

## 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.

25

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.

#### **Progress with Minimum Skills and Operational Leadership Roles (2002/03)**

| <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.