

AUTUMN 2010

BRIGADE



FIRE SEASON 09/10

We prepared. We educated. We fought ...
And we remembered.

ALSO: IGA - A DECADE OF SUPPORT, SPIRIT OF CFA PAINTING, TOLL & WESTPAC SUPPORT, DC-10 AIRCRAFT

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Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM



From the Chairman

A glimpse of the future

The 2010 State Urban Junior Championships held at Echuca in late February was a great success for several reasons, not least the excellent attendance at the event.

More than 600 young competitors from all over the state and from as far as Esperance in Western Australia participated in this year's annual Championships.

The enthusiasm, dedication and sheer enjoyment shown by the young brigade participants was an absolute delight for all of us who attended.

I was particularly impressed by the level of skill demonstrated at these championships, but I think the greatest attribute that was on display was the development of teamwork, which is so vital to our organisation. We can't function in our brigades without it and it is the single most important skill that enhances our day-to-day firefighting activities.

For me it was an extraordinary glimpse of the future of CFA. It's vital that we continue to attract young people into the ranks of CFA and the junior championships is an excellent way to leverage recruitment of teenagers into our organisation.

I note that there seems to be an increasing number of girls and young women taking part in the championships – we should encourage this trend as well as look to attract more youngsters from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Congratulations to Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria and the Echuca Fire Brigade for conducting such an extraordinarily successful event this year. Bob Cameron, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, also attended the event and on behalf of the CFA Board I thank him for the Government's continuous support of the championships.

I would also like to acknowledge the terrific work done by the volunteers and paid staff who plan, organise and conduct this event. These include the myriad 'behind-the-scenes' workers - the judges, stewards, marshals, time-keepers, recorders, announcers, first-aiders, and other volunteers who make these championships such a pleasure to attend.

We should continue to embrace the junior championships as an event that strengthens the ethos of CFA and also as an exceptional opportunity to recruit and attract new young members. ■

Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM
Chairman

The next edition of Brigade will feature stories and photos covering all of the 2010 championships.

Acknowledgements

FEATURE PHOTOS

Thank you to the following people who provided images for the fire season feature of this edition of *Brigade* (while we couldn't use everybody's photos or every photo sent in, your support is much appreciated).

We prepared - Blair Dellemijn, Darlene Pentland, Matt Gage, Lauren O'Connor, Michael Glenister, Noel McWilliams, Terry Goodwin

We educated - Barry O'Connor, Bill Barbour, Blair Dellemijn, Chris Lewis, Ray Holloway

We fought - Keith Pakenham, Sarah Black, Brian Brady, Craig Hutchinson, Paul Horton

And it wasn't all bushfires - Darren Apps, Blair Dellemijn, Luke Comisso

We remembered - Keith Pakenham, Blair Dellemijn

IGA FEATURE

Words by Amber Van De Camp, Leith Hillard and Jenna Clarke. Photos compiled by Amber Van De Camp and Keith Pakenham. Thanks also to IGA for its help in putting the feature together.

AND IT WASN'T ALL BUSHFIRES CONTRIBUTORS

Fire takes hold and *Coolroom Comes Under Heat* by Darren Apps, *Gas Leak Stops Traffic* by Blair Dellemijn, *New Year Starts with a Bang* by Aneta Alford, *How to save a life* by Keith Pakenham, *Smoke on the water* by Jenna Clarke, *Toolamba rocked by school fire* by Jenna Clarke, *All out attack* by Andre Brown, *In the heat of the day* by Keith Pakenham, *A Lucky Escape* by Peter Hobbs

In the heat of the day

Brigades attending the Ingham's factory fire: Balnarring, Baxter, Bittern, Cardinia, Carrum Downs, Casey Group, Clyde, Cranbourne, Crib Point, Dandenong, Frankston, Hallam, Hampton Park, Hastings, Langwarrin, Moorooduc, Mt Eliza, Mt Martha, Narre Warren, Pakenham, Patterson River, Pearcedale, Scoresby, Skye, Somerville, Tooradin, Tyabb, Westernport Group



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Change of address

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

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

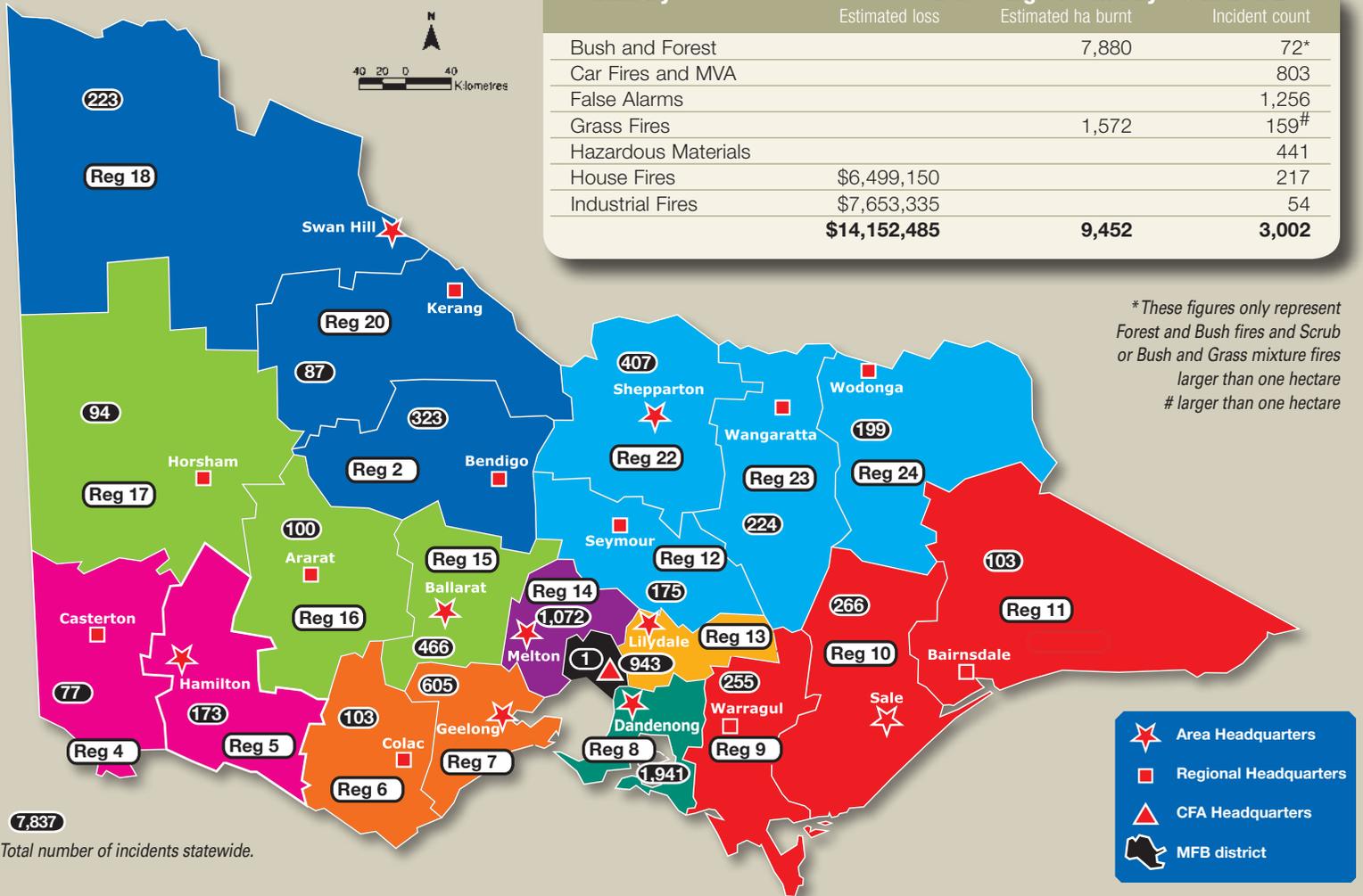
In this section of *Brigade*, we summarise CFA incidents and examine the total number of incidents for each region. All statistical information has been extracted from CFA's Fire and Incident Reporting System (FIRS).

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

Summary	Date range 1 October - 31 December 2009		
	Estimated loss	Estimated ha burnt	Incident count
Bush and Forest		1,906	77*
Car Fires and MVA			1,307
False Alarms			1,847
Grass Fires		11,983	241#
Hazardous Materials			638
House Fires	\$16,070,460		340
Industrial Fires	\$1,603,300		64
	\$17,673,760	13,889	4,514

Summary	Date range 1 January - 8 March 2010		
	Estimated loss	Estimated ha burnt	Incident count
Bush and Forest		7,880	72*
Car Fires and MVA			803
False Alarms			1,256
Grass Fires		1,572	159#
Hazardous Materials			441
House Fires	\$6,499,150		217
Industrial Fires	\$7,653,335		54
	\$14,152,485	9,452	3,002

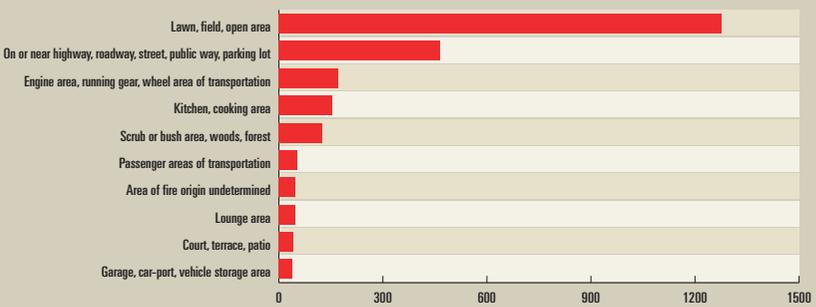
*These figures only represent Forest and Bush fires and Scrub or Bush and Grass mixture fires larger than one hectare
larger than one hectare



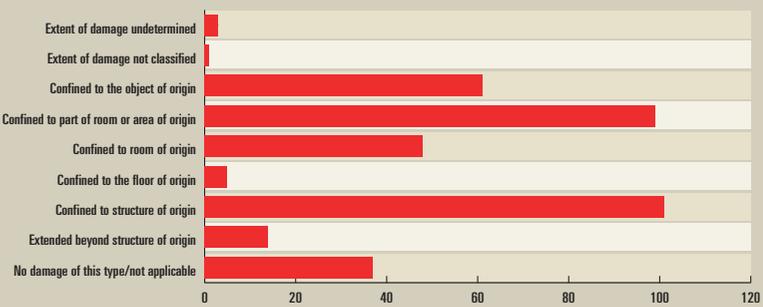
7,837 Total number of incidents statewide.

- ★ Area Headquarters
- Regional Headquarters
- ▲ CFA Headquarters
- 👤 MFB district

Top 10 fire starts 1 January - 8 March 2010



Extent of flame damage 1 January - 8 March 2010



Mick Bourke



From the CEO

Hard work and moving forward

This edition of *Brigade* reflects on life at CFA over the past six months. We prepared for another fire season, educated the community and, when the flames came, responded with the professionalism and commitment characteristic of our people. We also grew stronger off the fireground through strengthened partnerships with friends both old and new.

