

# Brigade

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**General  
Firefighter  
training evolves**



**Wirrate  
brigade  
rises from  
the murky  
depths**



**What the  
Chief  
learned in  
New York**



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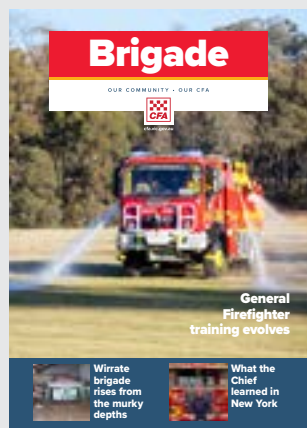
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COVER PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIJN



Winter 2025

# IN THIS ISSUE

- 04** News from our leaders
- 06** Montrose bushfire destroys a home
- 07** How planned burns protected properties in the Grampians
- 08** CFA acknowledges its 80th anniversary
- 09** Emerging Young Leaders Mentoring Program
- 10** **Feature:** General Firefighter training evolves
- 14** Update on CFA projects
- 15** Bannockburn brigade celebrates 100 years
- 15** Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund
- 16** Annual Firefighter Memorial Service
- 17** New York brings new insights for Chief Officer
- 18** **Feature:** Rising from the murky depths
- 20** Understanding fire through reconstructions
- 20** Update on culture review
- 21** Faces of CFA
- 22** Captain honoured for fiery truck rescue
- 23** Quarterly Operational Update
- 27** Case studies
- 31** New station for Beaufort Fire Brigade
- 31** Two new trucks for Woodend Fire Brigade
- 32** The two of us: Yallourn North father and daughter
- 34** 2025 smoke alarm campaign
- 35** Women's Challenge Camp
- 36** 2025 State Championships
- 38** Boronia brigade pays it forward
- 39** Safety at caravan parks
- 40** Volunteer recruitment campaign continues
- 41** Incident statistics
- 42** Through the ages: Yea Fire Brigade



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## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

# Greg Leach AFSM

The Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF), which replaces the Fire Services Property Levy, will come into effect on 1 July 2025, with CFA volunteers able to apply for a rebate. We understand this new levy is of concern to many members and we will



be supporting members to be able to check their details through a portal on our Members Online site.

The Victorian Government has now announced some changes to the ESVF which means that the levy for all primary production properties will be capped at the same amount paid in 2024-25 for the coming year (2025-26). We welcome this much-needed recognition of the situation that many of our CFA members find themselves in.

Travelling across Victoria, I have heard from volunteers about how challenging things are. Giving up your time to volunteer in the current environment is something that we don't take for granted and I thank everyone who turns out for CFA. Among the issues that are regularly raised with me are training, flexible volunteering models and volunteer recruitment and retention. You can read about the new approach to General Firefighter training on page 10. The changes are a response to the feedback we received over a number of years. There is also work being done to improve the Volunteer Recruitment Hub.

Later this year CFA's regulations are due to be updated to improve CFA's operations and better support volunteers. An extensive period of consultation with members and community organisations has been undertaken by the Department of Justice and Community Safety, with recommendations now being considered by the Minister for Emergency Services.

On 2 April CFA marked 80 years as an organisation, a milestone that encompasses an immeasurable legacy of sacrifice, commitment and mateship. Victoria is a safer place thanks to the millions of hours of dedicated service provided by CFA volunteers and staff.

Early in May we commemorated Saint Florian's Day, a day of reflection and remembrance for firefighters across the world. I was proud to attend the annual memorial service for firefighters at the Victorian Emergency Services Memorial in Treasury Gardens. Family, friends and brigade colleagues gathered to honour those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty for CFA and predecessor organisations while protecting their communities.

Chief Officer Jason Heffernan and I also attended the AFAC National Memorial Service in Canberra. During the service AFAC memorial medallions were presented to families of those being commemorated, including the family of Portland Fire Brigade volunteer Garry Mallen, who passed away while attending a structure fire in 2024.

In March it was fantastic to see more than 100 CFA brigades compete in Mooroopna at the annual State Firefighter Championships. It was great to see our future firefighters in action alongside those who have attended for many years.

## CHIEF OFFICER

# Jason Heffernan

As the fire season continued to test us well into autumn, I want to take a moment to extend my sincere gratitude and thanks to all our members who have continued to dedicate their time to protecting their communities.



Fire Danger Periods were extended much later than normal in several municipal districts, including to 30 May in Towong Shire in the north-east of the state, because of the significant ongoing dry conditions. The conditions we are currently experiencing are being likened to those in the lead-up to the 1982-83 fire season which led to the Ash Wednesday fires in February 1983.

Without above average rainfall in the coming months, we are likely in for an early onset and potentially severe 2025-26 fire season. We are working with our districts and their senior volunteer leaders to support members where we can, and want all members to know they can take advantage of the wellbeing services CFA has available on **1800 959 232**.

With that in mind, I'm pleased that the Victorian Government has made amendments to the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) to acknowledge the impacts that this levy would have had on our farming communities who are experiencing significant dry conditions.

The high level of anger across large areas of our community about the ESVF was evident, with many brigades and volunteers making their feelings known.

The decision to reduce the ESVF levy to the 2024-25 rate for one year will bring some relief, although we know that the impact of drought will continue for a long time.

Please be assured that we have advocated for you throughout this process and will continue to do so. Ultimately, this is a government decision and we will do what we can to support you in claiming the rebate available for CFA volunteers. While this is a difficult time for many, I ask that you please continue to demonstrate the CFA values.

I am constantly reminded of just how incredible our members are. Recently I attended Jeffcott Fire Brigade to present Captain Brad Burke with a Chief Officer's Commendation for Courage after he risked his life to rescue a truck driver from a burning vehicle in late 2023. See page 22 for the full story.

Acting Chief Officer Garry Cook AFSM also awarded the distinguished Unit Citation for Service to firefighters from Bacchus Marsh, Ballan and Melton fire brigades for their response to a serious school bus crash in 2022 in the Pentland Hills. The bus, carrying 27 students and four staff from Loreto College Ballarat was struck at speed by a truck. The firefighters' ability to respond quickly, work alongside other emergency services and provide reassurance to young people in distress is something we as an organisation are very proud of.

Thank you to all members for your work in continuing to uphold our mission to protect lives and property.



## DCO WEST REGION

## Brett Boatman

Over the past two summers, West Region has experienced major bushfires that have relentlessly impacted our communities. These campaign fires have been consecutive, concurrent and compounding in terms of their frequency, duration, impact and consequences.



During these periods of extended, high intensity work we need all of CFA contributing to keeping our communities safe. The glue that binds our system together is our Groups.

The role of our Groups has been subject to discussion and debate over recent years. For me, their role is clear – they are critical to lead planning, prevention, preparedness, readiness, response and sometimes in the initial recovery phase of an emergency. Our group officers and group management teams are central to local fire and emergency planning.

During the initial hours of our major fires over the past two summers, the Group system rapidly deployed resources to protect communities which was often done in advance of establishing incident management teams (IMTs).

On Boxing Day 2024, Groups across West Region planned 21 strike teams, of which 18 were available for away deployment. Fourteen of these strike teams were deployed to the Grampians. As our areas became depleted, strike teams from Districts 2, 7 and 20 moved into our region to provide backfill and initial attack capability. These were supplemented by five strike teams from the metro regions that formed at Ballarat and deployed to the Grampians.

One area that needs improvement is the communications, decision-making and integration of Groups into the IMTs and major fire operations. This has been an ongoing issue and there are some excellent examples of Groups being included. However there are also examples where the Groups are left out of the planning and execution of the incident shift plan. I strongly encourage all incident controllers and IMTs to pay special attention to the inclusion of CFA Groups to ensure we achieve integration and coordination at every level.

It is not just during bushfires where the organising capabilities of our Groups have an impact on community safety. Groups coordinate training and develop our future leaders. They are involved in many activities ranging from the installation of smoke alarms and planning strike teams for response to storms and floods.

CFA Groups are critical, and for me their role is clear. They are the local CFA coordination and command level to plan, prevent, prepare, respond and recover from all emergencies that involve CFA. Groups are critical in CFA for delivering quality services and making our communities safer all year round.

The Group structure is a model that few other organisations can replicate.

## DEPUTY GROUP OFFICER, D7

## Barry Tomlin

The Leigh Group located north-west of Geelong consists of seven brigades. The area predominately comprises mixed and cereal crop farming enterprises, however recent changes to the area have included the construction of the Rokewood wind farm and an increase in small rural holdings and sub-divisions.



These new developments have introduced challenges within the peri-urban interface environment and farming areas, especially with the integration of wind turbines and associated infrastructure.

The Leigh Group has a strong relationship with the District 7 HQ leadership team and staff and receives great support from neighbouring groups and brigades for both operational and non-operational activities. These partnerships are vital to ensure the group's readiness and effectiveness, while also providing immediate surge capacity for large-scale incidents.

The Leigh Group itself extends support to a neighbouring group and brigades during the Beyond The Valley music festival. Held annually over New Year's Eve at Barunah Plains Homestead in Hesse, Beyond The Valley features local and international artists across multiple stages, and attracts more than 35,000 attendees over the four-day event. This influx of visitors presents distinct challenges for planning, management and incident response.

Recently, Leigh Group strengthened its fleet with two brigades taking delivery of new tankers. One is an ultra heavy tanker with a water carrying capacity of 10,000 litres, and the other is a heavy tanker with a capacity of 4,000 litres. These trucks significantly enhance the group's firefighting capabilities. Plans are also in place to replace at least one light tanker with a medium tanker at another brigade, which will further boost the group's firefighting capacity.

The Leigh Group Management Team (GMT) assists brigades and communities to prepare for incidents, responding during emergencies and recovering afterward. This is partly achieved by assigning each GMT member a specific portfolio corresponding to brigade management team roles, providing effective support to brigades and communities. The group also supports individuals in fireground leadership development such as sector commander, and also IMT roles.

Personally, being a member of CFA for more than 25 years has been a journey filled with growth and learning. From my early days as a brigade member, to my current role as a deputy group officer and my second term as a brigade captain, each step has taught me invaluable lessons and provided enriching experiences.

Reflecting on the past, I feel immense gratitude for the support and trust given to me by both the group and brigade members, along with district leadership. Together, we have faced challenges, celebrated successes and consistently worked to improve our readiness and response capabilities. Looking ahead, I believe the brigades in the Leigh Group will continue to prosper and serve our communities effectively, no matter the challenges that come our way.

# Ferocious fire hits Montrose

On 15 March a fire started next to Dr Ken Leversha Reserve in Montrose, which quickly became a fast-moving bushfire. Crews battled challenging conditions and difficult terrain to bring it under control.

The fire, which started on Saturday afternoon, was fanned by unpredictable gusty winds overnight on Sunday, causing it to quickly spread to the reserve and double in size, prompting an Emergency Warning to be issued to residents.

The strong and sudden wind change, described as a downburst, resulted in an ember attack in multiple directions.

Montrose Fire Brigade Captain Matt Jalowicki said he had never witnessed fire behaviour like it since joining the brigade in 2004.

"It was a sudden wind event that came out of nowhere and hit with force. It's an experience I'll never forget," Matt said.

At the height of the incident, more than 100 firefighters from CFA, Forest Fire Management Victoria and Fire Rescue Victoria were on scene, alongside more than 40 firefighting vehicles, four helicopters and three dozers.

Unfortunately, one property was lost, another partially damaged, and one outbuilding destroyed.

"This is the largest grass and scrub fire I've attended in the area," Matt said.

Matt said the response was one he was extremely proud of.

"Thanks to the support from surrounding brigades and the use of aircraft, it was successfully contained," he said.



"As captain of the brigade, I'm beyond proud of our members. From those who were first on scene when the fire broke out, to the crews who rotated in for night shifts, and the team that stayed back to manage the station, answer calls, and support incoming crews, it was an incredible collective effort.

"I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the brigades who came to support us throughout the weekend and the days after. Your help and commitment were truly appreciated."

STORY BRITTANY CARLSON

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# Protecting the Grampians



**The work of CFA's planned burn crews was crucial over the 2024-25 fire season to help firefighters contain fires more quickly and save properties.**

Planned burning is used throughout the year to reduce fuel loads, promote the growth of native grasses and create strategic breaks – pockets of land that are burned to create a barrier that slows down the spread of a bushfire. CFA works alongside Forest Fire Management Victoria to carry out planned burns.

Manager of Community Safety South West Region James Haley, who was responsible for overseeing planned burn teams in the state's west, said these burns were successful.

"What's black doesn't reburn," James said. "As a general rule of thumb, fire reaches about three times the height of the vegetation, so a fire across native vegetation is going to be a lot more manageable than a fire that might grow to six metres in height through pasture grass which can be incredibly dangerous and hard to control."

In Dunkeld and Cavendish, planned burning was used to create strategic breaks along roadsides and around homes and farms, which allowed firefighters to fight the Grampians fire as winds pushed the fire out of complex and risky terrain in the Grampians National Park.

In Dunkeld, the fuel on 12 parcels of private land plus additional municipal and Committee of Management land was reduced to create a 'horse shoe' around the town, and significant separation between any fire pushing out of the Grampians National Park and the town itself.

In Cavendish, several linear breaks were created – a number of them are long-term strategic breaks to stop a fire running out of the Grampians National Park. In addition, at a community meeting the owners of numerous properties next to the national park asked for help to carry out burn-out operations. CFA planned and implemented this burning around houses, farm buildings and other infrastructure.

When the Grampians fire threatened to impact properties in Dunkeld and Cavendish, firefighters were able to safely combat the fire where burn-out operations had occurred. Based on feedback from the incident control centre and fireground personnel, many assets and properties were saved. The burn-out operations created safe zones from which firefighters could actively protect themselves and the community.



Another benefit of the planned burns was that when the main fire ran into linear burns, only minimal resources had to be diverted from other parts of the fire that were not contained by planned burns.

The CFA Planned Burn Taskforce helped with these operations. The Taskforce is made up of a pool of volunteers from around the state who make themselves available specifically for planned burning.

"They have good expertise in burn-out operations," James said. "We put out the request maybe 24 hours before that we intend to undertake burns, and volunteers from all over the state drop everything to come and help."

"The value of these burns, particularly around homes, sheds and other infrastructure, cannot be overstated. Multiple burns have already proven critical to fire suppression efforts."

James said teams work with the community when planning these burns and it was a great source of comfort for communities being threatened by fire.

"We've also seen a significant positive impact with many residents reaching out for asset protection support. We've received numerous expressions of gratitude from landowners and community members for the collective effort," James said.

"It really creates community confidence, creating that space where they know it can't burn again."

"These communities are under an extreme amount of stress and pressure and to work with them, plan with them, and to hear what they think is important to protect is pivotal. It is not just a case of CFA alone determining what can be burnt to protect homes and other assets."





PHOTO: SIMON SCHLUTER, THE AGE

# CFA recognises 80 years

**On 2 April 2025 CFA officially marked its 80th anniversary since formation. Although many of our brigades and firefighting organisations were established well before CFA was formed, CFA has been instrumental in protecting communities across Victoria.**

Our 80th anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate our history and achievements and acknowledge the vital contribution of our members, past and present, who have worked tirelessly to keep Victorian communities safe.

As part of our celebrations, CFA developed a page on our website and Members Online where we celebrate our achievements and reflect on the events that have shaped CFA.

Through devastating fires, floods and other emergencies, as well as responding to incidents every day and preparing their communities, our people have been there; resilient, dedicated and passionate. This legacy has been captured through a wonderful story about our history on Members Online, and in a booklet posted with the autumn edition of *Brigade* magazine.

We updated our video 'We are CFA – 80th anniversary' which we encourage brigades to share with their communities. Use this QR code to watch it.

We also asked brigades to participate in a special video called 'Who we are'. Use this QR code to watch it.

On our website and Members Online, CFA is presenting 80 stories in 80 days where we are



sharing information and facts about CFA in varying formats to highlight what we do. We are also giving members of the community the opportunity to post their thanks to CFA through a dedicated page on the website.

On 28 March, the new Beaufort Fire Station was officially opened. Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said there was no better place to mark CFA's 80th anniversary than with one of the oldest brigades in Victoria.

"This brigade has been there since CFA's inception and it is just wonderful to be celebrating here surrounded by the history of this long-running brigade," Jason said.

To mark the occasion, a Willys truck and running cart were on display to show how far CFA had evolved in the past 80 years.

On 1 April, a Volunteer Forum was held at Ballarat Fire Brigade, the oldest, continuously operating fire station in the Southern Hemisphere. This historic venue helped CFA celebrate its 80th anniversary through looking at old fire trucks at Ballarat and Buninyong brigades and how they were used. Viewers of the forum were also treated to a detailed look at Ballarat City brigade's extensive memorabilia and photo collection dating back to the Victorian era.

The Volunteer Forum was also an opportunity to look back at CFA's participation in the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal. Since 1951, CFA volunteers have raised more than \$41 million for the hospital.

Use this QR code to access all the 80th anniversary information on Members Online.







# Emerging young leaders

**Eager and nervous faces enter the room searching for something or someone familiar. They light up when they see their mentor. It's the first face-to-face workshop in the Emerging Young Leaders Mentoring Program, a significant milestone in this trial program after years of planning and preparation.**

Identified as an initiative of the Volunteer Leadership Development Fund and the Sustainable Volunteerism Pathways Team, this program is designed to equip young people with essential leadership and management skills, ensure the continuity of institutional knowledge, increase retention, operational efficiency and effectiveness, and improve volunteer satisfaction and engagement.

When asked about the value of the program, participant Catherine McAllister said, "I think it will allow younger members to gain confidence to pursue leadership roles in all levels of CFA. It's something I wish I had the opportunity to do at their age."

The program recently won an Emergency Services Foundation encouragement award as a Gender Inclusivity Initiative. Half of this year's mentees are women or non-binary participants. Life Saving Victoria (LSV) also joined the trial program with several partnerships, and their participation demonstrates excellent interagency cooperation and collaboration.

"From an LSV perspective, it's a great opportunity to interact with another emergency service as we assist our emerging leaders on their leadership journey. It also creates a networking opportunity with like-minded individuals outside our own organisation," another participant commented.

Across the next six months, young adults aged 18 to 30 with leadership aspirations will embark on a journey with experienced adults who can share and transfer their valuable knowledge. Through online sessions and face-to-face opportunities, the program aims to equip our young volunteers with the necessary skills to take on future leadership roles in CFA.

They will build leadership and management skills and encourage ongoing participation in brigade life. We also hope to see increased volunteer satisfaction, clear understanding of pathways and progression and recognition, to improve the overall volunteer experience by making members feel valued.

The program is designed to be flexible, facilitating the sharing of experiences and expertise from seasoned adult mentors and

external leadership professionals, ensuring the transfer of critical skills and institutional knowledge as well as current best practice.

"Having held multiple leadership roles throughout my time at university, I want to experience that same level of mentor support through CFA," Mentee Lilliana Abel said.

And rightly so, as districts and regions have identified the need for emerging leadership, young adult challenge camps and other initiatives for younger members. The Emerging Young Leaders Mentoring Program saw more than double mentee expressions of interest than the program had capacity for, showing that there's a strong need for more projects designed for this age group.

The program will be a learning curve for both our mentees and mentors.

"I am crusty and grumpy, but want to see our younger members learn and develop. I will need to be open to the young viewpoint, as will they to the older view on life," Mentor Brooke Killen said.

This is exactly what the program seeks to do – find some common ground in the organisation, improve communication skills and empower young people to have confidence and respect when expressing their ideas and unique leadership styles.

"Facilitating a session for this program as a young volunteer has been an amazing opportunity to learn and develop my skills, but more importantly to see the development and awesome learning from mentees and mentors," facilitator Harvey Beckley said.

"After looking in from the outside over the face-to-face weekend, it's safe to say CFA is in great hands. We have amazing emerging leaders who are starting their journey."

While the faces in the room are still unsure and at the beginning of their leadership journey, there's a lot of positivity in the conversations.

"I'm interested in growing and developing away from just the fire side of things," Mentee Cara Munnings said.

"Connecting people like this, outside of their regular groups, will make a more connected CFA and produce better outcomes and teamwork at bigger events," Mentor Don Cook said.

"Some day I hope I can do the same for others," Mentee Sam Berkery said.

STORY ALEX REID



# GENERAL FIREFIGHTER PROGRAM EVOLVES

With increased flexibility and ongoing enhancements driven by member feedback, CFA's General Firefighter (GFF) program is continually evolving to meet the needs of our districts and brigades, developing capable volunteers who are ready to serve their communities.

For new CFA volunteers, GFF training marks the first crucial step in every CFA's member's journey in becoming an operational member – equipping them with the skills and confidence to protect their communities from fire and other emergencies.

As the prerequisite for new operational members, GFF is often the first experience new volunteers have undertaking training at CFA. Not only does it equip them with the essential skills needed to respond to incidents, it also lays the foundation for accessing future training through CFA's Training Pathways.

Originally released in 2020 to replace Minimum Skills, GFF was reviewed throughout 2023-24 to ensure the training was meeting the needs of new volunteers, brigades, districts and regions.

Story by Shaunnagh O'Loughlin,  
Josephine Saltalamacchia and James Taylor





## TAILORED FOR FLEXIBILITY

Based on feedback, a series of improvements were embedded in the revised program, including providing an increased level of flexibility for regions and districts to tailor the scheduling and delivery of the program to what works best for their unique circumstances.

General Firefighter can be delivered:

- face to face, either over a longer period or in an intensive three-day format
- using paper assessments or digital tablets/computers
- with theory components completed online at the participant's own pace, followed by practical assessments at their brigade.

DCO Operational Doctrine and Training Rohan Luke said the flexibility embedded in the revamped GFF model made it easier for new recruits to complete their essential training without compromising on quality or readiness.

"One size doesn't fit all when it comes to GFF training. Everyone has different learning preferences and needs, so flexibility isn't just convenient, it is essential to help new members succeed," Rohan said.

"It's also about enabling our regions and districts to maintain our high training standards while tailoring the GFF training to suit local brigade needs."

In Districts 2 and 14, a flexible approach saw participants complete the theory components of the training online, which allowed the in-person component to focus solely on the practical training and skills. Read more below.

"The beauty of the revised GFF is that districts have options that should suit the needs of local members' availability, digital access and support requirements," Rohan said.

"Training delivered locally, using a strong support base from the brigade and instructors, and agility in the delivery of the course makes for a better experience for our newest members."

## FASTER PATH TO THEIR FIRST TURNOUT

General Firefighter by its nature is intended to be delivered to a large number of new recruits each year. As fire seasons grow longer and more unpredictable, ensuring a steady pipeline of well-trained, capable firefighters is more important than ever.

Since the revised GFF was released in October 2024, 64 courses have been delivered under the new program to 269 new members across the state\*.

In Districts 15, 16 and 17, most members complete GFF within a month under the revised program, with brigades being instrumental in supporting their new members through the process. Read more on page 12.

"While the GFF course material is vitally important to keep our members safe, it is also important for our members to progress through the training as smoothly and as quickly as possible," Rohan said.

"The revised program and added delivery flexibility has cut average GFF training completion times, helping new members become operational faster."

Brigades are encouraged to work with their district to determine the best delivery method for their circumstances.

The Training team will continue to refine the GFF program based on volunteer feedback and operational demand. Improvements to the Learning Hub have already seen improvements made to GFF digital assessments based on this feedback.

\*Figures don't include members who completed General Firefighter during the teach-out period for the original program which ran until April 2025.



Keep up to date with enhancements to the Learning Hub: [members.cfa.vic.gov.au/learning-hub](https://members.cfa.vic.gov.au/learning-hub)

### Case study

## NORTH WEST REGION BLENDS LEARNING AND PRACTICAL FLEXIBILITY

In Districts 2 and 14, a flexible approach has been successfully adopted by combining digital theory modules with adaptable practical delivery. In District 2, although the course was promoted as face to face, participants proactively completed the theory online beforehand. This allowed the in-person component to focus solely on practical skills.

This approach highlighted strong engagement with digital learning and streamlined the course without compromising outcomes.

"Practical sessions in the districts are offered either through scheduled courses that members can nominate for, or via brigade-led sessions where if brigades or groups have access to an

instructor they can coordinate their own groups," North West Region Manager Learning Development Penelope Larke said.

These brigade-nominated sessions are entered in the Learning Hub (LMS), offering flexibility while maintaining oversight.

"Training is typically delivered at the brigade, which makes participation easier and removes the need to attend other training facilities such as training grounds. This blended and locally delivered model has been well received by members, allowing brigades to train at times that suit them while maintaining a consistent and effective training experience," Penelope said.



## ESTABLISHING SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

Establishing Support Requirements (ESR) is a short, essential activity designed to help CFA understand whether a new member needs additional support through their training activities. It consists of three brief online modules that take about 20 minutes to complete:

- **Module 1:** Receiving information (listening)
- **Module 2:** Interpreting information (reading)
- **Module 3:** Data interpretation (maths).

It's important that members take their time and focus on the questions when going through these sessions as the outcomes are important to identify any additional support requirements. The results allow CFA to:

- tailor individual learning support plans, where required
- provide targeted assistance if needed
- ensure a better training experience for all members
- set members up for success, initially in GFF but also in other training.

A member needs to complete the ESR modules before beginning GFF, and we encourage members to complete them early to avoid delays in their training and ensure everyone gets the best possible start.



For General Firefighter PPC enquiries and orders, please contact your local district office.

## RESOURCES TO SUPPORT BRIGADES

Resources are available to support brigades to deliver GFF and support their newest members.

Brigades will be provided with a Learning Hub (LMS) onboarding guide and skills drills guide as part of continual improvements to the GFF program to help them easily support members to access online training. This will also include hard copies of LMS user guides.

In addition, those members with a Brigade Training Profile in the Learning Hub can also access online materials identical to the GFF digital materials available to new recruits. Log into the Learning Hub, click on Brigade Training Profile and then the Brigade Resources Catalogue/General Firefighter V2.1 Brigade Information Handover.

## GENERAL FIREFIGHTER CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The GFF program continues to evolve, reflecting CFA's commitment to meeting the unique needs of our volunteers. As we move forward, the program will undergo further refinements to enhance accessibility, efficiency and overall training quality. Key upcoming improvements include:

- enhanced knowledge assessments in the Learning Hub for a more effective learning experience
- streamlined program structure and simplified enrolment process for new members
- automatic enrolment in digital theory and assessment courses to support seamless learning
- automatic enrolment in practical training components, with flexibility to suit member preferences.

By taking a collaborative and comprehensive approach, CFA remains dedicated to delivering high-quality training that meets accreditation standards and empowers volunteers with the skills and confidence to serve their communities effectively.

### Case study

## FLEXIBLE DELIVERY AND BRIGADE ENGAGEMENT IN WEST REGION

Districts 15 and 17 primarily deliver GFF through a blended model, with a full three-day face-to-face course scheduled every six months. However, nominations for these are typically low because members prefer to complete theory online at their own pace, followed by practical sessions delivered flexibly within one to three weeks. This model supports members' availability and helps to streamline their training experience.

District 16 has maintained the traditional three-day, face-to-face format and has transitioned smoothly to the new GFF program, showing that both models can work depending on local needs.

"The GFF course's flexibility in location is a major strength. It's typically run at brigades without the need for visits to training grounds," West Region Manager Learning Development Samantha Plater said. "As long as a tanker is available, support equipment such as collar tanks can be provided.

"Most members complete the revised GFF program within a month. Brigade engagement remains key; when brigades actively support members through the process, retention and satisfaction are notably higher. Offering varied delivery methods ensures GFF meets the diverse needs of all volunteers."







## EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS

Secondary school outdoor education teacher Patrick Van Dyk had thought about joining his local fire brigade, Laharum, for some time. Growing up in Horsham and spending much of his life exploring the Grampians, Patrick's love of the outdoors and community involvement made volunteering a natural fit.

"I love being outdoors and I love being involved in community groups," Patrick said. "I figured joining the brigade would be a great way to get to know the community better, while doing something I enjoy."

Patrick marked the beginning of his journey at CFA by completing the General Firefighter training, which he described as an incredibly positive and rewarding experience that exceeded his expectations.

"I wasn't sure what to expect going into it, but the training was practical, hands-on, and easy to follow. I came away feeling comfortable and confident with what the course taught me."

The course ran over three months at his local brigade, delivered in a small, supportive group.

"There were just three of us doing the course, which made a massive difference," Patrick said. "We got one-on-one attention, and the way the skills were taught and explained made it so practical and engaging. Everything was broken down clearly and it just made sense."

Patrick credited his trainer, Graham Hill, for creating such a supportive and effective learning environment.

"Graham talked through everything in depth and took the time to explain why things were done a certain way," Patrick said.

"We weren't just sitting around in a classroom, we were out there learning the skills, hands on."

One of the most memorable parts of the course for Patrick was learning the entrapment drill, a skill that prepares the crew for a situation where a fire truck is engulfed by fire.

"It's the kind of thing you hope you won't need to do, but if it happens you must be ready. Knowing how to do this gave me a lot of confidence and reassurance," Patrick said.

Now officially an operational brigade member, Patrick is proud he made the decision to become a volunteer and plans to stay involved for the long haul. As someone who juggles a busy teaching schedule, Patrick said the brigade's flexibility is a big reason he can still jump on the truck.

"As an outdoor education teacher, we go on a lot of trips but the flexibility the brigade offers makes it easier to stay involved."

"It feels good to be part of something that supports the community. I'm really looking forward to getting out there."

For anyone thinking about taking the step into volunteering, Patrick has no hesitation in encouraging others to give it a go.

"I would say go for it," Patrick said. "The training is practical, the people are supportive and you finish feeling confident enough that you'll be able to make a difference."

## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO START

At 51 years old, Helen Jolley has officially completed CFA's General Firefighter training and become an operational member with Lexton Fire Brigade, a personal milestone and a proud moment for a brigade seeing a rise in women volunteers.

Following two major fires that threatened her local area, Helen decided it was time to stop watching from the sidelines.

"We've had two really scary fire incidents here and I've always been pretty terrified of fire," she said.

"After the last one, I just thought, 'I need to be able to do something'."

What began as a way to feel more prepared quickly became a journey into active volunteering. Helen didn't originally plan to become operational but by the end of her training her mindset had changed.

"I signed up thinking I wouldn't go operational but once I'd finished I realised I could and would give it a go."

Helen completed her face-to-face training through CFA's updated General Firefighter program, which she described as challenging but rewarding.

"The program really showed how important teamwork is – you can't do it on your own."

She recalled one moment in particular during a timed simulation.

"The assessor said: 'That took you three minutes, now pack up and do it again.' It really drove home how much every second matters."

Now fully qualified and waiting for her first callout, Helen said becoming a firefighter has been both empowering and eye-opening.

"It's a big thing to feel like you can help when your community is in trouble. After everything we've been through here, that means a lot."

She's also proud to be part of a growing wave of women joining CFA, a shift that's clearly visible at Lexton.

"There's a really strong group of women coming through," she said. "At this rate, we've got enough to mount a female team at Lexton."

Helen hopes her story will inspire others to take the leap.



# UPDATE ON CFA PROJECTS

In each issue we update members with the progress being made on some of our projects. More information about all of our projects is on Members Online: [members.vic.gov.au/CFAProjects](https://members.vic.gov.au/CFAProjects)

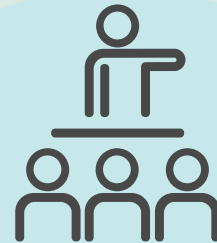


## Fire Medical Response (FMR)

FMR is a CFA-led medical co-responder program with Ambulance Victoria (AV) that is training and equipping members from 50 CFA brigades to attend some AV incidents involving cardiac and respiratory arrest. Thirty-two brigades have been recruited into the program and consultation is underway with seven brigades across Districts 7, 13 and 18. Consultation will soon commence in Districts 9, 10, 23, 24 and 27. FMR training is complete in Districts 11 and 22 and is currently being delivered in Districts 2, 5, 6, 11, 15, 16, 17, 20 and 22.

Operations began on 4 December 2024 and the 11 operational brigades have collectively attended 34 calls to date. A number of these have resulted in the successful transport of patients to hospital.

During the fourth quarter of 2025, FMR training will be delivered in Districts 2, 8 and 13. Four FMR training vehicles have recently been completed with the assistance of Fleet.



## Volunteer leadership development

There will be an August 2025 intake for the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management. The Emerging Young Leaders Mentoring Program has been launched.

The Captains' Peer Mentoring Program has begun for another year. The 2025-26 Women in Leadership Mentoring Program will begin soon, and Women's Challenge Camps started in April. In the fourth quarter, we plan to develop new offerings in leadership essentials and governance training.

## Radio Replacement Program

About 18,000 CFA radios will be replaced across Victoria. The new radios will introduce a technology refresh with enhanced features and functionality. Mobile radio installations are finished in Districts 7, 8, 13 and 15, and currently taking place in Districts 2, 5, 10, 16, 17 and 22. Training has been completed in Districts 12 and 23 and is ongoing in Districts 4, 6, 9, 24, and 27. Kick-off meetings and 'train the trainer' sessions have been held in all districts.

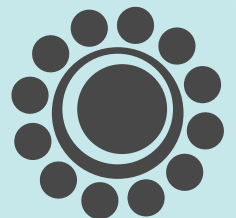
Portable radios have been delivered to brigades in Districts 5, 11, 16, 17, 20 and 22. Deliveries are in progress in Districts 12, 18 and 23. Local base installations and delivery of bag radios are underway in Districts 12, 18 and 23, and Bluetooth remote speaker microphone deliveries have started.



## Gender Diversity Program

This program will create lasting change in CFA by progressively improving the suitability of our buildings to the diverse needs of firefighters and staff. There will be upgrades to amenities at 41 fire stations and three training campuses, focusing on toilet and turnout facilities at stations and providing change buildings at training campuses. Concept designs and cost plans have been completed for Bangholme, Penshurst, and Sunraysia training centre projects.

Architects have been appointed to about 90 per cent of the projects and concept designs have been approved by stakeholders at 17 brigades and are moving forward to the design phase. In the fourth quarter of 2025, we will seek construction bids for about 10 internal modification projects.





# Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund

**The Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) was announced by the Victorian Government in December 2024 to replace the Fire Services Property Levy.**

The Fund, which will come into effect on 1 July 2025, was created by the government to support various emergency services, including CFA. The levies on property owners will be collected through local council rates notices.

Operational and support CFA volunteers and CFA life members will be able to apply for a rebate on their primary property of residence through the Department of Government Services.

The Victorian Government has announced some changes to the original proposal, which means that the ESVF variable rate on primary production properties for the 2025-26 financial year will be the same as the 2024-25 rate in recognition of the increasingly dry conditions.

More details about ESVF and the rebate scheme are available on the Department of Treasury and Finance website. CFA will be developing a portal where members will be able to access the link to the rebate form when it's available. More details will be available in coming weeks.

Many CFA members have expressed strong views in opposition to this

government policy. CFA strongly believes – and has advocated continuously with the Victorian Government – that volunteers should not be any worse off than they were under the previous Fire Services Property Levy, given they directly provide the fire service that the new ESVF seeks to fund.

Thank you for the work you do in providing critical services 24/7 to serve and protect your community.



## Bannockburn's 100 years

**In early April, CFA members and other emergency services personnel, and more than 20 trucks, formed a procession down the main street of Bannockburn to celebrate the brigade's 100th year serving the community.**

In the early days of the brigade there was no station or equipment and trucks were stored in the sheds of members. Eventually work began on the first Bannockburn fire station when CFA purchased land for the station in January 1955.

Across its 100-year history the brigade has been involved in many major incidents such as the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983, the 2009 fires, the 2019-20 fires and the Echuca floods in 2021-22.

To celebrate a century of service the brigade has organised several events throughout the year to gather both old and new members together with the community. One of the major events was their community day and torchlight parade on 5 April. During the day the station was open to the community, where they could explore the trucks, historical displays and get some food.

In the evening both past and present brigade members marched alongside Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and VICSES in a torchlight parade.

Bannockburn Fire Brigade Captain Shannon Robinson said she was extremely proud to be captain at this special moment in history.

"We are a great bunch of people, and it was fun marching with our members side by side. It was a very proud moment," Shannon said. "We might have flashy new trucks but at our core we are still the same, community-minded people who just want to do what they can."

Brigade member and Community Safety Coordinator Dale Smith has been leading a dedicated committee working to organise the celebrations for the 100-year milestone.

"The events throughout the year are a way for all past and present members and community to reflect on our amazing history," Dale said.

STORY BRITTANY CARLSON



# Keeping the memory alive

**Barry McLean (pictured laying a wreath) is a familiar face at the CFA Annual Firefighter Memorial Service that commemorates the CFA firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty.**

Barry's son Darren John McLean (pictured inset below) died on 14 February 1982 in a tragic firefighting incident when the truck he was in rolled over.. He was 17.

Barry has been attending the memorial every year for decades to keep his son's memory alive, and is supported by Churchill brigade members who accompany him to the service.

For Barry it's about being around people who have been through a similar ordeal to him.

"You meet people from years ago who have had the same experiences as you," Barry said. "There is a reverence to the event and people you meet."

Despite the tragic circumstances Barry always has a twinkle in his eye, a friendly smile and warm manner, but it does not mask the loss he experienced more than three decades ago.

Darren was a budding journalist, with work experience at Channel 10 under his belt and a job lined up at Channel 7 in Melbourne.

Darren and the other 81 firefighters who have died since 1908 are gone but not forgotten.

Each year the service affirms the dedication and courage of our firefighters, and allows families, brigades and members of our communities to remember our fallen heroes, while reflecting on their exceptional service in protecting communities from harm.

The service became an annual event in 1987 after the first one was held at Fiskville Training College.

The service has been held in various locations in Victoria since 1998 and for the past two years the event was held at the Firefighters Memorial in Treasury Gardens, Melbourne.

**STORY BRIGID ENNIS**



PHOTOS: TIAHN WRIGHT





# New York brings new insights

I was honoured to attend the United Nations 69th Congress of Women (CSW) in New York during March as part of the Australian Champions of Change Coalition. It felt apt that my first day on this trip fell on International Women's Day – a chance to acknowledge the achievements of women globally but also reflect on steps we need to take. While in New York, I also took the opportunity to connect with fire service peers and gain a greater understanding of the differences and similarities between our agencies.

**8 March:** Before CSW officially kicked off, I visited New York City Fire Department (FDNY)'s Engine Company 54 and the FDNY Fire Zone – a community fire readiness and prevention facility. It was great to speak to current and former FDNY members about the similarities and differences we face as fire services, learn about how they engage with the community, and gain a greater understanding of their operating model.

**10 March:** At sessions with the Champions of Change Coalition cohort, we heard from and spoke to leading women activists from around the world. Key takeaways from today included the threats to women's rights across the globe and the importance of having courage to make change in a hostile climate.

**11 March:** Business leaders, policy experts and changemakers from across the globe focused on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in public sector. The importance of men in this space was reinforced – by actively supporting women, challenging discriminatory behaviour and advocating for inclusive policies, we ultimately create a more equitable society for all.

When discussing driving diversity outcomes through procurement, I reflected proudly on CFA's commitment to social procurement and the ways we strive to create value through broad social and sustainable impacts.

**12 March:** I further explored the differences between CFA and FDNY, meeting FDNY Chiefs at the Fire Academy on Randall's



Island. I heard how IMT deployments are managed across the US and how the department approaches training to support diversity. While our agencies may differ in many ways, we face similar challenges, such as appropriately fitting PPC and how to ensure firehouse facilities best support all genders. With only six women in a cohort of 330 recruits last year, they acknowledged that FDNY has work to do in this space when it comes to recruiting and retaining women.

**13 March:** Following a tour of the UN headquarters, our cohort took part in a roundtable with the Australian Government Permanent Mission to the UN, discussing the global shifting geopolitical environment and how we can support and influence gender equity in our roles and organisations.

**14 March:** The Champions of Change Coalition cohort met for a Fire and Emergency Management Roundtable on barriers to representation and inclusion of women in frontline roles. Speaking with counterparts from Australia and around the world, we came together to learn from each other and share knowledge and experience.

In a professional space, men may be more likely to both have a mentor and an

intrinsic level of self belief. This inevitably leads to a system that is set up in favour of men. Ensuring women can have mentors in a space where they feel comfortable and confident is vital, and I reflected on our incredible Women in Leadership Mentoring Program which enables participants to learn, share knowledge and build confidence while developing the next cohort of leaders within CFA.

The topic of PPC and uniforms that properly fits all genders was a challenge seemingly faced by many. This brings up a range of safety concerns – both physical and psychological, and I am proud that CFA is aiming to be a disrupter in this space to ensure all members feel safe and comfortable on and off the fireground.

**15 March:** A trip to the Rockaway Point Fire Department, one of the few volunteer fire departments in New York, rounded out my trip. Hosted by the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief, I heard more about the differences and similarities between our agencies. Volunteers are trained by other volunteers, no different to a group training event you might see in CFA. I sat in on a session equivalent to CFA's 'Respond to Urban Fire' course, with almost identical course content. Respond to Urban places a heavier focus on dynamic risk assessment, enforcing safety as both a CFA value and a core priority for all our members.

Throughout the trip, a repeating theme was that the onus for equity cannot only be on those affected. We cannot only expect women to be the ones pushing for change, and the importance of male allies to stand up is vital to making tangible differences.

Where more people are being emboldened to further the regression of equality in many areas, we must be emboldened to speak up, call out inappropriate behaviour and actions where we see them, and be a part of the change.

STORY CHIEF OFFICER JASON HEFFERNAN

# RIISING FROM THE MURKY DEPTHS

During the October 2022 Victorian floods, Wirrrate Fire Brigade suffered a heartbreaking loss

Story by Duncan Russell



**After the Goulburn River submerged Wirrrate Fire Station to a depth of 170 centimetres, brigade members showed remarkable resilience. The brigade is now stronger than ever.**

"With a new station refit, new vehicles and some younger members joining the brigade, we've got a really bright future," Wirrrate Fire Brigade Captain and North East Regional Manager Volunteer Sustainability Hamish Fletcher said.

But immediately after the floods in 2022, the future looked bleak.

The story really began a long time before the flood. When Hamish took over as captain, the brigade had been applying unsuccessfully for 10 years for a VESEP grant for an ultralight.

"We needed a small, flexible vehicle to get into tight spaces," Hamish explained. "Finally in 2020 our grant application was successful and we received a new LandCruiser ultralight in 2022. We trained using it and we were ready to respond with it, but then we had the flood."

"Our brand new LandCruiser never went out on a job. It got drowned."

The area surrounding Wirrrate was first hit

by flash flooding, which impacted all the roads to the fire station.

"Although this intense flash flooding didn't affect the station, we couldn't reach the station to remove the vehicles."

Then the Goulburn River flooded the area and it was inevitable the station would be inundated.

A day after the flooding, Hamish was given an aerial photo of the station taken by a drone, and an employee of Mitchelton Winery who toured the area by boat gave Hamish a photo that showed the station 170cm deep in brown water.

"It was a traumatic time for the brigade," Hamish said. "Water destroyed our vehicles and the brigade's historical records. We didn't know how long it would take to get new vehicles. We were preparing for the fire season and I wondered how we would be able to respond without vehicles or a station. It was heartbreaking."

CFA at all levels sprang into action to help Wirrrate brigade.

"We had incredible support from District 22 including from ACFO Tony Owen and North East Region DCO Ross Sullivan AFSM. Then our long-time catchment Commander

Pete Dedman and BASO Paul Verbeek supported us continually through the whole ordeal even though the flooding was still impacting the district. In the middle of an emergency everyone went into problem-solving mode."

Fleet and Protective Equipment team members Danny Jones and Steven Hill visited the station immediately after the floodwater had subsided. They first helped to remove the ultralight and tanker from the station.

"Then they both pitched in and helped us clean the station," Hamish said. "It was incredible to have that level of support from Danny and Steven."

"It was rewarding to be able to support our dedicated volunteers at Wirrrate during this challenging time," Head of Fleet and Protective Equipment Danny Jones said. "Seeing firsthand how the brigade triumphed over adversity with a little bit of help was truly inspiring."

Progress was made quite rapidly to replace the vehicles and find a temporary home for the brigade members.

"First we were given a district spare tanker, then we received a District 23 decommissioned 2.4D Hino medium





tanker,” Hamish said. “The district mechanical officers did incredible work to give it a facelift and make sure it was mechanically sound. They made sure it was fully stowed and they repainted parts of it.”

After a brigade member shared a photo of the flooded station on Facebook, Wesburn-Millgrove brigade members offered to lend Wirrate an ultralight they were planning to sell.

“They contacted Fleet and said they wanted to delay selling it so they could lend it to us. We used their ultralight for the whole 2022-23 season.”

The final piece of the puzzle to becoming operational again was finding a temporary home for these two vehicles.

“Brigade member Craig Newnham said he had space in his hayshed, so we relocated a few kilometres up the road. All things considered, we got up and running again quickly thanks to the amazing support. We are so thankful and appreciative.”

The brigade operated from the hayshed until the end of December when the power was reinstated to the station and the trucks could return. Brigade members also returned to the station while the kitchen fit-out and painting continued.

The brigade had an audit of everything in the station which made it easier to replace what had been lost.

The brigade couldn’t order a new LandCruiser ultralight because it was no longer available and being replaced by the Ford Ranger. The Fleet team asked Hamish if the brigade would like to trial the new Ford Ranger and Hamish jumped at the opportunity. For 12 months the brigade trialled an ultralight that had a Ford cab chassis combined with the tray and firefighting equipment from the brigade’s destroyed ultralight. Following the trial, the brigade received a new Ford Ranger ultralight.

“We contributed some money towards the renovation to make improvements. For example, we now have an air conditioner in the meeting room that we didn’t have before.”

In March 2025, the brigade held an awards night to recognise the hard work of its volunteers and to thank all who had helped in the recovery after the flood.

“This was our first opportunity since the flood to celebrate our achievements,” Hamish said. “Our members have shown their dedication to the brigade, and we will always be grateful for all the support we received during a traumatic time.”



# Fire reconstructions

**When a major fire occurs, it leaves behind more than just a blackened landscape – it offers vital clues that help us better understand bushfire behaviour. Reconstructions are our scientific investigations to understand the drivers of fire behaviour during and after fires.**

We do reconstructions for a range of applications, but the simplest reason is to help us understand how fires behaved and how effective our fire management levers – such as suppression tactics and fuel management – actually were.

These investigations require a mix of fieldwork, mapping, data analysis and community input to capture the lessons for future planning and response.

Following the significant fires in 2024 and 2025 across West Region, a joint CFA and DEECA fire behaviour team is leading detailed reconstructions. These investigations will assess fire progression, weather influences, suppression actions, and the role of past burns in shaping outcomes. The work supports better modelling and decision-making for future fire events.

To support this work, the team is calling on CFA members and crews to contribute photos or dashcam footage showing active fire behaviour – especially any edge or direct attack firefighting. These images provide time-stamped, on-ground perspectives that help validate simulation tools and give insight into real-world tactics and constraints.

While the focus is on the major fires of the last two years, we would be grateful for any examples that can be provided, including from other events around the state from years past. This is not part of an after-action review, it's purely about capturing what we can learn scientifically from these events.

If you have footage to share or want to know more, scan the QR code below or email [bushfire.research@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:bushfire.research@cfa.vic.gov.au).

Your contribution could make a real difference to how we fight fires in future. We will work with you, your brigade and district to establish how best we can access and use the footage, including navigating privacy and policy concerns you may have.



## CFA culture review evaluation underway

**Three years on from the publication of the findings of the External Review of Culture and Issues Management at CFA, an evaluation of the progress made against the recommendations by Dr Helen Szoke AO and Allen + Clarke is being undertaken.**

The 2021 review made 10 recommendations about improvements to CFA's management practices, organisational culture and response to workplace complaints with the aim of fostering a safer and more inclusive environment for all.

The purpose of the evaluation, being undertaken by the original review authors Dr Helen Szoke AO and Allen + Clarke, is to assess the work that's been undertaken by CFA since April 2022 and propose future actions where we can focus efforts to achieve cultural improvements and further embed change.

As part of the evaluation, there will be a desktop review, the development of five discussion papers outlining ongoing

challenges, highlighting successes and posing questions for the future, followed by stakeholder engagement with volunteers, staff and operational leaders, as well as focus groups.

We are seeking interested volunteers and staff to register their interest in being part of the evaluation by using this QR code. We know your time is valuable so we will provide a range of options for you to take part either online, by phone or in some circumstances in person.

The final outcomes will be an Action Plan for the future which will be subject to consultation.

It's important that we continue to work on our culture so that we can make CFA a place where all members feel safe and able to contribute to their full potential.







## Faces of CFA

MICK FRANCHETTO, MORWELL FIRE BRIGADE, DISTRICT 27

### What is your CFA role?

I'm the 1st Lieutenant.

### Why did you join?

I started as a Junior member as a 12 year old when one of my friends joined and it sounded like fun. When I was 16 years old the Junior program faded away until I was the only member left. The officer in charge of Morwell brigade (Morwell was an integrated staff/volunteer brigade) sought permission to allow me to join the senior ranks at 16. Back then you had to be 17 before being allowed to join the senior ranks in an urban brigade. I started as a senior in 1985 and never looked back.

### What incident has had the greatest impact on you?

I have been involved in many incidents that have had an impact on me, my fellow firefighters and the community as a whole.

In 1991 the town was shaken by an explosion that destroyed three shops and damaged 45 other buildings in Church Street, Morwell. The scene was described at the time as something from a war zone. When I arrived on scene, I was asked to attend the rear of the shops as there was a report of someone trapped underneath the rubble.

Having donned BA, I went to the rear and helped Ambulance Victoria (AV) officers to remove rubble from a person. There was a large slab of bricks on him, which we lifted. While I took the whole weight of the slab, AV officers dragged out the man.

As a result of our actions the AV officers and I received the Royal Humane Society of Australasia Bronze Medal for Bravery. I also received a Letter of Commendation from CFA. This left a lasting impression on me as it was the first time my actions had directly helped a person at their worst time, and they made a full recovery. At other times, the outcomes weren't so great.

### Who have been your mentors in CFA?

Many people have had a major impact on me including Station Officers Malcolm Fallon, Gary Harker, Ross Sullivan AFSM, Ross

Male (who have all since risen within CFA ranks). These men were what CFA stood for and they made a tremendous effort to get the best out of anyone they met.

### What have been the highlights of your time in CFA?

I think the biggest highlight would be the friendships I have made. Over 40-plus years I've watched my friends get partners, get married, have children, watched those children grow up and still be part of the greater brigade family. Some of those friends have left the brigade but the friendships have endured.

Other highlights have been the changes in CFA, the development of equipment, PPC/E, vehicles, etc. Everything is designed to ensure we go home safely after each callout.

### How do you motivate your brigade members?

Setting a good example to everyone around me as the previously-mentioned mentors passed onto me. Ensuring the core values are what drives us to be the best we can be.

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

You get out of CFA what you put in. You need to balance your family life, work life and CFA in that order. Safety, safety and safety. Everyone should get to go home. Our job as firefighters is inherently dangerous but we control our destiny. Have fun when it's time for fun and do the hard work when it's needed.

A quote that I think is apt is "the best thing an old firefighter can teach a young firefighter is how to become an old firefighter".

### What do you like to do in your spare time?

I enjoy reading a good book (sci-fi, action/adventure books) and watching a good movie. I love to fish but haven't done it in some time. I love to travel, especially ocean cruising. My wife and I are about to embark on a ten-week journey around Europe. I'm slowly ticking off the bucket list destinations.



# Captain honoured for fiery truck rescue

**Jeffcott Fire Brigade Captain Brad Burke has received the Chief Officer's Commendation for Courage after risking his life to rescue a truck driver from a burning vehicle in late 2023.**

While driving through Jeffcott in the state's north-west, Brad saw a semi-trailer carrying grain leave the road and crash into trees. Acting instinctively, he pulled over and ran towards the wreckage.

"I saw the truck veer off and thought he was avoiding a bump, but then he kept going straight into the trees," Brad said.

"The first thing I did was ring my brother James (also a CFA member), who was only six minutes away. He called Triple Zero to alert emergency services.

"As I approached the crash my first thought was: 'I need to find the driver.' The door was pinned against a tree, but I heard him inside."

Finding driver Wayne Woods wedged between the seats, he realised the driver's door was blocked.

"I had to tear away the bonnet, break the glass and climb onto the engine bay to reach him," he said.

As he worked to free the driver, a fire started near the rear of the cabin and spread quickly.

"By the time I pulled him free, flames were spreading. James stayed on the phone with Triple Zero and rendered first-aid until paramedics arrived. This allowed me time to organise more CFA appliances to respond to the scene because the fire was starting to get away."

Not long after he had freed the driver, the truck was fully engulfed in flames.

"Thankfully crews arrived quickly and were able to stop it spreading."

The driver was air-lifted to hospital and was released within a week. He made a full recovery and is back driving again.

"You don't think, you just do it. The priority was getting him out and making sure no one else was inside," Brad said.

CFA District 18 Assistant Chief Fire Officer Gavin Wright praised Brad's actions.

"He acted with incredible bravery under extreme pressure, Gavin said. "His quick thinking and determination saved a life that day and his actions are truly worthy of this recognition."

When he received his award at Donald Fire Station, Brad (pictured above with Wayne) insisted he was just doing his job.

"It's humbling to receive this award but my only thought was getting the driver out safely. I didn't think about anything else," he said. "I just happened to be in the right place at the right time. If it were me in that truck, I'd hope someone would do the same."

"It's what we do as firefighters. We're here to protect our communities and that's all I was trying to do."

Brad is now one of just 19 recipients of the Chief Officer's Commendation for Courage since its introduction in 2012.

**STORY JAMES TAYLOR**





# QUARTERLY OPERATIONAL UPDATE



## Chief Officer's message for winter

As we head into what should be some cooler weather, I want to take a moment to sincerely thank each and every one of you for your unwavering commitment and hard work over the past months.

The Fire Danger Period was extended in many parts of the state, and I appreciate the efforts of all members to continue to respond to incidents and support their communities throughout what has been a long summer season.

The 2024-25 post summer season debrief program is well underway to capture opportunities for improvement from the season to enhance CFA's performance. Brigades, groups, districts and regions have been conducting their internal after-action reviews and many members have contributed to a Strike Team Leader Experience Survey. Thank you to those that have participated in these activities – your contributions are greatly appreciated.

The cooler months will turn our focus to the increase of structure fires, and home fire safety engagement. I thank everyone for their continued support in keep our communities safe through the winter period.

This quarter's Operational Update includes some key updates about topics that are highly relevant as we approach winter. I encourage you all to discuss the content of this update with your brigades and teams to ensure everyone is familiar with it.

### Breathing Apparatus (BA)

Post Fire Services Reform, the allocation policy is no longer applicable and brigades may have both MSA G1 Classic (G1C) and MSA G1 Electronic (G1E) in use at their locations. This topic provides information about the differences between G1C and G1E breathing apparatus. All BA

operators must ensure they are aware of the differences between these two BA sets. All members should also have general awareness that at any incident both types of BA may be present.

### Asbestos exposure and decontamination

Winter often sees an increase in structure fires. This also heightens the possibility of exposure to asbestos. It is important that members understand what is required when attending a structure with the possibility of asbestos. Brigades should ensure that appropriate measures are taken on scene with regard to minimising exposure and decontamination processes, as well as the recording requirements after the incident.

### Case studies

This edition's case studies include an arcade shop fire in Torquay and a structure fire in Tecoma where a CFA member had a close call with a 'bush pole.' Both case studies include points of what worked well and what could be improved, and questions that should be discussed by brigades so that everyone can learn from these incidents and apply the lessons in their own operational response.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for your efforts this season. You and your teams embody the true spirit of service. The resilience you displayed under immense pressure was truly commendable.

As we move forward, I urge you to take the time to look after yourselves and each other. Rest is essential, so please take the time to rest and recover after what was a demanding season. Seek out our wellbeing services if you need some additional support. They can be accessed 24/7 by calling 1800 959 232.

Use this QR code to access the Quarterly Update, along with a number of other topics that may be of interest.



### Importance of after-action reviews (AAR)

An AAR is a key component of post-incident activities, including incidents where CFA supported other emergency management agencies. The purpose of an AAR is to identify key observations, learning opportunities and good practice to ensure learning and improvement occurs.

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

only shared by the individuals involved but can also be documented and shared more widely in CFA for continuous improvement.

The best way to share AARs is to send them to the catchment officer and email them to [aar@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:aar@cfa.vic.gov.au).

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

What was planned?



What actually happened?



Why did it happen?



What would we do differently next time?

# MSA G1 breathing apparatus

Breathing apparatus (BA) is an important aspect of firefighting and is often used at incidents where heat, contaminants, toxic gases and smoke are a respiratory hazard to firefighters.

## CFA BA Allocation Policy

Post Fire Services Reform, the allocation policy is no longer applicable and brigades may have both MSA G1 Classic (G1C) and MSA G1 Electronic (G1E) at their location. Below, we outline the differences between G1C and G1E BA. All BA operators must ensure they are aware of the differences between the two BA sets, and all members should have general awareness that at any incident, both of these types of BA may be present.

This information is summarised from relevant CFA MSA G1 BA training materials.

All BA operators must ensure they are fully aware of the differences between the Classic and Electronic sets, and undertake regular and relevant skills maintenance using the MSA G1 set(s) they are qualified to use to ensure currency.

It is critical to note that any CFA member who wants to transition from operating a G1C to a G1E must undertake additional training with the G1E because of the significant differences in the operation and safety components of this BA set. This additional training must be delivered by a qualified trainer and assessor and recorded in LMS.

## MSA G1 Classic and MSA G1 Electronic BA sets

It is critically important to understand the differences between the MSA G1 BA sets. The table below highlights the differences between the sets.

Component	MSA G1 Classic (pneumatic)	MSA G1 Electronic (electronic)
Fully operational weight (including cylinder)	12.46kg	14.67kg
Battery	✗	✓
Buddy lights	✗	✓
Power module	✗	✓
Electronic low air alarm at 100 bar	✗	✓
Series of different electronic safety alarms	✗	✓
Distress signal unit (DSU)	MSA Motion Scout	MSA G1 Control Module
Pressure gauge	Analogue	Digital and Analogue
Fireground practices, FGOs (not common to both classic and electronic sets)	FGP 5.6.1 (2018) FGP 5.8 (2019)	FGP 5.9 (2019) FGP 5.10 (2019)
Used by other agencies in Victoria	Corrections Victoria (in Victorian prisons)	Fire Rescue Victoria, Ambulance Victoria, Airservices Australia (Aviation Rescue Firefighting Service)



MSA G1 Classic (G1C) BA set



MSA G1 Electronic (G1E) BA set





## Critical safety notes

- All CFA BA operators must be qualified and currently competent with PUA FIR207 Operate Breathing Apparatus open circuit.
- All BA deployments and operations must consider that there could be both MSA G1 BA set types in use at one incident. This is important for safety and crew welfare, especially if a BA-related emergency is experienced and where different BA safety components will be present.
- All CFA BA operators must be aware of the differences between safety components of the MSA G1C's Motion Scout DSU versus the MSA G1E's series of audible safety alarms and visual buddy lights.
- All CFA BA operators must follow the relevant CFA training, reference manuals and protective equipment FGP's for each set type.
- Some locations in CFA may have both MSA G1C and G1E BA sets available for use by qualified and competent CFA BA operators.
- CFA BA operators transitioning from using an MSA G1C to an MSA G1E must be aware of the increased weight associated with a G1E set and need to be in an appropriate operational condition to avoid injury.
- Skills maintenance is a requirement for any CFA firefighter to retain their CFA BA operator competency. It is highly recommended to complete regular BA skills maintenance and related tasks with all MSA G1 BA set types at their location to ensure BA operator proficiency.

## Further resources

All the resources below are available on Members Online ([members.cfa.vic.gov.au](https://members.cfa.vic.gov.au)).

- CFA MSA G1 Classic reference manual for information about the components and operation.
- CFA MSA G1 Electronic reference manual for information about the components and operation.
- CFA Operate Breathing Apparatus Classic Brigade Training Resource, prepared by Structural Instructor Chris Maloney, Version 2 04112024, p30.
- CFA Operate Breathing Apparatus Electronic Brigade Training Resource, prepared by Structural Instructor Chris Maloney, Version 1 02082022, p24.
- CFA Safety Alert No.67 (April 2019) Distress Signal Unit – Thermal Alarm.
- CFA Operate Breathing Apparatus Electronic Brigade Training Resource, prepared by Structural Instructor Chris Maloney, Version 1 02082022, p11.

# Asbestos

There is a potential for firefighters to be exposed to asbestos, especially at structure fires.

The health and safety of CFA members is always the top priority. It is vital that members are familiar with SOP 10.03 Asbestos Incidents to ensure appropriate measures are taken to maintain safety and minimise environmental impacts.



Members should also be aware of Operations Bulletin 2023/003 (v2) Asbestos Management and PPC Decontamination at Incidents and its attachments, which include asbestos procedure checklists and a request for cleaning contaminated CFA personal protective clothing.

## Personal protection and safety

### Personal protective clothing and equipment (PPC/E)

At a minimum, all CFA members involved in an incident with the potential for asbestos exposure, should wear wildfire or structural PPC and a P2 or P3 respirator (certified to AS/NZS 1716).

Those involved in decontamination after the incident should also wear disposable nitrile gloves (not firefighting gloves) and disposable particle barrier coveralls (at a minimum certified to EN ISO 13982-1 Type 5) where available and without wildfire or structural PPC.

### Personal decontamination

All people who may have been exposed to asbestos should be decontaminated at the incident.

The members being decontaminated and those assisting in the process should continue to wear their P2 or P3 respirator during the decontamination process to avoid the potential of breathing in any asbestos particles that may be dislodged during the decontamination process. PPC should be kept damp to minimise fibres becoming airborne while doffing PPC.

Boots, helmets, BA cylinders and harnesses, hoses and other equipment should be washed on scene with copious quantities of water, and dried. They should only be recommissioned into service after a visual inspection to determine there is no residual potential contaminate present.

### Managing potentially contaminated clothing and equipment

It is important that contaminated PPC/E is dealt with safely. Operations Bulletin 2023/003 (v2) Asbestos Management and PPC Decontamination at Incidents sets out the process, including appropriate labelling and bagging.

Any disposable materials used during the process (gloves, wipes, masks, etc) should be placed in a separate asbestos plastic bag and labelled.

There are various supplies required to appropriately handle contaminated PPC/E, so ensure your brigade or district has a supply of, or access to, necessary quantities to enable compliance with the SOP.

## Incident operations

It is important to carry out certain immediate actions during an incident, in addition to wearing appropriate PPC/E, to minimise exposure and contamination.

These immediate actions include informing all personnel, restricting entry to the area and establishing hot and cold zones. Consider appointing a safety adviser to assist the incident controller with risk management issues.

SOP 10.03 procedure 3 'Incident Operations' sets out a detailed list of considerations including:

- Identify and secure the suspected contaminated area. All non-essential CFA and non-CFA members should remain outside the contaminated area.
- All CFA members and vehicles should remain upwind where practicable, ensuring vehicle air conditioners and ventilation is shut off, all vehicle doors and lockers are closed, and windows are wound up.
- If the fire is at a domestic premises, where possible make enquiries with the owner/occupier regarding the presence, location and type of any asbestos.
- In commercial properties, access to the Asbestos Register should be requested from the property owner/occupier.
- Where possible, asbestos-containing material should be kept damp. High pressure jet streams should be avoided where practicable to minimise break up of asbestos-containing material.
- Contain fire water run-off as far as practicable and seek advice (through the DDO or SDO) from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for significant asbestos incidents.

## Recording exposure

CFA needs to keep records where members were exposed or suspected of being exposed to asbestos.

Following an incident where asbestos is suspected to have been present, the incident controller must ensure that Personal Injury/Incident Report(s) are submitted and recorded on CFASafe incorporating the following information:

- Names and related details of all members involved in the incident.
- The risk controls implemented at the incident to mitigate the risks from asbestos exposure.
- Detailed information relating to duties undertaken by crew members at the fire/incident relating to their exposure.
- Type of structure involved and areas where asbestos was suspected.
- The type and condition of the suspected material (eg cement sheeting).

Operations Bulletin 2023/003 (v2) Asbestos Management and PPC Decontamination at Incidents can be accessed using this QR code.





# Tecoma house fire – ‘bush pole’ incident



## Summary

In early December 2024, CFA crews were called to a house fire which unfortunately couldn't be saved.

The home was built on a moderately steep block with a split-level design. Large hardwood poles, called bush poles, were used as columns throughout the structure in an A-frame style construction.

During the overhaul stage a bush pole fell and struck a firefighter. This accident led to a review of and change in the overhaul strategies and tactics.

## Incident overview

On 4 December at about 6pm, crews from Belgrave Fire Brigade responded to a structure fire in Rocksleigh Avenue, Tecoma. Initial reports stated there was smoke issuing, flames visible and sounds of explosions. The Belgrave pumper was first on scene at 6.10pm and immediately gave a wordback to Firecom of 'Structure fire not yet under control' and to make pumpers four.

Further support arrived shortly after from Belgrave, Sassafras, Belgrave Heights and South and Upwey brigades.

When the brigades arrived, the structure was fully alight and external firefighting strategies were employed. As the firefight continued, the decision was made to request further support from Bayswater BA van, Yellingbo Rehab

and the Upwey lighting unit. Ambulance Victoria was also on scene to monitor firefighters' welfare.

At 6.12pm a further call to Firecom reported that the fire was spreading to a neighbouring property which was situated on the street behind the original property. Sassafras pumper was requested to go to Dickinson Street where the house was situated to commence exposure protection.

By 7.20pm, most of the fire had been knocked down. However, as the centre of the structure was still alight, crews continued with an external attack because of the risk of structural collapse. As this was a large home with unique construction and significant structure collapse, overhaul and final extinguishment was difficult and slow.

Several hours after the fire was knocked down and well into the overhaul stage, a bush pole fell without warning and struck a firefighter on the helmet followed by a glancing blow to the thigh. The firefighter was assessed by Ambulance Victoria personnel who concluded that the injuries were minor with only bruising to the leg.

Firefighters remained on scene until the early hours of the next day, continuing to extinguish hot spots and to help protect the point of origin until fire investigators arrived on scene.



## What worked well

**Sectorisation:** Operationally, the decision to sectorise to manage the span of control effectively highlighted that one person cannot oversee all elements of the fireground. The Incident Management Structure (IMS), which limited supervision to six individuals, included an operations officer, two sector commanders and a safety officer. Establishing northern and southern sectors was crucial in supporting this structure and ensuring manageable supervision.

**Safety officer:** Although appointing a safety officer is not always common outside urban environments, the members at this incident benefited from having an experienced individual in this role. This person was instrumental in observing the fireground, reinforcing the importance of taking on board a safety officer's observations and recommendations.

## Lessons identified

**Overhaul:** This event highlighted the hazards associated with completing final overhaul of a significantly damaged structure in the dark. In hindsight, members believed it should have been recognised sooner. This was a major conclusion from an incident management team meeting where the current overhaul strategies and tactics were reviewed and changed.

Specifically, it was determined that conditions were too dangerous to continue overhaul, the site was steep, floors on the split levels were burnt out in places, there was significant structural collapse, it was dark, and crews had been on scene for many hours and members were fatigued. It was determined there was no threat of fire spread if areas reignited.

Police officers who provided crime scene guard overnight were briefed and CFA crews left the scene. Crews planned to return in daylight hours with a CFA truck to meet the municipal building surveyor and fire investigators, and consider the use of an excavator to more safely complete overhaul.

**Restricting access:** After the fire had been knocked down and the risk of spread was minimal, crews could have been removed from the building collapse envelope. Areas of the building that could not be properly assessed in the dark for structural stability could have been cordoned off to restrict access to all personnel on scene including firefighters. These areas could be more safely assessed the following day.

**Local group:** The local CFA group could have been used to provide members to crew one truck that remained on scene overnight for any flare-ups. This would have prevented overnight disturbance to the primary and support brigades.

## Questions for your brigade

- Does your brigade typically appoint a safety officer and are they empowered and encouraged to constantly review strategies and tactics and report back to the incident controller?
- Has your group of brigades discussed capability and a process to activate 'fire duty' overnight to relieve the first responding brigades?

## Conclusion

Alternative construction methods and materials may not perform as expected compared to traditional ones. Bush poles, for example, are not uniform in weight distribution and may not be straight. If supporting timbers burn through, the poles can fall without warning.

If you have any lessons to share email [lessons-management-centre@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:lessons-management-centre@cfa.vic.gov.au)





# Arcade shop fire in Torquay



## Summary

On 14 April 2024, CFA crews responded to a structure fire in the main street of Torquay. The fire started in a restaurant and spread to six shops in the arcade. Firefighters battled the blaze for more than three hours and it was brought under control at 3am the following morning.

## Incident overview

At about 11.20pm, firefighters were paged to a Triple Zero call for a structure fire on Gilbert Street, Torquay.

Although there wasn't a pre-incident response plan for this specific restaurant, the premises is in an area of enhanced response protocols to structure fires because of the structural and infrastructure risks. This means that additional resources are automatically dispatched to assist at any structure fire in this part of Torquay's response zone.

The enhanced structural response in this zone includes automatic dispatch of three pumpers and an aerial appliance, ensuring that the appropriate resources are available to combat a structure fire.

Torquay Fire brigade was the first to arrive on scene. On arrival, the crew established control in a timely fashion, then provided a detailed sitrep that stated the fire was not yet under control and four shops were involved. Based on this information, the Triple Zero Victoria team leader and fire services communications controller provided early notifications to the required parties, including the state duty officer, and considered any required move-ups or requests for additional vehicles to respond.

Fire Rescue Victoria's Pumper 64 and Ladder Platform 63 were already en route, with Pumper 63B moving up to Station 64. Shortly after, this arrangement was altered with Pumper 63B requested to respond, along with Grovedale brigade Pumper 1, Highton brigade Tanker 1 and Ocean Grove brigade BA Unit.

Requests were also made for the power and gas companies to attend, as well as Ambulance Victoria for firefighter monitoring and welfare.

The firefight, which continued while additional resources were responding, was made difficult by the compressed ceiling material in the arcade. It was difficult to extinguish and required extended use of BA that placed a strain on the availability of qualified personnel and BA resources.

To combat this, the Ocean Grove BA Unit was paged just after midnight so that additional cylinders were available. However, after further discussions the incident controller (IC) and district duty officer (DDO) determined that further support would be required to sustain BA usage. Consequently, at about 1.45am Bayswater BA Support was dispatched. This enabled cylinders to be refilled on-site and significantly reduced the workload in later returning the BA cylinders to the sets.

With consideration to member welfare and the duration of the incident, Torquay SES was responded in the early hours of the morning to supply lighting and hot drinks.

At about 2.50am, Barwon Water was notified there was broken pipework throughout the building that was leaking and creating a hazard.

The fire was reported to be under control at about 3am and most crews returned to their stations.

Shortly after, the gas company attended again for a secondary leak. At about 8.15am, the scene was declared safe after the leak was managed and most of the blacking out was complete. Torquay Pumper 1 and Tanker 1 returned to the scene later that afternoon to continue with blacking out any hotspots that had the potential to reignite.



## What worked well

**Sectorisation:** The early establishment of a management structure including an operations officer and multiple sectors with appropriate crewing, along with support from the District 7 DDO, allowed the IC to manage the event within the span of control.

**Member welfare:** Ambulance Victoria was on scene to monitor crews. Also, CFA collaborated with IGA management to provide refreshments and food during the incident.

**RMR channels:** The early allocation of the RMR fireground channel by the IC allowed for situational awareness for arriving crews. Also, when the Bayswater BA Support was requested, a 'statewide' RMR channel was allocated to allow communications with the vehicle while en route.

**Safety officer:** The IC appointed a safety officer to assist with firefighter safety. This was established early on and no injuries were noted at the incident.

## Lessons identified

**Utilities (gas and electricity):** The arcade had an external gas meter that was destroyed by the fire and became a flame thrower in the arcade that hindered firefighting operations. The standard response from utility companies (within an hour) is generally suitable. However, at times a quick response may be required and may not always be possible. Members should consider whether utilities will be required to attend early in the response to enable sufficient response time and minimise delays.

**BA control:** BA control was not established until later in the event. Earlier establishment of a BA control point would have assisted in developing a BA resourcing plan.

**Forcible entry training:** Accessing the IGA building behind the shopping arcade was delayed because of the lack of training on forcible entry equipment. This task was allocated to the FRV crew when it arrived.

## Questions for your brigade

- Have your brigade's fireground leaders considered and practised sectorisation of incidents in complex/large structural firefighting environments?
- Has your brigade considered tactics when power/gas isolations are delayed?
- If you're in an urban environment, do you know which specialist vehicles are available in your area and are you familiar with them?
- The extended use of BA due to some of the building materials involved created challenges in maintaining BA sets and operators. What other challenges may be present and what would a BA resourcing plan look like for BA wearers and sets?

## Conclusion

This incident underscores the importance of preparedness, resource management, and interagency collaboration in effectively handling complex fire emergencies.

Despite the absence of a pre-incident plan, fire detection and suppression systems, the prompt arrival and control established by CFA crews enabled efficient coordination and resource allocation. The collaboration of CFA and FRV firefighters and the escalation of response efforts were crucial in managing the fire, which affected multiple buildings.

We encourage all members to discuss this incident and case study within your brigade to understand how it might apply to you.

If you have any lessons to share email [lessons-management-centre@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:lessons-management-centre@cfa.vic.gov.au)





# Beaufort Fire Station completed

**Beaufort Fire Brigade members were officially handed the keys to their new station and heavy tanker at the end of March in an event that celebrated the past and present.**

Beaufort Fire Brigade Captain Tony Neville said the brigade, which has been operating for 151 years, was thrilled with the new modern station.

"Everything flows better," Tony said. "All our trucks are now in the one bay. We used to have separate sheds and had to move cars around to get to equipment.

"I think it may have also helped with recruitment as we have five new volunteers waiting to do their General Firefighter training."

The new station includes essential amenities such as a motor room with three drive-through bays, offices, workshops, operational areas, meeting rooms, change rooms for both men and women, and unisex ambulant facilities. Externally, the station has a car park and a six-bay storage shed.

To mark the occasion a Willys truck, running cart and leather fire beater were on display to show how far CFA had evolved in the past 80 years.

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said there was no better place to mark CFA's 80th anniversary than with one of the oldest brigades in Victoria.

"This brigade has been there since CFA's inception and it is just wonderful to be celebrating here surrounded by the history of this long-running brigade," Jason said.

"This new facility marks the beginning of a new part of this brigade's history and one that will only improve the service CFA members provide to their local area."

Beaufort Fire Brigade responds to more than 100 callouts a year, attending bushfires, structural fires, car accidents and heavy vehicle incidents, as well as supporting emergency response efforts of surrounding brigades.

STORY BRIGID ENNIS



## Two new trucks at Woodend

**Woodend Fire Brigade members have welcomed a new medium tanker and rehab unit vehicle to their engine bay.**

Gathering at the fire station in early May, Woodend Captain Steve Ritchie, who's been a brigade member for 31 years, said the brigade was proud to have a modern firefighting fleet.

The new medium tanker has a 2,650-litre water capacity that allows for rapid and controlled suppression of fires directly from the vehicle.

"Our old tanker served us well for 25 years but this new vehicle provides advanced capabilities and ensures safe transport to and from incident sites," Steve said.

"It's a game changer for us. This tanker is a four-wheel drive and comfortably seats a crew of five, whereas our old tanker was a two-wheel drive and had our crews squished in together or travelling on the back of the truck."

The new rehab unit replaced an existing one, and is better equipped to monitor and maintain firefighter health on the fireground.

"We've replaced our makeshift unit with a purpose-built vehicle that provides enhanced safety and comfort for our team," Steve said.

"It comfortably seats four crew members in the twin cabin and is better configured to store health monitoring

systems, lighting, cool chairs, water, wash facilities, salt and sugar boosters, and first-aid kits.

"It will significantly improve on-site health support for firefighters, ensuring our members have a safe space to rest and recover during prolonged incidents.

"Responding to more than 230 callouts in the past two years, the improved features of both vehicles will significantly help with our crew's communication and teamwork when responding to incidents."

CFA District 2 Commander Hugh Kelly congratulated the brigade on their new additions.

"These vehicles are a testament to the dedication of Woodend Fire Brigade and the community that supports them," Hugh said.

"Both additions will be valuable assets to help keep the local community safe, while also ensuring the safety and wellbeing of brigade members."

The new medium tanker and rehab unit were made possible through the Victorian Government's Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program and significant brigade contributions from community and business donations.



STORY JOSEPHINE SALTALAMACCHIA



# THE TWO OF US

## Mark and Hayley King

**Two of Us** is a new feature series that profiles pairs of people at CFA who share a meaningful connection such as family members, friend or mentors. The King name is synonymous with Yallourn North Fire Brigade. Mark King AFSM, first joined CFA in 1992. He was captain for 17 years, and two years ago handed the reins over to his daughter Hayley who is continuing the King tradition.

### Mark King AFSM

My brother Lance has been in CFA for 46 years; I've been in it for 30. As a kid growing up, I really didn't know much about it. Lance was in the running team and Juniors. But yeah, it's a big part of life.

Hayley started at the brigade as a Junior, but she's grown up around the station, even before I got involved. Lance was captain before I took over, so it's definitely been in the family. My son, Hayley's brother, is in the brigade as well.

It's been great to see Hayley progress through the ranks. I think she's just gone ahead in leaps and bounds. I was lucky enough to take her on a strike team up Mount Hotham way. It was her first strike team and I was her crew leader, so that was a good experience. That's a memory that really stands out.

It was a very proud moment to see Hayley voted in as captain. Basically, I thought it was time for me to step down. I tried to do it just before COVID-19, but that put a halt on things for a little while. It was a bit of a changing of the guard with some other roles too, so I'm proud of the brigade management team as a whole.

I'm probably a little bit more supportive of her now that she's in the captain role. It was a bit of an adjustment for me at the start, having to step back and let her do her thing. Every now and then I just guide her and the other officers. But she has certainly grown from it; that's for sure. I think her position working as a community engagement coordinator for CFA helps a lot as well. That's brought her out of her shell. As a kid, she wouldn't even ring up and make an appointment – we had to do all that for her. It's certainly different now.

She's got a really sound knowledge of things. She stands up for herself, so she's not one to be pushed around. She works well with all volunteers and staff. It's good to see. Like I said, as a kid she would never do that, but she has to now.

I think she still looks out for her old dad and texts him a bit. I kind of let her steer her own ship, and then just step in if she needs it. She'll come to me if she wants guidance. I think





she has plenty of good support from the staff that she works with as well.

Sometimes when both Hayley and I are at a job people will come and talk to me rather than talk to her. So, I just point them to Hayley and say that's who you need to talk to. I've been around for a long time, so they know the face. I don't think they mean anything by it; they're probably just not used to me not being in that role any more.

I think we know where the line is. I think, like any father, I look out for my daughter, and if someone doesn't toe the line I can get a bit cranky sometimes. But it's good to see her run jobs and the way she handles them.

She's heavily involved in the community in what she does and she promotes CFA and the brigade really well. I think that she's doing a fantastic job. She interacts well, like I said, with the rest of the team and members. She's very supportive of everyone and she's really grown into the captain role.

## Hayley King

We basically grew up on the fire station. Every Sunday we were there helping out around the station. I remember very early on when we used to have Captain Koala come over from the fire station and visit us at kindergarten (see photo above). Little did I know at the time, that was actually my dad. So it's just crazy to look back at all the photos and just see the different things and the stuff that we grew up with.

I think joining CFA was basically inevitable. I loved Juniors, I loved being on station, I loved seeing all the things that my dad was doing and the team was doing down there. So, it wasn't even really a thought. It was where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do.

I don't think my dad and I would have the same bond if we didn't volunteer together. We're really close. We always talk about the camaraderie and the family environment at brigades, and it's kind of just heightened that for dad and me. We're close and we talk about all sorts of things. When I go onto the fireground and people recognise my last name I already have that built-in respect.

One of my strongest memories of volunteering with dad was my first ever strike team. It was an ultralight strike team. We were based out of Omeo, and we were going into Mount Hotham and Dargo. Being an ultralight strike team, it was just the two of us in the truck. There was a lot of 'hurry

up and wait' sort of thing, but it was night shift and it was five days, and it was the first time I'd been out there and done that. It was really cool to learn from dad.

Taking over as captain was kind of surreal. Dad had been doing it for a long time. I really wanted him to be able to enjoy life and hand over to someone else – but I didn't think it was going to be me. I was the first female lieutenant in the brigade and started as the fourth lieutenant. But learning from him and building my confidence, as we got closer to the election I really thought I could give it a go. I wasn't sure whether I'd have the support of the brigade but it's been amazing.

I learn a lot from him and I think him seeing me as captain, we learn from each other. I might not do things the way he does but he's very respectful of me having my own voice and being a strong leader.

I think the main thing I take away from him is that he always put the community at the forefront of what we did. I've made sure we continue to do this through all the decisions we make. The work that we do is always focused on making sure our community is at the forefront.

Seeing dad receive an Australian Fire Service Medal was amazing. To see him in that room and see all the different people getting those awards just really cemented that that was exactly what he deserved; the effort and the work and the time that he puts into the organisation for free. He does it because he just wants to give back. It was so humbling and I was so proud.

Dad's a big softy at heart. He has that strong persona, but he is definitely always making sure everyone is OK. He's always fighting for his volunteers and for what is right. But the time that he puts into the brigade even now when he's not captain is amazing. Nobody sees all the work he does in the background..

I just hope I can do our family name proud and that I can follow in his footsteps and make positive changes for our community and for CFA. Just supporting and continuing the hard work that he's already done.

*'The Two of Us' will be a regular feature on Members Online. If you know of a dynamic duo from your brigade, nominate them by emailing [internalcomms@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:internalcomms@cfa.vic.gov.au)*

STORY ALISON SMIRNOFF

# SILENCE IS DEADLY

## Are there working smoke alarms in your bedrooms?

Most fatal house fires start at night and the smell of smoke alone won't wake you up.

Victoria's fire services recommend smoke alarms be installed in all bedrooms, hallways and living areas.

Smoke alarms should be:

- Powered by a long-life battery
- Installed on the ceiling at least 30cm from the wall
- Interconnected so that when any alarm activates, all smoke alarms will sound
- Replaced after 10 years regardless of the type

**Silence is deadly**

**For more information visit [vic.gov.au/smoke-alarms](https://vic.gov.au/smoke-alarms)**



# 2025 Smoke Alarm Campaign

**This year, CFA and FRV are taking a stronger approach to the 2025 smoke alarm campaign based on insights from post-campaign research.**

The findings highlighted the need to emphasise the importance of having smoke alarms in bedrooms and pointed out several areas for improvement, particularly the need to convey a stronger sense of urgency and to stress that having smoke alarms outside bedrooms or in hallways is not enough.

CFA believes that using various assets from the previous campaign 'Silence is Deadly', will create more impact. This campaign – which featured relatable people including a baby, a middle-aged couple, and an elderly couple – will resonate with a wider audience and be more effective at reaching different demographics.

Additionally, the images show a fire occurring before the smoke alarm activates, emphasising the importance and urgency of having smoke alarms in bedrooms.

To further emphasise this message, this year's campaign will include a series of shorter, darker animations that highlight the

significance of not having smoke alarms in bedrooms when the bedroom door is closed.

The aim of the campaign is to increase awareness of the critical need for working smoke alarms in Victorian homes, especially in bedrooms and living areas.

The campaign will be promoted in two media bursts using social media and digital, print, radio advertising, as well as media stories and promoted to CALD audiences.

Advertising will direct people to a dedicated joint campaign website: [vic.gov.au/smoke-alarms](https://vic.gov.au/smoke-alarms).

CFA has extensive CALD language information on our website including animations and brochures.

All collateral/resources are available to our members on the Community Engagement Content Portal under Campaign Resources>Smoke Alarm (go to [cfa.vic.gov.au/cecontentportal](https://cfa.vic.gov.au/cecontentportal)). We encourage brigades to use these resources on their Facebook/Instagram pages.

To find out more about the campaign or the resources available please contact [nancy.thompson@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:nancy.thompson@cfa.vic.gov.au)

## Smoke Alarm Action Day: 1 June 2025

CFA participated in a Smoke Alarm Action Day on 1 June, along with other Australian states, when people were told about the importance of having a working smoke alarm installed and what to do if they don't. It highlighted how important functional smoke alarms are to preventing fire-related tragedies.







# North-east women challenged

**A group of CFA women from the north-east recently gathered at the Ovens Valley Homestead to break down barriers and push themselves out of their comfort zones.**

North East Region hosted its first Women's Challenge Camp from 2 to 4 May, where women from across the region came together to face physical and mental challenges while delving into personal development, leadership, team building and networking sessions.

The camp began on Friday when participants got to know each other through fun ice breaker activities. As they learned more about each other, the trust between them started to build.

On Saturday participants enjoyed a presentation about CFA safety before settling in for an invigorating and inspiring panel discussion from trailblazing women in CFA about the challenges women face and how they could all go about making change.

Participants then took their newly-built trust and encouraged each other through a physically demanding high ropes course, cheering as they conquered heights and celebrated at the end of the flying fox.

That evening the women had the opportunity to ask questions of North East Region Deputy Chief Officer Gavin Thompson AFSM and District 24 Assistant Chief Fire Officer Brett Myers.

Tanya Lumley, one of the event organisers and member of the Volunteer Sustainability Team in the region, said it was important to create spaces like these for CFA women so they can learn and feel supported.

"The goal is to have more people learn about themselves in a space where there are no barriers, real or perceived, where they can speak up and really step into themselves," Tanya said.

"The more empowered women there are, the less we will need these manufactured safe spaces because the whole world becomes a safe place for us."

Camp participant Dana Last from Strathbogie Fire Brigade said the panel discussion was a particular highlight for her.

"I have met some of the most wonderful people here," Dana said. "It is an opportunity for us to step out of our comfort zones and enhance our knowledge and skills in a totally safe

space where we don't feel like we have to step back.

"I feel so inspired and am in awe of what the women on the panel have done and the paths they have created for the rest of us."

On Sunday, after building new friendships and connections, the women all enjoyed a session of yoga, learned more about their thinking patterns in a workshop, and enjoyed a final presentation by Anne Leadbeater OAM. An independent national consultant on disaster recovery and community resilience, Anne was recognised with an OAM following the 2019-20 bushfires where she helped lead her community through recovery. She spoke to the group about leadership and resilience.

The weekend was modelled on the successful South East Region Women's Challenge Camp which has been running for seven years.

"I hope the camp in the north-east will continue to grow," Tanya said.

**STORY BRITTANY CARLSON**



# 2025 State Championships

**More than 100 CFA brigades competed in the 2025 CFA/VFBV State Firefighter Championships in Mooroopna in March.**

Thousands of people were welcomed to the competition with an opening parade and remarks from CFA Board Chair Jo Plummer and VFBV State President Samantha Collins. The event was officially opened by Emergency Services Minister Vicki Ward MP.

The Urban Juniors battled it out on 22 and 23 March, with Melton A crowned Urban Junior champions for the fifth year in a row, and their sixth win in seven years.

Melton Fire Brigade 2nd lieutenant Bailey Rhodes took over the role as coach of Melton A from his father Anthony who had been in the role for around 20 years. He said it was an emotional victory after a rocky start to the competition.

"The team struggled in the first few events but the comeback was incredible to watch," Bailey said. "I shed a few tears after the last event which we had to win to win the Championship, I'm not usually an emotional person but I'm immensely proud of the Juniors and all their hard work. The team trained for about four hours a week from October.

"The Championships are all I've known since I was born. I've watched dad run in them for many years and competed with my whole family, so to take the reins of the team and see them put in all the hard work is an honour and a moment I'll never forget."

The Rural Juniors Champion team was Napoleons-Enfield A, the Rural Seniors event was won by Leopold A, and the winners of the Urban Seniors event was Melton A.







Senior runner Hayley Rennie from Tatura Fire Brigade is one of the many longstanding runners for the brigade who for the first time broke her own record.

"I have been running for about 12 years, and I'm very competitive. I came first in the one person Marshall and broke my own personal record," Hayley said.

"We all celebrate our wins together. It is so exciting to see those who have been trying to place first for the past five years, get a first this year.

"It's also great that we have the women's events now. We have more opportunities to win and to better ourselves."

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan once again rallied his Chief's Chargers for some healthy competition. However, as Jason said, "the young kids wiped the floor with us".

The corporate tent featured displays from many CFA areas, including operational training, infrastructure, Fire Medical Response, aviation, Planned Burn Taskforce, community engagement and volunteerism.

At the Urban Junior Championships it was announced that Stawell will host the State Firefighter Championships next year, a decision that pleased Stawell Fire Brigade members.

"We ran the State Championships in Stawell in 1995, 2000 and 2006 so it will be great to have people back in the town, supporting the area especially after the bushfires over the Christmas period," Stawell Fire Brigade Captain Mal Nicholson said.

"The championships are also a great opportunity to showcase the area and local community to CFA volunteers from across the state. We know the Stawell community and Northern Grampians Shire will get behind us to make the 2026 State Championships a fantastic event."

To see all this year's results go to [vfbv.com.au](http://vfbv.com.au).





# Boronia pays it forward



**Many of CFA's smaller brigades face financial challenges and may not be able to afford essential equipment and items. The Pay it Forward Program facilitates urban brigades that have more opportunities to raise funds through community support to give items to smaller brigades.**

"While on strike teams, members of Boronia Fire Brigade realised how lucky they were when they saw that some brigades needed more efficient equipment to carry out their role, and our members wanted to help," Boronia Fire Brigade Captain Ramon Relph said. They turned to District 13 Brigade Administrative Support Officer Kelly Krajnc for advice.

"I found out that Taminick and North Winton brigade desperately needed carpet in their meeting room as it was cold and the acoustics were terrible," Kelly said. "The brigade couldn't afford carpet and as it is a small community there was no real opportunity to fundraise."

Another brigade short of funds, Nulla Vale, needed a Protek branch.

Kelly contacted Boronia Fire Brigade Captain Ramon Relph again who offered support to both Taminick and North Winton and Nulla Vale brigades for the items they needed after discussing it with brigade members.

"When talking to Ramon, it was clear he exuded enthusiasm for this initiative and wanted to step up to help other brigades that didn't have the same level of financial support as his brigade," Kelly said.

"Nulla Vale brigade initially asked for one branch and one hose, but we didn't think that was enough so we gave them two branches and two hoses," Ramon said.

In late September 2024, Boronia brigade members travelled 120 kilometres to Nulla Vale to personally deliver a range of branches (including two new Protek 366s) and 25mm hoses. The brigade also donated turnout gear hooks which were salvaged from Boronia's recent fire station upgrades. These will be shared among the group.

"Nulla Vale made us feel welcome, like part of their brigade," Ramon said. "It was a really enjoyable day."

"This trip also opened the door to helping other brigades. I talked to the captains of Pyalong and Tooborac brigades and found out they also needed branches. After speaking to my brigade members we also bought two branches for each brigade."

The following weekend, Boronia members travelled 240 kilometres to Taminick, north-west of Wangaratta, to see firsthand the difference carpeting the meeting room had made for Taminick and North Winton brigade.

"Taminick and North Winton's meeting room is the hub of the local community with several groups using it," Ramon said. "Having cold concrete wasn't pleasant. The carpet has made a huge difference."

Boronia members also donated funds to help the brigade buy an Honour Board to display the proud history of their membership. Boronia members were amazed by the strong family legacies supporting the brigade since 1910.

The members of Taminick and North Winton organised a barbecue lunch and took Boronia members on a tour of the local area to talk about their two major risks – the Winton Wetlands and Warby Ranges.

Boronia brigade members see Pay it Forward as a long-term initiative. With help from Kelly, they now look through the list of old VESEP applications and target the minor equipment requests.

"Our plan is to help one or two brigades every six months," Ramon said. "We want this to continue."

"This initiative has also been beneficial for my brigade members. They see how rural brigades operate and protect their communities, and we've built new friendships."

If your brigade is interested in this initiative please reach out to your local BASO.

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL



# Safety at caravan parks

**Caravan parks are an iconic part of the Australian landscape. In Victoria. There are more than 450 caravan parks, with about nine out of 10 in the urban, peri-urban and regional areas protected by CFA. They range from traditional tourist parks to residential villages that can resemble housing estates.**

Caravan parks play an essential role in the local economy, with about 9.2 million visitor nights spent in these parks each year, contributing almost \$0.5 billion annually.

Most traditional tourist parks experience their highest occupancy rates during the Fire Danger Period, attracting visitors who may be unfamiliar with the region. Many of these parks are also in areas of high bushfire risk and this combination can create serious challenges for firefighters. For CFA it is vital to not only protect lives and property during an emergency but to help ensure business continuity for these parks and the communities they support.

CFA plays a central role in ensuring fire safety in caravan parks. Since 2010, CFA's *Caravan Park Fire Safety Guidelines* have been incorporated into legislation that regulates caravan parks. The guidelines set the minimum safety standards for fire protection and emergency management, covering how movable dwellings and park facilities should be designed, installed and maintained to keep residents safe.

Operationally, they set the minimum requirements for firefighting infrastructure, access for fire trucks and firefighters and emergency management planning. Park operators must regularly get a fire safety report from CFA and parks are inspected to make sure they meet the required safety standards.

In 2024, CFA released an updated version of the guidelines, building on the previous edition. This update followed an in-depth 12-month review conducted by CFA's Specialist Risk and Fire Safety Unit, which analysed 10 years of data from CFA's statewide approval and inspection processes. The review identified recurring issues, including the most commonly requested variations to the safety standards and instances of

non-compliance. It also became clear that a more nuanced approach could be taken to achieve the fire safety objectives.

The updated 2024 guidelines balance the need for robust fire safety measures with a streamlined compliance process, making it easier for park operators to meet their obligations while ensuring optimal safety outcomes for the community and firefighters.

The Specialist Risk and Fire Safety Unit works closely with districts, park operators, managers, local councils, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, and industry bodies to ensure parks are as safe as possible for visitors, residents and our firefighters.

By providing expert advice during the planning and design phases, conducting inspections and providing fire safety reports for council registration processes, CFA ensures that any identified safety issues can be addressed. This collaborative effort is essential to maintain a safe environment.

We encourage all brigades in areas that contain caravan parks to familiarise themselves with the guidelines. Brigades will often be the first call for park operators wanting advice about compliance or to request an inspection, but you should be aware that there's a suite of legislative requirements the park must comply with. To ensure consistent advice is given across the state, queries should be directed to CFA's Specialist Risk and Fire Safety team.

Brigades should:

- regularly engage with park operators to familiarise themselves with the park, its layout and firefighting equipment
- carry out training in the park with the approval of the park operator
- forward requests from operators for fire safety reports, inspections, review of emergency management planning or advice about compliance to [caravanparks@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:caravanparks@cfa.vic.gov.au).

For more information about caravan park safety use the QR code.



**STORY MARC BURTON-WALTER**



# ‘Give us a hand’ campaign



**The ‘Give us a hand’ recruitment campaign was the first time in 10 years that CFA had run a coordinated, statewide recruitment campaign.**

The decision to run a campaign was the result of continued enquiries and frustration from brigades about the lack of holistic support provided for recruitment activities.

The campaign was grounded on comprehensive market research and has been running statewide for the past two years with the aim of increasing recruitment enquiries from young people (aged 18 to 44 years) and diverse groups, as well as growing the capacity of daytime response for brigades.

The campaign reached up to seven million Victorians and led to almost 4,000 volunteer expressions of interest (EOI) being registered on the Volunteer Recruitment Hub.

After two years of focused recruitment campaigning, CFA commissioned an independent evaluation to assess the campaign’s performance against the targets and discover what worked well and where there was room for improvement.

The evaluation reviewed 12 key documents, spoke to 98 volunteers and staff across CFA and analysed 224 responses across two online surveys.

Group General Manager Strategic Services Robyn Harris, who was the executive sponsor of the evaluation, said the report showed that public enquiries spiked during the periods the campaign was in the public eye.

“This evaluation outlines the key successes of the campaign as

well as the areas for improvement to answer questions about its viability for future years,” Robyn said.

“The evaluation didn’t examine the conversion of EOIs into actual new recruits, as there are many more steps and issues, outside of promotion, that have an impact on a volunteer’s commitment and ability to follow through the process. But what the evaluation highlighted was a need to undertake a broader assessment of the recruiting and onboarding process, which CFA is now turning its attention to.

“A summary of the campaign report and results from the online surveys are available on YourSay and I encourage members to have a look at the findings,” Robyn said.

Use the QR code to read the survey results.



While the statewide campaign provided overarching messages for all brigades, some areas received additional support with spreading the recruitment message out to their local communities. For example, in 2024 Clyde Fire Brigade was supported with paid social media advertising and a local letterbox drop of recruitment postcards.

These supported brigades had varying levels of success. The evaluation showed that 86 per cent of brigades that were supported in 2023 and 2024 saw an increase in EOIs and 40 per cent of them saw an increase of five or more EOIs.

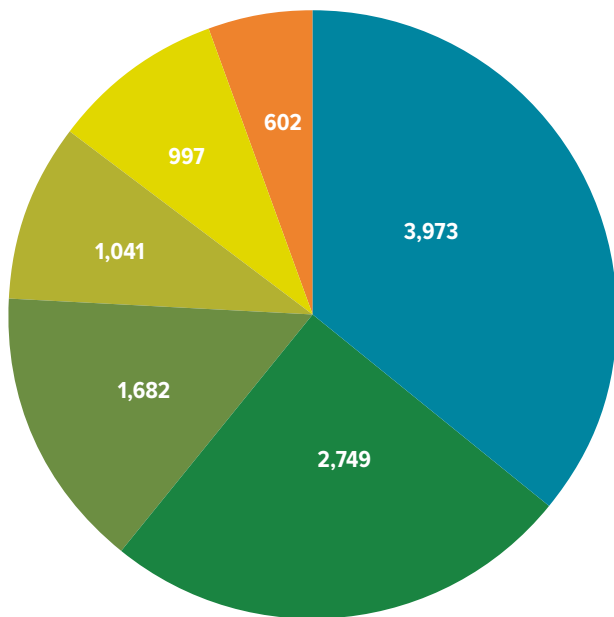
**STORY LERNA AVAKIAN**



# Incident statistics

1 January 2025 – 31 March 2025

## INCIDENTS BY TYPE



Service calls\*

Fire and explosions

Motor vehicle accidents/rescue/EMS calls

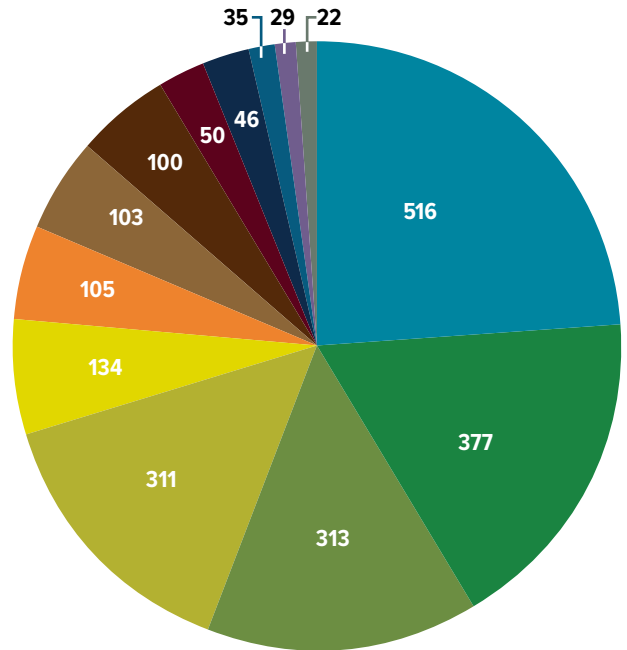
Good intent calls

False alarms/false calls

Hazardous condition

\* Includes 3,099 callouts supporting FRV, 15 supporting DEECA

## ORIGIN OF FIRE



Paddock/open area/lawn

Scrub/bush area

Road/car park

Undetermined

Engine area/running gear/vehicle wheel

Area of a vehicle

Kitchen/cooking area

Waste or rubbish area/container

Crops

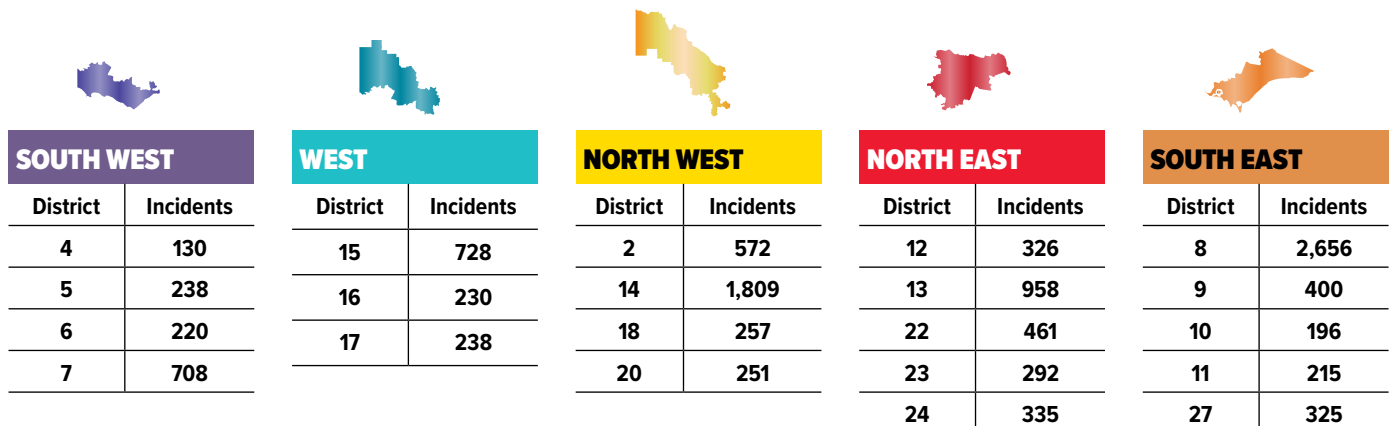
Garage/carport

Balcony/porch/verandah

Storage area

Bedroom

## INCIDENTS BY DISTRICT



# Yea Fire Brigade







- 1 Current station
- 2 1935 Dodge Sinclair
- 3 Road rescue demonstration, 1980s
- 4 Yea competing in Alexandra, 1958
- 5 Car rollover and fire, 1990s
- 6 Denis McCarthy Memorial Trophy
- 7 Mazda T4000 rescue unit, 1990s
- 8 Strike team, 1990s
- 9 Yea brigade at Kilmore, 1900s
- 10 Yea pumper filling loco K153 water tender, 1977
- 11 Old station, late 1990s
- 12 Storm damage, 2020s
- 13 Station display cabinet

# Emergency Memberlink

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

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

Details of the offers and full terms and conditions are at [emergencymemberlink.com.au](http://emergencymemberlink.com.au)

To join Memberlink phone 1800 820 037 or register online at [emergencymemberlink.com.au](http://emergencymemberlink.com.au). You can also access your Memberlink card on the website.

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



- 6% discount with **Bupa** and waive two and six-month waiting periods on extras when combining hospital and extras cover.
- Hire a **Britz**, **maui** or **Apollo** campervan and receive 10% off daily hire rates.
- **Searoad Ferries** has a 10% discount on ferry travel between Sorrento and Queenscliff.
- Plants, trees and garden products at wholesale prices at **Plantmark**.
- 5% to 10% off the best unrestricted rate of the day at **Accor Hotels**.
- Corporate leisure rates and reduced insurance excess on car hire with **Avis**.
- **Flie Legal** offers a free online consultation and 20% discount on current fixed rates on conveyancing, wills and estate planning.
- **Westfund Health Insurance** has a 5% discount plus two-month waiting periods waived on extras cover.
- Up to 20% discount on the public web price on the entire range of **Lenovo** notebook and desktop PCs, monitors and accessories.
- 15% off travel insurance with **Insure&Go**.
- Exclusive hotel rates throughout Australia and internationally with **Hotel Planner**.
- A free small hot McCafe beverage, small soft drink or orange juice with a minimum spend of \$5 on presentation of your Emergency Memberlink Card at **McDonald's** restaurants in Victoria.
- Generous savings on **Qantas Club** membership via the Member Benefits Corporate Scheme.
- Take \$50 off the already discounted price on a **Driver Dynamics** defensive driving course.
- Savings of up to 10% on a range of **eGift cards** from major brands such as Coles, Woolworths, JB Hi-Fi, Endota Spa, EG Fuel Card, Bunnings and the Ultimate Gift Card range.
- 30% discount on **Milleni** women's fashion bags and wallets and men's wallets.
- **Isubscribe** offers 10% off any magazine subscription. Popular titles include Better Homes & Gardens, National Geographic, Gardening Australia, Home Beautiful and New Idea.
- **Experience Oz** offers at least 10% off attractions, zoos and aquariums, Queensland theme parks, and extreme activities.
- Receive a \$300 excess reduction when you have your car repaired at **Sheen Panel Service**.
- **mycar Tyre & Auto** has 10% off servicing, mechanical repairs and TCP tyre purchases.
- 10% off Australian car rentals with **Budget**.
- Discounts on home entertainment, audio, televisions, mobile phones, IT hardware, fitness trackers and more through the **JB Hi-Fi Corporate Benefits Program**.
- You and your family members have access to discounts throughout the year at **Specsavers**.
- **Sixt Australia** offers up to 20% off the best rate of the day on passenger and commercial vehicles.
- Receive 15% off the best rate at **Best Western** Australian and New Zealand properties.
- Commercial pricing on household appliances and electronics through **The Good Guys Commercial Division**.
- Up to 15% off the best daily car rental rate with **Europcar**.
- **RSEA Safety** has 15% off full priced items instore.
- **Village Roadshow Theme Parks** offers discounts on a five-day Escape Pass, Australian Outback Spectacular tickets, Top Golf and Sea World Resort and Paradise Country Farmstay.
- Travel with **Spirit of Tasmania** and save 5% on adult Spirit and Flexi passenger fares.
- **Nissan Fleet** pricing and extra benefits across a select range of new Nissan vehicles.
- 20% off flowers from **Petals Network**.
- 20% discount on unlimited ride tickets at **Luna Park** Melbourne.
- Exclusive accommodation rates at **The Hotel Windsor**.
- Exclusive pricing on household appliances and electronics through **Harvey Norman Groups & Associations Division**.
- The **Bridgestone Business Associates Program** has 15% off Bridgestone's website prices on the full range of car, SUV and light van tyres.
- Victorian Government rates at **Quest Caroline Springs**.



# Brigade

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

PRINT  
POST  
100010934

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA