

# The year in review

## Operations

This year was the most active for CFA in its history with the overall number of incidents increasing by 5% over last year. This reflects the busiest summer fire season in CFA's history. It also reflects increases in all types of incidents other than hazardous material incidents which declined by 5% compared with 2001/02 and the number of false alarms call outs which remained static.

While fire remains the major type of incident attended by CFA, the number and diversity of other incidents demonstrates that we are much more than a fire service with over 9% of our activities involving motor vehicle accident rescue and almost 8% involving hazardous materials.

Although the overall number of incidents increased, they do not reflect the extent of activity. For example, fires and explosions increased by 754 over 2001/02, and only seven of these were recorded as associated with the North East Victoria and Gippsland campaign fires which occupied a total of 8,595 CFA personnel over 71 days, including a period after containment on ready-reserve.

The number of primary and support turnouts by brigades increased by 5% over last year. This increase reflects increased brigade commitment to the major campaign fires which involved a total of 674 brigades throughout the State.

### Total number of incidents (at 30 June)

Incident type	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	change
Fires and explosions	12,066	11,554	14,510	13,784	14,538	+5.5%
MVA, rescue, EMS calls	2,879	2,877	3,045	3,306	3,332	+0.8%
Hazardous condition	2,426	2,001	2,772	2,863	2,715	-5.2%
Overpressure rupture	32	15	27	22	35	+59.0%
Service calls	1,630	1,545	1,864	1,583	1,867	+17.9%
Good intent calls	3,515	3,225	4,002	3,839	4,608	+20.0%
False alarms/false calls	6,375	5,694	7,797	7,658	7,654	nil
Undetermined and other	329	3,863	289	267	343	+28.5%
<b>Total incidents</b>	<b>29,252</b>	<b>30,774</b>	<b>34,306</b>	<b>33,322</b>	<b>35,092</b>	<b>+5.3%</b>

(Information provided from Fire Incident Reporting System (FIRS) and grouped by AIRS Divisions.)

### Total number of turnouts by CFA brigades

	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	change
Primary	29,252	30,774	34,306	33,322	35,092	+5.3%
Support	20,006	21,788	27,411	25,360	29,889	+17.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,258</b>	<b>52,562</b>	<b>61,717</b>	<b>58,682</b>	<b>64,981</b>	<b>+10.7%</b>

### Summer fire season

As mentioned above, the 2002/03 summer fire season was the busiest ever for CFA, following six years of drought conditions and particularly warm and dry weather in the northern parts of the State. The continuing effects of the drought resulted in tinder-dry fuel loads that produced extreme fire risks. During the summer fire season, a total of 24 Total Fire Bans (TFBs) were declared, the highest number for the past five years, and the second highest ever in CFA's history.

### Total Fire Ban Days (1999-2003)

	Whole of State	Partial
1999	1	4
2000	3	13
2001	6	8
2002	0	9
2003	4	20

### Declared Total Fire Bans 2002/03

18 October 2002	North West
2 November 2002	North West; North East
12 November 2002	North West; Central; North East
17 November 2002	North West
17 December 2002	North West; North East
18 December 2002	North West; North East
19 December 2002	North West; North East
20 December 2002	North West; North East
21 December 2002	North West; Central; North East
29 December 2002	North West; South West; Central; North East
30 December 2002	North West; North East
7 January 2003	Whole of State
13 January 2003	North West; South West; Central; North East
18 January 2003	North East
20 January 2003	Whole of State
21 January 2003	North East
22 January 2003	North East
24 January 2003	North West; South West; Central; North East
25 January 2003	Whole of State
26 January 2003	North West; Central; North East; Eastern
29 January 2003	Whole of State
30 January 2003	North East; Eastern
18 March 2003	North West; South West; Central; North East
19 March 2003	Central; North East; Eastern

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Victoria is divided into five Total Fire Ban (TFB) districts, based on geography and climate.

The fire season in NSW traditionally starts before Victoria and we assisted the NSW Rural Fire Service with firefighting personnel and equipment to battle severe fires in the Sydney region during October and November 2002.

During the declared fire danger period from 1 December 2002 to 30 April 2003, we attended a total of 15,493 incidents throughout the State, including 168 fires that originated on public land. Examples of major incidents originating on public land that involved a significant commitment of CFA resources.

### Major incidents originating on public land: 2002/03 summer fire season

Date	Location	CFA brigades	CFA appliances	Fire size
18 December 2002	Big Desert	34	25	181,400 ha
19 March 2003	Wandong	28	35	8 ha
19 March 2003	Gembrook	18	24	650 ha
7 April 2003	Newham	80	102	600 ha

In addition to the major North East Victoria and Gippsland fires, and those described above, other significant fires occurred at Lysterfield, Morwell, Beechworth, Teesdale, Taggerty, Alvie, Smythesdale, Newton and Pakenham South.

### North East Victoria and Gippsland fires

The largest of fires originating on public land occurred on the evening of 8 January 2003 when a series of violent thunderstorms stretching from South East NSW to North East Victoria ignited 87 fires on public land in Victoria's alpine area. While all but nine fires were successfully contained, the inaccessibility of mountainous terrain contributed to what was to become one of Victoria's most devastating fires.

For 57 days, 15,725 personnel (of whom 8,595, or more than half, were from CFA) fought under extreme conditions to bring the fires under control. The extent and unpredictability of the fires, the number of personnel involved and the logistics of providing and supporting firefighting resources (including 1,192 interstate and overseas firefighters, and Defence personnel) was likened to a military campaign, and for this reason the fires are known as the 'campaign fires'.



## Personnel deployed on the campaign fires

### Victorian State Government agencies

- 8,595 CFA volunteers and staff
- 3,350 DSE, DPI, and PV firefighters and staff
- 1,016 SES staff and volunteers
- 75 MFESB staff
- 1,545 other non-firefighting agencies.

### Interstate and overseas agencies and personnel

- 130 NSW Rural Fire Service personnel
- 584 South Australian Country Fire Service personnel
- 31 Tasmanian Fire Service and Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service personnel
- 68 Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and Queensland Rural Fire Service personnel
- 234 Department of Defence personnel
- 35 USA Department of Agriculture (National Forests Service) fire personnel
- 62 New Zealand Rural Fire Authority personnel

As the fires originated on public land, DSE acted most often as the agency in control, with CFA and other agencies providing support. As these fires also threatened private land and townships, it was decided very early in the campaign to adopt an inter-agency approach to fire management, including the establishment of joint Incident Control Centres (ICCs).

The fires were the biggest and most resource-intensive emergency event in CFA's history. Never before has CFA needed to deploy and continue to coordinate and manage such a large force of firefighters and support resources over such a prolonged period of time. The challenge we faced was to deploy sufficient resources to the campaign fires while maintaining operational capacity to protect the rest of the State. During the period of the campaign fires we attended 7,523 other incidents throughout the State, assisted by MFESB which stepped into CFA stations in outer-metropolitan Melbourne to allow the release of CFA personnel to fight the campaign fires.

When the fires were eventually contained on 19 March 2003, more than 1.1 million hectares (or 5% of Victoria) had been burnt, including more than 108,000 hectares of private land. During the fires, 41 dwellings, 213 other buildings, more than 3,000 km of fencing and more than 9,000 cattle and other commercial stock were lost. No lives were lost as a direct result of the fires. Like the fires in NSW and ACT during this summer fire period, the fire intensity and the extent of ember attack were at levels not generally experienced.

While the losses had a deep impact on the communities affected, they were relatively minor compared to other major Victorian fires such as 'Black Friday' on 13 January 1939 and 'Ash Wednesday' on 16 February 1983. This is testament to the relatively successful wildfire strategies used and, more importantly, the engagement of communities directly impacted by the fires prior to and during the fires, further demonstrating the synergies between community safety and fire suppression activities.

The campaign fires resulted in additional expenditure for CFA of \$14.8 million. This was reimbursed by the Government.

### Post-fire recovery

As is common practice, we have used the experience of the campaign fires to review our business and service delivery, and to identify opportunities for improvement. This is being achieved through a recovery project which is reviewing all aspects of the operation, including physical response capacity, community preparedness and involvement, logistics and mobilization and the impact on CFA's budget and annual and corporate plans.

The project includes extensive debriefing of brigades and individuals, as well as input from many external organisations that supported CFA during the fires. It will identify processes and procedures that performed well and areas that need improvement, and establish a process from which future recovery activities can be developed.

Information gathered as part of the recovery project was also used to provide a comprehensive submission to the Victorian Government Bushfire Inquiry, in which we have identified areas for improvement and recommended potential solutions that would ensure Victoria is better prepared for large-scale fire emergencies in the future.

Concurrent with our commitment to continuous improvement, the recovery project also includes a number of investigations into specific incidents that occurred during the summer fire season. These relate to a number of 'near miss' incidents and more general operational issues such as fatigue, red flag warnings, dehydration and resource mobilization. Most of these relate to the campaign fires.

### **Service Delivery Standards**

During 2002/03, compliance with Service Delivery Standards (SDS) was 89.75% on a rolling 12-month basis. While slightly below the 90% benchmark requirements, continual monitoring of performance is being factored into future resourcing and capital works programs.

### **Safer Firefighting program**

The Linton coronial inquiry into the tragic deaths of five CFA volunteer firefighters on 2 December 1998 resulted in 55 recommendations that highlighted a number of risks and problems needing urgent attention by CFA and DNRE (now DSE).

To ensure that the Coroner's recommendations are carefully considered, a high-level group, the CFA Safer Firefighting Steering Committee, was formed, comprising representatives from CFA's major stakeholders. The Steering Committee is overseeing the progressive resolution of all recommendations.

Of the 55 recommendations associated with the Linton coronial inquiry, 24 (or 44%) are nearing completion, and 27 (or 69%) of 39 recommendations associated with the Linton/Midlands Joint CFA/DSE Review are considered complete. Internal auditors will validate the completion of recommendations progressively.

While resolution of the Linton recommendations is a priority, there are a number of other reviews and inquiries that have occurred in the past that are also being addressed. To assist in the management of resolving these recommendations, we have introduced the Performance Improvement Monitoring System.

As a demonstration of our commitment to continuous improvement, we currently have 130 reviews, and 1,733 recommendations from the debriefings recently conducted as part of the post-campaign fires operational recovery project that will also be included.

Key actions resulting from addressing the recommendations are described below.

### **Programs to improve operational effectiveness and service levels**

The impact of providing support to NSW in October and November 2002, and the North East Victoria and Gippsland campaign fires and subsequent recovery activities have significantly impacted on our ability to complete many major programs with an operational impact. These include a number of projects emanating from the findings of the Coronial Inquiry into the Linton fires and the Safer Firefighting program. Nevertheless, significant progress has been made with many important projects that are continuing to improve the effectiveness of CFA as we evolve as an integrated emergency management agency. These are summarised below:

#### **Operational audits:**

During the year we completed Regional and Regional Emergency Coordination Centre preparedness audits. Procedures and checklists for the Real Time Performance Monitoring project were agreed with DSE, and were implemented at seven incidents including the Big Desert and North East Victoria and Gippsland campaign fires.

In addition, an operational analysis was conducted on the Arthur's Seat Chairlift collapse and, in conjunction with DSE, 'near miss' investigations into seven incidents during the campaign fires.

The final project report on assessment of brigade operational efficiency was completed and development of technology systems to support the process has commenced.

#### **Review of Groups:**

The future role of Groups is being progressively implemented. Extensive briefings with brigades and Groups have been held and mapping and planning tools are currently being developed.

#### **Review of use of private appliances:**

We have engaged a project officer for this review and a legal position and interim guidelines are now being developed.

**State Operational Plans and Standards:**

Functional roles of appliances and operational specifications are being developed, and incident management standards are being defined and reviewed as part of the State Operations Management Plan (StOMP). We have completed and implemented the Escalation and Readiness Plan format and are currently establishing an information technology system to link brigades, Groups and Regions to the State Emergency Control Centre (SECC) database.

**Introduction of fireground Safety Adviser:**

This project involves an ongoing review of managing safety in the workplace and consultation with DSE. Commitments by both agencies during the campaign fires and in post-fire activities has delayed further progress which will be resumed during 2003/04.

**Resource Management and Information System:**

The resource tracking system was developed and is being implemented progressively. Operational requirements have been defined and standards and specifications have been completed.

**Skills maintenance for command and control personnel:**

This project is now complete. We developed an RPL process for role evaluation for personnel involved in the 2002/03 fire danger period activities, and Levels 2 and 3 Incident Management Team (IMT) personnel training has been completed at Regional level.

**Vehicle spray protection system:**

Phase 3 of this project is now complete. Findings on an earlier spray system has been validated and design modified for final tests. Fit-out of a test vehicle has been completed and tested. A validation site has been selected in NSW and its preparation has been completed in readiness for large-scale field experiments which are scheduled for January 2004.

**State Aircraft Unit (SAU):**

The SAU was extensively used during the 2002/03 summer fire season. An operational review and refinements to its operations are being implemented. An audit of aviation specialist personnel is currently being conducted to identify training requirements.

**Class A Foam program:**

We have completed consultation on a draft policy for Class A foam and agricultural land. Information cards have been developed for use by brigades and property owners.

**Service delivery planning**

The Service Delivery (Brigade) Planning Tool has been developed to assist brigades in identifying and delivering enhanced service levels to their communities. It was originally developed for the Brigade Community Support Program and was intended primarily to support planning at brigade and Area level.

The introduction of this planning and reporting tool involves significant work at Area level to assist brigades to introduce a risk-based planning process and it is anticipated that full introduction of this process will take a number of years.

The data captured at brigade level will form a critical basis for determining and evaluating service delivery and the efficiency of this delivery. The data will also provide important information on demand management, risk treatment at brigade level and benchmarking across CFA.

The service delivery planning model is a critical component of our corporate planning process, and it will be a key activity in our annual planning for the next three years. It also supports the Auditor General's report which recommended that CFA proceed with this business tool as soon as possible.

The process is being piloted in the Barwon/Corangamite Area and, following completion of this trial, a standard process will be developed for use across the State. Critical to and concurrent with this pilot program is the identification of CFA activities in accordance with the PPRR output model in the new corporate planning process.

Involvement of staff in the summer fire season and particularly the campaign fires, has delayed commencement of the planning process for 2003/04. However, we are intending that by June 2004 all Areas and Directorates will have a generic, integrated business tool (database) and an associated brigade planning process, and that a minimum of three Areas will be using the business tool. We also intend that all Areas and Directorates will be trained and engaged in the brigade planning process during 2004/05 and that by 2005/06 all Areas will have produced plans for their brigades using the new planning process and tool.

## Community safety

CFA places considerable emphasis on risk management planning and we believe that prevention can be more effective in reducing community risk. For several years, our approach has been to engage the communities we serve in a range of diverse programs that include multicultural communities, youths and high risk groups such as the isolated elderly and intellectually disabled. We are also actively involved in assisting local government with municipal fire prevention planning. Our major community safety activities focus around the identification of fire risk and fire prevention on a seasonal basis.

### Community engagement during the campaign fires

The level of community engagement and community action that occurred in partnership with CFA personnel was a key factor in limiting the damage of the campaign fires. The success of community involvement is the result of many years of community and fire preparedness programs that have connected communities and individuals with CFA. It is also testament to the importance placed on community preparedness as well as operational response and has resulted in a model that will mature further following the experiences with these fires.

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Community engagement had a number of components: accurate and timely information, involvement in operational planning, preparedness for the fire and assistance with asset protection. IMTs undertook many briefings of communities that were threatened by fire. These briefings were very successful, with community participation and positive input achieving a high level of community engagement. Through these briefings, communities understood the potential threat of the fires and the actions they should take when threatened.

Community briefings were supplemented with the engagement of firefighting crews that supported communities under potential threat. The firefighting crews were tasked to work with these communities to develop tactical plans. When activated, the community, with predetermined plans, worked in tandem with the response phase.

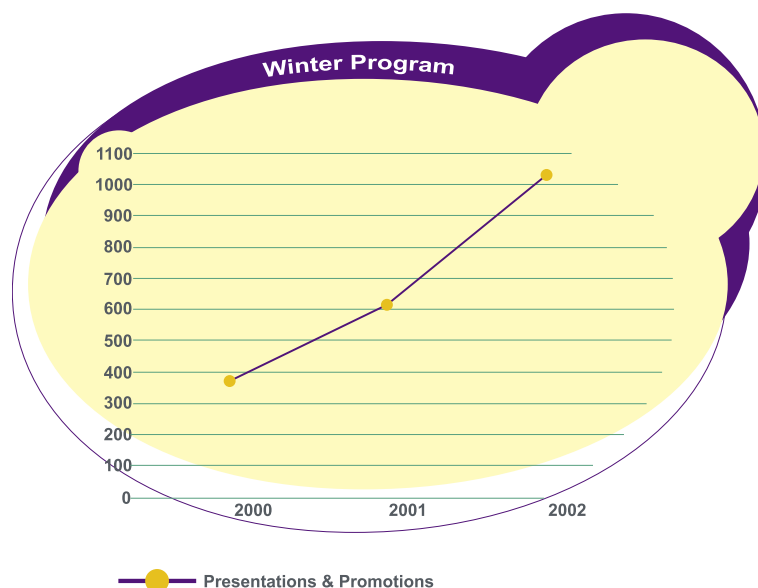
A survey of residents in North East Victoria and East Gippsland after the fires indicated the overall success of community preparedness with 75.6% stating that their household was either 'well prepared' or 'very well prepared' to deal with a bushfire before the 2002/03 summer fire season. In addition, almost all respondents (96.3%) felt that they were either 'well prepared' or 'very well prepared' by the time the fire was a threat to their property.

The fires did, however, demonstrate shortfalls with emergency planning processes. These shortfalls have been analysed and recommendations have been made to the State Government's Bushfire Inquiry on potential remedies that could improve community readiness on a State wide basis.

### Winter program

The joint CFA-MFESB winter program has increased awareness of residential fires and prevention over recent years with a program of residential fire safety programs. These are supported by an extensive media campaign which incorporates the 'Change your smoke alarm battery' message.

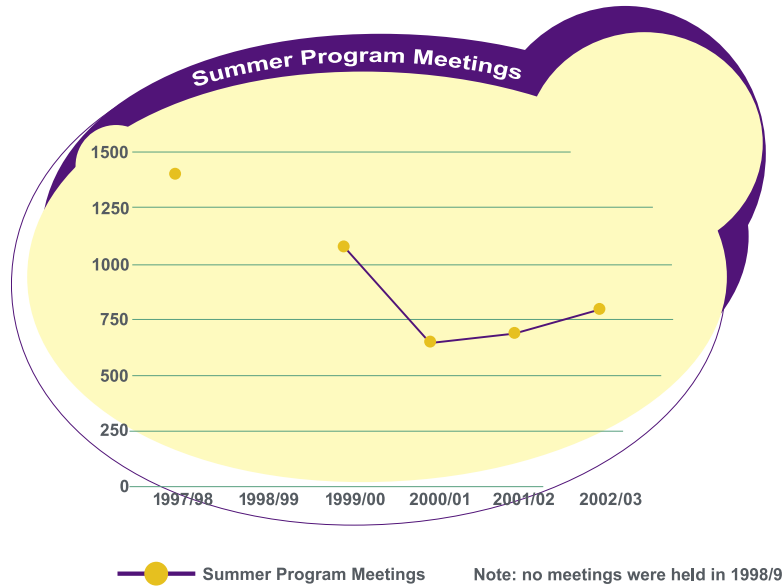
The funding of casual presenters has, in particular, made this increase in service delivery possible.



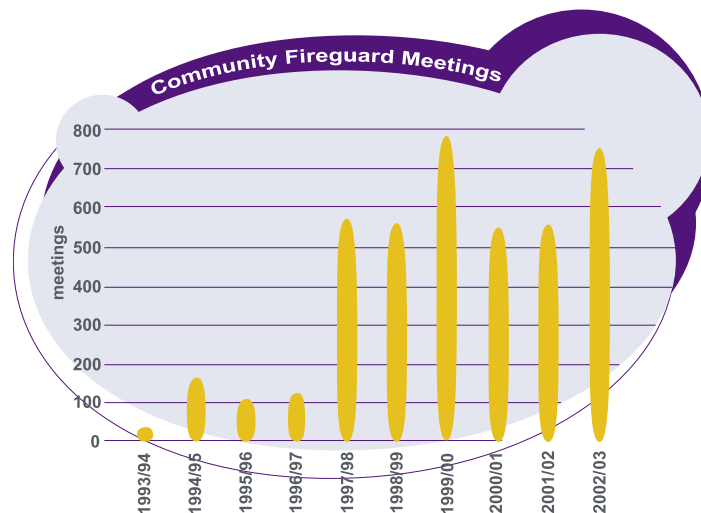
**Summer program**

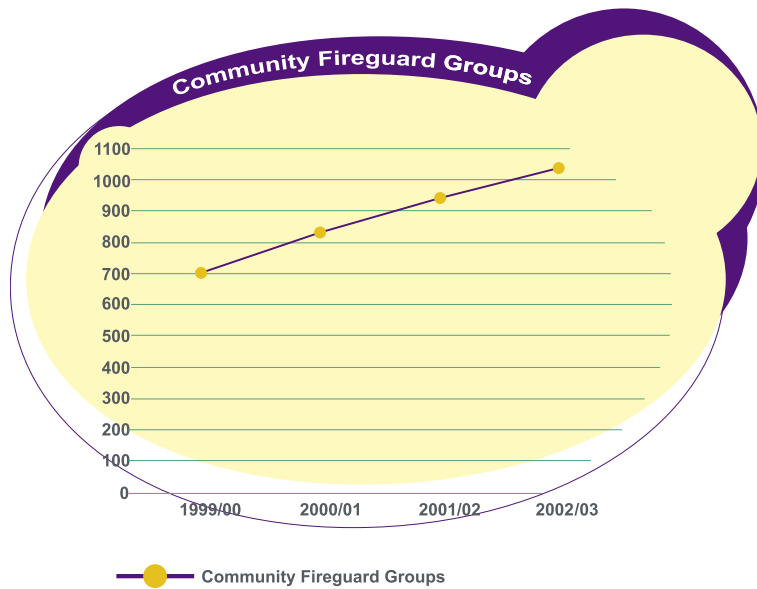
The summer program has been conducted each year since 1997/98 and in most years comprises Community Fireguard, Bushfire Blitz and a media campaign. It involves the delivery of a large number of information sessions by trained presenters. The role of Area Community Education Coordinators in planning and coordinating delivery of this program has been critical to its success.

The campaign fires in North East Victoria and East Gippsland generated considerable interest in the program with large numbers of residents in fire-affected areas attending public briefings. Over the period of the major fires, 82 meetings were held in fire-affected areas and an additional 172 Bushfire Blitz meetings were held in non-fire affected areas. During the entire 2002/03 summer period a total of 801 Bushfire Blitz and public meetings were held throughout the State.



The Community Fireguard activity has continued to grow steadily. The program is, to a large extent, driven by community desire to become involved and hence there is some annual variation in activity levels that reflects seasonal conditions or occurrence of major fires that stimulate community concern. A total of 752 meetings were conducted across the State during the 2002/03 summer fire period.

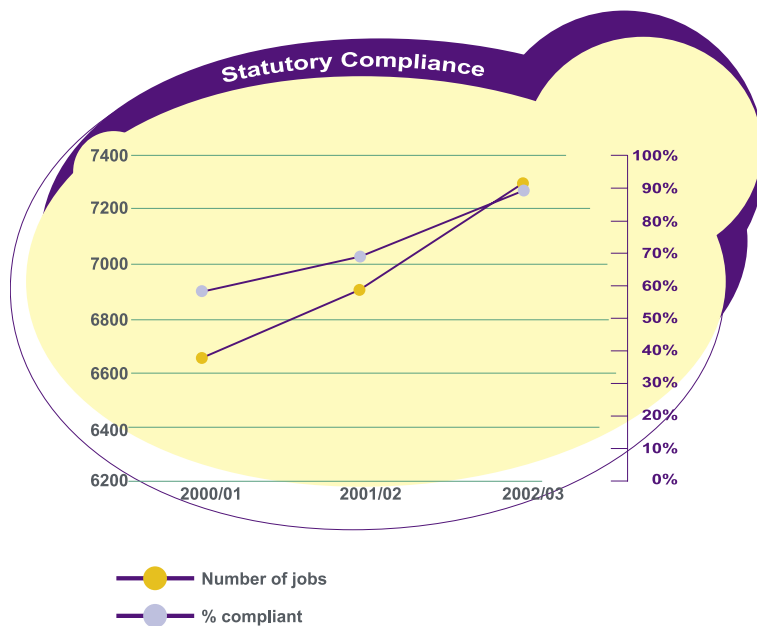




**Statutory compliance**

CFA provides fire safety input to land use planning, structural fire protection and the handling of dangerous goods and acts as a referral authority in accordance with a range of legislation. Over the past three years, these referrals have increased by over 10% from 6,620 to 7,300. In past years, the demand on CFA to meet statutory compliance requirements has impacted dramatically on available resource capacity. In response, Area Fire Safety Officers have been appointed to meet this demand. Despite a significant commitment of personnel to the major campaign fires, we have generally been able to sustain service delivery levels.

Statutory compliance demand is expected to continue to rise in line with an expected population increase of 20% over the next 25 years.



**Environmental management**

CFA's Environment Policy was approved by the Board in May 2003. This policy will assist us to manage environmental issues while maintaining safety, effectiveness and efficiency.

The policy follows development of a draft environment strategy which will ensure that environmental improvement is sustainable throughout all our operations. Developed by a cross-section of CFA people, this draft strategy is in its final stages of consultation and will be submitted to the Board for approval in late 2003.



## Capital works

Considerable progress continues to be made with our capital works program. During the year investment in land and buildings and firefighting appliances, totalled \$25 million, compared with \$18 million for the previous year.

### Land and buildings

A total of 20 new fire stations were completed and modifications to 13 existing fire stations were completed or commenced. At 30 June 2003 there were eight major new fire stations and 10 smaller stations under construction, with a further seven stations committed.

#### New fire stations completed 2002/03

Baileston	Ferntree Gully	Maiden Gully	Sandy Point
Ballan	Gormandale	Melton South	Sassafras
Balmattum	Harrietville	Nulla Vale	Somerville
Cobden	Katunga	Pastoria	Strathfieldsaye
Doreen	Lardner	Pomborneit	Sunbury Satellite

#### Modifications to fire stations completed or commenced 2002/03

Chelsea	Mildura	Romsey	Warrnambool
Eltham	Morwell	Traralgon	Wodonga
Gisborne	Murchison	Wangaratta	Yea
Heathcote			

#### Projects under construction or committed

Ballarat	Diamond Creek	Greenvale	South Morang
Bendigo	Doveton/Hallam	Hoppers Crossing	Sunbury
Chirnside Park	Drouin	Morwell	Torquay
Cranbourne	Eaglehawk	Nhill	Wangaratta South
Craigieburn	Eltham	Point Cook	
Creswick	Geelong City	Rokewood	

In addition to these works, documentation has commenced for the replacement of cooling towers at Bendigo, Ballarat, Dandenong and Fiskville, and for the refurbishment of the tower at Frankston.

The Rural Fire Station Enhancement Program has also progressed with all projects from the previous year completed and the ten final projects scheduled to be completed shortly.

These are Broadwater, Hazelwood North, Heywood, Maude, Pigeon Ponds, Spring Creek, Tintalra, Vasey, Waubra and Wemen.

### Review of standard fire station design

A review of current fire station planning, design, construction and maintenance methods has commenced to ensure that a combination of both contemporary and potential future innovative design, building materials and technology are used in the most cost and energy effective, practical, and operationally efficient manner. As building and upgrading of fire stations represents a major capital investment, the objective of this project is to ensure fire station design supports our long term service delivery requirements.

### Firefighting appliances program

The firefighting appliances program is on target to achieve completion of all previous years projects as well as most of the 2003/04 program. This will see over 100 appliances delivered during the current year. It is estimated that savings in excess of \$400,000 have been achieved through early placement of cab chassis, pump sets and the extension of contracts for bodies; these savings are equivalent to two 3.4D tankers or one medium tanker.

Production of vehicles approved under the third and final round of the Government's Community Safety Emergency Support Program (CSESP) will commence in September 2003. Four 1500 litre tankers are planned to be completed by end October, by which time eight tanker rebuilds will have commenced.

### Fiskville capital works improvements

Improvements have been made to our major training complex at Fiskville near Ballarat. A new classroom has been installed to facilitate increased training activity.

The new LP Gas House has been completed and is now fully functional. Standard Operating Procedures have been developed and these are undergoing a final risk analysis and safety check prior to operational use of the facility.

Work is also currently underway on realignment and stabilisation of access roads and the upgrading of car park areas.

### **Other capital works**

Other capital works during the year included completion of the SAP finance system and the Aged Protective Equipment Replacement program, along with minor capital projects such as the sale of transport vehicles.

### **Review of capital works program**

During the year a review of the capital works program has resulted in significant improvements in the management of capital works, especially the monitoring and reporting of the capital works program. A key issue identified in the review was the need to develop the capital evaluation model in order to more accurately forecast land and building expenditure associated with increasing demand for our services over multi-year periods. As part of this improvement process, the three-year rolling capital works program is now more closely aligned to planning and budgeting associated with development of our annual and corporate plans. Planning for capital works beyond three years has also become an organisational priority. These improvements support the broader government funding environment in which agencies are required to develop multi-year infrastructure strategies.

Given the forecast growth associated with DSE's Melbourne 2030 planning vision, our capital works program will continue to be a key multi-year strategic initiative to support our service delivery strategy. Accordingly, further improvements will be made to management of capital works programs, including a multi-year approach to vehicles, personal protective equipment and clothing, information, communications and technology, and minor capital works.

### **Personal protective clothing program**

Despite a number of industrial disruptions, the structural firefighter protective clothing project has continued to compile research data, including the completion of Wollongong University research into heat storage in firefighting protective ensembles. CFA and MFESB jointly scoped this research using the facilities of the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences.

The full consultative committee has received the final report and the first draft of the ensemble 'performance' requirements has been prepared with a number of potential variations now under consideration.

Tenders and performance options have been completed, short-listed design options and field consultation has commenced. Field trials and final specifications are expected to be completed by the end of the current financial year.

Field trials for wildfire gloves have also commenced, with samples sent to selected volunteer members. Field trials are expected to be completed by October 2003.

### **Communications**

During the year, the Board approved development of a Call Taking Centre and system to provide call taking services in country Victoria. There are seven phases for the rollout of the country call taking system across the State, with Phase One due for cut over in late October 2003.

CFA and Emergency Communications Victoria (ECV) are now processing a variation to the existing contract for call taking in the BEST CAD area. In accordance with this contract, ECV has issued an impact analysis which will form part of the overall submission to the CAD Contract Management Group (CADCMG). The functional baseline documents for design of the system were approved by CFA in June 2003 and this involved nine system changes to better meet the operational requirements of regional and rural Victorian brigades.

Assignment areas and response data for brigades included in Phase One of the program are now complete. Phase One involves the Buninyong Group only, which will have its emergency calls taken by the centre later this year. Scenario testing of the system is scheduled to commence in October 2003, and will involve members of the User Reference Group which includes representatives of the VRFB, VUFBA, UFU and other stakeholders.

## CFA People

At 30 June 2003, CFA was served by 60,311 members, of which comprised 59,136 (or 98%) volunteers, 425 career firefighters and officers and 750 other staff.

Overall volunteer numbers have increased by 2% compared with last year. Volunteer numbers fluctuate seasonally and peak during the higher activity levels of the summer fire seasons. While in past years we have experienced a gradual decline in volunteer numbers, we believe the prolonged 2002/03 summer fire season and the extent and duration of the campaign fires contributed to the increase in active volunteer numbers at 30 June.

We continue to monitor the general trend in volunteer attrition and the potential this has to impact on the workload of active volunteers. In response, we continue to provide brigade support and recruitment activities.

During the year, we recruited an additional 56 career firefighters to support volunteer brigades in meeting increasing demands for our services, particularly in Melbourne's outer-metropolitan growth corridors and major regional centres.

### Total CFA personnel: by job type (at 30 June)

Job type	2000	2001	2002	2003
Volunteers	64,340	61,657	57,985	59,136
Career firefighters	313	357	405	425
Career support & administration	525	698	724	750
<b>Total</b>	<b>65,178</b>	<b>62,712</b>	<b>59,114</b>	<b>60,311</b>

### Total CFA personnel: five-year comparison (at 30 June)

	Total	change
2000	64,340	- 2.5%
2001	61,657	- 4.4%
2002	57,985	- 6.4%
2003	60,311	+ 4.0%

### Total brigades (at 30 June 2003)

Staffing	Urban	Rural	Total
Permanent only	0	0	0
Permanent & volunteers	24	0	24
Volunteer only	202	958	1,160
Other (included FIB)	0	56	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>1,014</b>	<b>1,240</b>

## Equity and diversity

We are now into the third year of our five-year Equity and Diversity strategy which will allow us to capitalise on the talents, skills and knowledge of all CFA members and ensure we meet our legislative obligations under Equal Opportunity (EO) legislation.

Our activities during the year continued to focus on increasing EO awareness. EO awareness training was conducted across all areas of the State, with 385 participants trained during the year.

We now have 46 Contact Officers located throughout the State to provide support and information to CFA members who may have discrimination or harassment concerns.

## Training

Development of skills and knowledge is integral to achievement of our objectives and goals as we evolve into an integrated emergency management agency. Our extensive training program not only supports, but is an important part of our corporate planning and encompasses both volunteer and career staff. The single most important training initiative is the five-year Minimum Skills Program which commenced on 1 July 2000. This program will ensure that all volunteer firefighters possess the required skills for their respective roles and brigade risk profile. Importantly, this also enhances the safety of CFA members.

Due to involvement of key training personnel during the summer fire season, particularly the campaign fires, progress on completing our training objectives was delayed. Although substantial work had been completed prior to the fires, this is being further updated, including financial and resource considerations. Minimum Skills training targets aligned to brigade risk profiles are being reconfirmed.

Substantial work on external benchmarking and standardisation of design and delivery processes has been completed. Standardised processes and procedures have been developed for integration with overall training policy and improved implementation.

The national Public Safety Training Package (PSTP) is fundamental to the integrity and external recognition of our training program. Existing training modules have been translated into the PSTP in line with the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) requirements, and are awaiting endorsement by the UFU.

During the year, a preliminary strategy and project implementation plan was developed for succession planning.

Although the fires have delayed progress with our training program, we have made considerable progress in implementation of some of the Minimum Skills and operational leadership training programs. Although behind our target for 'wildfire with structure' and 'structure with wildfire' qualifications, we have implemented some initiatives to address this and anticipate improvement in the current year as emphasis shifts from wildfire training to other qualification profiles.

<b>Progress with Minimum Skills and Operational Leadership Roles (2002/03)</b>			
<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Target 2002/03</b>	<b>Actual 2002/03</b>	<b>Total 2002/03</b>
Wildfire qualified firefighters	20,588	20,845	21,673
Wildfire with low structural qualified firefighters	10,195	7,205	7,402
Wildfire with structural qualified firefighters	4,885	434	447
Structural with wildfire qualified firefighters	1,170	115	121
Crew leader qualified	150	2,151	2,170
Strike Team leader qualified	35	358	362
Sector Commander qualified	38	45	45

*Note: Actual refers to numbers trained who are still members of CFA. Total refers to total numbers of members trained. All numbers are cumulative.*

The initial success of the Minimum Skills program was evident throughout the summer fire season, particularly during the campaign fires when skills learnt were applied effectively and safely in demanding conditions.

### **Occupational Health and Safety**

We continue to record positive improvements in our overall safety performance. This is supported by a significant reduction in compensation claims and a commensurate reduction in the WorkCover initial premium for 2003/04.

In 2002/03 we received a total of 314 compensation claims, representing an increase of 4.6% over the previous year. Of these claims, 228 were made by volunteers, reflecting an increase of 11.7% compared to 2001/02 but a decrease of 2.0% over the five-year average. Despite increases in the numbers of career firefighters, staff claims totalled 86, a decrease of 10.4% compared to 2001/02, and a decrease of 12.9% over the five-year average.

We experienced a 55% increase in the number of claims during January and February 2003 (45 claims more than the five-year average for this period) due to the commitment of volunteer and career personnel to the campaign fires. It is this increase in claims that has negatively impacted in the overall positive performance for 2002/03. This trend also reflects an increased safety awareness by members, resulting in a greater willingness and recognition of the need to report incidents and register claims.

Significant progress has continued to be made on the implementation of our Safety First program. Major activities during the year include:

- Provision of specialist support for the campaign fires, including monitoring of the welfare and hydration of firefighters;
- A broad range of safety related training including manual handling, recruit firefighter courses and development of safety modules for the Diploma of Business;
- Coordination of the WorkSafe Focus 100 program through out CFA;
- Development of manual handling aids to reduce the risk to firefighting personnel;
- Progressive implementation of legislative compliance programs including manual handling, plant and hazardous substances risk assessments, through to the provision of chemical registers for key locations; and
- Development of procedures to meet the requirements of the OHS Management System (AS 4801).

The proposed WorkCover premium for the 2003/04 has continued to reduce compared to 2002/03 and 2001/02. Due to the increasing CFA remuneration base, these premiums have been shown as a percentage of remuneration for more meaningful comparison with previous years.

#### **WorkCover premiums**

(as percentage of remuneration)

2003/04	1.337%
2002/03	1.661%
2001/02	1.935%

#### **Industrial relations**

The Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) with the UFU for career firefighters was certified by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission on 15 December 2002. This concluded a period of intensive negotiations which commenced in June 2002. Implementation of this EBA is being managed by an Enterprise Bargaining Implementation Committee which comprises UFU members of CFA and CFA management. CFA and the UFU are continuing discussions through this committee on implementation of certain requirements of the Certified Agreement, including the deployment of permanent career staff in outer metropolitan growth areas.

Negotiations for collective agreements for Operations Officers and Operations Manager, and Managers Community Safety were concluded during the year.

We are currently negotiating collective agreements with the relevant unions for 503 non-operational employees, comprising administrative, professional, technical and scientific staff. We are hopeful that this process will be completed during 2003/04.

## **Finance and Administration**

### **Development of a 10-year financial model**

Work has commenced on development of a 10-year financial model, incorporating cash flow and sensitivity analysis, budget benchmarking and a focus on the outputs described in our annual and corporate plans. The tender process for developing this model has been completed and a consultant appointed to assist in developing this model as well as a 30-year strategic planning model.

### **Improved budget process**

We have also continued development of a long-term rigorous budget process that supports our corporate planning process. This process provides financial statements for the annual, corporate and strategic plans in a manner that optimises the use of CFA's limited financial resources and allows the reporting of these resources in the form of PPRR outputs approved by the Board. The 2003/04 budget is the first year of a three-year integrated planning and budgeting improvement plan.

The outputs of this process will provide an improved understanding of the use of CFA's existing resource base and associated activities.

### **Improved financial reporting**

In addition, we have implemented improved Board and departmental financial reporting, using Systems Applications Processes (SAP) as CFA's single, corporate financial management system. Board recurrent financial reports are now produced from SAP on a monthly basis and are consistent with accrual accounting principles.

### **GIMS asset management system**

The Government Infrastructure Management System (GIMS) is a Department of Justice pilot project for the State Government. Its objectives are to standardise the categorisation and reporting of assets and provide an information technology system designed to assist 'total lifecycle asset management'. The GIMS system will become the primary system for project management, incorporating the full PPRR output-based planning framework.

Implementation of the project has experienced minor delays due to availability of staff and protracted negotiations regarding the interface into the SAP finance system. The system interface between SAP and GIMS has now been finalised; we expect initial roll-out to start in October 2003 and to be completed in March 2004.

### **Activity based costing**

Following a review of the available options for activity based costing (ABC), it has been decided that CFA's requirements will be met through the GIMS asset management system. ABC functionality will be implemented progressively during 2003/04.

### **Information management strategy**

Work on development of a five-year information management strategy was completed during the year.

## **Community perceptions of CFA**

For many years we have collected annual baseline information on community perceptions of CFA and our service provision. Each year, public response demonstrates a positive perception of CFA with 99.5% of those surveyed believing that CFA provided excellent service, 93.2% believing all CFA members were highly skilled and competent to fight fires, and 97.2% expressing confidence in calling CFA in the event of a fire.

Community perception research is now being redesigned to allow benchmark measurement of community attitudes and flexibility for annual adjustment according to current areas of public or CFA concern. It will also provide a useful performance benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of our annual and corporate plans. However, due to a reallocation of priorities associated with the campaign fires and their aftermath, the next survey will be conducted later in 2003.