We had great successes leading up to and during the firefight, and we also experienced times of sadness and loss. In particular, we mourned the passing of Tolmie & District brigade member Hugh Monroe, who died in a tanker rollover accident on 10 January. The loss of a CFA member on active duty is one that affects us all and our thoughts and condolences remain with Hugh's family, friends and fellow brigade members.

On the first anniversary of Black Saturday, we joined the nation in mourning the terrible loss of that day. We also reflected on the unwavering commitment CFA members showed in fighting the fires in Gippsland leading up to 7 February and then the extraordinary work done on Black Saturday and beyond.

We have also continued to move forward. There has been unprecedented change rolled out through the Bushfire Preparedness Program to educate the community and to better prepare ourselves. Our Ready for the Future program has and will continue to see changes to our command and control structure and regional boundaries that will add to CFA's strength.

Our partnerships are thriving, with Bendigo Bank and Ritchies continuing to provide significant support to our brigades. IGA also remains a key friend and contributor to CFA brigades across Victoria, entering its tenth year of official partnership with our organisation.

Toll Holdings, a long-time CFA supporter, provided more than \$475,000 to help us update our District Mechanical Officer vehicles, unveiled at Essendon Airport in February.

Westpac has been a key partner in two recent major projects. Its generous support has delivered the Westpac Firewatch aircraft to bolster our aerial surveillance capabilities, and the 'Spirit of CFA' commemorative poster. This extraordinary painting by renowned artist Jamie Cooper captures both the soul of the organisation through its history, and our determination to continue to grow and walk confidently into the future.

And then, of course, there are the countless partnerships you have at the local level with your communities, friends and supporters, without whom we could not go from strength to strength.

It's been a busy and challenging time and we've seen well-focussed change following our own reviews and the interim recommendations of the Royal Commission. You've been part of that process from review through to implementation and I've been impressed with the way you've swiftly embraced and implemented improvements that will make CFA even stronger.

Thank you to you, your families and supporters for your hard work, ongoing commitment, flexibility and vision in an exciting era of change for CFA. I look forward to working with more of you as the year unfolds. ■

Mick Bourke
CEO

Boundary alignment update

CFA has begun working on the alignment of its boundaries with Local Government and other State Government emergency service organisations. Alignment will improve multi-service planning and response to emergency situations across Victoria.

The CFA Board decided last September to align the boundaries after considering an external review of CFA's business, the future direction of the emergency management sector and the options available to meet future demands.

Since then, a project team has been working with General Managers and other stakeholders to plan the changes across the organisation. Consultation has begun but there is much more work to be done. CFA members will be asked to provide input and support to the project, and to discuss and work through any concerns.

The changes mean that CFA's existing nine Areas will become eight Regions. They will be renamed along with the current 20 CFA numbered Regions, which will become Districts. Some reporting structures and relationships may change but brigades will continue to respond to the same areas they currently service.

The changes will provide a common framework for planning, operational and administrative services across the emergency services sector including Victoria Police, Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES), Department of Sustainability and Environment, Ambulance Victoria, Department of Justice and the Department of Human Services. Other state emergency agencies have or are also in the process of aligning to these boundaries.

These changes will improve CFA's ability to manage emergency incidents together with other emergency services. They will also provide better support to our volunteers and, in some cases, reduce duplication of processes and, therefore, volunteer workloads.

While there are a number of challenges in implementing these changes that will affect many brigades across the state, CFA is confident that with the support of its members it will be able to better equip the organisation to be "Ready for the Future".

CFA is expecting to make the boundary changes by 1 July 2010. ■

Command and Control changes

Recommendations from the interim report of the Bushfires Royal Commission have led to a number of changes to command and control arrangements now embedded within the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958*, the *Emergency Management Act 1986* and the State Emergency Response Plan.

These operational management changes are designed to strengthen decision making and improve emergency management across government agencies. They include a new command level and geographical alignment, and aim to ensure that during emergencies, information flows more efficiently within agencies and government, and to key stakeholders and the community.

The changes are to be structured to geographically align with state regional boundaries and local government boundaries in acknowledgement that many emergencies, including bushfires, may be a community crisis requiring VICSES, ambulance, Victoria Police, Department of Human Services, power companies and Department of Education responses.

In addition to Level 3 bushfires, other triggers for applying these arrangements will include a significant threat to life, property or the environment from bushfire, forecast of “severe” or greater fire danger and the deployment of a large number of resources.

The new level in the line of control is known as the Area of Operations and will be overseen by an appointed controller at the Fairer Victoria region level or for a specified area based on the type or location of an emergency incident.

The appointed State Controller will oversee all response activities, provide strategic leadership, ensure emerging risks or threats are identified and establish a control structure that matches the incident’s multiple challenges – environmental, community and inter-agency.

The State Controller will establish and oversee a State Control Team at the State Control Centre and convene a State Emergency Management Team. The State Controller may also appoint an Area of Operations Controller, and incident controllers may be appointed from across the emergency services.

These changes were applied this summer and will continue to be rolled out as part of the Ready for the Future program over the next few months.

Consultation will take place with key stakeholders and members will be kept informed of changes as they occur. ■

INJURED TOLMIE & DISTRICT MEMBERS

Four other Tolmie & District brigade members were also involved in the tanker rollover on 10 January 2010 and they are making satisfactory progress in recovering from their injuries.

SUNBURY TANKER ROLLOVER

Sunbury Tanker 2 (3.4D) was involved in a rollover on 13 February 2010 while responding to a truck accident on the Calder Highway at South Gisborne. Three Sunbury members were transported to hospital and were released later that day. ■



Photo courtesy of the Monroe family

Vale Hugh Monroe

27 NOVEMBER 1947 – 10 JANUARY 2010

Tolmie & District Rural Fire Brigade member Hugh Monroe died on 10 January 2010 after the tanker he was driving was involved in an accident on the way to an incident in Victoria’s north east. The accident happened about 14 kilometres from Tatong.

Mr Monroe, 62, had been a volunteer for nearly 11 years and was a much loved member of both his brigade and his community. A dedicated firefighter and brigade 3rd Lieutenant, he was involved in the 2006 campaign through Victoria’s high country and the Black Saturday fires last year.

Mr Monroe was a Vietnam Veteran and retired to Tolmie after working as a protective services officer in Melbourne, guarding the Shrine of Remembrance. Handy with a pool cue and a keen fly fisherman, which he wrote about for his local paper, Mr Monroe ran fishing and tourism trips. He was also a passionate gardener and opened his property to visitors as part of the Open Garden Scheme.

An active, community-minded man, Mr Monroe will be deeply missed. CFA extends its sincere condolences to Mr Monroe’s family, friends and fellow brigade members.

Chief Officer Russell Rees described the accident as a tragedy and said it “reinforces once again the dedication and commitment of our people across the emergency services.” He said work protecting Victoria’s communities went on that week “under a shadow of loss as we mourn Mr Monroe’s sacrifice.”

Chief Executive Officer Mick Bourke joined Russell in expressing his condolences to Mr Monroe’s family and friends, and the wider CFA family. “When one of our own dies in active service, it deeply affects the whole organisation. All across the state, CFA members are sharing this pain and sending their condolences to those involved.” Condolence messages were also posted on CFA Connect and CFA’s facebook page.

Mr Monroe’s funeral was held on 16 January 2010 in Mansfield. During the CFA and Tolmie brigade eulogy, Region 23 Operations Manager Stewart Kreltszheim said if he could describe Hugh in one sentence it would be: “A man who put service beyond himself; service to his country, service to his state and service to his community.”

The service was followed by a Guard of Honour and the funeral procession was led by Wangaratta brigade’s historic Dodge pumper.

Mr Monroe is survived by his wife of 27 years, Kathy, and his children. ■

Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

The 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission is nearing the end of its public hearings with the seventh and final block drawing to a close in late May.

After hearing evidence for more than a year, the commissioners will adjourn to prepare their final report on 26 May. That report is due to be presented to the State Government by 31 July this year.

Since resuming for 2010, the Commission has heard evidence relating to planning, defensible space, roadside clearing and fuel management, as well as oral submissions on the cause and circumstances of each of the 12 main fires.

In the first week of February, Counsel Assisting the Commission presented the proposed key findings it would like the commissioners to adopt in relation to each of the fires, while the State Government and other parties also lodged submissions in response to Counsel Assisting's proposals.

CFA 2009 Fires Task Force Coordinator Greg Esnouf said the commissioners would consider all the submissions before preparing their final report.

"While there are many points on which we agree with Counsel Assisting, the State Government submission also pointed out where we think wrong conclusions have been drawn and encourages the Commissioners to make alternate findings."

Mr Esnouf said Counsel Assisting had commended many CFA members in its submissions and it was pleasing that these outstanding contributions had been highlighted.

"While everything did not go as we would have liked on 7 February, there were many outstanding results and efforts that are deserving of recognition as these have not always received equal focus in the Commission or the media reporting of proceedings in the past," he said.

"While pointing out areas where we can continue to improve our service delivery, Counsel Assisting has also acknowledged the contribution that so many CFA volunteers and staff made on that challenging day."

At the time of printing, there was still a lot of evidence to be heard, with topics such as insurance, systemic issues like firefighter safety, communications, information management, resource tracking and mapping, and organisational structure still to be addressed. In addition, there will be further consideration of policy issues about community preparedness and response to high fire danger days, while the Commission will complete its inquiry into the causes and circumstances of deaths relating to the Kilmore East fire.

Mr Esnouf said it had been a long and challenging year for everyone working on the response to the Royal Commission, including those in the 2009 Fires Task Force, and the team was still busy preparing for the final topics to be discussed.

"I would like to thank every CFA member who has appeared before the Commission, provided a statement or helped us to gather information," he said.

"The Task Force team, in conjunction with our legal team at Maddocks, has assisted the

Victorian Government Solicitor's Office to prepare thousands of documents, statements and pages of evidence. It has been a mammoth task."

Mr Esnouf said CFA was looking forward to receiving the Commission's final report in late July so preparations could get under way for the 2010/11 fire season.

ROYAL COMMISSION UPDATES ONLINE

Royal Commission updates can now be viewed on CFA Connect TV with 2009 Fires Task Force Coordinator Greg Esnouf appearing in a video blog.

The first of his blogs updated members on the progress of the Commission while providing some background on its structure and process.

The blog proved so popular, regular updates will now be filmed and uploaded to CFA Connect TV. They can be viewed at www.cfconnect.net.au

Mr Esnouf said he was pleased to be able to provide another means by which members could receive information on the status of the Royal Commission.

"We are incredibly lucky to have CFA Connect TV as a resource we can use to communicate with members," he said. "Not everyone wants to sit down and read pages of information, so a video blog enables me to provide a different form of update. Members can view the whole 10 minutes or just choose the sections that are of interest to them."

You can watch the updates by visiting CFA Connect and clicking on 'blogs'. ■

AMONG THE NEW INITIATIVES INTRODUCED FOR THE 2009/10 FIRE SEASON, INCLUDING THE 42 PROJECTS IN THE BUSHFIRE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM, WERE:

- a command and control structure for Bushfires in Victoria that is aligned with the state regional boundaries and in turn local government area boundaries, and which improves and strengthens the decision making and information delivery in bushfire settings
- an unprecedented number of Community Fire Guard and Fire Ready Victoria meetings across the state with a new online booking system for community meetings making it easier for people to gain information and access
- a new Fire Ready Kit, that provides thorough preparedness and community safety advice to help Victorians prepare for the fire season
- an online household self-assessment tool to determine if a house has sufficient defensible space
- the introduction of Township Protection Plans for the 52 identified high risk bushfire locations in Victoria
- CFA working with councils to assess and establish, for the first time ever, Neighbourhood Safer Places - Places of Last Resort
- a new national fire danger rating system with associated actions for the community to respond to and
- a new web-based messaging system that sends warnings simultaneously to the emergency service websites and media outlets that broadcast emergency information. ■

FEATURE

FireSeason



WE PREPARED

BY ALISON APRHYS

In the lead-up to summer, CFA brigades large and small, rural and urban, participated in training to hone their skills and lock in procedures to protect their communities, their mates and themselves during the coming fire season.

Of CFA's 60,000 members, around 47,300 are Minimum Skills accredited, giving them the ability to turn out to fires and other emergency incidents. With the 2009 fire season at the back of their minds, organisers and members worked hard and smart at region, group and brigade level to run exercises in all weathers and terrains. "Hope for the best, plan for the worst," appeared to be the mantra.

Preparation is multifaceted; it's as much about people as it is resources, weather, topography and equipment know-how.

CFA members also prepared to work hand-in-hand with other emergency services including VICSES, Police, Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). As one CFA member observed, any inter-agency rivalry disappeared after Black Saturday. "We're all on the same side, no matter the colour of our uniform," he said. ■

FEATURE
FireSeason
WE PREPARED



HERE IS A SMALL SAMPLE OF SOME OF THE WORK CFA BRIGADES DID TO PREPARE

- Last October in the north east, brigades from Regions 23 and 24 came together for a joint exercise at Stanley organised by Deputy Group Officers David Box and Fred McGregor. Members were divided into strike teams and took turns in running through procedures at mock incidents including closed circuit drafting, a mock structural fire using a smoke machine and a serious Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA) scenario.
- In Region 14, members were busy as the Hume Group attended a group exercise at

the historic Greenvale Park near Melbourne Airport. There, they joined forces with MFb, Parks Victoria and Aviation Rescue and Fire. A few members from the Whittlesea-Diamond Valley Group also lent a welcome helping hand to the exercise, which involved 120 members. The scenario was a park fire with the focus on asset protection.

- The Mount Cottrell Group braved cold and rain for its annual training at Toolern Vale in line with the new Township Protection Plan.

The exercise included a DSE crew on hand to assist with chainsaw operations and maintenance.

- Region 9 was full steam ahead with 60 members from the Narracan and Leongatha Groups and Nilma North brigade taking part in using quickfills to support collar tank training. Newborough Pumper Tanker and Moe Pumper were also on hand to give members some urban pumping experience.
- Leongatha Group members also participated in Hot Fire Training at the



CFA West Sale Training Complex. A series of MVA incidents involving single, multiple and heavy vehicle entangles with power lines were staged. There were also exercises in running control points and communications. Leongatha SES attended and the Salvation Army tested its new Emergency Services Catering Trailer to great acclaim.

- Last November, seven brigades in the Traralgon Group joined Hazelwood North brigade in Region 10 to participate

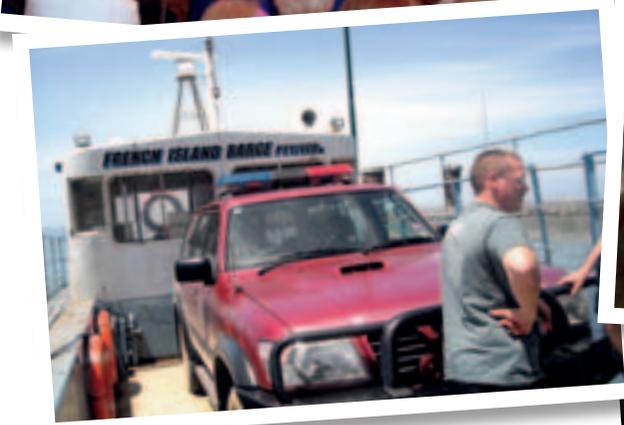
in a number of scenarios including survival training, asset protection at the Latrobe Regional Airfield, drafting and quickfill pumps and collar tank refill.

- Members of The Basin and Boronia brigades gained valuable experience in risk assessment and were the envy of many when they were given permission to demolish a 60-year-old training tower at the Knox Track. ■

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2009/10 FIRE SEASON WERE CALLED UPON IN 13,097 INCIDENTS BETWEEN 1 NOVEMBER 2009 AND 28 FEBRUARY 2010 COMPRISING:

Fire & Explosions	5788
Overpressure Rupture	10
MVA, Rescue, EMS Calls	1252
Hazardous Condition	1074
Service Calls	601
Good Intent	1854
False Alarms & False Calls	2413
Other	54
Yet to be determined	51

FEATURE
FireSeason
WE EDUCATED





WE EDUCATED

BY ALISON APRHYS

A significant interest in attending CFA-run community education sessions saw an additional 130 Fire Ready Victoria meetings scheduled in January and February this year.

A record number of Victorians, more than 44,000, attended CFA's Fire Ready bushfire preparedness meetings in the lead-up to and during the fire season. There were 1,730 meetings – a huge 57 per cent increase on the 2008/09 fire season.

In addition to the Fire Ready Victoria meetings, more than 6,600 additional people have also attended CFA's comprehensive Community Fireguard (CFG) program since June 2009. The program uses specially trained facilitators to work with community groups to develop bushfire survival strategies specific to their risk environment and local needs.

Many brigades also ran information sessions at their stations or at local events. Members also reported that another important means of educating the community was by their own good example – such as having a fire plan, clearing away garden fuel, cleaning gutters and staying abreast of fire warnings.

STATE-WIDE CAMPAIGNS

Fireworks warning

In December, CFA joined with MFB, Victoria Police and WorkSafe to launch a campaign highlighting the risks and hazards involved in the unsafe use of illegal fireworks. The campaign included a live safety demonstration.

Community diversity

Also in December was a meeting of CFA's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community spokespeople at a CALD briefing day. CFA's Community Safety team passed on this season's Fire Ready messages through the latest publications and led the enthusiastic group on a tour of the State Control Centre (SCC). CALD spokespeople are paid by CFA to read prepared scripts on SBS and other community radio stations about fire preparedness, and to support Fire Ready Victoria presenters at various community meetings and workshops.

AROUND THE REGIONS

Representatives from the **Bass Coast Group** held their first meeting at Tankerton on French Island. All members attended the group meeting, which included an operational briefing from Parks Victoria on

its preparedness for the coming fire season and a Fire Ready Victoria presentation before enjoying morning tea.

At the **Kongwak & District Fire Station**, 80 people attended a Bushfire Safety meeting where they heard from CFA Wildfire Safety presenter Robin Rankin and brigade Captain Ray Holloway. Feedback was extremely positive and the successful presentation was followed by a sausage sizzle.

Members of **Sarsfield brigade** opened their fire station to 90 locals who came along to hear a Fire Ready Victoria information session. Brigade members also demonstrated fire extinguisher use and pump drafting water from a tank. A guest speaker from Pheasant Creek spoke about his family's experience of Black Saturday before the brigade hosted a BBQ.

Tyers and district filled the local hall at a Township Meeting where eight **Tyers brigade** members spoke on topics ranging from personal protective equipment to lessons learned from 7 February at Traralgon South. Earlier, the brigade ran a very successful Kids Awareness Day supported by the Maffra students who wrote the *Teenagers in Emergencies* booklet.

CFA Community Safety Gippsland attended the 130th Bairnsdale Heritage Show and provided the community with information on preparing for the coming fire season. The Regional Mobile Communications Vehicle and the Mossi-Tambo brigade tanker were popular attractions. More than 150 people visited the display.

Also in Bairnsdale, CFA joined VICSES, Victoria Police and Water Police to help the local Bairnsdale Neighbourhood Watch team on its annual Community Safety Day. Local residents received information including the new Bushfire Survival Kits and many residents sought advice on property preparation and fire danger period dates.

Samaria Rural Fire Brigade hosted a Fire Ready Victoria meeting, which was attended by 40 residents and CFA firefighters. The visitors were given the latest information on bushfire preparedness and a range of local and specific rural issues. A sausage sizzle followed.

A record crowd of 2,500 attended the 4th Annual **Riddells Creek Bushfire Expo**. The successful event was held in the Macedon Ranges foothills some 40 kilometres north west of Melbourne. CFA was joined at the expo by more than 30 exhibitors including DSE, Department of Human Services, Department of Primary Industries, Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority, Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority and Macedon Ranges Council. ■

Russell Rees



From the Chief Officer

In early January Victoria faced the most difficult weather conditions since February 2009.

We were well prepared for these conditions, with thousands of firefighters on standby and Incident Control Centres (ICCs) ready to go across the state. And we asked the community to be prepared with us.

I once again thank all our firefighters on the ground for doing an excellent job. All incidents were quickly controlled and there were no major fires. Where there were fires, we hit them fast and early.

For the first time, we advised the community in three districts of the state to prepare for Code Red conditions under the new national fire danger rating system.

The fire threat in parts of Victoria was very real – had fires broken out at the wrong time and in the wrong places, we would have been facing some serious challenges.

We entered this fire season more prepared than ever before, with new command and control structures, increased resources and ICC capacity, and more warning systems.

In the lead-up to the season, the biggest fire preparation effort in Victoria's history focused on community information. There was a huge effort to prepare high risk communities for the season and to help them understand the new fire danger ratings and other changes arising from the interim recommendations of the Royal Commission. A record number of Victorians attended bushfire preparedness meetings.

The conditions of 7 February last year were unprecedented in our lifetime and I hope we never face those conditions again. If we do, we will be better prepared because we have better systems in place.

Our focus is to keep changing and improving, to learn the lessons of 7 February last year. We feel an enormous duty to go forward, as our efforts this summer have shown. ■

Russell Rees
 Chief Officer

WE FOUGHT

FIRE IN THE LAKE BY DANIEL CONNELL

Incident name: Lake Mokoan Road Control

Region: 23

Date: 4 January 2010

Brigades: Barjarg, Benalla, Bonnie Doon, Booroolite, Boweya, Chesney Vale, Devenish, Glenrowan, Goomalibee, Goorambat, Greta, HVP Delatite, Laceby West, Lurg, Mansfield, Molyullah, Oxley Flats, Oxley, South Wangaratta, Taminick & North Winton, Thoona, Tolmie, Wangaratta, Winton



A fire in the bed of Lake Mokoan, near Benalla, broke out in early January. The fire, which burned through 580 hectares, was close to the town of Winton North and the Hume Freeway, and was contained before any property was under threat. The freeway remained open. An Emergency Warning was issued to residents in the Winton North and the Lake Mokoan areas.

More than 150 firefighters, 30 CFA tankers, slip-on units and water-bombing aircraft from Mansfield and Benalla, as well as graders and bulldozers, were on-scene. The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) also provided support.

Regional Duty Officer Paul Horton said strong containment lines were built early to ensure the fire could be held through difficult conditions forecast for later in the week. "With the pending temperatures in the high 30s and above 40 we didn't want it to get away from us," he said. ■

A FIERY FREEWAY BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Incident name: Narre Warren Grass Fire

Region: 8

Date: 31 December 2009

Brigades: Berwick, Hallam, Narre Warren



A scrub fire along the out-bound off-ramp on the Princes Freeway at Narre Warren North Road in Narre Warren was quickly contained by firefighters.

The fire began around 3:00 pm on New Year's Eve. In strong wind it quickly spread along the embankment up to the sound barrier. A few embers spotted over the top and started another fire in the easement towards houses, but this was quickly extinguished by the crews on-scene.

Four tankers were used to contain the fire with Incident Controller Andrew Harris from Narre Warren brigade in charge.

Police blocked the entrance to the freeway for around an hour while crews completed their work.

The cause of the fire was being investigated. ■

BURNING BRIDGES

BY LEITH HILLARD

Incident name: Grampians
- Roses Gap Road

Region: 16

Date: 22 January 2010

Brigades: Antwerp, Ararat, Barkly, Beaufort, Brimpaen, Clear Lake, Crowlands, Dadswells Bridge, Glenorchy, Great Western, Green Lake, Halls Gap, Jeparit, Kenmare, Lake Goldsmith, Landsborough, Langi Kal Kal, Lubeck, Moyston, Navarre, Pomonal, Raglan, Rainbow, Stawell, Werrap



Friday 22 January started out quietly in the Horsham ICC with a severe fire danger rating and a helicopter on standby right across the fence from the lunch room.

Attention was focused on the strong winds predicted for the afternoon with Region 17 Operations Manager Dale Russell sending planes up at about 2pm to check for dry lightning strikes.

He was right to be concerned. With a strong north westerly blowing, a series of lightning strikes hit the Grampians National Park at about 6.30pm. One of them started a fire that burnt 1715 hectares and got to within 50 metres of the Western Highway at Dadswells Bridge.

The 9.30pm wind change blew the fire towards the town, home of the Giant Koala tourist attraction, also burning 15 kilometres of fencing, farmland and livestock. The Western Highway was closed two kilometres west of Dadswells Bridge to the Roses Gap turnoff, while a section of Roses Gap Road was also closed.

Some 200 DSE and CFA firefighters created a 17-kilometre control line overnight with four aircraft also helping to contain the fire, which reached bushland that had not burned for 100 years.

Dadswells Bridge Captain David Sharp told *The Wimmera Mail Times* that the fire would give the town better fire protection. "The one positive is that we now have an excellent fire break behind the town," he said. "We would have never in 100 years been able to do a controlled burn that close to town on that part of land."

A Cross Roads brigade member suffered burns to his leg after stepping into an ash pit. He was treated by ambulance at the staging area before being taken to Stawell Hospital. By Sunday he was resting at home and was described by Operations Officer Ross Anderson as "a bit sore". Two other firefighters were also treated for burns at Horsham Hospital. ■

YELLOW BRICK ROAD LEADS TO FLAMES

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Incident name: Emerald Grass Fire

Region: 13

Date: 31 January 2010

Brigades: The Basin, Beaconsfield, Belgrave, Bunyip, Clematis, Cockatoo, Coldstream, Emerald, Ferntree Gully, Healesville, Hurstbridge, Kallista-The Patch, Lilydale, Maryknoll, Macclesfield, Menzies Creek, Monbulk, Montrose, Mt Evelyn, Narre Warren East, Olinda, Pakenham, Pakenham Upper, Ranges Group Control, Rowville, Sassafras & Ferny Creek, Scoresby, Tynong, Upper Ferntree Gully, Upwey, Wonga Park



A column of smoke was showing as crews approached a grass and scrub fire in Emerald in January.

Crews were having access issues getting to the seat of the fire due to the thick growth of trees. Air support was then.

Firebird 302 and Helitak 335 arrived and began water drops and were managed by the Air Support Supervisor at the MCV. Strike Teams 0842, 1334, 1354, 1374 rolled to the scene to assist ground crews.

A "Red Flag Warning" was sent as confirmation of the impending weather change to all crews on-scene. When the storm eventually hit, most vehicles had left the fireground and crews sheltered around the Control Point. Drenching rain, thunder and lightning hit the nearby area and state forests. The number of crews and trucks was reduced shortly after as DSE crews arrived along with a heavy dozer to work into the forested area.

A "Grass and scrub fire Stop" was finally placed on the call at 8:05am the following morning. ■

SKYE HIGH FIRE

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Incident name: Wedge Road Grass Fire

Region: 8

Date: 8 January 2010

Brigades: Baxter, Carrum Downs, Cranbourne, Frankston, Hampton Park, Keysborough, Langwarrin, Patterson River, Skye



A grass fire quickly burned several paddocks on Wedge Road in Skye in early January.

The fire appeared to start near a fenceline below a run of power poles and quickly spread through several paddocks towards a farmhouse and a number of out-buildings. Tankers and crews from surrounding areas were quick to pull the fire up; the property had many gates linking allotments for fast access.

The Frankston Salvage crew set up a quickfill point at the west end of Wedge Road to allow tankers a rapid turnaround time. Crews worked into the night to ensure the fire did not flare up again with high temperatures and winds expected the following day.

Jemena Power representatives isolated power lines that were damaged and later that night restored power back into the area.

The occupier of the property was very grateful no buildings or machinery were damaged during the fire. ■

BLACKENED PROSE

Incident name:

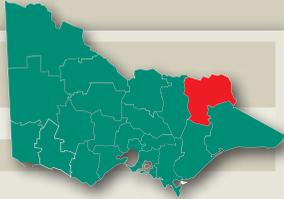
Pine Mountain Creek Road

Region: 24

Date: 17 December 2009

Brigades: Beechworth,

Berringama, Biggara, Bonegilla, Bright, Chiltern, Corryong, Cudgewa, Kergunyah, Kiewa, Mitta Mitta, Myrtleford, Tallangatta, Tawonga, Tintaldra, Walwa, Wodonga West



Fire broke out in the Jingellic area in mid December during horrific windy conditions. Strike teams from the north east were called to assist NSW fire crews. CFA member Sarah Black captured the nature of the firefight in this poem. ■

Jingellic Fire

Black.

Kilometre after kilometre black,

Smouldering farm land,

Still hot

Still smoking.

Rows of hay bales

Freshly harvested

Their golden beauty now smoking black.

More kilometres, the convoy of fire trucks travels,

The blackness extends

Flanked occasionally by green crops

A strange contrast.

Through the thickening smoke

Small aircraft skim overhead, bank hard,

Dump a load of water.

Finally the fire line,

Brown paddocks, fingers of orange flame

And charred remains,

Through the haze cattle are herded

Between lines of fire racing across the grass.

Hay stacks burn,

Solitary in empty barren paddocks,

Sheds, twisted piles of metal peeling like sculptures,

Falling to the ground,

The harvest taken by the flames,

They will still glow red tonight

When the black of night merges with

The scorched landscape.

FIRE IN A HAYSTACK

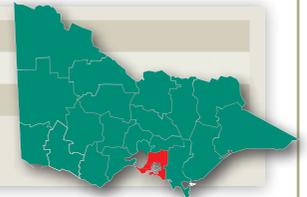
BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Incident name: Simpson Road paddock fire

Region: 8

Date: 19 November 2009

Brigades: Bayles, Bunyip, Koo Wee Rup, Longwarry, Nar Nar Goon, Tynong



Crews were called to a hay field fire in the locality of Vervale when a recently bailed field of hay caught alight in November. Firefighter Cooper from Bunyip brigade was the Incident Controller and multiple tankers attended the call.

Ground crews opened and spread all the bails involved, allowing the fire to burn itself out before soaking the remaining area down thoroughly. A tractor was also used to help open the full bails and spread them over a wide area. The job was completed very late into the night to ensure no embers were left to cause an issue the following day.

Operations Officer Jim Dore oversaw the call and no buildings or sheds were threatened by the fire, which was contained to one large paddock. ■

A NEW YEAR'S EVE ALERT

BY DANIEL CONNELL

Incident name: Mount Clear – Whitehorse Road

Region: 15

Date: 31 December 2009

Brigades: Ballarat, Ballarat City, Bowenvale, Bungaree, Buninyong, Burrumbeet, Carisbrook, Clunes, Creswick, Fiskville, Glen Park, Invermay, Learmonth, Maryborough, Millbrook, Miners Rest, Mt Buninyong, Mt Cameron, Mt Warrenheip, Napoleons, Sebastopol, Smythes Creek, Smythsdale, Talbot, Wallace, Wareek, Wendouree



As a fire near Ballarat threatened several houses and burned more than 30 hectares of bushland, more than 10,000 people in Mt Clear and its surrounds were sent the telephone emergency warning system alert on New Year's Eve.

The fire broke out in scrub land at around 4.45pm. The Emergency Warning was sent out to communities at around 6:00pm, and the fire was declared contained by 8pm.

In tough weather conditions, more than 250 firefighters from CFA and DSE, 30 appliances and air support worked for more than three hours to contain the fire.

CFA Region 15 Operations Manager Wayne Brigg said although the fire was contained, crews continued to monitor the scene with thermal imaging equipment for underground hot spots.

"We had a helicopter fly the entire area of the fire with an infra-red camera to detect hot spots, which we then recorded on GPS to produce a map for the ground crews to black out the hot spots identified," Wayne told the *Ballarat Courier*.

"About a dozen or so were detected and the helicopter picked up ones close to the fire edge, so they were the ones we were concentrating on blacking out first." ■

EYES ABOVE AND BELOW

BY IAN KELLETT

Incident name: Melville Forest – Vasey Road Grass Fire

Region: 4

Date: 31 December 2009

Brigades: Balmoral, Bochara, Branxholme, Bulart, Carapook, Casterton, Cavendish, Coleraine, Culla, Digby, Gringe, Gritjurk, Harrow, Hensley Park, Hilgay Settlers, Karabeal, Konongwootong, Mcewen, Melville Forest, Mooralla, Muntham, Nareen, North Balmoral, North Hamilton, Paschendale, Pigeon Ponds, Tahara, Tarrayoukyan, Tarrenlea, Telangatuk, Timbercorp, Vasey, Wallacedale, Wando Heights, Wootong Vale, Yulecart



A fire on the Melville Forest and Vasey Road was spotted when Mt Dundas lookout tower had a smoke sighting approximately three kilometres south of Gringegalgona in Region 4.

A pager message went out to Vasey brigade, reporting an undefined fire in a paddock. On arrival, Incident Controller DGO Rodney McFarlane requested a further 10 tankers. This was escalated to 30 because the fire was in grassland country and its front was being driven forward by a north west wind towards a bluegum plantation to the south east. A strike team from the Heywood Group was put on standby but not required.

A water bomber aircraft was dispatched from Hamilton airport with air observers from Stawell for aerial reconnaissance but, on advice from the ground crews, was not used for water bombing.

The fire was brought under control around 8pm and 10 tankers and crews worked well into the night with a further eight tankers and crew mopping up and blacking out the following day. An estimated 275 hectares was burnt without property or stock losses. ■

FIRE JUMP

BY JENNA CLARKE

Incident name: Cann River – Myrgatroyd Track 2

Region: 11

Date: 12 January 2010

Brigades: Bemm, Bruthen, Bumberrah, Goodalls, Lakes Entrance, Toorloo, Traralgon, Mount Taylor, Paynesville



CFR responded to a DSE incident in the Cann River-Lower Tonghi area in January when a previously contained fire jumped containment lines at approximately 3pm and reignited, four weeks after it began.

DSE crews were monitoring the fire when severe heat and strong winds caused it to spread through a gully and jump containment lines surrounding dense, inaccessible, rainforest terrain.

Emergency warnings were immediately issued to the residents of Cann River and Lower Tonghi. Fortunately, though, the fire was brought under control before either of the townships was affected.

At its peak the fire grew to approximately 60 hectares and was headed in the direction of Lower Tonghi where there are four properties.

The Princes Highway was closed between Orbost and Cann River at 4.00pm and re-opened around 7.30pm.

The fire was brought under control when crews laid containment lines after the cool change came through late in the evening. ■

MILD CONDITIONS BUT EXTREME POTENTIAL

BY BRIAN BRADY

Incident name: Mingay-McIntyres Road Grass and Scrub Fire

Region: 6

Date: 23 January 2010

Brigades: Berrybank, Cape Clear, Carranballac, Cressy, Darlington, Derrinallum, HVP Ballarat, Linton, Lismore, Mannibadar, Mingay, Pura Pura, Skipton, Vite Vite, Wallinduc, Werneth



A round baler operating in a paddock at Mingay north of Lismore started a grass and stubble fire that burned out 300 hectares in late January. Great work by ground crews suppressed the fire just as it was entering the edge of a mature pine plantation.

The conditions on the day were low 20s temperature, humidity of about 45 per cent and a southerly wind of 30 kilometres per hour. The Fire Danger Index was in the high range.

Crews reported flame heights of more than two metres, which proved difficult to attack. Helitak 335 and Firebird 309, both from Ballarat, made up the air attack with Helitak 335 dropping three loads onto the fire, which had by then been contained.

The practice across the western plains on 'bad days' is to conduct a radio schedule across Lismore Group (with Westmere Group likewise) and discuss whether or not farm machinery should continue operating for the day. A 'paddock ban' is usually implemented at 11am on these types of days until 6pm or later if conditions dictate. The 'ban' is purely voluntary by machinery operators but most, if not all, comply because they understand the implications of starting a fire in those conditions.

The value of the 'paddock ban' on extreme days is highlighted by a fire like this one at Mingay, which ran in relatively mild conditions. The potential of this fire under extreme conditions from the north is too frightening to contemplate! ■

FEATURE
FireSeason
WE FOUGHT





FEATURE
FireSeason
WE FOUGHT



AND IT WASN'T ALL BUSHFIRES...

INCIDENT BRIEFS

SEE 'ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS'
ON PAGE 2 FOR ARTICLE AUTHORS

FIRE TAKES HOLD

Despite work from Corio and Geelong City brigades there was little that could be done to save a single storey weatherboard house in North Geelong in February. Fire had already taken hold of the occupied house, preventing internal fire attack as crews wearing BA and handlines attempted to extinguish the blaze.

Region: 7

Brigades: Corio, Geelong City

COOLROOM COMES UNDER HEAT

Fast work by crews ensured a fire in a stock pile of winter wood in Grovedale did not spread to an adjoining cool store. A spark from a nearly extinguished fire in a small contained incinerator was enough to engulf the wood pile and threaten the cool room containing more than \$5,000 worth of milk products. The thankful owner was happy to ensure the firefighters had ice cold chocolate and iced coffee milk to quench their thirst on the warm afternoon!

Region: 7

Brigades: Grovedale, Belmont

GAS LEAK STOPS TRAFFIC

A four-wheel-drive sprung a leak from a connection to its LPG tank in Melton in November requiring an LPG Flare Off Unit. While waiting for the unit to arrive, crews were rotated through different jobs every 15 minutes because of the extreme heat. Melton Van was summoned to the call so that the air conditioning could be used to cool down and rehydrate firefighters. It took 30 minutes to flare off the gas.

Region: 14

Brigades: Melton, Gisborne

NEW YEAR STARTS WITH A BANG

Fire crews arrived to find a garage and the two vehicles it contained well alight after an explosion in Lysterfield on New Year's Day. The garage door appeared to have been

blown off. The fire was quickly brought under control, with members aided by the use of foam through hose lines.

Region: 13

Brigades: Bayswater, Rowville, Ferntree Gully, Upper Ferntree Gully

HOW TO SAVE A LIFE

Firefighters could hear a weak voice calling to them from a heavily smoke logged unit in Noble Park in January. Crews in Breathing Apparatus forced open a front sliding window and found an elderly lady collapsed inside. The woman was treated outside in a lounge chair until Ambulance Victoria paramedics arrived. Firefighters ventilated the building with a positive pressure fan. There was no structural damage to the unit.

Region: 8

Brigades: Dandenong, Springvale, Noble Park

SMOKE ON THE WATER

A fast-spreading fire on Port Welshpool jetty in January may have been caused by a discarded cigarette butt that became lodged in the pier. Given the limitations of driving heavy tankers onto the old, weak structure, which is not open to traffic, Port Welshpool Coastguard and DSE reinforcements were also called in.

Region: 11

Brigades: Welshpool, Toora, Alberton West

TOOLAMBA ROCKED BY SCHOOL FIRE

The small hamlet of Toolamba in north east Victoria was rocked in February after its local primary school was devastated by fire. It took around an hour for 60 firefighters to bring the blaze under control.

Region: 22

Brigades: Cooma, Merrigum, Moorilim, Mooropna, Murchison, North West Mooropna, Rushworth, Shepparton, Tatura, Toolamba

ALL OUT ATTACK

Breathing Apparatus crews attacked a factory fire near Kerang in January from three sides through exterior windows and roller doors, and internally from the front of the building. They eventually got onto a landing and attacked the fire from above before containing it. The factory owner praised the brigades for their quick response and accurate fire operations.

Region: 20

Brigades: Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook, Murrabit, Sandhill Lake

IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY

Three hundred staff members were safely evacuated from a factory that caught fire in Somerville in January. CFA's Health Team monitored firefighters as they left the fireground in the extreme heat of the day. Extra BA wearers were called in from around the region to keep crews active in the firefight while others took a break. Crews stayed on throughout the night, slowly working their way into the many hotspots beneath the crumpled structure.

Region: 8

Brigades: See brigade listing under 'Acknowledgements' on page 2

A LUCKY ESCAPE

A Western Australian couple and their baby were lucky to escape serious injury in January in Newham when a large branch fell on the bonnet of their hire car, crushing it. The driver pulled to the side of the road some 30 metres further on where the car caught fire and was totally destroyed. The first Newham tanker crew on-scene found that the fire had already spread to roadside vegetation, run up trees and burned a short distance into the adjoining paddock.

Region: 14

Brigades: Newham, Lancefield, Woodend ■

FEATURE
FireSeason
AND IT WASN'T ALL BUSHFIRES







WE REMEMBERED

On 7 February this year, Australians stopped to remember the tragedy of Black Saturday 2009. CFA members also remembered the weeks leading up to 7 February, particularly the fires in Gippsland.

Around the state, commemorative events were held in local communities. CFA brigades stood alongside their neighbours and friends, and CFA was also represented at the only official event, at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne.

In reflecting on the anniversary, Chief Executive Officer Mick Bourke said that last summer touched us all. "The community's loss was our shared loss. We grieved as the state grieved. And we continue on the path to recovery as the rest of Victoria does too."

Chief Officer Russell Rees said Black Saturday "has had a huge impact on the firefighting community and will never leave us. Our thoughts are with those who were involved in the fires, and particularly those who lost loved ones."

Both Mick and Russell also reflected on the work of CFA members during the 2009 firefight and CFA's focus for the future. Russell talked of "the outstanding dedication and commitment of CFA firefighters and staff," and said "our focus is to keep changing and improving, to learn from the tragedy of this event."

Mick said that "we have seen twelve months of unprecedented change. Existing CFA programs were strengthened. New community safety measures and improved operational command and control structures were implemented."

KINGLAKE BRIGADE

A message from Kinglake brigade Captain Craig Lawless

The past twelve months have not been easy for the brigade as 12 of our members lost their homes on Black Saturday, others had damage to their properties and all lost people that they knew.

Despite all of this the members have continued the duty to provide fire protection to the community and surrounding areas. We have stuck together as a team and helped one another out at different times during the year. The brigade has been much more than just a fire brigade over the last year.

We thank all those people that have given us support during the past twelve months and are continuing to provide support to our brigade and members. As a brigade we know we are part of a larger family in CFA and other firefighting agencies right across the country.

Craig's message is reproduced in full at www.cfaconnect.net.au

ST ANDREWS BRIGADE

A message from St Andrews brigade Captain Helen Kenney

On Sunday 7 February firefighters and community members from St Andrews gathered at the fire station to reflect on the tragic February 2009 fires.

Black Saturday had a huge impact on the firefighting community and it has been a difficult time for brigade members. It's been a

tough year but we are good at supporting each other in tough times.

I would like to thank my brigade for all their hard work and commitment. We also thank all of the other brigades who came to our aid and helped us out during the fires. Their ongoing support is appreciated.

The brigade will continue working together and is ready to protect the community as we have always done.

Helen's message is reproduced in full at www.cfaconnect.net.au

KINGLAKE WEST

A message from Kinglake West brigade Captain Karyn Norbury

One year on since Black Saturday Kinglake West Fire Brigade mourns the loss of all life as well as the damage to the flora and fauna within the natural wonderland we know as the Kinglake Ranges.

Our brigade has found this past year difficult but we have come through it together by supporting each other. We are as ready as always to turn out for a fire and to protect the community as we have always done.

The inception of the memorial bell was triggered by the tragedies of Black Saturday and we would like the bell to signify our great respect for those who lost their lives due to the fires in Victoria.

Karyn's message, including the background to the unveiling of the memorial bell, is reproduced in full at www.cfaconnect.net.au ■





IGA formally presents CFA with the 2009 Community Chest contributions (l-r) Sandy Anderson, Ritchies SUPA IGA Rowville, Karen Fahey, IGA State Marketing Manager, CFA Yarra Area General Manager Lex de Man, Operations Officer Jason Lawrence and Chief Executive Officer Mick Bourke

IGA - a valued friend

CFA has many valued partnerships right across Victoria. Few have been as long-standing and beneficial to so many members and communities as our partnership with IGA.

From monetary donations to featuring in IGA's Local Heroes advertising campaign, these benefits continue to grow. IGA is there

in times of need, promotes CFA messages and provides ongoing local support in an invaluable contribution to the organisation.

As we head towards our 10th year partnering with IGA Victoria's Community Chest program, we take a look at some of the IGA people and places that have made a difference to CFA over the past decade. ■

Ritchies also part of the CFA family

Ritchies stores are an important part of the IGA family, and great supporters of CFA. Ritchies IGA started its Community Benefits program in 1993, and local brigades have been benefiting ever since. As Ritchies has grown so has CFA and, since the program's inception, almost \$2 million has been donated to local brigades.

The Community Benefits program involves customers receiving a free Ritchies' Community Benefit Card at their local stores. Customers nominate their own charity and every time they shop at Ritchies, one per cent of the money is automatically allocated to their nominated recipient. There is no limit to the amount an organisation can receive through Ritchies' Community Benefit Card program.

There are many local CFA brigades that have benefited immensely from the program including Dromana brigade, which has received \$237,201 in the past 10 years.

Yarra Glen brigade has consistently received more than \$2,400 a month from its local Yarra Glen Ritchies. The brigade also received an extra \$40,000 in April 2009 from Ritchies Victorian Bushfire Appeal.

Shortly after the tragedy of Black Saturday, Ritchies IGA Chief Executive Officer Fred Harrison thanked all the firefighters and volunteers who had given so much of their time to assist.

"Having seen so many of these people in action, we don't realise how lucky we are to have such a great volunteer support network. Many people gave their time and put themselves through personal danger, all to assist the local community," Fred said.

Ritchies IGA donated more than \$70,000 to affected brigades following the events of 7 February 2009 in just another example of its ongoing and generous commitment to CFA. ■



Compassion at Whittlesea

There was a country music festival in Whittlesea on 7 February 2009 so Michael Caminetti (pictured) was expecting a busy day managing the IGA supermarket. He could never have foreseen his change in role to emergency response over the following weeks.

"We noticed smoke over the hills and then it was straight over the store. The Salvation Army was at the shop the next day arranging food for the firefighters. They told us what they wanted and we gave it to them: free bacon, eggs, bread, fruit and veg all donated by our suppliers. If I got on the phone and asked for something we got it pretty much straight away.

"As well as that we had the army using our cool room. It was chockers. We filled every fridge we had.

"IGA management said, 'Do whatever you can and we'll work it out later'. The Salvos handed out IGA bushfire vouchers so people came in and got whatever they

needed although alcohol and cigarettes weren't covered.

"Organising the stock was all done after hours. We started early in the morning getting the breakfast supplies to the catering unit. We got some phone calls from people stuck around Kinglake with no supplies. We made up their orders and gave them to the firefighters to drop off from the trucks because they were the only ones allowed up there.

"The staff wanted to do anything they could. In a small community we knew everybody. We had customers come in smelling of smoke and crying looking for staff so they could pass on their stories. They'd be hugging customers and talking to them instead of working. In a supermarket you get ups and downs with customers but this time there was sympathy and compassion.

"IGA is very community driven and those weeks really boosted my loyalty. It makes me want to stay." ■

Give and take at Yarra Glen

Saturday 7 February 2009 was the official opening of the Yarra Glen Ritchies IGA store. But what opened as a supermarket in the morning was transformed into an evacuation point overnight with a triage set up in the tearoom. Ritchies IGA CEO Fred Harrison and Director Mal Cameron were on hand, opening up the shelves and telling everyone to take whatever they needed.

The strongest memory for Store Manager David Barling is "the 200 people with cats, dogs and birds in the supermarket overnight. We've got a good buffer here with the lake and car park so people parked their RVs here for the next few weeks because some of them had nowhere else to go.

"We got companies to donate food and we'd channel it over to the hall where it was distributed. We sold necessities at cost price and firefighters would come and grab a trolley and just fill it up."

Forging a strong community connection with Yarra Glen brigade is very important to David and his staff.



The Yarra Glen IGA crew (l to r) Nicole Hughes, David Barling, Cameron Botsford, Donna Parnell, Brett Davis and Liam Dickson

Yarra Glen Captain Bill Boyd is "over the moon. IGA has been absolutely fantastic to us. We get our new tanker around August and a lot of the money came from them. Some of their other money has gone towards renovating the station.

"To everyone who uses the Community Benefits card, we say that if you hear the siren at night, you can go to sleep knowing that you've made a contribution."

"Ritchies professes to be about working with the community," continues David, "and

we stood up and showed we were fair dinkum. We got hundreds of letters and I can't tell you how many times I was called to the front of the store so someone could shake my hand. And CFA thanked us! I can't stress enough how amazed we were to get thanks from them. After all they did!"

The store and brigade run regular barbecues near the entrance to thank the locals in turn. "It's not all about take, take, take," Bill says. ■



Wayne Dyson of Dyson's IGA Supermarket (centre) presents cheques to (from left) Numurkah Fire Brigade Captain Paul Rees, Katunga Fire Brigade 1st lieutenant Jake O'Hara, Wunghnu Fire Brigade Captain Kevin Hickey, and Waaia Fire Brigade 1st Lieutenant Geoff Moore. Photo courtesy of the Numurkah Leader

Strong support in times of need

IGA stores all over the state opened up their doors to affected communities following the tragedy of 7 February 2009.

Warburton IGA Store Manager Shane Wyles said: "We weren't directly affected by fires, although we did have huge amounts of ash blowing into town. It was after the fires that we assisted however we could. We sent water, meat and beer, all the essentials, up to Marysville. We also ran lots of food up to Wesburn, and donated toiletry goods to the Healesville area."

Then there's Michaels SUPA IGA Supermarkets in Korumburra and Leongatha, which, 10 years ago, launched the Michaels IGA Rewards Program. Local CFA brigades have received almost \$100,000 since the program started.

This local support continued following Black Saturday with the stores supplying thousands of dollars of food to local aid relief. ■



Michaels IGA SUPA Leongatha & Korumburra stores owner Michael Lorenz with Leongatha Fire Brigade Former Captain, 2nd Lieutenant Greg Carruthers

Dyson's dishes up support in Numurkah

Wayne Dyson is a second generation supermarket man at Dyson's IGA in Numurkah. "We're all about being local so we picked CFA straight away for the Community Chest quite a few years ago. Numurkah, Katunga, Waaia and Wunghnu brigades split about \$2000 a year between them and that's come to \$18,800 over nine years. We also donated money when Numurkah bought its support vehicle so we're one of the major sponsors with our name on the door.

"We had quite a bit to do with the bushfire appeal last year. The store gave a full week's worth of profits and, with other donations topping it up, managed to donate \$12,500. We also put some produce bins in front of the store and some Numurkah brigade members stationed themselves there to accept donated non-perishable food, cash, cheques and clothes from locals.

"Our store also donates about 50% of supplies for their various fundraisers. They sell bacon and egg sandwiches to the truckies waiting at the local silo, hold sausage sizzles throughout the year and cater at things like clearing auctions.

"We're very proud to be a brigade sponsor. They do a fantastic job for the town and when we can help we will. They're here for the town and we're here for them." ■



Where the money goes

In 2009 more than \$290,000 was raised for CFA brigades. This is on top of the additional support IGA gave CFA and the wider community after the February 2009 fires. Here are some snapshots of where the money goes around Victoria.

Mortlake Fire Brigade Captain Ray Edwards says additional funds that come in usually go towards the replacement of brigade-owned vehicles. "This year we will probably put the donation towards a new quickfill and trailer. It takes a long time to raise enough money and the support from IGA's Community Chest is a great help for sure."

Mallacoota Fire Brigade has used the ongoing financial assistance from IGA's Community Chest to build a second facility that helps with operations. Brigade Captain Rodney Lewis says that with the vastness of area the brigade covers, and with another couple of smaller villages

nearby, the funds were used to build a new shed. The brigade has also used funds to upgrade brigade equipment.

"IGA has definitely helped our brigade expand our operations, and in a small town we have a great relationship with the local store," Rodney says.

Over at **Point Cook**, this is the first year the brigade has received a donation from the IGA Community Chest Program.

Brigade Treasurer David Lovell says they had already planned to replace the brigade-owned vehicle, used for community activities and educational and operational roles, so the funds are definitely a big help.

"IGA's donation will help the brigade improve its delivery of services to the Point Cook community and to the wider community of Victoria," David says. ■

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Cooper tells his story of the Spirit of CFA

When Jamie Cooper began his journey to depict the spirit of CFA on canvas, he admits how overwhelmed he was by the opportunity and experience.

Jamie, who has completed numerous corporate, community and sporting projects throughout the years, spent many hours researching, learning and understanding CFA and its volunteer spirit.

On this page, Jamie explains what each part of the painting represents.

CENTRE PANEL

In the foreground is a man in today's wildfire gear (*fig 1*). Behind him a woman wearing the coveralls of the 1980s (*2*) (Ash Wednesday etc), behind her in the smoke haze, a bloke from the 1960s with his blue singlet and knapsack (*3*). Further back a man from early 1939 (*4*). Finally deep in the background, a settler from the original Black Thursday in 1851 (*5*), armed only with a branch. Way up in the distant smoky sky we see Elvis dumping a load of water to finish off the job (*6*). The figure in the foreground steps out of the blackened earth on to some new green shoots that symbolise what they are fighting for, the hopes for the future and the resilience of the human and community spirit.

LEFT PANEL

This is the archetypal image of three firefighters on the hose wearing structural gear from the late 1960s (*7*) until now (*8*); when the black jackets were gradually being phased out and replaced with Nomex and PBI Gold personal protective clothing.

RIGHT PANEL

The story of the changing face of CFA and the organisation's important connection with the community. Central in this image is a couple hugging a CFA volunteer (*9*), symbolic of the thousands who have been directly helped by CFA.

Next to this is a CFA community education class (*10*). Then, an impromptu signpost made from burnt corrugated tin nailed to a blackened tree (*11*).

At top right a snow mobile (*12*) lets us know that CFA is doing its bit in all terrains and climates across the country.

Below is a cross section of the fire services spanning around 150 years. Out front is a brigade captain from the 1860s (*13*), behind him from left: uniformed firefighter from 1918 (*14*), boy in training 2009 (*15*) (the future firefighter), red coats early 1900s (*16*), black uniforms from 1920s (*17*), female firefighter 2009 (*18*), 1980s gear (*19*) and our new Nomex structural PPC (*20*). Behind them is a shiny new generation Pumper (*21*) on the right and a Dodge pumper from the 1930s (*22*) at left.

Above that is the iconic CFA tin shed (*23*). ■

Spirit of CFA prints are being sold through *Herald Sun* and Westpac branches for \$79.95 + postage, with CFA members receiving a special discounted price of \$59.95 + postage. To order a discounted print, call the *Herald Sun* shop on 1300 306 107 with your CFA member number handy. Every CFA brigade will also receive a complimentary print to hang in their station. These prints are being distributed through local Westpac branches. For more information contact CFA Public Affairs on cfa.promotions@cfa.vic.gov.au. ■



Photos: Keith Pakenham

The Westpac FireWatch aircraft and Toll Holdings supported District Mechanical Officer vehicles in front of Toll tankers and an Erickson Air crane at Essendon Airport



District Mechanical Officer vehicle supported by Toll Holdings



The Westpac FireWatch aircraft



Premier Brumby and Operations Officer (State Aircraft Unit) Wayne Rigg (front) with Minister Cameron and Chief Officer Rees at the Firewatch launch

Joint launch covers air and ground

BY AMBER VAN DE CAMP

TOLL HOLDING ITS OWN

After Black Saturday, Toll Holdings employees, their families and friends gathered to raise funds for CFA. Even international members were involved, holding fundraisers at schools and workplaces. Toll Holdings then agreed to match those donations and more than \$475,000 was raised.

In talking about the events of 7 February, Toll Group Managing Director Paul Little AO said: “We had people flying the skycranes, replenishing CFA water tankers and volunteering. Toll is part of Victoria and we are delighted to assist CFA via this donation.”

This generous donation was given to CFA recently to assist with the purchase and refurbishment of District Mechanical Officer vehicles. One year on at Essendon Airport, Premier John Brumby and Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron assisted with the hand-over of funds.

CFA CEO Mick Bourke accepted the funds saying the generous

support from Toll will reach right across the state through the updating of these crucial vehicles in CFA’s fleet.

BANKING RIGHT IN THE SKY

In 2009 Westpac looked to the skies for an opportunity to support CFA in a similar way to the Life Saver Rescue Helicopter Service. After initial discussions, it wasn’t long before Westpac FireWatch was born; a twin engine, fixed wing aircraft equipped with new aerial surveillance technology.

The plane operated this year on days of high fire danger risk until the end of the fire season and was a welcome addition to the 34 aircraft in Victoria’s existing fleet.

Chief Officer Russell Rees welcomed the new aircraft saying the information provided would not only help ground fire controllers better understand fire behaviour, it would also help with issuing timely warnings to the public.

FireWatch was also launched at Essendon Airport in February 2010. ■



Photos: Keith Pakenham

Elvis's big sister

BY ALISON APRHYS

The biggest aircraft to be trialled to fight fires in Australia's history was based at Avalon airport this fire season.

The DC-10 aircraft, which can carry up to 45,000 litres, came from the United States and has five times the capacity of the Elvis water bombing helicopter. The aircraft completed regulatory testing under the watch of the Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

The DC-10 was selected based on its operational performance in the United States, which has similar landscape characteristics to Victoria, where it had completed more than 300 operational drops.

North America has been using very large aircraft such as the DC-10 and 747s during the last three seasons with mixed views surrounding their effectiveness compared to the performance of helicopters and smaller apparatuses. The Bushfire Co-Operative Research Centre will deliver a scientific and operational review of the aircraft's effectiveness for Victoria's fire agencies after the 2009/10 bushfire season.

The DC-10 was used in late January to drop fire retardant on a 250 hectare fire in the Murray Sunset National Park west of Mildura. ■



Truganina visits Vicki

BY RODNEY WALKDEN

When Truganina Fire Brigade members were given the chance to see 'Vicki' the DC-10 up close and personal at Avalon Airport in February, they jumped at the opportunity.

There were hoses, tanks, pumps and equipment everywhere and the entire setup required the attention of a crew of 16. Essentially, the inside of the aircraft is empty and can easily be refitted as a commercial carrier. Captain Jack Maxey, who pilots Vicki, explained that the DC-10 has three tanks fitted externally. These remain empty

when the aircraft is not in use and can be filled in just over 10 minutes. Tank numbers 1 and 3 are straight off the shelf from Erickson Air-Crane and are the same that are fitted to Elvis and other Air-Cranes.

The computer system used for monitoring and dropping the 45,000 litres of water/retardant is also taken from Erickson Air-Crane. As Captain Maxey said "there was no point in reinventing the wheel and we know that the Erickson stuff works." ■

Aircrane pilots drop into Pomonal BY MATT VENN

Three senior pilots from Erickson and Ericsson's Australian partner Helicorp visited Pomonal in November. Chief Pilot David Barnett and Chief Flight Instructor Randy Erwin, both from Erickson, and Helicorp Chief Pilot Roger de Souza talked for more than an hour to a very enthusiastic audience of brigade and community members.

It was made clear to the pilots that their help in defending the Pomonal township in 2006 was appreciated. The pilots were absolutely honoured to be asked to talk, and stunned that people came from as far away as Echuca and Frankston. Amazingly, no-one had ever asked an Air-Crane pilot to talk to an audience of any kind before.

Pomonal Brigade acknowledges the initiative taken by firefighter Matt Dalkin who first suggested the idea. Matt demonstrated good leadership skills in bringing his dream to fruition. ■



Chief Flight Instructor Randy Erwin Photo: Matt Dalkin

We shared the dream in Toolangi BY MICHAEL NARDELLA

For one magic hour in December, Toolangi Fire Brigade members and local CFA firefighters from all over Region 13 crammed into the Toolangi CJ Dennis Hall to hear from an Elvis Helicrane pilot.

Not many of us get to fulfil our childhood dreams, but Canadian born, Australian raised (Albury) Captain Stuart Wild, has done just that. The stories Stuart told of his experiences both here and around the world as he travels from fire zone to fire zone for nine months of the year kept the audience spellbound. We shared many laughs and after a one hour talk, Stuart stayed on for another hour talking to our audience of 45 on a one-to-one basis.

We particularly thank Roger De Souza of Helicorp, and of course Stuart for taking time on his day off to travel to Toolangi. ■



Captain Stuart Wild at Toolangi Photo: Peter Sharman



Photo courtesy of Bruce Jewell

Drouin it their way BY ALISON APRHYS

It was a ruby anniversary last year when members and friends of the Drouin West Rural Fire Brigade (DWRFB) celebrated 60 years to the day of the brigade's founding on 14 November 1949.

The cheers and celebrations echoed across Region 9 as the brigade celebrated with a dinner at the Jindivick hall. More than 100 guests attended, including members past and present, along with representatives from all brigades in the West Gippsland Group, Gary Blackwood MLA and Matt Viney MLC, who read a letter addressed to the brigade from Premier John Brumby. In it, the Premier highlighted the extraordinary contribution made by the brigade. "I am writing to congratulate the Drouin West Fire Brigade on its 60th anniversary... you should be very proud of the brigade's longevity and service to the community," he wrote.

A highlight of the celebration was the launch of the book *Drouin West Fire Brigade*. Compiled by Kevin Dale it was officially launched by founding member and ex-Captain Bill Higgs. According to Bill's son Captain Graeme Higgs, who has been leading the brigade for 17 years, the past six decades have seen enormous change. "Our brigade continues to grow and meet the

needs of a growing community, not just within Drouin West but also the many neighbouring communities that we support," Graeme says.

DWRFB comprises 68 members. Thirty-six are operational including four with Breathing Apparatus accreditation and eight with First Aid. There are also seven juniors.

DWRFB's family-friendly approach embraces 18 families including 12 husband and wife teams, as well as many parents and their adult children. "We are a band of brothers and sisters; you form a bond and the one I have with my fellow firefighters is very hard to describe but it's there," Lieutenant Bruce Jewell says.

CFA's General Manager Gippsland Area Malcolm McKenzie says the members are a hard working and dedicated crew. "I'd like to congratulate the Drouin West Rural Fire Brigade on a job well done over the last 60 years," he says.

The DWRFB Tanker featured in an award-winning photo taken by Alex Coppel on Black Saturday with Lieutenants Bruce Jewell and Gary Cheesman on board. ■



Lenny lauded with council honour BY LAUREN O'CONNOR

Teenage firefighter Lenny Pritchard has been chosen as Nillumbik Shire Council's Young Citizen of the Year.

The award is not the first time the 18-year-old Diamond Creek resident has been recognised – she was recently honoured with the VCE Achiever of the Year Award for her efforts during and after Black Saturday.

The quietly spoken, yet confident, Lenny said she was thrilled to be honoured. And despite her young age, she said volunteering for the Diamond Creek Fire Brigade was the right thing to do. What she didn't expect was to be confronted with the events of Black Saturday.

Lenny did not hesitate in putting her hand up on Black Saturday and was soon on the Diamond Creek pumper helping defend the townships of Strathewen, Arthur's Creek and St Andrews. And in the nights following, she volunteered for strike teams supervising backburning operations.

According to Diamond Creek Fire Brigade Captain Peter Perkins, Lenny “saw things you wouldn't normally like someone so young to see.” But Captain Perkins said Lenny was a “confident young woman who did everything asked of her and never made a fuss.”

“The award is a great achievement. She's a well-rounded person, a community-minded person, and a shining example to other young people,” he said.

Lenny's community-minded focus also extends to other areas: she volunteers with several organisations including Prison Fellowship Australia (PFA) and Youth with a Mission. Her PFA work involved helping organise a camp for children of prison inmates. In her final year of high school last year she also managed to organise a visit from the Red Cross Blood Bank.

The Pritchard name is well known to members at Diamond Creek Fire Brigade. Lenny's father has been a member for 22 years and her mother is a long-serving member of the auxiliary.

And despite everything she witnessed on Black Saturday, there was some good news to come from Lenny's experiences. “Since the fires we've had a lot of involvement at the school. I got two brigades to come in and we talked about CFA and volunteering,” she said.

Whatever was said that day worked because several classmates soon joined CFA.

Lenny will be studying Nursing/Midwifery at university this year and we wish her well with her studies. ■

Baby love

BY ALISON APRHYS

Surf Coast Brigade Administration Support Officer (BASO) Adele Lynch made history in November when she helped deliver the first baby ever born at Torquay Fire Station.

After expectant father Paul Sayers asked for Adele's help when his wife Michele went into labour, she quickly ushered the couple into the station meeting room. Adele called 000 and rang a local midwife, all the while making Michele comfortable. By the time the paramedics arrived, baby Gemma was already well on her way.

Adele was delighted and surprised to receive a visit from Paul, Michele, Gemma and Gemma's big sister Mia a few days later. The family presented her with a bouquet of flowers and a beautiful box of chocolates as a thank-you gift.

“We were very happy with everything she did,” Michele said.

Paul agreed. “Adele was wonderful,” he said.

“This was not listed in my job description,” Adele said with a smile before adding that she is now happy to get back to tackling the more routine aspects of her job! ■



Surf coast BASO Adele Lynch (left) with Paul, Mia and Michele Sayers and baby Gemma



Pam and Craig Lawless. Pam holds a photo of her late husband Terry

Kinglake's family connection BY ALISON APRHYS

When Craig Lawless, Captain of Kinglake Fire Brigade (KFB), talks about his father Terry, he speaks slowly, quietly and with great pride.

Terry, who also wore the red helmet at KFB, had more than 25 years' CFA service before he retired. Last October he succumbed to the aggressive Multiple Myeloma (cancer of the plasma cells in bone marrow), aged just 66.

"Dad was really into empowering people, giving them a job and letting them go and do it without interference," Craig says. "He'd offer support if they needed it, but he'd let them work it out themselves instead of standing over them."

It's a tradition that Craig is adamant about continuing.

While Terry was no longer captain by the time Craig graduated from junior to senior brigade membership, his examples of hard work, quiet determination, 'can-do' attitude and helping others has obviously rubbed off on his sons Trevor (36), who works in Japan, and Craig (33), who lives and breathes CFA.

These qualities are something that Craig very much needs to draw on. Nearly a year after Black Saturday, when 12 members of KFB lost their homes, his job is as much about keeping the brigade family together as it is about training and answering call-outs.

He says that his father was firm about looking after yourself as well as your crew. "He always said drive safely to and from the fire station," Craig says.

A man of few words, Terry Lawless lived up to his ideals, had a

generous heart and took a 'hands-on' approach to all aspects of his life, including his work at the Country Roads Board where he worked on quality assurance testing bitumen.

His wife Pam, who previously held the secretary/treasurer roles at KFB and of its auxiliary, says that while Terry was delighted when Craig was made captain, he wisely refrained from interfering when it came time for the next generation to step up.

"Terry was so proud that Craig kept the CFA connection going but he let him do his own thing," Pam says. "When Terry was involved he did it fully, but after he resigned, he stepped right back; he was either full-on or not."

Looking back it seems auspicious that Terry joined KFB on Valentine's Day 1977, because from the first he loved being part of the close-knit team. A decade later, he was elected captain after holding the roles of communications officer and secretary.

When first diagnosed with cancer in September 2008, Pam and Craig say that Terry faced the sentence with his characteristic 'get on with it' approach. "He stoically and with great dignity accepted his condition," Pam recalls.

According to KFB's former captain Paul Hendrie's speech at Terry's funeral, the KFB brigade lost a wonderful member and he had lost a good mate.

"Terry's enthusiasm and his time spent working for the brigade was enormous; if he wasn't turning out to emergencies or down at the station tending to brigade activities, he was at home developing operational procedures and plans," Paul said. ■



(l to r) Leading Firefighter James Wong, Deputy Chief Officer Steve Warrington and Beaconsfield Captain Paul Hayes
Photos: Keith Pakenham



Runners head for the finish line at St Kilda beach

Long way home for a safe climate

BY DARLENE PENTLAND AND JENNA CLARKE

It was not a typical Sunday afternoon: CFA tankers on the foreshore with the city skyline as a backdrop, torrential rain just 30 minutes before – now brilliant sunshine, a strong southerly whipping up waves in the bay and covering those gathered in salty spray. In the distance, a group of travel-weary, foot-sore runners jogging along St Kilda beach.

The Run for a Safe Climate involved 25 emergency services personnel spending 28 days running 6,000km through five states and territories. CFA was an official sponsor of the run. Leading Firefighter James Wong and Beaconsfield Captain Paul Hayes joined runners in northern Victoria and made their way down to St Kilda Beach - taking the scenic route via Adelaide.

James says he took part because he's "passionate about the climate and the beautiful, wild and natural ecosystems of our world." He also loves running and challenges "especially through some of Australia's best environments!"

Paul says he's always had an interest in renewable energy and the planet but didn't realise what a crucial stage we had come to in the fight against global warming. "It hit me in the face, I needed to get involved," he says. "I have a young family of three kids, and I am genuinely concerned about the world they're going to have to live in."

The run traced a route through many areas affected by climate change. It started in the tropical rainforests of Queensland and took in the Great Barrier Reef, the NSW snowfields, the (once) mighty Murray, Coorong National Park, the Great Ocean Road and bushfire affected areas of Victoria.

The run was not only about impacts of climate change, it also raised awareness of the safe climate solutions for Australia. The Run for a Safe Climate message is clear: climate change is real, global warming is already impacting our way of life and the time for action is now.

To find out more about safe climate solutions for Australia, go to www.safeclimateaustralia.org ■



Frankston Firefighter Michael Jones.
Photo: Keith Pakenham

Running to remember

BY MARNIE UMBERS WITH ANNE SHEEDY

Frankston Firefighter Michael Jones has been invited to represent CFA in the Tour of Duty run from Los Angeles to New York. The run will be held in the United States in August to commemorate the 411 emergency services workers who lost their lives on 11 September 2001.

The 4620 mile run will take about a month to complete and the team will run across Brooklyn Bridge on the morning of 11 September; arriving at Ground Zero at the same time as the first plane struck tower one.

One of the objectives of the run is to raise money

for local charities in the United States as the run progresses, with opportunities for people to donate to the Australian group's own charities before the event.

One representative from each Australian state's fire service has been invited to take part, and it is a great privilege for Michael to be running on behalf of CFA.

The Tour of Duty team is currently rustling up corporate sponsorship for the trip, so if anyone has some great contacts who might be interested in helping out, please don't hesitate to contact Michael on 0419 573 289 or jonesy2007@optusnet.com.au ■

Doing it for the kids

BY MARNIE UMBERS

Mt Eliza Fire Brigade visited the kids attending this summer's Muscular Dystrophy Association camp at Camp Manyung in Mt Eliza in January.

Muscular Dystrophy is the name applied to a group of diseases that are, for the most part, genetically determined and that cause gradual wasting of muscle with accompanying weakness and deformity.

The kids had a great time as the brigade demonstrated the hoses, fan, breathing apparatus and other equipment used in firefighting. Of course the most popular aspect was the siren!

It was a rewarding morning for all involved and the kids got a kick out of asking real firefighters all their questions. ■



Mt Eliza Fire Brigade Lieutenant Daniel Gardner at the camp



Photo: Paul Carracher/The Wimmera Mail-Times

Pomonal shows cutting edge

BY MATT VENN

The town of Pomonal celebrated Australia Day 2010 by holding a hugely successful ride-on mower rally. Fifty-six drivers turned up to set a world record for the number of ride-on mowers cutting grass at the same time.

Organiser John Malligan said participants came from as far away as Hamilton, Ballarat and Rainbow. With more than 100 astounded spectators looking on, the long line of ride-ons threaded its way from the Pomonal Store to Barney's Bistro where the Pomonal FB had prepared a paddock for cutting.

Owner of Barney's Bar and Bistro, Gary Main, donated half the day's bar takings, saying it was a fantastic day and he looked forward to supporting the event next year.

With the help of sponsors (thanks Monaghans RE, Intertwine Services, 3WM Radio, Stawell and Ararat Lawn Mower Centres, Ararat and Stawell Mitre 10) Pomonal brigade raised \$2,500 for a new community tanker. Videos on CFA Connect. ■



Paul with his framed turnout jacket

Turnout coat tells the story

BY ANNE SHEEDY

Kinglake Fire Brigade Second Lieutenant Paul Lowe's yellow turnout coat has seen a lot of action and is blackened from the smoke and ash from the Black Saturday fires.

Over the last year many celebrities have visited the brigade to commend the members on their efforts and thank them for their hard work. At each opportunity Paul, a volunteer for 13 years, asked them to sign his yellow turnout jacket.

Over time, he collected more than twenty celebrity signatures including Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Shane Warne, Peter Helliar aka "Strachnie," Joe Hachem, Doug Hawkins, The Living End band members, Max Walker, numerous Australian Olympians and AFL players.

Paul thought it was fitting to dedicate his turnout coat to the people of Kinglake as a symbol of what they had been through together. Thanks to assistance from the Kinglake Football and Netball Club, it is now framed and hangs proudly on the wall of the Kinglake National Park Hotel. It is surrounded by images of Black Saturday and the local brigade at work. ■



Standing tall in Cohuna

BY LEITH HILLARD

A lone firefighter now stands in place of the old Cohuna fire station, carved with a chainsaw from local red gum. About 70 people turned out for the unveiling last December including members of the Men's Shed who built the shelter. Pictured are life members Geoff McGraw, Robert Waterson, Bill Frantz and Brian McLoughlan. ■



A rare event

BY LEISA LEES

Koriella brigade members were awarded their years of service awards in November at the Koriella Fire Station. In presenting the awards, Region 12 Operations Manager Peter Creak said: "It was quite rare to hand out a 50-year service medal but to give out two 60-year awards was even rarer!" ■

Some serious face-time

BY MARTIN ANDERSON

Nearly 65,000 people have now signed up as CFA Facebook fans, giving CFA unprecedented direct access to our growing online community.

The CFA Facebook page allows CFA to communicate directly with the community by posting regular updates on Fire Danger Rating forecasts, Total Fire Bans, and other important information.

Every time a CFA Facebook administrator posts an update it appears on the personal Facebook pages of those nearly 65,000 fans. January and February 2010 saw more than 2.5 million CFA updates displayed on personal Facebook pages.

The growth of the CFA Facebook page is part of an ongoing CFA strategy to increase the use of social media to engage directly with the community.

As well as Facebook, CFA runs a YouTube channel, which has had more than 1 million video views, manages a number of different Twitter accounts, and of course, there's CFA Connect! ■



Camel train passes the station

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

You don't often see a Northern Territory camel train wandering the roads of Victoria. But that's what happened in early November when Gembrook, Pakenham and Nar Nar Goon brigades escorted the wandering beasts through Nar Nar Goon.

The camels were part of a fundraising effort by Russell Osborn and Ros Consoli who were raising money for the Children First Foundation. They had travelled 6,000 kilometres from Darwin to Melbourne over 18 months and the CFA appliances were there to provide some extra protection on the 100 kilometre per hour rural roads. ■



Kids acting up for safety

BY LEITH HILLARD

A partnership between Lara Primary School and Lara Fire Brigade has resulted in the production of an excellent short film, Fire: Friend or Foe, made by Grade Three and Four students.

In support of the motivated school and its project, Lara brigade re-jigged its Brigades in Schools (BIS) format with students spending full days at the station. Building on BIS were fire awareness nights run for parents.

"The brigade was really quite incredible; phenomenal," says Marcia O'Brien, the school's ICT co-ordinator. "You can't measure the amount of goodwill that came from the days the students spent at the station and the information nights."

"Supported by their class teacher Roslyn Heywood the students started working on the film in March. Work didn't stop until November followed by a premiere with local dignitaries including CFA members walking the red carpet."

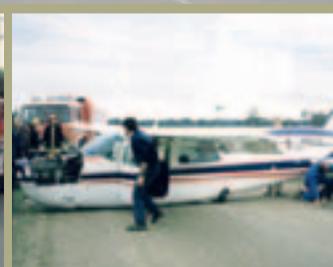
The children also organised a dress-up day with all proceeds going to Lara brigade. You can watch the video on CFA Connect. ■

The 75 Years

HASTINGS

A PHOTOGRAPHIC DIARY OF A CFA BRIGADE

Compiled by Keith Pakenham





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Bunnings and Mitre 10 will stock the roses from 1 July 2010.



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BLACK SATURDAY NIGHT

Photographer Chris Mulherin captured this photo from Doncaster hill at 9.15pm on 7 February 2009. The photo has since been used in a number of CFA publications including *Brigade* magazine.

Chris, a student, is now selling framed copies of the print with 10 per cent of proceeds going to CFA. For more details visit www.BlackSaturdayNight.com

