatly," Cranbourne Fire Brigade Junior Leader Deb Jackson said.

Having established a foundation for the weekend, subsequent sessions covered community engagement, child safety, program planning and future development



plans for the JVDP. The group also explored what comes after Juniors – the Cadets Program and future youth pathways.

A significant part of the weekend focused on networking between Junior leaders and facilitating the exchange of ideas and activities.

"We were given some very helpful information and tips. Participants shared the skills and drills they use for Juniors," Red Cliffs Fire Brigade Junior Leader Lisa Bubbs said. "It was awesome getting to meet and network with them all and making some new friends and connections."

However, it wasn't all work and no play. The venue offered a spa, gym, walking tracks and golf course, and on Saturday evening there was a dinner for participants to thank them for the work they do with their Junior brigades throughout the year.

You can find out more about how to encourage positive youth engagement in your brigade through the Excellence in Youth Engagement course on The Learning Hub: members.cfe.vic.gov.au/learninghub.

STORY JEN CLEMENT

Bairnsdale Fire Station officially opened



Bairnsdale Fire Brigade volunteers celebrated the official opening of their new fire station at the beginning of September. Brigade members were joined by CFA Deputy Chief Officer Trevor Owen to officially open the new \$2.5 million station on Calvert Street.

Bairnsdale Fire Brigade Captain Aaron Lee (pictured with five previous brigade captains) said the new station will increase the brigade's capacity.

"It's a bigger premises and better location for us, but the ability to house more equipment is a great boost for the brigade," Aaron said. "In particular, having the ability to refill breathing apparatus cylinders at the station is one of the major new additions.

"There were lots of good memories at the old station, which dates back to the days of horse-drawn fire carts, but we outgrew that building and we're now looking forward to making new memories at the new station."

Features include a motor room with four drive-through bays, a large brigade meeting room, a breathing apparatus cylinder refill station and separate turnout rooms and change facilities for men and women.

The new station is no longer on the busy Main Street which means it is easier for volunteers to access the station when attending calls.

The brigade contributed \$250,000 towards the project.

Bairnsdale volunteers moved into the station last year, and Deputy Chief Officer Trevor Owen said it was fantastic to now officially open the new facility for the brigade and local community.

"This new station is an asset to the thriving Bairnsdale Fire Brigade, allowing our volunteers to continue doing what they do best – protecting lives and property," said DCO Owen. "Bairnsdale volunteers are experts in both urban and wildfire environments and this new station matches the professionalism of its members.

"I would like to thank the brigade for their invaluable service to their local community and wider Gippsland area."

STORY MARK BLACKMAN



Captain line-up (from left to right): John Delany (1980-1986, 2000-2004); Graeme East (1994-2000); Aaron Lee (current); Billy Royal (1986-1992); Les Beechey (2004-2014); Geoff Hopkins (1992-1994).

Lilydale Auxiliary marks 60 years

This year the Lilydale Auxiliary is celebrating its 60-year anniversary. Founded in 1961, the auxiliary has a rich history of fundraising and catering for Lilydale Fire Brigade. It is still going strong today.

The fundraising achievements of the auxiliary across its 60-year history has helped Lilydale Fire Brigade in a number of ways, from updating the station's kitchen to purchasing defibrillators and contributing towards the purchase of a field command vehicle (FCV).

As well as fundraising, Lilydale Auxiliary regularly caters for the brigade, other brigades within District 13 and other emergency services organisations.

Gwen Corbett is the treasurer of both the auxiliary and brigade, having been a member at Lilydale for 36 years. She said the auxiliary is a vital part of the community and supports the firefighters wherever needed.

"An auxiliary brigade is such an important part of a town," Gwen said. "Whatever needs to be done, we do it. If someone needs sandwiches at 3am, those sandwiches appear. Before 24-hour shopping centres were open, everyone would raid their fridge, their cupboard – the fireys never went without food and we've always been very proud of that."

A highlight for Gwen during her time in the Lilydale Auxiliary was being asked to cater for the Great Victorian Bike Ride.

"The Ride was something really special," Gwen said. "To cope with such a big venue and such a large crowd of people was a big achievement. It was humbling to know that we impressed the RACV. We fed more than 2,000 people in two-and-a-half hours that day."

Tanya Brock is Lilydale Auxiliary's president, having been a member for around six years. Also volunteering as an operational firefighter with the brigade, Tanya said the friendships built through the auxiliary are really special.

"I don't have a favourite memory as such; I love every time we're together," Tanya said.

"The people we cater for really appreciate the work we do; we always enjoy it and have a good time. All our auxiliary members get on really well, so it makes my role as president really easy."

Lilydale Auxiliary Secretary Sheryl Haley echoed Tanya's thoughts.

"I've been part of the Lilydale auxiliary for 39 years and there's no way I could pick a favourite memory. Everything's exciting and fun and everyone gets along well," Sheryl said. "No matter if we're catering or doing another type of fundraising, we just have the best time."

"I was first inspired to join to support my husband – that's really what it was about in those days. But now it's so much more than that. It's great comradeship and we really support each other. We support the brigade and the brigade supports us."

Someone who has been at the Lilydale Auxiliary since its humble beginnings is Val Oliver, who joined in 1962 just months after it was founded. She said while the auxiliary has changed a lot over its six decades, its core cause – to support the brigade – remains the same.

"At the beginning it was all of the wives coming together to support our husbands. Now we're still a dedicated group that comes together to help all members of the brigade however we can," Val said.

"I think the most valuable thing we've raised money for is the brigade's FCV which has improved our capabilities by a long way."

The brigade looks forward to celebrating its 60-year anniversary this October after having to put their celebrations aside in 2021.

"I'm really looking forward to the 60-year celebration," Val said. "Lots of past members are coming along and it will be great to reflect on past memories and all that we've achieved over our 60 years."

Lilydale Auxiliary has seven members. Gwen, Tanya, Sheryl and Val, are joined by Ann Brien, Kathryn Sargent and Heather Turner.

STORY TIAHN WRIGHT

Below: From left to right: Gwen Corbett, Val Oliver, Tanya Brock and Sheryl Haley



Whittlesea welcomes young members

Young people are an important part of a healthy brigade. But the number of operational members aged 16 and 17 years old is relatively low and this is something the Youth Team at CFA aims to change. Recently, the Youth Team ran successful Cadet camps targeted at our 16 and 17-year-olds, and we talked to one of our operational Cadets about his brigade.

Josh Corps (pictured) is 17 years old and studying agriculture at TAFE while working as a farm contractor. He recently attended a Cadet Training Camp in Sale and regularly turns outs with Whittlesea Fire Brigade along with his dad Simon.



Simon is a strong advocate of Josh's participation in the brigade. "It will allow him to continue to build his community spirit while learning new skills and working with a great team," Simon said. "He will have experiences that people his age may never have, both positive and challenging. And we have been very impressed with the support he has already been given from the brigade and CFA.

Josh enjoys turning out and recently helped to rescue a horse.

"I am currently doing a Certificate II in Agriculture and love working with cattle, so I felt right at home supporting the animal as we prepared to rescue it on a steep incline," Josh said. "The crew worked well together and we all learned new skills with Arthurs Creek brigade members who are experienced in large animal rescue."

One of Josh's reasons for volunteering was to feel a part of his local community, a sentiment that's echoed by his dad.

"Youth his age need as much encouragement as they can get, and be given opportunities to show them they are valued as part of the team and the community."

Josh's advice for other young people his age who are considering lending a hand at their brigade is, "Don't be nervous. You can be confident that you will be supported and included in your brigade. There is a lot to learn and don't be afraid to ask questions."

That support has been clearly demonstrated by Whittlesea brigade Captain Richard Gardiner. Richard got involved in CFA when his dad took him to the station when he was 16 years old and hasn't looked back. He reflects on this action by his dad as a 'sliding doors' moment of his life, having subsequently had a career in emergency management working with CFA, Ambulance Victoria, FRV and Emergency Management Victoria.

Joining CFA at such an early age was life-changing for Richard and why he has remained passionate about giving young people the opportunity to be operational.

"It was quite formative for me and opened my whole world to the idea of helping other people," Richard said. "I realised it was a possibility and something that could be done, but then I had that visceral experience of doing it and I realised it was something that I loved."

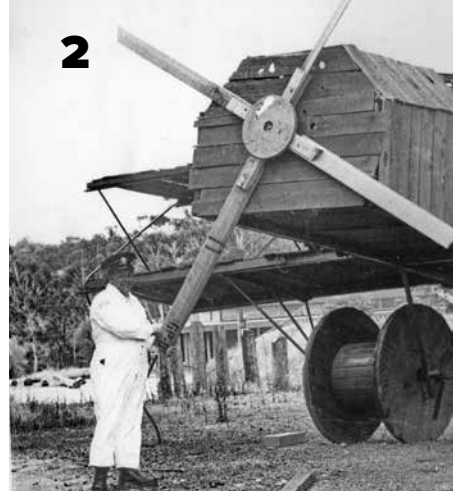
Richard stressed that brigade management teams have an important role to play,

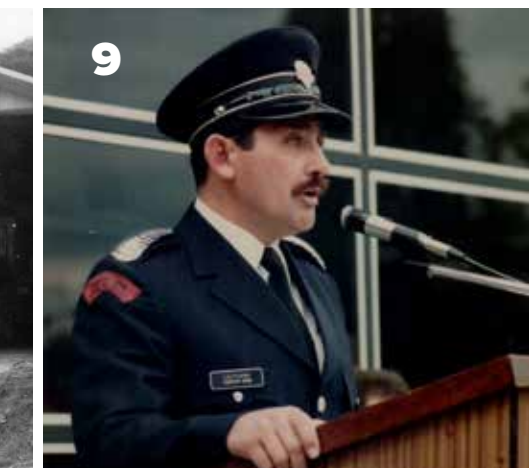
"BMTs need to develop really strong relationships with the young members and their families, even if the families are not involved in the brigade. This gives them insight into what the young person is into and what opportunities they should be offered and be able to have.

"If you build a relationship with their families and guardians, you will open the door to get to know them and know their capabilities, strengths, and skills."

Richard is keen to encourage and support the younger cohort and see them as people just like anyone else in the brigade, but at a different stage in life.

STORY GOLDIE PERGL





THROUGH THE AGES DIAMOND CREEK

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Running events 1940s 2 Mock airplane and members 3 Early station 1950s 4 Brigade members 2018 5 Main Street station late 1990s 6 Tug of war at Town Fair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 Dodge Sinclair pumper and Austin tanker 1957 8 Town Fair parade 9 Adrian Hem AFSM 10 Christmas tree sales 11 Current fire station 2018
---	--

COMPILED BY KEITH PAKENHAM AFSM



Emergency Memberlink

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

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

Details of the offers and full terms and conditions are at emergencymemberlink.com.au.

To join Memberlink phone 1800 820 037 or register online at emergencymemberlink.com.au. You can also access your Memberlink card on the website.

The Memberlink team welcomes feedback about the program and your suggestions about new benefits you think would be of value to you, your family and your colleagues. Phone the team or leave a message on the Emergency Memberlink Facebook page.



- **Westfund Health Insurance** has a 5% discount plus the two-month waiting periods waived on your Extras cover.
- Up to 10% off year-round plus additional savings during promotional periods on **Dell Technologies** laptops, desktops, monitors, printers and accessories.
- \$50.00 off the already discounted price on a **Driver Dynamics** Defensive Driving Course.
- The **Bridgestone Business Associates Program** has 15% off Bridgestone's website price on the full range of car, SUV and light van tyres.
- You and your family members have access to discounts at **Specsavers Optometrists**.
- **SPC -The Good Meal Co** has a 20% discount on home-delivered meals.
- 10% off the best available rates at Melbourne's historic **The Hotel Windsor**.
- 30% discount on **Milleni** women's fashion bags and wallets and men's wallets.
- **Sixt Australia** has up to 20% off the best rate of the day on passenger and commercial vehicles.
- Save 3-7% on pre-purchased **Gift Cards** including Woolworths, WISH, Coles, Myer, Kmart, Target, Rebel Sport, JB Hi-Fi, Supercheap Auto and BCF.
- Special hotel accommodation rates throughout Australia and internationally with **Hotel Planner**.
- **Experience Oz** has at least 10% off hot deals on a range of experiences such as attractions, zoos and aquariums, theme parks and extreme activities.
- Exclusive discounts on home entertainment, audio, televisions, mobile phones, IT hardware, fitness trackers and whitegoods through the **JB Hi-Fi Corporate Benefits Programme**.
- 4% discount on the Emergency Memberlink Health Plan through **Bupa**.
- Commercial pricing on household appliances and electronics through **The Good Guys Commercial Division**.
- 25% off revitalise Bath House bathing and Moonlit bathing during off-peak periods (Monday to Friday outside public and school holidays) at **Peninsula Hot Springs** on the Mornington Peninsula.
- **mycar Tyre & Auto** has 10% off servicing, mechanical repairs and TCP tyre purchases.
- 20% off flowers from **Petals Network**.
- Discounted cinema tickets, attraction tickets and e-gift cards through the **Memberlink Box Office**.
- 15% off prescription glasses and prescription sunglasses at **OPSM**.
- **RSEA Safety** offers 15% off full-priced items online and instore.
- Up to 40% off the Hewlett-Packard public store price on HP laptops, desktops, monitors, printers and accessories through the **HP Corporate Store**.
- Special offers on **Elgas** LPG bottled gas.
- 5% of adult Spirit and Flexi passenger fares with **Spirit of Tasmania**.
- **Nissan Fleet** pricing and benefits across a select range of new Nissan vehicles.
- 5-10% off the best unrestricted rate of the day at **Accor Hotels**.
- Two months free for pets aged 6-52 weeks, one month free for pets aged over one year, plus receive 6% off annual premiums through **PetsOnMe Insurance**.
- Plants, trees and garden products at wholesale prices at **Plantmark**.
- **Searoad Ferries** has a 10% discount on ferry travel between Sorrento and Queenscliff.
- Exclusive pricing on whitegoods, kitchen appliances, audio visual, computers and mobile phones, home appliances and furniture through **Harvey Norman Groups & Associations Division**. Contact your Emergency Memberlink Team for a quote.
- Corporate leisure rates and reduced insurance excess on car hire with **Avis**.
- Preferential government accommodation rates at **Choice Hotels Asia-Pac** across Australia.
- **The Automotive Vehicle & Buying Service** can save you time and money on the purchase of your next new vehicle.
- **Infinity Celebrancy** has 30% off all celebrancy services including weddings, funerals and other life events.
- Trade cash prices on the full product range at **Burson Auto Parts**.
- 20% discount on unlimited ride tickets at **Luna Park Melbourne**.
- Up to 15% off the best daily car rental rate with **Europcar**.



Brigade

If undeliverable return to:
D&D Mailing Services
6/400 Princes Hwy
NOBLE PARK NORTH VIC 3174

PRINT
POST
100010934

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA