

## **CFA today**

Over the past 58 years, CFA has evolved from these informal beginnings to become one of the world's largest volunteer-based emergency services and provides a diverse range of risk reduction and fire suppression services to minimise the impact of fires and other emergencies on the community.

Under the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* (CFA Act), CFA is the responsible agency for 'taking, superintending and enforcing all necessary steps for the prevention and suppression of fires and for the protection of life and property in case of fire ...' This includes bushfires and structure fires, as well as incidents involving hazardous materials, road accident rescue, and rescue in areas of diverse risk, including high-risk industries such as petrochemical and gas.

CFA operates within the Victoria State Government portfolio of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, administered through the Department of Justice.

CFA serves a population of approximately 2.6 million people in more than one million dwellings. Its geographical area includes the rural, provincial, and metropolitan communities of Victoria outside the district served by the Metropolitan Fire & Emergency Services Board (MFESB) and excluding areas of publicly owned land managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). CFA also provides support to other fire and emergency services agencies within Victoria and interstate for significant emergencies that may arise.

In 2002/03, CFA attended 35,092 fire and emergency incidents in Victoria, involving almost 65,000 turnouts by CFA brigades.

CFA's operations rely on the skills of an integrated force of volunteers and career personnel. CFA people are dispersed throughout Victoria, united through a commitment to create safe communities and protect life and property. They have forged very strong strategic relationships with their local communities and provide not only fire suppression expertise but also assistance with fire prevention and mitigation through educational programs and close working partnerships with local municipalities and industries. Volunteers in many areas contribute to the social cohesion of their local communities.

CFA is funded through insurance levies (77.5 per cent) and by the Victorian State Government (22.5 per cent).