



PROTECTING LIVES AND PROPERTY | WINTER 2013

BRIGADE

LEARNING BY DOING

MEMBERS GET THEIR
HANDS DIRTY



FISKVILLE UPDATE PAGE 10

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CLAIRE HIGGINS ACTING CHAIR

The May Board meeting was held at Fiskville and it was a pleasure to be part of that hive of activity. CEO Mick Bourke and I were grateful to have the chance to meet and talk to staff, many of whom are long-time employees who

live locally. It was the chance to acknowledge that, while they have laid out the welcome mat countless times for tens of thousands of members of CFA and other organisations, the recent media campaign is hitting very close to home.

The staff of Fiskville look after our people so they can go home and better look after their communities; they directly contribute to the protection of lives and property. The CFA Board and the wider CFA community are utterly supportive of our Fiskville staff and invested in the future of Fiskville.

It was also a pleasure to attend Fiskville in June for the graduation of our 15 newest career firefighters. Five have come from our volunteer ranks but the other 10 are new to CFA. Our graduates are now being welcomed at Mildura, Traralgon, Morwell, Cranbourne, Patterson River, Hoppers Crossing, Belmont and Warrnambool fire stations and Swan Hill headquarters. Congratulations.

Mick Bourke updated the Board on the Kilmore East trial. The plaintiff's case has been heard and discussions have begun around the electricity case that SPI will mount. It is expected that the government's

case through CFA, Department of Environment and Primary Industries and Victoria Police is not likely to be heard until July at the earliest. The government parties have also offered to assist both the plaintiff and the defendant in growing an understanding of the property loss and personal injury cost of the Kilmore East fire.

The CEO also detailed the consistent approach now being taken to fire station construction and renovation. This means that the combination of station types will be quite different from what it was a year ago, with 250 stations due to be either built or upgraded by the end of the government's first term.

Chief Officer Euan Ferguson informed the Board of the Doctrine of Victorian Fire and Emergency Agencies that has now been signed by all agencies. The doctrine will set a common standard to achieve interoperability based on industry best practice, providing guidance on actions and judgements to all agency personnel.

All the recommendations of the recent Minimum Skills review have been endorsed by the Chief Officer. These include establishing new training specifications for an all-hazards skills program and its incorporation as the initial training program for volunteers; and assessing these skills on the job as members being trained enter the fireground under direct supervision. The changes may also include the forming of a strategic partnership with TAFE to deliver training to address gaps associated with the awarding of national competencies. ■

HOME FIRE CAMPAIGN GETS COOKING

STORY SONIA MACLEAN

With more than a third of Victoria's home fires starting in the kitchen, it made perfect sense for a celebrity chef to kick start the joint CFA and Metropolitan Fire Brigade Home Fire Safety Campaign.

Chef and well known TV identity Tobie Puttock cooked a hearty breakfast for firefighters from the two agencies to mark the campaign's official launch. Other celebrity chefs from Melbourne and regional Victoria, including Guy Grossi (Grossi Florentino) and Ian Curley (The European) are also helping to raise awareness of fire safety in the home – one instance where too many cooks won't spoil the broth.

CFA Deputy Chief Officer Steve Warrington said that, with the campaign running through to the end of winter, it wasn't too late for CFA members to get involved.

"Every action, big or small, contributes something to our efforts in preventing fires and fatalities. It could be as simple as putting up a poster at your local library or sharing a post from the CFA Facebook page," he said.

For a Home Fire Safety Brigade Kit, contact your BASO or regional Community Education Coordinator. To download resources such as printable posters, ads and web buttons, go to the marketing section of the Template Toolkit on Brigades Online. ■



Left: Chef Tobie Puttock with Sally Gerdan from Upper Beaconsfield brigade

PHOTO: CHRIS BARBER

HOW TO HELP YOUR DMOs

STORY JANET FISHER

District Mechanical Officers (DMOs) are committed to keeping your trucks working at the fireground and at your station.

When DMOs need to tilt the cabin to access the engine, it takes considerable effort if the truck isn't fitted with power assist. Also, DMOs need to check all trucks as quickly as possible on the fireground at the shift changeover. To help them do their job efficiently, there are some things firefighters can do:

- DMOs aren't allowed to tilt a cabin by themselves, so if you see one, please offer to help in the lift or ask if they want you to tilt the cabin forward before they get to it.

- Remove items from the cabins (especially water left behind seats), even if they were left by a previous shift. This reduces the effort needed to tilt the cabin, and ensures that a DMO won't be struck by a falling item.
- Leave a clear work area on the deck. Ensure all items are correctly stowed and don't leave tripping hazards.

Executive Manager of Fleet Services Peter Wright and Deputy Chief Officer Alen Slijepcevic believe that the level of assistance given to DMOs is generally good, but recent injuries to DMOs shows there is a need to raise awareness. ■

HELPING BRIGADES COMMUNICATE

STORY NANCY THOMPSON

In October 2012, CFA launched the Template Toolkit, an online, one-stop shop for all CFA-branded templates, communications materials and advice. It has proven popular with our members, so to make it even easier to access, the Communities and Communication team has put the most popular templates on a USB memory stick and sent one to every brigade.

On the USB, you'll find a range of templates for all types of correspondence and marketing purposes, designed to make communication faster and easier.

There are also CFA's new community and media engagement videos to help brigades with community presentations and to work more effectively with the media.

Other items include:

- The new *We are CFA* video and PowerPoint presentation that gives an overview of what we do and how we have evolved. This will be a useful

addition to presentations and displays and was created following requests from members

- Our new visual and writing guides outlining guidelines for everything from using the CFA logo to the CFA tone of voice when writing
 - CFA's colour and black and white logos
 - Corporate and brigade templates that can be used for brigade communications including letterheads, certificates, minutes and PowerPoint presentations
- Every brigade secretary will receive a USB during July and we encourage members to use and share its contents across the brigade and with other CFA members. ■

To see the whole range of templates, visit the Template Toolkit on CFA's intranet or Brigades Online. If you have any questions about the USB, please email CFA Marketing on cfaprom@cfa.vic.gov.au

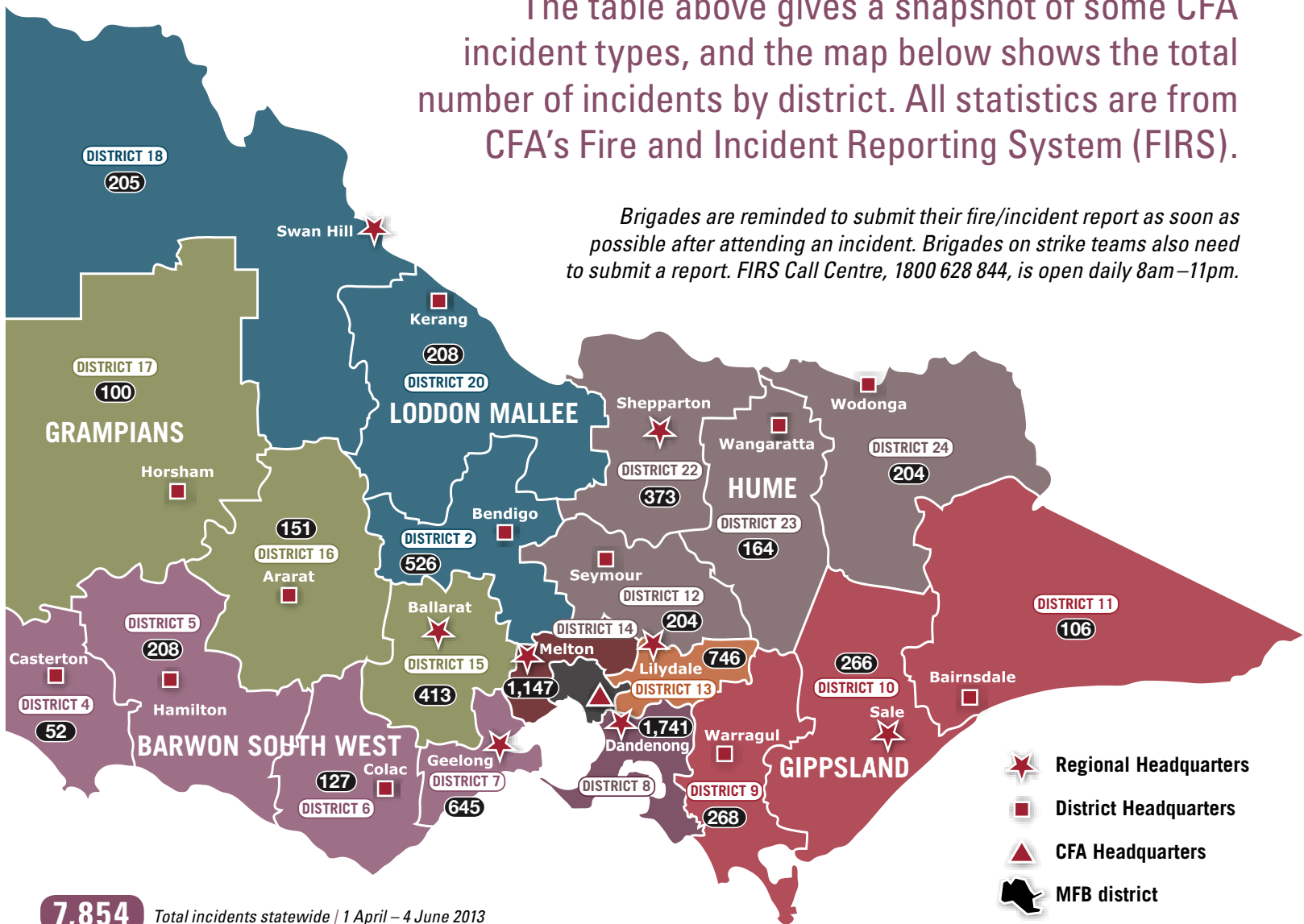


INCIDENT SUMMARY

INCIDENT TYPE	1 APRIL – 4 JUNE 2013			1 JANUARY – 31 MARCH 2013		
	Est. loss	Est. ha burnt	No. of incidents	Est. loss	Est. ha burnt	No. of incidents
Bush and forest		851	33	166,931		95
Car fires and motor vehicle accidents			767			1,246
False alarms			1,143			1,780
Grassfires		1,178	123	21,826		277
Hazardous materials			475			816
House fires	\$7,373,345		189	\$20,111,330		335
Industrial fires	\$900,300		41	\$7,763,500		64
	\$ 8,273,645	2,029	2,771	\$27,874,830	188,757	4,613

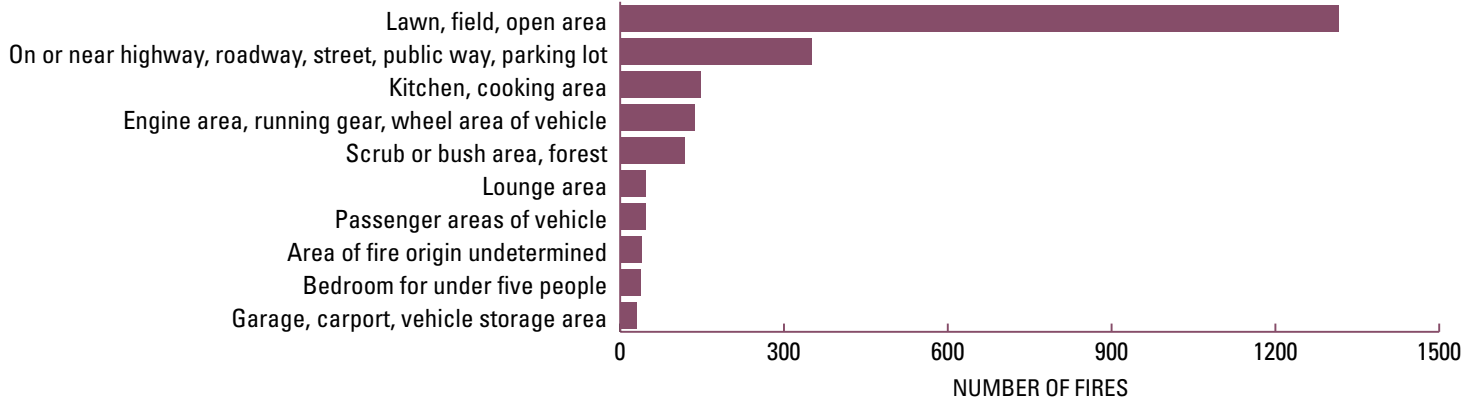
The table above gives a snapshot of some CFA incident types, and the map below shows the total number of incidents by district. All statistics are from CFA's Fire and Incident Reporting System (FIRS).

Brigades are reminded to submit their fire/incident report as soon as possible after attending an incident. Brigades on strike teams also need to submit a report. FIRS Call Centre, 1800 628 844, is open daily 8am–11pm.



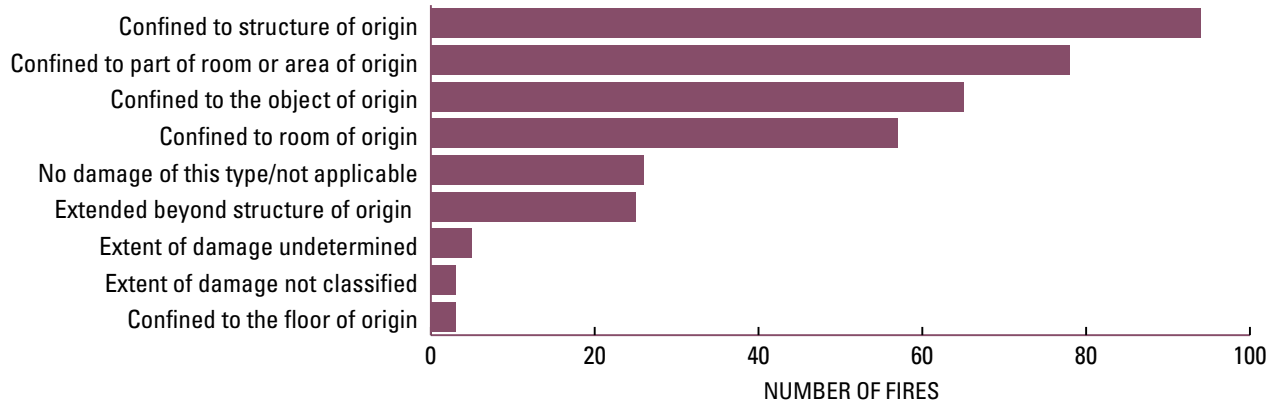
ORIGIN OF FIRE

1 APRIL – 4 JUNE 2013



EXTENT OF FLAME DAMAGE

1 APRIL – 4 JUNE 2013



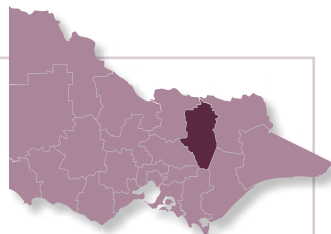
MANY CARAVANS SAVED IN D23

INCIDENT: Structure fire

DISTRICT: 23

DATE: 5 May 2013

BRIGADES: Lima South, Swanpool, Benalla, Mansfield, Whitegate, Barjarg, Maindample, Samaria, Warrenbayne, Tatong



A quick-thinking CFA volunteer and caravan park owner reported a fire in a caravan near the Midland Highway in Lima South (north of Mansfield) just before 5pm. The fire spread quickly to a further six caravans and annexes in the park which contained around 60 caravans and cabins.

Around 48 firefighters brought the blaze under control and managed to stop the fire spreading to adjacent caravans. No one was injured.

“The gas bottles were a safety hazard,” said District 23 Operations Manager Stewart Kreltze. “We removed some of them, but others were venting in the caravans producing columns of fire. We cooled those down to stop them venting.”

State Emergency Service supplied lighting and the local power company isolated the power. One CFA crew remained at the scene overnight. ■



PHOTO: GRESMITH/HELL

PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM



ABATTOIR BURNS IN CRANBOURNE

STORY KEITH PAKENHAM

INCIDENT: Structure fire

DISTRICT: 8

DATE: 23 March 2013

BRIGADES: Cranbourne, Dandenong, Frankston, Berwick, Hampton Park, Scoresby, Langwarrin, Narre Warren, Hallam, Clyde, Upper Beaconsfield



Cranbourne brigade was called to an electrical fire at Cranbourne Abattoirs in Thompsons Road at around 3.30pm. When Senior Station Officer Phil Charles arrived with his crew, he found the building staff at the front gate. He was told that smoke and fire were filling the main structure.

As the property had only one hydrant, additional pumpers were called to help the two aerial trucks that were heading to the scene. The metal-clad building contained the fire and for the first hour crews could attack the fire only from the outside.

Clyde and Upper Beaconsfield big fills were used to supply additional water from a large dam on site. Staff and firefighters helped to herd sheep and cattle from the building's pens to the surrounding paddocks.

Part of the roof collapsed, which allowed the fire to vent. The west end of the building contained an ammonia plant, but it wasn't damaged in the fire.

"We initially tried an internal attack, but that was quite dangerous as part of the ceiling was starting to fall in," said Phil. "It looked quite grim when we arrived, the way the fire was spreading, but with the use of the aerial appliances we managed to pull the fire up and stop it from engulfing the factory."

A rehab unit was set up to ensure firefighters were hydrated and had a rest after they'd used breathing apparatus.

A fire stop was called around three hours after it started, though crews continued blacking out and checking for hotspots with a thermal imaging camera into the night, with State Emergency Service supplying lighting. ■

To see more images and video go to news.cfa.vic.gov.au/abattoirfire

SUNDAY DRIVE BECOMES A NIGHTMARE

STORY BLAIR DELLEMIJN

INCIDENT: Structure fire

DISTRICT: 14

DATE: 31 March 2013

BRIGADES: Sunbury, Diggers Rest

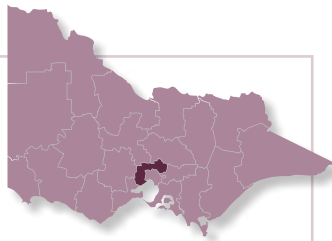


PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIJN

On the last day of March, Sunbury and Diggers Rest brigades and Sunbury State Emergency Service (SES) were paged to a reported car accident with entrapment.

When Station Officer Adam Whitford arrived at Riddell Road, he found a car had punched a large hole in the side of a house, making it and the chimney extremely unstable.

After crews had donned breathing apparatus, and with a safety officer watching for any building collapse, crews were sent in to assess the driver.

"One of our volunteers is a MICA [mobile intensive care ambulance] paramedic, so it was handy to have him in breathing apparatus to assess the patient and assist in extrication," explained Adam.

It was discovered that the driver wasn't trapped and, because of the amount of gas in the air from a broken gas meter and the chimney lurching overhead, a quick snatch-and-grab was performed to remove the driver. The patient was then taken to hospital in a non-life threatening condition.

When the distraught home owner arrived some time later, CFA members were told there was a dog in the house. A quick search found the dog cowering in the corner of a room. "The dog ran nearly vertical up the walls when we tried to get

near it," said Firefighter Adam Pricor. The dog was rescued but two firefighters had to be treated for minor bites to their fingers.

The gas company needed to isolate the gas supply to the house, but it didn't know exactly where the shut-off valve was in the street, so a backhoe was used to dig a hole.

SES stayed at the scene to provide lighting and help remove the damaged car and chimney. ■



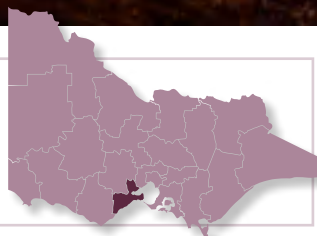
THE STING IN THE TAIL

STORY DARRYN HILL

INCIDENT: Grass and scrub fire

DISTRICT: 7

DATE: 27 March 2013



Windy, warm conditions late in the fire season quickly turned a small scrub fire into a 1,200-hectare blaze that destroyed 16 houses and 15 outbuildings.

At 11.35am, Dereel brigade received an alert page for a tree fire that was spreading in Ferrers Road, Dereel. I immediately started to look for smoke and see what the wind was doing. I called VicFire to tell them smoke was visible about 500 metres down Ferrers Road.

Within minutes, around a hectare of dense scrub was burning, houses were under threat and Birddog 373 gave regular situation reports. Twenty minutes after the first alert page, the call was made for 50 tankers. Community warnings were issued promptly to Dereel and surrounding townships and we sectorised the fire to help us manage our attack.

At this point a Level 3 incident was initiated and I handed incident control to our Deputy Group Officer Dave Stephens who was a qualified Level 3 operations officer. I became a sector commander and strike team leader in the Leigh Group car, with Group Officer Ross Wilson as the driver so we could see where all the trucks were and work out our plans.

The wind kept changing the direction of the fire flanks, which made it quite difficult to contain the fire even in small sections. When we knew we'd been beaten by the fire, we moved forward and kept trying and trying. The fire moved so quickly that our attack plans had to change often, which made it very hard to put them into action.

Our sector moved with the fire and we headed to an area that needed asset protection. At this time we broadcast to our crews about the potential of the fire. All of a sudden the road in front of us started to disappear in smoke. Very quickly we couldn't see anything. I knew from previous experience that it was about to go bad. I jumped on the radio and yelled to all my crews, "Safety, safety. All crews get prepared. Mayday, mayday, mayday."

We had flames all around us. Everything had got to its ignition point and went up. There were many mayday calls at this time. Due to the thickness of

the smoke, we didn't know the status of the crews. Then, within a minute, the smoke and flames cleared as if nothing had happened and there were black, burning trees around us.

Ross and I decided it was time to move our sector again to the far eastern side of the forest and out into the paddocks where we would have a much better chance of getting on top of spot fires and any potential spreading. Using local knowledge, I led the strike team down a fire access track, knowing we had some time up our sleeves because the fire had to go down a valley before it got to us.

I got a report that the fire had spotted over Wurrook Road, about two kilometres ahead of the fire. Within minutes, the fire had picked up momentum again and seemed to be going just as quickly down the hills as it went up. We saw a way to slow or even stop the fire in its tracks – a harvested lucerne paddock that was mainly dirt.

The fire was ten metres high as it went through the paddocks and came quickly down the hill and through the paddock until it hit the lucerne. It was like it hit a brick wall. To help with the firefight, helicopters dropped water on to the flames. With success on this front, we left the paddocks and went to the eastern flank.

We heard on the radio that a very strong wind change had hit Mount Gellibrand and would hit us at any time. We heard District 14 strike teams were heading to the staging area in Rokewood, so Ross and I put in a request for them to assist us. The Divisional Command acknowledged and said they would also send graders. Ross and I drove up to meet District 14 strike teams and graders.

This was a turning point and we got the upper hand. The graders built control lines in the paddocks ready for the wind change, while all trucks were putting out the edges of the fire.

We got the fire under control in the evening, but there was still a lot of work to ensure the fire stayed within containment lines.

The fire was physically and mentally demanding for my brigade members and I commend them for their efforts. The crews and other services who helped at this fire can't be thanked enough. It was great to see so many people get together and offer assistance, including CFA brigades who travelled long distances, Department of Environment and Primary Industries and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. ■

Darryn Hill is the captain of Dereel Fire Brigade

TRICKY MINE SHAFT RESCUE

STORY GERARD SCHOLTEN

INCIDENT: Mine rescue
DISTRICT: 2
DATE: 6 April 2013
BRIGADES: Bendigo Oscar 1
 Emergency Response Unit, Chewton, Harcourt

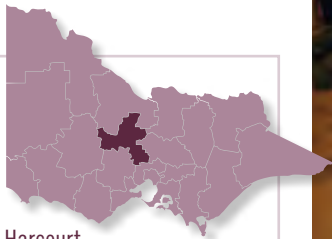


PHOTO: MELISSA DOLE

Bendigo's specialist mine rescue capability was put to the test in early April after a man aged in his 70s fell 35 metres down a disused mine shaft in a state forest near Harcourt.

The man lost his footing and plunged headfirst down a mine shaft before landing on a wooden platform. Oscar 1 Emergency Response Unit, with highly specialised rope, confined space and first-aid capability, joined CFA crews from Chewton and Harcourt, CFA staff from Bendigo, State Emergency Service, Ambulance Victoria and Victoria Police at the scene.

District 2 Operations Officer Alun Hughson said it was a delicate operation in difficult conditions. "Specialist rescue volunteers had to conduct the rescue in several stages," Alun said.

"After reaching the man, they administered first-aid to serious arm, leg and head injuries. They then had the difficult job of wrapping him in a flexible stretcher in a very narrow space.

"Once they had hauled him up to a horizontal shaft about five

metres above, he needed to be transferred to a rigid litter stretcher. He was then dragged 70 metres horizontally out of the tunnel."

When he was above ground, Ambulance Victoria paramedics stabilised the man's injuries before he was taken by helicopter to Melbourne, around two hours after his ordeal began.

Alun said it was a textbook rescue involving close cooperation between emergency services. "It was wonderful to see how the four emergency service agencies worked together, with volunteers and staff working side by side," he said.

Oscar 1 Emergency Response Unit was formed around 15 years ago and is made up of volunteers from the Bendigo area. Members must complete training in rope rescue, confined space rescue and Level 3 first-aid.

In April 2013 it became an official CFA brigade and you can read more about Oscar 1 in Pat O'Brien's column on p29 of this issue. ■

Above: Members of Oscar 1 on the night they became CFA's first specialist response brigade

To see a video go to news.cfa.vic.gov.au/harcourtmine

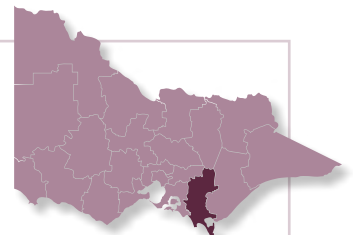


PHOTO: TROY LONGSON

PRIVATE BURN-OFF TAKES OFF

STORY KEITH PAKENHAM AND TROY LONGSON

INCIDENT: Grass and scrub fire
DISTRICT: 9
DATE: 24 March 2013
BRIGADES: Allambee, Hallora & District, Drouin West, Nilma North, Noojee, Darnum & Ellinbank, Moe South, Westbury, Trafalgar, Moe, Neerim South, Warragul, Yarragon, Willowgrove, Longwarry & District, five strike teams



Just before 11am, Trafalgar and Yarragon brigades investigated a burn-off north of Little Moe River Road in Darnum. Smoke was visible as crews approached and a call went out for additional tankers.

The fire, which headed east on private bush and grassland, had grown to six hectares after an hour and eventually burnt 60 hectares. Two Helitak aircraft helped with the firefight and Firebird 307 was used to report the location of the fire.

An Advice Message was issued to alert residents in nearby towns (Buln Buln, Darnum, Lillico, Shady Creek, Trafalgar, Trafalgar West, Yalungah, Yarragon and Nilma North) as smoke was visible from nearby communities and roads including the Princes Freeway.

Strike teams responded from Districts 9 and 10. The fire was under control at about 4pm, though several crews remained at the scene overnight blacking out. All hotspots were extinguished by 8pm the following day. ■

A CHALLENGE IN TORQUAY

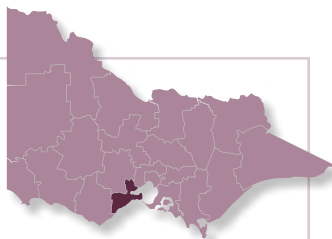
STORY JOHN MONAGLE

INCIDENT: Structure fire

DISTRICT: 7

DATE: 29 March 2013

BRIGADES: Torquay, Geelong, Corio, Anglesea, Belmont, Freshwater Creek, Connewarre, Aireys Inlet, Grovedale



Three prominent Torquay businesses were gutted in a fire that broke out in Bell Street shortly after midnight, prompting the police to evacuate residents.

Torquay brigade was called to the fire when smoke was discovered in Bells Bakery by an employee. The fire started in a storage room belonging to an art studio that backed on to the bakery. As well as the bakery, a restaurant and beauty salon were severely damaged.

No one was injured in the blaze but it took around 60 firefighters from nine brigades three hours to contain it.

Torquay Captain and Incident Controller Phil Campbell said it was a nightmare to fight the fire because of poor access.

"It was an eye opener," Phil said. "Several buildings were crammed together and accessing the fire was very difficult. The firefight was through the roof of the room behind the bakery and it was a bit of a rabbit warren of lanes between the buildings."

There were also problems keeping a good supply of water to the appliances. "We blocked the road to use water from the other side and used water from a nearby side street. A pumper on the side street boosted water to the Torquay pumper, then this fed Geelong City's ladder platform," Phil said.

Property landlord Max Findlay said he was thankful no one was injured. "I'm looking at the bright side – it could have been a lot more devastating. It wasn't an easy fire to put out and they did a wonderful job."



PHOTO: DAREN APPS

Thermal imaging cameras proved their worth to help crews black out the scene, while State Emergency Service provided lighting and Ambulance Victoria treated people for smoke inhalation. ■

To see video and more images go to news.cfa.vic.gov.au/torquayfire



BLAZE DESTROYS COMMUNITY CENTRE

PHOTO: IAN HUNTER

INCIDENT: Structure fire

DISTRICT: 13

DATE: 6 May 2013

BRIGADES: Lilydale, Bayswater, Coldstream, Mooroolbark, Mount Evelyn, North Warrandyte, Yellingbo



Police were initially concerned for the safety of two residents of a Lilydale retirement village when a fire broke out in the community centre at around 6pm.

CFA and MFB crews worked together to fight the fire in the 30 by 40-metre building in Tudor Village Lilydale on the Maroondah Highway. The fire was brought under control in just under an hour and firefighters then searched the building for residents.

Police officers door knocked the village during the evening but were unable to account for two of the retirement village's residents. However, the following morning police confirmed all residents were safe.

"It was a pretty hard fire to fight at the start," said Lilydale brigade Captain Warren Davis, "as being a retirement village all the streets are narrow. By the time we got all the appliances on scene, we found it hard to navigate around the other appliances that were already parked." ■

FISKVILLE PROGRESS ON TRACK



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

REPORT IMPLEMENTATION WELL UNDERWAY

Implementation of the 10 recommendations from Professor Robert Joy's *Understanding the Past to Inform the Future* report is well underway, along with health and environmental initiatives introduced by CFA's Board last year.

As a result of the recommendations, environmental engineering firm Cardno Lane Piper is undertaking analysis for key reports, including three human health risk assessments (on-site occupational, on-site Fiskville community, and downstream) and an ecological study of Lake Fiskville and downstream.

These studies are complex and time consuming and will inform plans for further remediation work necessary to ensure Fiskville complies fully with standards of environmental management and occupational health and safety.

CFA ACTS ON EARLY RESULTS

Preliminary results from these assessments revealed that fish caught from Lake Fiskville contain perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), a chemical found in Class B foams used at the college until 2007.

As a precaution, any person who may have eaten fish from Lake Fiskville, caught as part of recreational activities, is being offered blood tests and, where suitable, health monitoring.

CFA CEO Mick Bourke said, "CFA's first priority is working with employees and their family members who say they have eaten the fish, and we will take all steps to identify if their exposure poses any health risks and provide them with the support they may need.

"We're continuing the work prompted by Professor Joy's findings, including human health risk assessments, which we expect to be finished later this year, however, we couldn't wait until then to tell our people what we know now about the fish."

CFA has reinforced earlier advice that people must not eat fish from the lake and to obey the erected 'No Fishing' signs. CFA is now taking steps to remove fish from the lake.

While CFA is not aware of any adverse health effects in those who have eaten fish from Lake Fiskville, advice from eminent toxicologist Dr Roger Drew suggests that eating fish containing PFOS is likely to increase a person's blood PFOS level. Studies indicate that, at elevated concentrations, PFOS may change blood cholesterol and lipids, which are indicators of cardiovascular health.

Advice to CFA suggests that these risks are confined only to those who have eaten fish from Lake Fiskville and it's very unlikely there would be any health effects for those coming into contact with the water. Lake water is not used for firefighter training and CFA switched from dam water to town mains water for training in June 2012.

WATER PLANS PROPOSED

Cardno Lane Piper has completed designs to divert the Berembroke Creek around Lake Fiskville to minimise off-site run-off, and plans to upgrade the storm water systems around the practice area drills (PAD) to prepare for the installation of a new water treatment plant.

These designs have been presented to CFA, representatives from local councils and the relevant water authorities. A project manager has been appointed to manage these civil engineering works.

COMMITTED TO OUR PEOPLE AND FISKVILLE

As always, the health and safety of our people is CFA's highest priority. The voluntary health surveillance program has now been taken up by more than 100 people from the high and medium risk exposure categories. The Health and Welfare team is continuing to contact people who meet the risk criteria, encouraging them to participate in the program.

Fiskville remains safe for staff, trainees and visitors and CFA continues to work closely with WorkSafe and the Environment Protection Authority.



As the relevant workplace safety authority, WorkSafe has indicated it remains comfortable with training at Fiskville, including the use of fuels, fire suppression fluids and water.

Former Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe continues to provide oversight as Independent Monitor.

On a recent visit to Fiskville, CEO Mick Bourke again thanked the staff for all they have had to endure from the heavy and often less-than-balanced public scrutiny; their ongoing daily work; and their perseverance. CFA appreciates their efforts and support throughout this project, which will result in a world-class training facility for all members, benefiting the Victorian community.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING BOOST

The Victorian Government has committed \$16.8 million to enable CFA to continue the important upgrades at CFA training campuses and transform Fiskville Training College into one of the nation's leading practical firefighting training facilities.

This funding will be used to fully implement the Professor Joy recommendations, as well as the additional health and environmental initiatives. The investment will allow CFA to continue with a number of crucial projects including:

- upgrades to the water supply and treatment systems at Fiskville, and upgrades to the six regional training grounds where needed
- continuing to implement the health surveillance program and the Monash health study
- environmental upgrades that will see Fiskville strive for international accreditation for environmental management (ISO 14001)
- working towards introducing the highest standards for occupational health and safety (to AS4801) for all training campuses.

More than \$10 million has already been spent to address concerns around the historical use of chemicals for live firefighting training at Fiskville since CFA was made aware of the issue in December 2011, including the cost of Professor Robert Joy's investigation. ■

NEW STUDENT FACILITIES

STORY **DARREN GREVIS-JAMES**

Fiskville is continuing to undergo major redevelopment of facilities that CFA believes will make it one of the best training facilities in Australia. Construction of new student accommodation and a shower block, both funded by Project 2016, are now well advanced.

The new student accommodation features three buildings which are being built at the eastern end of the training ground facility in the accommodation and hospitality precinct.

Each of the buildings will be single storey, of brick veneer construction with steel rooftops. The new student accommodation will feature 30 bedrooms, all with en-suite bathrooms.

To the north of the accommodation site, the single-storey shower block is being constructed in the PAD precinct, and will feature change rooms, showers, toilets and locker facilities.

When *Brigade* magazine went to press, work on the accommodation and shower buildings was about one-third complete. Fiskville Redevelopment Project Manager David Ong said, "Concrete slabs have been poured and both wall frames and roofs have been constructed on both facilities.

"The next stage of construction will be the internal fit-out, plumbing and electrical works. The accommodation buildings feature a common lounge and beverage area. All bedrooms will be air conditioned."

The new accommodation buildings are expected to be completed in a few months.

Project 2016 Program Manager Deb Parkin said the project is a major contributor to the redevelopment of CFA's main training facility. "Project 2016 will also provide funding for the construction of a new structural training prop to simulate fire in a multi-storey environment," Deb said.

CFA has called for a proposal from contractors to design and construct the planned fire attack prop. This new training facility will replace the existing building that's approaching the end of its life.

A new sewer wastewater treatment system has been identified as the next priority project to replace the current plant, which was constructed in the early 1980s. The new plant will meet current best-practice standards and cater for increased capacity for new and future facilities. ■



PHOTO: DARREN GREVIS-JAMES



ELVIS PILOT CALLS AUSTRALIA HOME

STORY LEITH HILLARD

Mark Jones is Melbourne born and bred. He used to work all week to pay for an hour's flying at Moorabbin each weekend. Now he flies the Victorian skies in Elvis every summer.

For now, though, Mark and the Erickson Aircrane helitanker family of Elvis, Gypsy Lady, Elsie, Malcolm, Camille and Ihabod are in the northern hemisphere summer: three in the US while Mark and the other three are in Europe. The European season runs from June to September, in time for a November start in Australia.

Elvis was built in 1970 by Sikorsky but the Aircranes are now manufactured by Erickson. In Australia, the Elvis entourage includes three pilots, three mechanics, one fuel truck driver and the air attack supervisor on the Firebird.

Mark got his commercial licence in 1986 and has been an Erickson employee for 14 years. He has been stationed in Corsica, France, Korea, Greece and Salerno, Brescia and L'Aquila in Italy, always on a three weeks on, three weeks off basis.

"I've conducted a lot of training," explained Mark. "I've taught wildfire firefighting to the Italian Civil Protection which manages all natural disasters. Helicopters are so expensive to run that you can't take the time out to practise, so all training is operational on-the-job firefighting. These are two-pilot aircraft and we always have an interpreter on board.

"Fires in Europe tend to burn hot and quickly in steep terrain, cut through by a lot of roads and tracks. They don't have total fire bans and the farmers love to burn any time."

The winds add complexity with southern France alone buffeted by the Sirocco (a south-east wind from the Sahara), the Mistral (a cold, dry north wind that blows down to the Mediterranean), the Levant (a very humid east wind), and the Marin (a strong, wet and cloudy south wind).

"The company is very conservative," continued Mark. "There are a lot of redundancies built into the aircraft and a lot of procedures to follow. The pre-flight checklist records weight, temperature and altitude to determine the load of water. We have rules about cleared land and obstacles. There are strict wind speed limitations and we fly around the smoke. The fire will always be there in the morning."

Don't we know it! Mark takes his hat off to the crews on the ground.

"Helicopters are only one tool in the shed," he said. "In reality, the crews on the ground put out the fire. The ones who deserve the recognition are the people who do the job for free.

"In 23 years in the job, the February 2009 fires here were the worst I've ever seen; the enormity of it all. I can't imagine being on the ground anywhere near that."

This European summer, Mark will fly home three weeks in every six to be with his wife and two teenage boys.

"To me, it's a normal job and you have good and bad days." ■

GETTING YOUR IDEA OFF THE GROUND

STORY TAMMY LEAHY

Have you got a great idea or initiative that will benefit CFA and/or your community? Where do you start? How do you make a compelling case for the concept to seek support, approval and funding? Is it an organisational priority to achieve this idea?

These questions are all part of the concept phase of a project. Reviews of project management continually highlight that this phase improves effectiveness, reduces time delays and builds happier relationships with project teams and their stakeholders.

To support innovation and projects, CFA's Executive Leadership Team has adopted the Project Management Excellence (PME) framework. It provides a minimum standard for all sizes of project. PME was designed in collaboration with other agencies over the past two years.

Some of the benefits of PME are that it:

- has been built by project managers in the sector for project managers and their teams
- has one-page summary guides to assist all aspects of the PME framework
- aligns projects to corporate strategy and goals – doing the right things
- reduces duplication of effort and bureaucratic processes
- aligns to Budget and Expenditure Review Committee processes including reporting – one project report for all projects
- improves multi-agency project alignment and delivery
- improves project members' development opportunities.

When you start using PME, the Project and Change Management team will work with you to help you understand the process. The framework comes complete with process maps, summary guides and supporting templates, which can be found on CFA's intranet in the 'Projects' section of 'Management & Admin'. ■

If you'd like any help using PME or have any questions, call the Project and Change Management team on 9262 8910 or email projectmanagement@cfa.vic.gov.au


MICK BOURKE CEO

www.cfa.vic.gov.au/ceoblog

A BUSY TIME FOR PEERS

Over a busy fire season, the work of CFA peers did not go unnoticed. The CFA Peer Support Program is an integral part of this organisation, providing support and connections for members and their families in times of need.

The peers' experience and understanding of the roles, actions and activities of firefighters and brigade members, and the situations and circumstances that they may encounter, are invaluable. Without their efforts, many people may not get the support they need.

Many peers were on call for the majority of the summer and tirelessly gave up their time without a second thought when members were in need. During the height of the fires' impact on farming areas, peers were allocated to monitor welfare issues, provide support during shift changes and have a presence at community meetings.

In most cases, peers were supporting people in their local areas. But when some of the fires continued for several weeks, peers were called from around the state to support local peers in their efforts.

We would like to thank the peers (and their families) who provided support on the ground, often in difficult circumstances. We would also like to thank the peers who worked so hard, the peers who made themselves available for this important work and those who maintained interest in their fellow firefighters even if they weren't wearing their 'peer hat' at the time.

Being a peer is a challenging role, and our 150 or so peers have been through a rigorous selection process and successfully completed a 12-month training program.

All CFA members and their immediate family members can access Peer Support and CFA Welfare Services. If you or a member of your family require support, contact the rostered duty officer, officer in charge, your line manager, the peer coordinator or call the CFA Welfare line (1800 628 616).

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships at CFA play a crucial role. We have a rich history of forming partnerships with commercial organisations. They not only become part of our make-up, but also help us build for the future by joining us in our quest to prepare and protect communities in Victoria for fire.

Few partnerships have been as long-standing and as beneficial to our members as that with IGA and Ritchies. Since the partnership began, they have provided CFA brigades with more than \$5.8 million to buy equipment and upgrade trucks. (See 'Ritchies benefits the community' on p18 of this issue).

IGA and Ritchies' support has been constant, including during times of crisis such as the 2009 fires.

'Firestar Rose' is another ongoing partnership which has provided brigades nominated by customers with donations to support brigade activities. Thanks to Knight's Roses, since the program began in 2010 around 300 brigades have shared \$26,161 with the remaining \$23,430 donated to CFA's public fund to support leadership training, improve firefighter skills and provide equipment.

Earlier this year, a group of CFA members had the opportunity to take a two-day cruise from Brisbane to Sydney on board Queen Mary 2. Given the busy summer period we experienced this year, this opportunity provided our volunteers, alongside other emergency services, with a well-deserved break and a new experience. (See 'Queen Mary supports emergency services' on p42 of this issue). Many thanks to the Cunard Line and its parent company Carnival.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the many partnerships we have with employers who employ our volunteers across the state and allow them to serve the organisation and the community without question. This year's National Volunteer Week was all about acknowledging volunteers, their families, employers and our self-employed volunteers. Thanks for your dedication and commitment to protecting our communities.

We appreciate the continued support of all our partners and look forward to working with them in the years ahead. ■

PAGER ROLLOUT BEGINS

STORY JASON LEIGH

Members will soon be receiving their new pagers after the successful validation of a number of performance and useability upgrades. The upgrades have been accepted by Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria after the final trial of 400 pagers in the field.

Districts 2, 11, 12, 18, 20, 22, 23 and 24 have received their pagers and they will be distributed to brigades over the next few months in a staggered approach. The remaining districts will receive their pagers by July.

As well as a pocket guide and a larger 'quick reference guide', members will

receive a training DVD containing the user manual, a PowerPoint training presentation and instructional videos. These are also available from Brigades Online.

Four logistics coordinators from the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) will be available to deliver training and assistance as required, and brigades can book them through their district headquarters.

Members will need to return their old X3 pager when they collect their new one, because they are leased through Visionstream and CFA has a contractual obligation to return them. ■



FEARS AND MYTHS IN FIRE LAW

STORY NATHAN MADDOCK

Since the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, litigation due to damage caused by bushfires has come into the spotlight. But just how common is bushfire litigation? A Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) researcher has delved into the legal archives and produced a valuable resource for the emergency management industry.

One of the desired outcomes of the Bushfire CRC project *Mainstreaming fire and emergency management across legal and policy sectors: joint research and policy learning*, was to understand the real risk of legal litigation as a result of a bushfire.

Researcher Dr Michael Eburn explained. “Volunteers in particular report they are afraid they may be liable for their actions,” he said.

“People report that there is a tendency to sue over events that, in earlier times, were accepted as part of the risk of living in the bush. We wanted to know if any of those fears and beliefs were justified by the historical record.”

In an Australian first, Dr Eburn reviewed the history of litigation seeking compensation for causing, or failing to extinguish, a bushfire. The results, available on the bushfirecrc.com, may surprise some people.

“Litigation over bushfires is not, as many people say, a new phenomenon,” said Dr Eburn.

“People have been suing over bushfires for well over 100 years. Although litigation against the fire and land management agencies is new, it’s not common, and it only arises after catastrophic events, not day-to-day or routine events. So far, fire agencies have not been held liable for their well-intentioned actions.

“The research located 87 judicial decisions, arising from 71 cases from 1868 to 2011. Litigation arose from fires in only 48 of those 143 years even though,

based on the assumption that bushfire frequency has remained constant over the past century, there may have been in excess of five million fires in that period,” Dr Eburn said.

While doing this research, Dr Eburn identified cases dealing with legal liability for causing or allowing a fire to spread. He also identified claims alleging negligence in training firefighters; the right to criminal injuries compensation for fires started by arson; the jurisdiction and role of the coroner; the spread of urban fires; the interpretation of insurance policies relating to fire; liability for accidents involving fire appliances; and the application of planning law to fire-prone areas.

While all of these areas are important to fire agencies and firefighters, the research and the case analysis available on the Bushfire CRC website and published in papers, was concerned with liability for starting or failing to extinguish a bushfire. The cases were taken from courts across Australia.

The outcomes of this research can be found on the Bushfire CRC website by searching for ‘Australian bushfire cases’. Dr Eburn has summarised the facts of each case, the findings and, where possible, if the case was won by the defendant or the plaintiff. Many recent cases are not yet resolved.

It’s important to note that this research gives some idea if the issues were resolved by the court, but they cannot be relied on to give a full understanding of the law. No one should rely on the online material or the analysis of any particular case to guide judgements. If you need to understand the legal position governing any action or likely to apply after any event, you should seek legal advice. ■

Nathan Maddock is Communications Officer with Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC)

RED PLATING OF BRIGADE-OWNED VEHICLES

STORY LEITH HILLARD

The CFA Board has agreed that CFA’s 900 brigade-owned operational vehicles should be registered with CFA as the ‘operator’ and carry red registration plates.

VicRoads requires all vehicles to be registered under the name of a single-person owner. It is, however, having detailed discussions with CFA to include a ‘registered operator’ category in addition to the registered owner. This will ensure that traffic infringement notices are not issued to the volunteer who registered the vehicle.

“Brigade-owned vehicles are registered in the name of a brigade officer and

brigades can trade or upgrade their vehicles as they see fit,” said Executive Manager Fleet Services Peter Wright. “That won’t change.

“With the endorsement of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, we’re working towards red plating all brigade-owned operational vehicles to bring them in line with the rest of our operational vehicles. All fines would come to CFA before being sent to brigades to action, as with all our vehicles.”

CFA is working towards presenting VFBV and the CFA Board with a proposal by early July. ■

EUAN FERGUSON CHIEF OFFICER

www.cfa.vic.gov.au/chiefblog

In May I welcomed the public release of the report into the first 72 hours of the Harrietville fire. The fire started on 21 January 2013, burned for a number of weeks and had a significant social and economic impact on communities in north-east Victoria. The report was commissioned by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to examine the organisation and management of resources during the initial response to the Harrietville fire.

The report addressed several issues including:

- the sufficiency and adequacy of the first and extended attack
- the relationship between the local CFA and Department of Sustainability and Environment (now called Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI))
- the relationship between local DEPI and the Harrietville community
- the need for more rigorous record keeping, in particular logging of key decisions and strategies.

Of note I would like to reinforce:

- Firefighting is a difficult, dangerous task and our decision-makers do a tough job very well. We are pleased the report confirmed the fire was managed appropriately.
- We always welcome views from the community and this report will form an important part of our continuous improvement culture. It's not about blame or finding fault. It's about learning and improving.
- I have already met with DEPI Chief Fire Officer Alan Goodwin to discuss the report and how our agencies will address the issues raised. Work is continuing to improve relationships between the agencies locally, and between the agencies and the community.
- The Fire Services Commissioner has also met with community leaders from Mount Hotham, Dinner Plain and Harrietville to discuss the report and how the fire agencies will progress action in specific areas.
- Alongside Chief Fire Officer Goodwin, I recently met with CFA and DEPI members in Bright to walk through the report. Constructive feedback was provided by those in attendance.

You will be aware that the fire agencies are well into a process of debriefing from the 2012-13 fire season and the outcomes from this report need to be seen in the context of the overall lessons learned from the 2012-13 debrief process.

You will also be aware that, since the advent of the Fire Services Commissioner, we have identified key issues of focus in the lead-up to each fire season. In conjunction with the Fire Services Commissioner and the other agency chiefs, there will be a number of actions undertaken to ensure that the lessons from the Harrietville fire are incorporated into changed arrangements for the 2013-14 fire season.

Finally, I do and will continue to reinforce the great work that all our firefighters did over a very busy 2012-13 fire season.

The Harrietville report is available at www.oesc.vic.gov.au.

A significant recent CFA milestone, and the culmination of four years of work, is the signing of a contract with Telstra to deliver the new digital network that will provide regional brigades with direct radio communications to VicFire. This technology will provide a new generation of high-quality digital dispatch capability across the state.

Almost 1,000 brigades will be the direct beneficiaries of the new network – about 500 are currently operating on Category 5 dispatch with no direct radio communication to VicFire dispatch operators and a further approximately 500 are currently operating on Category 1 dispatch on the Interim Regional Dispatch Radio Service.

The rollout of the network will begin in November this year and will be available to all regional brigades by mid 2014. The new digital network will use newly-assigned channels. Fireground and command and control channels are not changing as an outcome of this project.

The introduction of this new network will improve crew safety on the fireground in regional and rural Victoria. ■



FEM CLIENT SERVICES CENTRE

STORY JOHN LLOYD

Fire equipment maintenance (FEM) is a way for volunteer brigades to generate income that can be used to support their operational and community activities. Around 300 brigades service portable fire equipment such as fire extinguishers, fire blankets, lay-flat fire hose, and hose reels for industry and businesses.

Between them, these brigades service one million pieces of portable fire

equipment twice a year for 37,000 customers. All this activity is supported by a small, dedicated team at FEM Bendigo.

The FEM Client Services team answers customer and brigade enquiries, and is happy to help brigades sign up new clients, answer account queries, and connect brigades with the FEM officers in Ballarat and Bendigo or the FEM manager at Melbourne headquarters. You can contact the team on 1300 36 3661. ■

REACH FOR THE SKY

STORY KEITH PAKENHAM

CFA's aerial firefighting capabilities have recently been boosted with the addition of a new aerial pumper. This means we now have three types of truck that can deliver water from an elevated point. We've compared their main features and specifications, and how they can be used.

The Scania Bronto ladder platforms have a maximum aerial height of either 37 or 42 metres. Their telescopic main boom and top articulated fly boom can reach above and over obstacles such as power lines or buildings to deliver water directly on to the target. The secured working cage can also be used as a viewing/working platform or lighting tower and as a crane for rescue work. Additional pumps are needed to supply water to the platform, because it doesn't contain a pump.

There are 42-metre ladder platforms at Dandenong, Traralgon and Geelong City brigades, and 37-metre units at Ballarat City and Bendigo.

The Freightliner Teleboom has a telescopic ladder capable of extending to 19.8 metres in length and its own 5,000 litres per minute pump on board. It's particularly suitable for rescue and lifting work with its rigid ladder and ability to be a water tower. It has a smaller footprint than the ladder platform and doesn't require additional pumps so, apart from the shorter reach, it's more versatile. Telebooms are located at Frankston and Corio brigades, and an additional, spare unit is available for use when other units are being serviced.

CFA's new Scania aerial pumper has a hydraulically-controlled series of booms operated using a wireless remote control. It can deliver water at a height of 20 metres and has a horizontal reach of 15 metres. Although the boom doesn't have any rescue capability via a ladder, the head contains two cameras: a forward looking infra-red and a standard colour video feed to a monitor in a locker. The on-board pump can deliver high water volumes with quick set-up times. It is a similar weight and size to the Teleboom.

Aerial pumps are likely to be located at Shepparton, Warrnambool and Mildura, but this was still to be confirmed when the magazine went to press. ■



42-METRE LADDER PLATFORM

Maximum aerial height	42 metres
Maximum aerial horizontal projection	20 metres
Below ground reach	5 metres
Inbuilt pumping capability	None
Maximum water flow rate at aerial outlet	4,800 litres per minute @ 700 kPa
Rescue capability (ladder access)	Yes
Area flood lighting	Yes 3 kW
Video camera vision	No
Vehicle size	11.2m x 3.75m x 2.5m
Vehicle weight	28.1 tonnes



TELEBOOM

Maximum aerial height	19.8 metres
Maximum aerial horizontal projection	15 metres
Below ground reach	0 metres
Inbuilt pumping capability	Yes
Maximum water flow rate at aerial outlet	3,800 litres per minute @ 700 kPa
Maximum water flow rate at pump	5,000 litres per minute @ 1000 kPa
Rescue capability (ladder access)	Yes
Area flood lighting	Limited
Video camera vision	No
Vehicle size	9.73m x 3.52m x 2.56m
Vehicle weight	19.34 tonnes



AERIAL PUMPER

Maximum aerial height	20 metres
Maximum aerial horizontal projection	15 metres
Below ground reach	2.5 metres
Inbuilt pumping capability	Yes
Maximum water flow rate at aerial outlet	3,800 litres per minute @ 700 kPa
Maximum water flow rate at pump	5,000 litres per minute @ 1000 kPa
Rescue capability (ladder access)	No
Area flood lighting	Limited
Video camera vision	Infra-red and colour video
Vehicle size	9.75m x 3.5m x 2.5m
Vehicle weight	19 tonnes

RITCHIES BENEFITS THE COMMUNITY

STORY NANCY THOMPSON

Since Ritchies started its Community Benefit program in 1993, more than \$3 million has been donated to CFA.

The program has benefited many CFA members and brigades, helping brigades to buy additional equipment and upgrade appliances. For example, Carrum Downs brigade has received \$75,870 since 1993 and Wonthaggi brigade has received around \$17,790.

Recently, Ritchies Supa IGA Cobram held its annual Family Fun Day to raise much-needed funds for Cobram's CFA and State Emergency Service. Chris Nanos and Phil Thomas from Ritchies head office drew the monster raffle which, combined with the barbecue, raised \$3,400 for both organisations.

Captain of Cobram brigade Mick Hilder said, "We hope to use funding from the day to go towards the brigade's contribution for our new Isuzu light tanker. I'd also like to say CFA is very appreciative of Ritchies' ongoing financial support of the Cobram brigade through its Community Benefit program."

Mandy Hawke, manager at Ritchies Supa IGA Cobram said, "These guys did a great job getting up close with the community and helping in every way. Usually the only time that people get



PHOTO: BARRY BENNETT

to meet the volunteers is at a road accident or a fire, so it was great to have them there handing out information. The local community appreciated the opportunity to meet them and ask questions."

Thanks to all suppliers who helped with the day and for the support provided for the show bags and monster raffle. ■

To learn more about Ritchies Community Benefit Program go to www.ritchies.com.au/community-benefit-card

Above: The raffle stall at Cobram's Ritchies Supa IGA Family Fun Day

IN BRIEF

RADIO DISPATCH SERVICE

Almost 1,000 brigades across regional and rural Victoria will directly benefit from being dispatched to emergencies by VicFire, when a new digital radio communications network is rolled out from November 2013.

The Regional Radio Dispatch Service project team is currently working with each district's operations manager to establish local requirements.

Each district will transition to the new network at an agreed time.

INCIDENT CONTROLLERS ACCREDITED

STORY DARREN GREVIS-JAMES

At the first joint CFA and DEPI Level 3 incident controllers accreditation ceremony, held in Melbourne in May, 37 men and women from both agencies received accreditation certificates.

Presentations to the Level 3 incident controllers, which included 13 CFA volunteers, were made by Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley, Chief Officer Euan Ferguson and DEPI's Chief Fire Officer Alan Goodwin.

Craig Lapsley said the multi-agency accreditation format reflected the recommendation of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission that agencies needed to work closely together to improve incident management procedures.

Alistair Drayton, the manager of accreditation programs for the multi-agency Incident Management Team Training Project (IMTTP) said a key objective was to collectively improve the sustainability

of training, capacity and capability of incident management personnel for Victoria.

"One of the key objectives of the IMTTP is to build processes that focus on the importance of selecting the right people with the right skills and experience to undertake incident management roles, rather than allowing self-selection," Alistair said.

Alistair said Level 2 incident controllers who want Level 3 accreditation undertake a rigorous assessment and development process that includes several key steps.

First there is psychometric testing to make sure the person is suitable for the role. There is then scenario testing that involves a day of assessment across eight emergency management and fire-related scenarios.

Candidates must also provide a portfolio of evidence of their experience and performance across a range of experiences at Level 2 and Level 3. ■



PHOTO: DARREN GREVIS-JAMES

CAPTAINS HAVE FUN AT BANGHOLME

STORY AMY SCHILDBERGER

CFA's Eastern Metropolitan Region organised a day out at Bangholme Training Campus at the end of May for 22 of the district's brigade captains and the full operations team.

District 13 Operations Manager David Renkin said it's the second time they've run the event as a way to bring the fun back into CFA.

"We don't get much of an opportunity to get together as a full team and have a play and go back to basics," David said. "It's a great way to build resilience among our captains and also build relationships.

"It also gives us a chance to discuss any issues and problem solve."

The group carried out a range of training exercises including a gas attack, running fuel fire and a car-into-a-pole rescue scenario.

Dandenong brigade brought their chemical detection unit for everyone to look at and learn more about this specialist equipment. The group was then taken through a hazmat scenario.

The Dandenong Ranges Feeding Group, comprising auxiliary brigade members, provided food throughout the day.

"The large amount of involvement and interest from across the district was pleasing to see and was a great networking opportunity," David said. "I look forward to facilitating more of these events and, most importantly, having fun!" ■



COBDEN MEMBER RIGHT ON TRACK

STORY LEITH HILLARD

Cobden member Colin Silcock-Delaney had a tough start in life. He grew up in orphanages and spent his teenage years in a boys' home with 300 others until a job was found for him at age 15.

In his 80-plus years, however, he has run full speed into life. In fact, he runs up to 10 kilometres every day and up to 20 kilometres once a week. He won his first triathlon at 50 years of age and the first-ever Geelong marathon in 1978 with a time of two hours 51 minutes.

Talk to Colin and the event details come spilling out including fire brigade championships.

"I liked running down the track with the hydrant," he said. "It's a good clean sport. I've competed in the Police and Emergency Services Games and I'll be there next year when they're in Melbourne.

"I've run 25 Melbourne Marathons. I did the 1983 New York Marathon and the 1990 Boston Marathon. I've been from New Zealand to Japan and Finland in 10 World Masters track and field championships – they're every two years. I love the travelling. There's no money in it.

"I carried the Olympic torch at Port Campbell after being nominated by school children I trained. I've just officiated at the Great Ocean Road Marathon over three days.

"People think I'm crazy. I go to bed early and get up early. I love eating lots of fruit and vegetables."

The man who describes himself as "the black sheep" as a child now has a life surrounded by family: five children, eight grandchildren, eight half-brothers and four half-sisters.

Colin has been a CFA member for 50 years and goes to brigade training two or three times a month, where he likes to stand back and let the younger ones have a turn. "I was always a firefighter," he said. "I never had plans to go to the top."

He does, however, remain ambitious on the running track. He runs 800, 1,500, 5,000 and 10,000 metres and is chasing another man in the 80 to 85 years-of-age category who has had the cheek to beat him. ■



CAPTAINS SHAVE FOR A CURE

STORY **EMILY DURBRIDGE**

In mid March, Stratford Fire Station played host to a fundraiser for the Leukaemia Foundation as part of the World's Greatest Shave.

District 10 captains, an operations officer, brigade members and community members decided to lose or colour their locks in the name of charity.

Mike Sears, captain of Stratford brigade and organiser of the event, decided to host the night to support his sister who's having treatment for non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Clydebank Captain Wayne Goddard, Maffra Captain Ron Graham, Perry Bridge Captain David Read, Boisdale Captain Mathew Sim, Newry Captain Mark Whitehurst and Stratford Firefighter Darren Rafferty all shaved their heads. Sale Captain Doug Brack and Operations Officer Paul Fixter went home with brightly coloured hair for the cause.

Coongulla Captain Geoff Lynch promised to shave off his 40-year-old beard as well as his hair if he raised over \$1,000 – which he did.

David Luxford was a brilliant auctioneer, convincing people to part with their money, and he also donated his hair for the cause. Doug Richardson was auctioned for \$1,500 and somebody threw in an extra \$200 for him to lose an eyebrow!

Community members got right behind the night, either shaving their heads, colouring their hair or participating in the auction.



PHOTO: EMILY DURBRIDGE

Stratford auxiliary did a wonderful job making lots of cakes and goodies to raise extra money for the Leukaemia Foundation.

More than \$8,000 was raised, which is a fantastic effort. Congratulations to everybody involved for helping to raise so much money for a good cause. ■

Above: Coongulla Captain Geoff Lynch loses his 40-year-old beard at the hands of Regional Director Mark Potter

ART TRIUMPHS IN TRAWOOL

STORY **DUNCAN RUSSELL**

Over the Easter weekend Trawool Fire Station, near Seymour, hosted an art fundraiser. The event developed from artist Lee Stephenson's idea to invite several local artists to join her in an exhibition at Trawool brigade, where she's a CFA member and former communications officer.

"It was wonderfully successful," said Lee. "A commission on all sales was donated to Trawool brigade and we raised around \$2,000 for the brigade."

Two local wineries – Trawool Valley and Brave Goose vineyards – helped to raise money by selling wine at the exhibition and donating to the brigade, a dollar from each glass sold.

The fundraiser was opened by Chief Officer Euan Ferguson. "To those of you here who are not CFA members, I say you are well served by the Mitchell Shire, Alexandra and Yea groups. Those men and women have served at many fires.

"On 6 March, a fire took off from the side of the road in Trawool brigade's backyard, and brigade Captain Tony Crook showed superb leadership in handling that particularly difficult fire," Euan said.

"Small brigades like Trawool rely on the generosity of the local community and employers. Without their support, our job would be so much more difficult."

Robert Parker, friend of brigade members and former local



PHOTO: DUNCAN RUSSELL

councillor, spoke about how the natural beauty of the area had inspired artists for decades.

"How lucky we are to live in the lovely Trawool Valley. The wonderful art here tonight is to support CFA members who do such a wonderful job." ■

Above: Eight local artists raise money for Trawool brigade

JOHNSONVILLE'S MULTI-FUNCTION VEHICLE

STORY PETER WHITE

PHOTO: PETER WHITE



Johnsonville brigade celebrated the arrival of a new \$160,000 one-of-a-kind support vehicle in March following 20 years of fundraising.

Rae Whelan, an active member of the local community, praised the brigade at the presentation. "We need to support the guys and girls of the fire brigade because they support us and our community," she said.

Tim Bull, State Member of Parliament for Gippsland East, presented the keys to Johnsonville brigade Captain Rod Baylis.

"This new vehicle was developed by local members. It's modelled on a light salvage vehicle, but customised by the brigade," Rod said.

"In the event that another appliance is not readily available, this vehicle has the capability to respond to and commence handling a wide range of incidents."

Its features include LP gas flare-off equipment, telescopic lighting for field work, quick fill pumping and extra equipment including hoses, spare hydrant and couplings, signage and shovels.

"It's great to be able to celebrate today's milestone with a new replacement support vehicle that will enable Johnsonville brigade to respond to a wider range of emergencies, providing broader community protection," Mr Bull said.

The support vehicle was funded by the Victorian Government's Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program, CFA and the Johnsonville community, including the Salt Creek Camp Draft Committee which has supported the brigade over many years with its fundraising activities. ■

PATROLLING PORT PHILLIP

STORY MICHAEL KEANE

Boats in the United States Coast Guard have machine guns and the crews are armed with pistols and rifles. But the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard is a bit different. It's not a military organisation, but promotes water safety with the motto "Safety by all means."

The usual way the fishing community sees a yellow Coast Guard boat is when they've broken down and are anxiously waiting for assistance, sometimes in rough seas.

Coast Guard's role is to promote water safety through education, search and rescue, examination and example. Coast Guard's marine operations include radio monitoring, safety patrols, search and rescue, vessel assistance and vessel tracking. Its public education program consists of classes in basic seamanship, coastal navigation, marine radio and boat licence courses.

Werribee Coast Guard brigade, which was formed in 1982 and

has 35 members, is responsible for an area that extends from near the Williamstown Football ground to Point Wilson Pier (near Corio Bay). The Werribee flotilla has carried out over 100 assists this year, including rescuing three fishermen in May, after their boat sank and threw them into the freezing waters of Port Phillip. The Werribee crew picked up two men and the St Kilda crew rescued one. All were airlifted and returned to shore safely. This reinforces the dedication of the volunteer members in the Werribee area, where a volunteer crew is on stand-by around the clock.

The history of the flotilla is long and interesting and has a bright future on the west side of the bay. If you're interested in boats, navigation, seamanship, marine radio, first aid and community involvement, contact Angelo Auciello from the Werribee flotilla on 0414 689 206. New members are most welcome and previous knowledge is not required. ■



PHOTO: COURTESY OF COAST GUARD MEDIA UNIT

IN BRIEF

MEMBER ASSISTANCE NUMBER

The phone number for member assistance has changed to 1300 795 711. The new Member Assistance Program gives CFA members and immediate family one point of contact, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can access a range of confidential mental health services run by qualified psychologists and counsellors. More details about the program will be in the spring issue of *Brigade* magazine.

YOU'VE EARNED IT

Your Emergency Memberlink Program is just one way for us to recognise your commitment and contribution to emergency services and Victorian communities.



Through Emergency Memberlink, members can receive discounts and benefits on a wide range of products and services. In excess of 250 offers are available, with new benefits being added regularly.

Details of the offers can be found in the Emergency Memberlink Guide which is sent out with all new Memberlink Cards and on the Memberlink website www.emergencymemberlink.com.au. Be sure to visit the website regularly to keep up-to-date.

There are a number of ways you can access your Memberlink Benefits. These include:

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- **Online Shopping** – goods below RRP delivered state-wide.
- **Purchase Cards** – Safeway/Caltex, Coles, and many more Gift Cards available through your Memberlink team at 5% discount.
- **Discount Vouchers** – time limited, special offers updated regularly. Members can download these vouchers from the Memberlink website or call the Memberlink Team.

For anyone without a Memberlink Card, you can call the Memberlink Team on **1800 820 037** or register online.

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*Terms & conditions apply.



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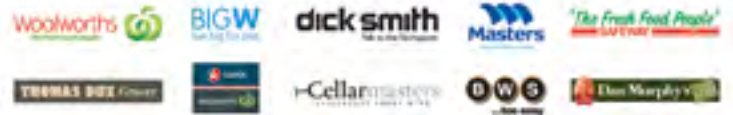
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Right: Hampton Park brigade members Kay Smith and Jo Smith with Max and Jack



PHOTO: LEE-ANNE McCLOSKEY

PAMPERING POOCHES PROFITS BRIGADE

STORY LEE-ANNE McCLOSKEY

In mid May, Hampton Park brigade once again teamed up with Hampton Park Veterinary Hospital to run a successful dog grooming day.

Members of the public were invited to the station to have their dogs groomed by the team from the veterinary hospital, with all profits going to the brigade. It was a great success with more than 40 dogs washed, clipped and blow dried.

This year's event exceeded all expectations and the team from the veterinary hospital was kept busy all day. The weather was perfect, with sunshine all day, and dogs of all shapes and sizes lined up to be pampered.

The doors to the station were opened and the community had an opportunity to tour the station and meet our firefighters. Children enjoyed dressing up as firefighters and hopping on board the trucks. The operational support team also helped to raise money by running a sausage sizzle.

Captain Troy Smith said, "Working in partnership with the local veterinary hospital has proved to be a great success in raising the profile of the brigade within the community and, at the same time, raising much-needed funds."

Thanks to our local community who took the time to visit us and support the brigade. The event raised more than \$1,000, which will go towards upgrading the station's equipment. ■

IN BRIEF

NEW STATIONS FOR NEIGHBOURS

In mid April, neighbouring District 17 brigades Hopetoun West and Yaapeet officially opened their new stations. Yaapeet Captain Troy Fisher also received the keys to a new ultra light tanker from Mildura Member of Parliament Peter Crisp.

"We had a tin shed with a truck, a phone and a whiteboard. Now we've got this whole set-up and there's room for the quickfill trailer," said Hopetoun West Captain John Webster.



PHOTO: STEPHEN CADUSCH

MIA MIA STATION JUST COMPLETED

STORY STEPHEN CADUSCH

After many years of discussion and possibilities, Mia Mia brigade in District 2 is getting a new fire station. Construction started in February this year and has just been completed.

The new station will be a significant improvement over the existing station, with space for two tankers as well as an office, kitchen, meeting room and storage facilities. The amount of space, technology, fittings and equipment really highlight how far CFA has evolved.

The current station is only just large enough to accommodate Tanker 1 and the UHF aerial is constantly being bent out of shape as it drags across the open door. On occasions when we have had the district spare tanker, the beacons have to be laid down before backing it in so that they don't get knocked off by the door.

The brigade recently received a new light tanker, which was temporarily stored in a nearby farm shed until the new station was finished.

The new station is a huge leap from the original tin shed station which, these days, is used to store items for the local hall. Meanwhile, the current station will be handed over to the Mia Mia Recreation Reserve Committee and will continue to be a useful community asset.

We really appreciate the effort of the district office staff to ensure the construction of this station went ahead, and brigade members are looking forward to the official opening later this year. ■

LIGHTS, CAMERA, FIRE FOR DUNKELD

STORY JUDE ALEXANDER

PHOTO: SUSAN KIDNIE



The town of Dunkeld was the star in March when the Grassland Curing team recorded three field-based training videos. The footage was shot at the farm belonging to Brendan Gordon, vegetation management officer and Dunkeld brigade captain, and in the paddocks of Dunkeld.

These videos are part of a training package of five videos that will go online later this year, allowing grassland curing observers to access training from any location. The videos cover a number of aspects of grassland curing, including assessing curing and fuel loads, data entry and the use of satellites.

Appearing in the videos were Vegetation Management Officer Anthony Watt and Wildfire Instructor Terry Hanley. Several animals and children also made it on to film so that the videos could be as realistic as possible. Grassland curing observers are normal people who juggle family and farm life while collecting valuable data to help manage grassfire risk.

"The Grampians provided a stunning backdrop to the videos, but their beauty couldn't upstage the performers who did a great job," said Susan Kidnie, research officer for the Grassland Curing team. The team is very grateful to the Dunkeld and surrounding brigades for their hospitality.

Manager of Research and Innovation David Nichols presents two videos: one for CFA staff on validating data, and one explaining how satellites were originally used by NASA during the Cold War to track small grain crops worldwide. The technology was then developed for other uses, including analysis of fire risk. ■

TOLMIE VOLUNTEERS HONOURED

STORY DAVID MIMS

Chief officer Euan Ferguson presented his Commendation for Courage Award to Tolmie and District brigade members Trevor Mahon and John Johnson in a special ceremony at the fire station in mid May.

Around 50 guests from Tolmie and Tatong brigades, Mansfield group, State Emergency Service, along with Mansfield Shire councillor Marg Attley, CFA Operations Manager Stewart Krelttszheim and family and friends watched Trevor and John receive a framed certificate and formal dress ribbon.

With the events of 10 January 2010 – where CFA volunteer Hugh Monroe was killed when the fire truck he was travelling in was involved in an accident – still painfully fresh in the memories of those involved, it was a solemn and moving occasion.

In presenting the awards, Euan spoke of the recently-held annual CFA memorial service that honours the CFA firefighters killed on active duty, and the roll of honour on display at Fiskville that lists the names of those people, including Hugh Monroe.

Reading from the citation, Euan said, "On 10 January 2010, Tolmie and District fire brigade's tanker rolled over resulting in a fatality and four volunteers injured. The accident occurred in a remote area with no mobile phone or radio coverage. Despite being in extreme pain from unknown injuries later found to be severe, John Johnson and Trevor Mahon walked several kilometres to the nearest property to get help.



PHOTO: MILTON TAYLOR

"In doing so, John Johnson and Trevor Mahon demonstrated to the highest level the spirit of CFA."

At the end of the ceremony, refreshments were served in the community hall, giving those present a chance to reflect, remember and, most importantly, continue to move forward and celebrate the community spirit and support flourishing at Tolmie. ■

Reprinted courtesy of Mansfield Courier

Above: From left to right: Captain Leon Storer, Trevor Mahon, Chief Officer Euan Ferguson, John Johnson, Operations Manager Stewart Krelttszheim

BLOOD, SWEAT AND GEARS

STORY TANYA LYONS

Eighteen months ago, a group of staff from CFA's District 5 office started bike riding after work to enhance their work-life balance and become fitter and happier in the process.

"Our goal was to improve ourselves – whether fitness or skills," Barwon South West Community Safety Manager James Haley said.

"From the initial days of riding old, faded mountain bikes, feeling the bike seat outline every time we sat down, discovering how much difference gloves actually made and, of course, battling all variances of weather, the group decided to work to their ultimate dream – riding in the Murray to Moyné bike relay."

This goal was achieved in early April when 13 riders and two support volunteers – the Flying Flynnns – undertook the 540-kilometre ride from Mildura to Port Fairy.

"Every rider in the team achieved a personal best in the distance travelled and/or average speed and rode at least 200 kilometres over the two days," James said.

James said that although it was a team effort, special mention should go to Operations Manager Nick Brown. "He was the only rider in the event who rode the whole 540 kilometres from Mildura to Port Fairy. That's a huge effort," James said.

The Flying Flynnns also used the bike ride as an opportunity to raise money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the team's name honours its creator, John Flynn.

After many entrepreneurial efforts, including cake sales, trivia nights, auctions and garage sales, the Flying Flynnns raised around \$5,000.

"What started as a simple bike ride after work grew through the hard work and dedication of every member in the team to an inspirational achievement. Everyone involved in the ride and fundraising should be really proud of themselves," James said. ■



PHOTO: MICHAEL GREENHAM

IN BRIEF

HEYWOOD GROUP TANKERS

Tyrendarra, Myamyn, Heathmere and Condah brigades recently received new four-wheel drive medium tankers as part of the Truck Replacement Program.

One of the features on the 2,350-litre Hino tanker is the electrically-operated monitor at the front, which is controlled by a joystick in the cabin. It delivers a very effective water stream for bush, grass and structure fires.

NEW ROAD RESCUE TEAM FOR MELTON

STORY KAYLA MASKELL

Melton brigade strengthened its road rescue capabilities by adding 10 career firefighters to the brigade in mid April.

The new dedicated road rescue crew means there are two extra firefighters per shift to operate the brigade's specialised road rescue truck and equipment.

Melton brigade Senior Station Officer Michael Masters said the extra crew would benefit both the brigade and the community.

"Obviously, it will reduce our response times to road accidents, which is important with Melton brigade being first responders in road rescue," Michael said. "It will also ease the pressures on both career and volunteer members as the brigade does attend quite a lot of road rescues."

Michael said this was particularly important during the day

when most volunteers were at work and the calls were mostly attended by career staff. "But we will still rely heavily on our volunteer members to work with our dedicated crew, as at most road rescue incidents you need a few people to help out," he said.

"As well as this, our volunteers have been doing road rescue for many years and are all very experienced in the area."

Michael said the new firefighters, as well as Melton's 18 career staff, had undertaken special training in road rescue.

The two-week course – held at the fire station, a training centre in Melton and at CFA's Fiskville Training College – was both practical and theory-based and involved a lot of hands-on work using specialised tools and equipment. ■



Left: Melton crew, from left to right: Leading Firefighter Graeme Bland, Leading Firefighter Luke Shearer, Firefighter Mark Welch, volunteer Firefighters Stephen Hirt and Trevor Rickards, Firefighter Scott Burns

PHOTO: CORN WOODVATT

NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY

STORY JEFF GREEN

CFA's Board recently endorsed a new Health, Safety and Environment (HS&E) Strategy for 2013-15.

This strategy not only aims to build on the Safety First campaign to minimise health and safety risks to CFA personnel, but also incorporates a strong focus on the environment.

The strategy comprises four key objectives:

- build committed and accountable HS&E leadership
- establish and maintain effective control systems for HS&E risks
- minimise the impact of our activities on the environment
- improve the wellbeing and resilience of our people.

To ensure a clear commitment to this new strategy, the Board has established a committee focused on HS&E that will consider relevant matters, monitor progress on the strategy, and review serious incidents and CFA's performance.

Management will be accountable to drive the implementation of this strategy but, to be successful, all CFA members need to share the responsibilities.

The strategy's initiatives will be to:

- review CFA's health and safety policy so that it incorporates the environment
- implement internationally-recognised systems to manage health, safety and the environment
- establish an HS&E risk register to ensure risks are assessed so sound decisions can be made in prioritising the management of these risks
- increase audits and inspection programs of brigades and work activities to identify and address risks
- implement psychological preparation and prevention programs to reduce the exposure to psychological risk
- continue to expand health programs
- review procurement and project management practices to ensure critical HS&E issues are fully considered
- reduce our impact on the environment by reviewing our use of energy, emissions, management of waste and impact on natural resources
- improve online access to information and management of HS&E issues
- maintain specialist HS&E resourcing to support the delivery of the strategy.

The strategy's goal is to progressively enhance the overall safety of our members with a minimum impact on brigades. To find out more about this strategy, contact your regional occupational health and safety adviser. ■



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIN

HEALTHWATCH GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

STORY PETER LANGRIDGE

A CFA program that monitors the health of CFA volunteers has exceeded expectations, saving at least one life and helping to establish the largest volunteer health database in the world.

CFA leads the way in this area and is helping NSW emergency services and State Emergency Service in Victoria to set up their own programs.

The health check, which is open to all volunteers and their families, checks blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose levels and also includes a cardiovascular risk assessment. The free health sessions are run at a brigade's station on a meeting or training night.

All test results are confidential and members leave with a printed copy of their risk assessment. CFA members with internet access can also monitor their results on the database from home. Some members may be given a recommendation to visit their doctor to follow up the results.

The program is strongly supported by Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) and has been running since 2008. In the past four years, it has monitored the health of more than 9,000 volunteers.

Over the years, the team has received many heartfelt expressions of thanks. We've also helped several members with early diagnoses of different health conditions, so it's great that in some small way we're able to give back to our members who dedicate so much of their time to CFA.

The CFA health team set up Healthwatch tents at several events – such as the recent VFBV State Rural Championships in Werribee where more than 140 volunteers were tested.

A snapshot of the health assessments shows that CFA members are, in many cases, living a healthy lifestyle and have a lower risk than the general community. For example, 93 per cent of members are in the low-risk group for heart attack within a five-year period of having a health check. Also, only 13 per cent of members who've had a health check are smokers, compared with 17 per cent in the general population. ■

If you want to find out more about the program, contact Teagan Knight or Peter Langridge on 9262 8843 or email esvhealth@cfa.vic.gov.au. Online information is available at <http://esvhealthwatch.vic.gov.au>



ROSS BARKER
HUME ACTING REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Considerable effort and resources have been directed towards getting fire safety messages across to the community. Both staff and volunteers are involved in a range of programs to specifically address areas of risk.

Let me tell you a story about something that happened to me recently.

I was buying lunch at the local shopping centre and, while standing at the sandwich bar ordering lunch, the ‘whoop whoop’ siren sounded. “Isn’t that the fire siren?” I asked. “Yes it is,” was the reply. “Shouldn’t we be evacuating then? The siren always goes off, we’re used to it. Nothing ever happens.”

“I’m evacuating,” I said and I suggested the shop assistants do the same. “Would you like your sandwich first...?” came the reply. “No I’ll come back, thanks,” I said, thinking it would be toasted by the time I came back! As I was leaving, the ‘evacuate’ alert sounded and continued until CFA arrived.

After CFA arrived and the warning stopped, I returned and collected my sandwich. I began speaking to the other shop assistant who, ironically, ended up being a fire warden for a local organisation. She explained that although the supermarket runs occasional evacuation drills, it doesn’t extend to the variety shops. The sirens go off all the time, she said, and they are just used to it. I then went to get a coffee.

Being identifiable as a CFA employee, a conversation started with the shop owner and we quickly got on to the evacuation arrangements. Again, the message was the same. “Yes, we have a manual, but we have never had a drill. We don’t have any fire wardens.” I asked why he didn’t evacuate his staff and customers and his reply was along the lines of how it would be inconvenient and he’d lose customers and income. Bizarrely, he also said, “I couldn’t see any smoke or flame, so I didn’t worry about it.”

My observations about this incident are:

- people in the shopping centre took no notice of the siren or evacuation warning and simply went about their business
- the shop assistants were aware of the evacuation procedures but chose to ignore them
- they had not undertaken any form of evacuation drill
- centre management was not on site
- there were no wardens in place.

In talking about this episode, it became clear that, unfortunately, this is a normal occurrence. Perhaps we should be looking more broadly at ways to get the message across to a wider audience and reward those who have active fire plans in place, practise their fire responsibilities or otherwise do the right thing. I acknowledge all the excellent work that’s being done by CFA members, but it’s clear that there’s still a long way to go to mitigate complacency in the community and to demonstrate that fires don’t just happen in the bush or at home. ■



DON KELLY
GRAMPIANS REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Primacy of life is the key priority for CFA and emergency services. As the bushfire season has now ended, it’s appropriate to consider other fire risks faced by our communities.

Recently a public entertainment venue in the Grampians Region was forced to close temporarily due to concerns about its compliance with fire regulations. This closure impacted a number of businesses for about three weeks.

CFA assists local government and agencies to ensure buildings comply with the Building Code of Australia and have all relevant permits by identifying high fire-risk premises, undertaking joint inspections, providing advice about fire risks, and following up on any fire-related matters that may need rectification to ensure the safety of occupants, the community and firefighters. These activities relate to prevention, mitigation, and risk reduction.

CFA has the power to inspect existing buildings, identify any issues associated with maintenance of essential safety measures, and recommend that fire safety elements are upgraded or modified.

Inspections and assessment of high fire risk includes places such as shopping centres, sporting venues, hotels, night clubs and high-risk residential buildings – for example, backpacker accommodation. The assessment considers the water supply for firefighting purposes, access to emergency exits, provision of emergency lighting and warning systems, fire detection and suppression systems and access for emergency vehicles. Typically, these inspections are based on risk and available resources, and are coordinated in partnership with councils.

Emergency management planning for public events is another part of CFA community fire risk assessment, which is normally conducted before a public entertainment permit is issued by councils and other authorities. Public events, whether they are agricultural shows, music festivals or any other activity that will attract people in large numbers, need to be assessed by CFA. In most cases, an emergency management plan endorsed by CFA, police, and Ambulance Victoria is required before a permit is issued.

While CFA is responsible for carrying out statutory fire-risk assessments, CFA brigades have a role in monitoring the fire risk of their local buildings, events and public places where the community gathers.

If brigades have concerns about fire safety in public buildings they should discuss the matter with their catchment officers. Public events should also be referred to catchment officers at the earliest opportunity so that CFA can undertake the necessary inspections and advise organisers, owners and promoters about emergency management requirements to stage the event.

Brigade members should not provide advice on statutory requirements direct to owners, developers and promoters of events.

CFA’s obligation is to ensure high-risk premises and activities are fire safe for the community, occupants and firefighters. ■



KATE BRUERTON
EASTERN METROPOLITAN
ACTING REGIONAL DIRECTOR

We've already started to see the beginning of winter and the impacts this has for our brigades, volunteers and staff. Having already attended more structure fires this winter compared to last, our focus is to inform communities and residents on the importance of fire safety in the home.

In early May, we attended a structure fire in the community centre at Tudor Village in Lilydale (featured on p9 of this issue), where 18 CFA and MFB trucks and 80 firefighters attended. Tudor Village has around 300 live-in residents and our main priority was to ensure they were safe. As usual, all agencies worked together to achieve the best possible outcome; a commendable effort by all. Our Community Capability team has since conducted a walk-through of the village, engaging the residents in discussions about home fire safety, checking smoke alarms, assisting in identifying fire safety hot spots and handing out home fire safety literature. A fantastic effort by all from start to finish!

In late May, we held our annual Living Legends dinner at Healesville Sanctuary House Hotel. These evenings provide an opportunity for our long-serving brigade members to share their knowledge and experience. Forty-one 'living legends' and their partners attended and discussed the Life after Trucks program. This program looks to integrate the vast knowledge and experience held by long-serving members into everyday CFA support projects, enabling them to stay connected with the CFA community. Suggestions focused around:

- community Fire Ready Program
- staging Area team
- incident control centre/ Div Comm support
- Fire Safe Kids Program
- brigade support
- recruit training support
- HQ brigade support
- strike team transport
- catering trailer team
- secretary/treasurer

Our next step is to coordinate feedback via a structured survey.

At the end of the financial year, we reflect on our achievements. We appreciate the extraordinary contributions our brigades, volunteers and staff have made in achieving the exceptional level of services delivered across the region. As business planning for the 2013-14 year begins, we look at future priorities for the region.

To get out and meet so many of you over my six weeks as Acting Regional Director has been great, and I would like to thank everyone for their support. I will return to my role as manager business services shortly and look forward to maintaining the new relationships I've built.

Finally, I would like to reinforce that just because it's winter doesn't mean we slow down, so look after yourselves and each other. Identify when you need a break and don't be afraid to speak to someone if you need help. ■



PATRICK O'BRIEN
LODDON MALLEE
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Congratulations to Oscar 1 Emergency Response Brigade and all its members, approved by the CFA Board with effect from 11 April 2013, as the first specialist response brigade in CFA's history. Its response area covers the whole of Victoria.

In July 1997, the Oscar 1 Quarry and Mines Rescue Team was established in Bendigo by CFA, in consultation with Victoria Police, State Emergency Service and the Victorian Chamber of Mines. The name Oscar 1 derives from the police district covering part of central Victoria. The decision was made to base it in Bendigo to ensure a specialised skill base so that the three agencies had a capability to meet their obligations under the Emergency Management Act 1986 as control and support agencies for response to mine and quarry emergencies.

Victoria's history of mining has resulted in thousands of mine shafts throughout the state. Almost all of these are disused and more than half of them are unmapped. In Bendigo, regarded as a well-mapped area, only 2,000 of an estimated 3,000 mine shafts are 'known'.

The main purpose of the Oscar 1 Quarry and Mines Rescue Team was – and still is – to provide expertise and capability for incidents in disused mines and quarries. Around a third of the members of Oscar 1 worked in the mining industry and all were registered CFA volunteers with established brigades. These characteristics still apply, though now members will belong to their own, new brigade.

Oscar 1 is equipped with long-duration breathing apparatus and an extensive kit of rope and other rescue gear deployed on a tray truck. The brigade does rigorous training and fitness programs to maintain its rescue and underground firefighting skills.

Every year, Loddon Mallee Region (LMR) recognises brigades and groups that demonstrate initiative and innovation. The scope of the awards has been extended this year to include other active volunteer groups in the region. This year's recipients are: Terrick and Whipstick Fire Brigades Groups, Castlemaine, Corop West, Lake Boga and Piangil brigades and the LMR Volunteer Community Education Group. All the award recipients displayed initiative and/or innovation which have directly or indirectly enhanced operational capability and community safety in the region.

In an environment of change we often respond with a degree of concern and, sometimes, fear. I sincerely believe that CFA is a highly-capable organisation, abundantly blessed with highly capable people. We should always derive a great organisational and personal confidence and self-belief from these facts. We are entirely justified in thinking that there is no circumstance where we cannot find the way ahead. We simply have to persevere and believe in and harness the abilities we possess. Belief and perseverance are not solely for those in leadership positions but for all of us. Let's all display these two leadership qualities, plus courage, in times of change. We've all dealt successfully with multiple changes over the years and we can continue to do so together. ■



BOB BARRY
BARWON SOUTH WEST
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Encouraging excellence across Barwon South West Region is very important and the success of the Women and Fire Mentoring Program is a shining example of this.

Now running for three years, the program encourages the role of women in CFA. It provides a support system as they work towards their goals at CFA.

It was implemented in the south-west to provide a support structure for women who volunteer with CFA, develop a network of women in the south-west area, enhance the sustainability of brigades by encouraging women's participation and provide professional development training in mentoring and leadership.

The program operates over a 12-month period and consists of four formal training sessions, social events and guest speaker opportunities.

Some of the great achievements that have come out of this program were highlighted at a recent graduation for District 4 and 5. These included assisting at incident control centres, strike team participation and leading, completion of Minimum Skills and training opportunities.

What I found particularly impressive was the personal goals that had been achieved. It's very encouraging to hear that, having been through the program, some participants were named Firefighter of the Year or Recruit Firefighter of the Year in their brigades.

I was also pleased to hear that the skills learned as a result of the program could also translate into improvements at the participants' workplaces.

Mentoring is a two-way relationship and, in most cases, an opportunity for professional development for both the mentor and mentee. Mentors bring a wide range of skills to the mentoring relationship. They use their experience to help mentees see things from a different perspective. It's about being a good role model and encouraging the mentee to commit, set and achieve their personal goals, such as taking on leadership roles in the brigade.

While the program is about encouraging women to excel in CFA, we encourage both men and women to join as mentors. This ensures a mix of skills, experience and geographic location.

Already, the upcoming District 6 and 7 Women and Fire program has had overwhelming support from volunteers and staff and is booked up with 24 mentees and 21 mentors.

For more details about the program I'd encourage anyone to get in touch with Barwon South West's Manager People and Culture Julie Winzar. It would be great to see this program picked up in other regions across CFA.

I would also like to acknowledge Julie's hard work and dedication as one of the leaders of this program. ■



MARK POTTER
GIPPSLAND
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

I attended a group meeting recently and was handed a document titled 'Reflections'. This document described a volunteer's experience as a CFA member. I was impressed with the passion and understanding the author had of the challenges facing a very important topic for CFA – volunteerism. I also had the privilege to attend the launch of the VFBV Darley Leadership Program in Traralgon recently, where I met and spoke with the volunteers undertaking a leadership program this year. Again, the discussion and understanding around the challenges associated with volunteerism were impressive. I understand that a number of these participants will now focus on different aspects of volunteerism in their project work.

The challenge for all of us is to better understand volunteerism, at the very local community level in particular. One thing I experienced very quickly when moving to the Gippsland Region nearly five years ago is how different each community is. There is almost always a foundation that includes a sense of identity, sense of belonging and commitment to making the community a better place. However, each community has its own way of operating and working together to make it viable. The people in CFA who understand this most are the brigade members themselves.

For CFA brigades to remain viable and strong supporters of their communities, it's imperative that they are part of the community. In nearly all cases, brigades across Gippsland maintain strong relationships with their communities. In some locations the brigade is the only community group. While we are doing well with maintaining a relationship with communities, I regularly ask brigade members if they could do better.

I recently attended a brigade dinner and listened to the captain list the community activities that the brigade was involved in. This included Good Friday Appeal, the Anzac Day march, community engagement activities and other functions. He also explained that the brigade had taken on an additional 11 volunteers in the last year. I am not sure if this brigade realises it, but I have no doubt that the reason they have attracted this level of interest is due to their presence within their local community. By regularly engaging with your community on their turf, you are demonstrating a professionalism that makes people want to join your brigade.

I challenge every Gippsland brigade to think about how they interact with their community and look at how they can do more. I acknowledge that this might seem like more work, but if you attract more members like the brigade mentioned above, you will in fact reduce work on individual brigade members. The most significant outcome of this type of work is a strong viable brigade for the future. ■

Twitter – gipps_potzii



GREG ESNOUF
NORTHERN AND WESTERN
METROPOLITAN REGIONAL DIRECTOR

As we close out the 2012-13 financial year, members of Northern and Western Metropolitan Region are consolidating the learnings from the past summer fire season, and starting to prepare themselves for the bushfire season ahead. I would like to thank everyone for their contributions over the fire season, and I encourage people to consider ways that we can do business better in the future.

But even though summer has ended, we can never lose sight of the fact that a major part of our business doesn't stop. I often get asked, "What does CFA do in winter when there are no fires?" I simply answer that "we help to protect 600,000 people in the region while they work, live and sleep". For example, staff and volunteers continue to deliver key community services such as structural fire response, road accident rescue and hazmat services, building and planning approvals, and compliance inspections 365 days a year.

As an example, regional staff recently participated in a coordinated program with other agencies to inspect licensed venues, predominantly nightclubs in the Wyndham Vale area, on a Saturday night. The inspections focused on compliance with occupancy permit numbers, location and compliance of exits, portable fire equipment and general housekeeping in relation to the prevention of fire. Anyone who has seen the chilling footage of the recent Kiss nightclub fire in Brazil, where 240 people were tragically killed, or the horror of the Childers Palace backpackers hostel fire in Queensland in 2000 where 15 people were killed, will understand the critical importance of this work.

The region is continuing a leadership development program to support new and developing leaders in brigades, with two programs being run over the next couple of months. First, the Captains and First Lieutenants (Integrated Brigades) Induction Workshop is a new program developed in the region that gives new captains and first lieutenants information about how they can link to key regional personnel such as group officers, catchment teams and the Regional Leadership Team. It also introduces them to key regional processes. The day is also a unique opportunity to tap into the expertise of experienced captains, first lieutenants, group officers and members of the Regional Leadership Team, who attend as guests.

Second, the New Officer Program is designed to provide information to anyone who has taken on a new officer's role in 2012 or 2013. The program features a discussion-based format and is also an opportunity to make new connections with fellow new officers. The New Officer program has been developed by David Kearney from Barwon South West, and has been delivered successfully in a number of districts.

As we currently conduct elections in the region, I would like to congratulate those who have been elected to positions for the next two years and thank those who have provided great community service over the past two years. ■



PETER SCHMIDT
SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

In an exciting new era for Southern Metropolitan Region, a new district headquarters and Emergency Management Complex will be built. At the time *Brigade* magazine went to print, the construction was about to begin on this \$3.5 million project.

This state-of-the-art complex will amalgamate multiple offices and incident control centre facilities into one building, ensuring adequate amenities well into the future for this ever-growing and densely-populated district.

Finding an appropriate site and securing a lease has been a long process, so it's great to see this project come to fruition.

The building is expected to be completed by mid 2014 and will be up and running well before the 2014-15 fire season.

Dandenong brigade will also move to a new and improved site. Demolition of the site is complete and the plans have been signed off. Construction of the new \$13 million integrated station is expected to be complete by mid 2014. The two-level station will be the largest of its kind in CFA, and will feature a six-truck parking bay, amenities for up to 16 firefighters, large meeting and training areas, a gymnasium, administration offices and a large outdoor car park area.

The existing District 8 Headquarters and fire station site will be sold after the move into both new premises is complete.

This year also sees elections being conducted in many of the brigades and groups across the region. I wish to thank all of the outgoing officers for their dedicated service to their community and brigades/groups in the roles held, and understand that, in many instances, their level of commitment went well above the norm due to the high level of activity and risk experienced by their brigades.

I welcome all newly-elected officers and office bearers. The Regional Management Team (RMT) recognises the importance of ensuring you are inducted to your new roles and, with that in mind, we will be conducting leadership and brigade management forums over coming months as part of our People First strategy. I, together with the RMT, look forward to working with you in serving your communities into the future. ■

LEARNING by doing

STORIES LEITH HILLARD

Staff instructors and experienced volunteers work together to pass on vital skills. Some CFA training courses are old favourites, but others are leading CFA into new ways of operating.

PHOTO: OWEN GOODING



OTWAYS PLANNED BURN TRAINING CAMP

A training camp at Cape Otway in May taught 23 members how to safely carry out planned burns. The added benefit of this hands-on training was, of course, a reduced fuel load in this high-bushfire risk area.

"The training was for everyone from raw recruits to those doing it as a refresher," said Planned Burn Coordinator Roger Strickland. "We wanted to build their knowledge, skills and confidence in planned burning. The conditions were ideal for low intensity mosaic burning. It was very safe for instruction and people learned the value of standing back and observing fire behaviour – the value of taking their time. It allowed people to see the consequences of their actions.

"We made a close study of fuel moisture and members could see the significant difference in fire behaviour within the subtle range between 10 and 15 per cent moisture. The leaf burn test is a practical way to read moisture in vegetation and it showed us that a lot of the surface litter was slightly damp.

"We were in old sand dune country so it was undulating. We could see the effect on fire behaviour of the aspect of the sun on the ground and the effect of lighting patterns using both line and spot ignitions.

"Members worked in pairs with each buddy lighting in a formation that ensured that the fire lit by one of them didn't endanger the other. We knew where people were at every moment and had two floating collar tanks, two tankers and four slip-ons close by at all times. Our people could observe how well command and control was working and we were fortunate to have skilled personnel on hand to mentor the key positions."

Members also learned to factor in weather, different fuel types and assets to be protected. Anyone who has travelled down Otway Lighthouse Road will know it includes a very healthy koala population.

Barwon South West Vegetation Management Officer (VMO) Ian Morrison was instrumental in planning the camp, along with Wildfire Instructor Mike Evans.

"From an ecological perspective," said Ian, "the purpose was to reduce the stringybark and regenerate the manna gums that the koalas love. The koala numbers were actually low to nil in the area we burned. The low intensity fire gave them the chance to climb higher if necessary and they are in the manna gums which don't have stringybark. Fire doesn't travel up the ribbon bark so easily.

"Ageing trees are an issue in the area. We actively kept the fire out of tree hollows that are critical to so many species. We had water on hand if fire got into the canopies but that didn't happen in such benign conditions."

Learning took the form of campfire conversations each night as all participants settled in at Bimbi Caravan Park, which generously offered free accommodation. Members swapped fire stories, reflected on past incidents and listened to the knowledge and experience that everyone – member and instructor – was willing to share. Ideal conditions for learning and for burning.

Gellibrand firefighter Natalie Said thought that being hands-on was the best way to learn. "I've learned so much about fuel loadings and fuel moisture content, seeing the effects of different lighting patterns and how intense some of the fire behaviour was even with high fuel moisture," she said.

The burns were undertaken at the Conservation Centre property, Bimbi Caravan Park and the Cecil Mariner property, and all landowners were pleased with the results.

The native species were happy too according to Ian who inspected the area six days after the camp. "The kookaburras, magpies and rosellas had all come back," he said. "On top of that, we reduced the fuel load between 80 and 85 per cent across the landscape."

Brigades interested in planned burning should talk to their local VMO. All brigades either currently involved or wanting to get involved are invited to fill in the planned burn survey form available from their VMO. ■

CLASS A FOAM TRAINING IS A CLASS

After three nights of theory, the highlight of the train-the-trainers Class A foam course was a full day at Fiskville.

"It really sinks in when you're shown something rather than told something," said Captain Bill Boyd from Yarra Glen. "We used more props because we were also learning how to pass the skills on."

"We set hay bales on fire and attacked them with water and varied proportion rates of foam. The re-ignition just wasn't there with foam."

"We watched foam slow the burn right down on plywood. You could see its potential if you were protecting a timber house. We attacked diesel and petrol fires. Within two minutes of foam being applied to burning tyres, the fire was all but out."

"I'm a bit of a convert now. We've got foam on our 2.4C tanker and I'm now much clearer about its use and the environmental limitations."

Instructors Mark Barrile and Richard Cromb were on hand with ex-Captain Adrian Hem to guide the 10 new facilitators and reinforce the key question: is using foam appropriate?

"Crews must always consider where the foam run-off is going," said Mark. "Class A foam can help rapidly control fires but care must be taken to avoid waterways, dams and factories and farms certified organic."

"The course also helped facilitators understand Class A foam tactics for uses other than bushfire. We stress that you never use it for an internal structure attack because it can cause rapid ceiling collapse."



PHOTO: DANIEL LISTER

"We're normally limited in live fire training at facilities where water is recycled, but at Fiskville we could also do a Class A foam attack on a car fire. They could see that filling the vehicle with finished foam can extinguish all the materials inside – it reduces the need to get inside."

As for taking the training back to his own crew, as a captain of seven years Bill believes he can speak with a fair degree of knowledge and experience. "You can relate the old war stories," he said. "And now some new ones." ■



INCIDENT LEADERSHIP TAKES CHARGE

PHOTO: ANDREW PAYNE-CROSTON

The Incident Leadership course is delivered and supported by the Incident Management Team Training project, which was set up in response to the findings of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

Senior Wildfire Instructor Andrew Payne-Croston identified that Neville Carland was ripe for a challenge and nominated him for the course.

For Neville, Group Officer of Nathalia and District, it was a logical progression from Fireline Leadership which he completed about five years ago.

"Incident Leadership looks into the big picture stuff," said Neville. "It puts you in stressful situations and you have people assessing you as you respond. You could say that the course gives you the skills to handle pressure, but actually you find that you already have the ability."

"The course tested us in all-hazard scenarios that were very realistic and high intensity and they unfolded in real time. We learned strategies to help us quickly build operational energy in a team where you might not know the other participants, and they are likely to be from another agency. It gives you the confidence to plan and delegate and keep people informed while under time pressure."

"You learn to plan for the worst-case scenario so nothing takes you by surprise and you're not left all at sea."

In fact, Neville tested his leadership skills when the inland sea poured into Nathalia in 2012 and he worked on and off as sector commander.

"A lot of friends' houses were in dire straits," said Neville. "The levee threatened to breach. It was hands-on with all agencies, the army, the Red Cross, the council."

"The Incident Leadership course trained us the way we fight so I was able to approach the floods with confidence in myself. I left the course feeling like I'd been at an incident and here I was again."

"Ultimately, working on the 2012 floods was the most satisfying experience in all my time in CFA. It was the way we worked together; everything we did worked."

Incident Leadership is just one of a suite of training courses that develop Level 2 and 3 incident management team members. ■

KYNETON GROUP FOCUSES ON THERMAL IMAGING

CFA bought 15 Dräger UCF9000 thermal imaging cameras (TIC) last year; arguably the best on the market. Kyneton Group, joined by neighbouring Lancefield brigade, invested in one as a significant regional asset which can also be used by police, State Emergency Service and nearby brigades.

Lancefield Training Officer Jenny Davis, Tylden's Colin Moore and Kyneton Training Officer Greg McIntyre completed a two-day train-the-trainer course about using a TIC at structure fires, bushfires and a range of urban incidents.

Greg was enthusiastic about the Bangholme course which showed that, while a TIC is deceptively easy to use, it takes training to use it accurately.

"The camera detects the radiation of infra-red heat even in the absence of light," said Greg, "so an operator can see in the dark or through smoke. Understanding principles of operation and interpreting images was a big part of the course because you can be tricked. You can easily misinterpret what you see.

"The course reinforced situational awareness. You can't rely on the camera and forget normal firefighting practices. The TIC is a great aid for a competent firefighter but over-reliance can be hazardous. It has limitations.

"At Bangholme we learned which training drills and props to use as facilitators and we've gone home to train four more operators."

Kyneton Group and Lancefield brigade have established an operating procedure that requires an accredited TIC operator to be present when the camera is used at an incident.



PHOTO: GREG MCINTYRE

"One of the great benefits is using the TIC to show people how effective their fire suppression has been," continued Greg. "You can use it to focus hose streams and overhaul so there's less suppression damage. In trained hands, it's a tool with broad application in bushfire, search and rescue and hazardous materials."

The course was led by Senior Station Officer Gavin Parker from Traralgon, who Greg regards as the guru.

"CFA has benchmarked its training against that carried out by fire services in the UK, US and New Zealand, as well as camera manufacturers and specialist training organisations," said Gavin. "CFA has led the way in this training in Australia." ■

PLANTATION FIREFIGHTERS OF WILLATOOK

PHOTO: LEITH HILLARD



Of the 26 operational members at Willatook brigade, 14 recently completed the plantation firefighter course alongside 10 other members of the Hawkesdale Group. The course covered pine and blue gum trees, although in the Willatook area they grow blue gum to make into woodchips.

According to Wildfire Instructor Ray Downes, about 40 per cent of local farmland has been bought by plantation companies, and the training course examined what that means for brigades.

"The grass grows very high in blue gum plantations on highly productive farmland," said Ray. "On top of that, plantings are in raised beds so you can only fight a fire from the approach roads.

"The course looks at all the stages from planting to canopy closure. In the first three years, it's basically a grassland fire that you can't reach because of the tree beds. After five years, limbs drop off so you're dealing with a lot

of debris and brigades are likely to use a hoselay. From seven years onwards, you have canopy closure. Brigades might use a hoselay after a lightning strike on a reasonable day but, if a fire has come in from grazing land, it's an aircraft job.

"I drum in weather, fuel, topography, weather, fuel, topography – that's the catchcry of the course."

Willatook Captain Alan Vaughan leads a brigade keen to sign up for any course on offer and well qualified to confront a wide range of risks.

His members picked up the course message about situational awareness loud and clear. The brigade is proud of its new medium tanker and would only take it into a plantation in mild fire conditions.

"We came away with a healthy amount of wariness about plantations and more knowledge of fire behaviour," said Alan. "We learned about sloping country sending fire into the crowns, although it generally crowns more in pine than eucalypt." ■

APOLLO BAY ON THE ASCENT

All-volunteer Apollo Bay brigade was scheduled for steep-angle rescue training in 2013 and a shocking accident in 2012 when a car hurtled 90 metres from Cape Patton down to a rock shelf by the ocean, leaving a woman trapped, reinforced the urgent need for this training.

"There's a lot of emergency services scrutiny of the volunteers at Apollo Bay and their handling of that job was amazing," said District 6 Operations Officer Byron Kershaw, who is also CFA's technical rescue instructor in Barwon South West. "The pressure on them over an eight-hour rescue was incredible." A Victoria Police inspector agreed, calling them "a credit to your organisation" in a letter of praise.

The challenge, from Captain David Howell's point of view, was the lack of members with these specialist skills – but not any longer. Eleven Apollo Bay members completed the steep-angle rescue course in May – three as a refresher and one helping instruct – so 12 brigade members now have the qualification.

Also attending the one-day theory/three-day practical course were eight career firefighters from Geelong City, another three from Warrnambool and a volunteer from Hamilton.

"Mixing career and volunteer in rope training is all part of Barwon South West building a technical rescue team," said Byron. "The four districts work together with their emergency response tables so that we have a complete picture of our technical response capability. It increases the region's flexibility and builds awareness of each other's capabilities."

All course participants learned the seven key knots and the ins and outs of the standard equipment from ropes, harnesses, pulleys and hauling gear to carabiners, descenders, stretchers and personal protective equipment. They also mastered the finer points of the twin-rope rescue system, adopted statewide, with people connected by two pieces of rope at all times in case one fails.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of a technical rescue is finding the balance between urgency and the need for absolute caution.

"Everyone in the course did 12 drills on steep hills near Apollo Bay," continued Byron. "Everyone got to be the commander, the haul team commander, the safety officer, the belay operator and a member of the over-the-edge team. We're teaching people to step up as the rescue commander; we're teaching people to work as a team. Everyone learns to do a lot of checking of welfare, whereabouts and progress."

One thing Apollo Bay members didn't need any revision of was the nine-to-one mechanical advantage pulley system. The Cape Patton rescue involved 10 people on the pulley hauling up nine metres of rope for every one metre of stretcher ascent.

"We're by ourselves for nearly every job for at least an hour so we're a very isolated brigade," said David. "It makes you better at what you do, but the Cape Patton job stretched us to the limit."

"If there's a rope job, we call in the career fireys at Warrnambool and Geelong City, like we did that day. The career fireys and police search and rescue can look at our set-up when they arrive and we feel equal to them. We get lots of affirmation from the police and the ambos and we've never let them down."

"The challenges for us are busloads of tourists every day, narrow roads, drivers unfamiliar with the road and distracted by the view. We do breathing apparatus, road and rope rescue and search and rescue with just 15 operational members. We got five new members last year who did minimum skills before Christmas and already they've got their steep-angle qualification."

Apollo Bay Secretary/Treasurer Leah Beamish got a boost from the course. "I felt a lot of confidence in myself and in the team," said Leah. "It's also knowing that there's backup for us and watching the backup in action. You have different brigades and volunteer and career fireys all merging as a team."

It can't be a coincidence that Apollo Bay brigade, with its difficult challenges and varied incidents, has had a significant number of volunteers train to become career firefighters. The Great Ocean Road and the Otways throw up complex emergencies and that challenge is inspiring and can point to a career direction.

Apollo Bay members will be offered high-angle rope rescue training before the end of the year. ■

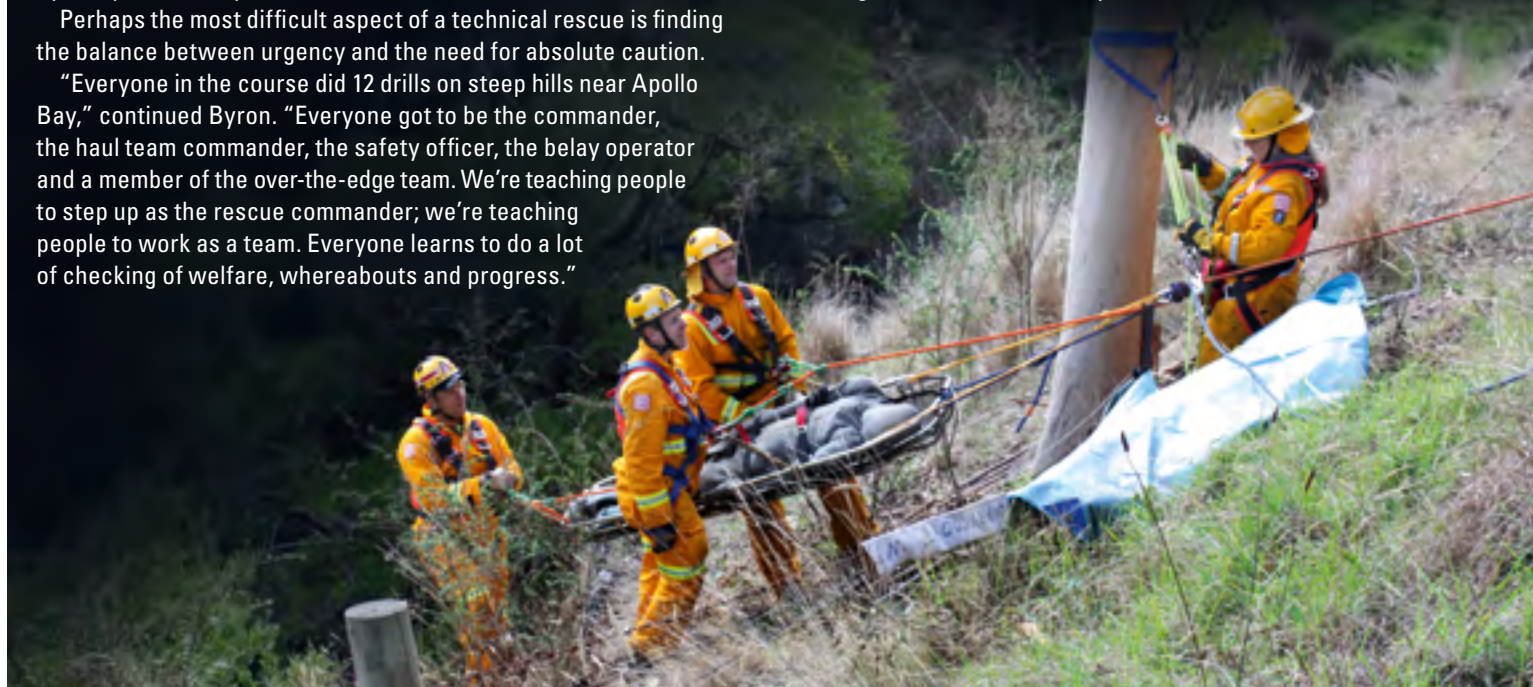


PHOTO: MELONEY HOWELL

LEARNING ABOUT ELECTRIC CARS

STORY MELISSA MUEGLITZ

Representatives from Merri and Belfast groups and Warrnambool and Port Fairy State Emergency Service (SES) members attended a combined training session in early April. Hosted by Warrnambool car dealership Callaghan Motors, the training provided information to first responders about electric and hybrid cars.

Belfast Deputy Group Officer and Callaghan Motors employee Steve McDowell saw the benefit of such training for emergency services volunteers in the area, and made the suggestion to the local catchment team.

Arrangements were made for technicians from Holden and Mitsubishi to attend the evening to explain the technology used in the Holden Volt and Mitsubishi i-MiEV vehicles.

“The session covered vehicle safety features and disabling in fire and road rescue situations. Vehicles were present on the night for members to inspect and service technicians on hand to answer any questions,” said Steve.

The session was well received by both CFA and SES members, with many appreciating the opportunity to catch up and broaden their skills in a great learning environment instead of at the side of the road at a real incident.

“The training was both interesting and worthwhile. There are certainly lots of things we need to be aware of with electric or hybrid cars, including being

cautious of whether it’s still running at the scene of an accident as they are just so quiet,” said Woodford Brigade Captain Graeme Crothers.

Special thanks to Stephen Callaghan and the team at Callaghan Motors for the opportunity and assistance in coordinating this training, use of their facility and catering on the evening. ■



PHOTO: COURTESY OF CALLAGHAN MOTORS

MASTERING OFF-ROAD TERRAIN

STORY ANDREW HEATH



PHOTO: ANDREW HEATH

Fourteen volunteers from Northern and Western Metropolitan Region took on a gruelling two-day course in May to improve their off-road skills. The practical sessions of the course took place at CFA’s Training College at Fiskville, Brisbane Ranges National Park and in state forest at Kinglake West.

Participants were members of Caroline Springs, Diamond Creek, Mernda, Plenty, Point Cook, Acheron, Eltham, North Warrandyte and Craigieburn brigades.

On the first day, participants were taken through the Fiskville Lakes 4x4 course, which has tricky hazards including cross slopes, steep climbs, mud, rock, sand and water. Each driver took on the course in a number of vehicles.

In the afternoon, the group went to the Brisbane Ranges where they navigated a number of Class 4 roads with decomposing granite surfaces. This road type accounts for most CFA vehicle accidents, so gaining an understanding of how vehicles handle in these conditions was very useful.

The following day, everyone gathered at Kinglake West and headed out into state forest and pine plantation areas in 3.4C and 2.4D tankers. The overgrown tracks, tight corners, steep sections and deep mud holes were very challenging.

Participants were shown how to use recovery equipment for large vehicles and, when a log became lodged between the wheels of one of the tankers, they saw how to remove the rear tyre.

Thanks to the course instructor and coordinator Lindsay McHugh and a special thanks to volunteers from Kinglake West brigade who supplied lunch on Sunday. ■

EDUCATING KIDS IN LODDON MALLEE REGION

STORY **LODDON MALLEE COMMUNITY EDUCATION TEAM**

Loddon Mallee Region's safety education program for children is back in full force this year. Thanks to a grant from the Department of Planning and Community Development, the Safety Awareness Field Education (SAFE) event has been delivered at Mildura and Swan Hill, and heads to Kyneton in July and Bendigo and Echuca in September.

This free, multi-agency, interactive program allows students to learn a wide range of safety messages through five structured lessons during the day. It's a great program for schools because children can get many messages from different agencies on the same day. And from the agencies' viewpoint it's an efficient and fun way to deliver messages to a large number of groups in a short time, rather than having to visit schools individually.

Following lunch, the children take part in an activity. Depending on the venue and the weather, it could be a treasure hunt or indoor entertainment such as a band playing. At some previous SAFE events we've been lucky enough to have one of the Victoria Police bands attend – Code One rock band, Victoria Police Showband or the Pipe Band. There's also a colouring competition for participating schools.

At the end of the day, every child receives a bag containing resources to encourage families to make changes in their homes, and each teacher is given a resource pack to use in the classroom to enhance the lessons learned during the day.

This event wouldn't be possible without the support of the following agencies: ESTA, Parks Victoria, Ambulance Victoria, State Emergency Service, Victoria Police, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Mallee Domestic Violence Services and Victorian Prison Service Dog Squad. ■



PHOTO: DOREEN RAVEN

GARDEN DESIGN IN BUSHFIRE-RISK AREAS

STORY **KATE SUMMONS**



Four Victorian landscaping students have shown that a great-looking garden can also improve bushfire safety, and their work was displayed at the 2013 Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show as part of the Student Design Award.

The competition was open to all students of landscape architecture, design, landscape construction and horticulture. Students were required to respond to a brief based on the design principles of the suburban garden in CFA's *Landscape for Bushfire* publication.

Winning designer Meg Geary said her garden 'Out of the Ashes' reflected the inevitability of bushfire in the Australian landscape. "Fire is part of the landscape and it's about learning how to live with it – rather than expecting it to change – and managing our environment so that we are less at risk," said Meg.

"It's about how bushfires move through and destroy the landscape, but also the regeneration and renewal afterwards. It highlights the ability of the bush to recover."

Her clever use of non-flammable landscaping materials included steel edging, gravel and a stone wall that all provide good separation between flammable elements in the garden as well as creating interesting and attractive areas of low fuel.

As winner of the competition, Meg now has the opportunity to design the landscaping for the Cockatoo Ash Wednesday Memorial. The project is based on the restoration of the kindergarten building that sheltered 300 people in the fires that hit the town in 1983. ■

PHOTO: KATE SUMMONS

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IS BUZZING

STORY MARK SULLIVAN

Something I've heard frequently around the traps recently is, "What does community resilience mean exactly?" Community resilience is not a new phrase. In fact, it's widely accepted as a buzzword across many sectors, including social and town planning, emergency management and welfare.

The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-15 offers guiding principles and practical ways to achieve disaster resilience. It is directly relevant to how CFA works with communities to help them reduce their level of risk and bounce back faster from disasters.

I want to explain what resilience means for CFA, its meaning in the context of disaster risk reduction, why building community resilience is important for CFA and other emergency agencies, and how resilience works to reduce the impact of and losses from disaster.

For me, the term 'resilience' essentially refers to the ability of something to return to its original state after being disturbed. For a community of people, resilience is measured by the people's ability to adapt to changes in the external environment.

This is how The Torrens Resilience Institute in South Australia defines community resilience: "A community is resilient when members of the population are connected to one another and work together, so that they are able to function and sustain critical systems, even under stress; adapt to changes in the physical, social or economic environment; be self reliant if external resources are limited or cut off; and learn from experience to improve itself over time."

To me, this really highlights the importance of working together, a factor also acknowledged in the Australian Government's 2012 National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSDR). The NSDR, released in 2011, is a national strategy that acknowledges Australia's history of natural disasters and Australians' resourcefulness and community-mindedness when faced with such hardships. Victorians demonstrated both these qualities after the fires in 2009 and, more recently, during significant flooding across the state.

"A COMMUNITY IS RESILIENT WHEN MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION ARE CONNECTED TO ONE ANOTHER AND WORK TOGETHER..."

But the strategy also highlights areas for improvement and stresses the need for an "integrated, whole-of-nation effort encompassing enhanced partnerships, shared responsibility" and an "adaptive and empowered community that acts on this understanding". For CFA, this means that we continue to stay on the ball in terms of understanding Victoria's risk, educating people about that risk and, in turn, seeking to empower individuals and communities to take responsibility for their risk.

At a more local level, the Victorian Emergency Management White Paper, released in late 2012, provides us with some insight into where emergency management in Victoria is heading. Though the White Paper has a strong focus on improving emergency management structures and arrangements across the board, the strategic priorities are founded on principles of community, collaboration and capability. Community resilience plays a big part in the principles and strategic direction of the White Paper, with a chapter dedicated to the discussion of "building community resilience". Like the NSDR, the White Paper places a high importance on supporting communities in building their resilience through engagement to increase their awareness of risk, as well as supporting community-based planning to mitigate hazards.



My team is invested in several key projects and programs that aim to either build resilience within communities at risk of bushfire or tap into existing networks and activities that already help guide and promote resilient communities. The Community-led Planning Demonstration project, that supports communities in developing their own emergency management plans, and Community Fireguard are just two good examples of this approach, where social capital is a fundamental component of engaging with and empowering communities to be safer and more resilient.

Community Information Guides are an example of where CFA has worked collaboratively within the organisation and with the community to create information for communities at risk of bushfire and grassfire that emphasises shared responsibility. Combining Victorian Fire Risk Register data with feedback from locals in at-risk areas, Community Information Guides are a dynamic source of local and relevant information.

But we're not stopping there. My team continues to seek out opportunities and partnerships that will support Victorians in building community resilience. ■

*Mark is executive director of Communities and Communication.
To read his blog, go to the blog section of news.cfa.vic.gov.au*



PHOTOS: BLAIR DELLENM

RURAL CHAMPS AT WERRIBEE

STORY **NANCY THOMPSON**

This year the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) Rural Senior and Junior Championships travelled to Werribee. The two-day event attracted more than 3,000 competitors, supporters and officials, for activities designed to test practical firefighting skills and build a strong sense of teamwork and camaraderie among volunteers.

More than 100 senior and junior teams participated in the event that has long been considered the major sporting and social date on the rural brigades' calendar.

VFBV Executive Officer Adam Barnett said this year's Rural Championships were a credit to the organising committee, competitors and the many volunteers and staff who contributed to the event.

"Organising a statewide event like this is an increasingly complex and sophisticated task that is a contributor to the future of CFA and volunteering," Adam said.

"It's a sporting and social event that has a positive effect on the recruiting, retention, skills and enthusiasm of large numbers of individual volunteers.

"At the same time, the event is based on a lot of old-fashioned hard work put in by the committee, with the support of a large number of volunteers and staff, and this year they did a great job."

The CFA on Display exhibition also provided CFA members with a fantastic opportunity to buy the latest corporate merchandise and get health checks. The education buses and mobile training units were also on hand for members to visit. ■



RURAL SENIOR RESULTS

Division A Aggregate

1st	Napoleons/Enfield A	54 points
2nd	Hurstbridge A	42 points
3rd	Greta A	40 points

Division B Aggregate

1st	Springhurst B	64 points
2nd	Dunrobin/Nangeela B	32 points
3rd	Truganina B	26 points

Division C Aggregate

1st	Dunrobin/Nangeela C	48 points
2nd	Dunolly B	40 points
3rd	Doreen A	36 points

RURAL JUNIOR RESULTS

11–13 Years Aggregate

1st	Napoleons/Enfield A	54 points
2nd	Dunrobin/Nangeela A	42 points
3rd	Strathmerton A	24 points

11–15 Years Aggregate

1st	Mandurang A	38 points
2nd	Moyhu A	24 points
3rd	Greta A	22 points

CHAMPION TEAM

1st	Napoleons/Enfield A	54 points
2nd	Dunrobin/Nangeela A	44 points
3rd	Mandurang A	38 points

THANKS A MILLION

STORY **DUNCAN RUSSELL**

PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM



To celebrate National Volunteer Week 13-19 May, CFA ran a campaign to say “thanks a million” to CFA volunteers in our communities for giving up their time to help others.

Federation Square again supported volunteers by showing “thanks a million” messages and images on the big screen, and members of the public were encouraged to post ‘thanks a million’ messages to volunteers on our Facebook page.

This message from Declan and Kathryn from Ferny Creek, which describes the work of CFA volunteers after a car crashed into their house, sums up the views of many: “To say we were relieved and grateful for the magnificent work of the brigade would be putting it lightly. Calm, courteous, compassionate and above all supremely competent goes some way toward a fuller description of how CFA conducted itself on a harrowing night.”

District 7 Headquarters hosted a morning tea. A cross section

of volunteers attended, including district staff who are also volunteers. Acting Operations Manager Dean Manson acknowledged the fantastic work of volunteers in the district and the support provided by employers, partners and family members.

CFA headquarters also held a morning tea, inviting four volunteers to give an insight into their volunteering lives and how proud they feel serving their community. You can watch videos of their speeches at news.cfa.vic.gov.au/thanksamillion. Volunteering Victoria’s Senior Manager of Policy and Advocacy Katherine Koesasi also came along and spoke about her organisation’s role in the volunteer sector.

In District 15, volunteers from Eureka Group and headquarters staff took part in a volunteer expo at Stockland Wendouree shopping centre and answered questions about volunteering with CFA. ■

Above: Morning tea at CFA headquarters in Burwood. **Left to right:** Executive Director Operational Training & Volunteerism Lex de Man, CEO Mick Bourke, volunteer April Himmelreich, Volunteering Victoria’s Katherine Koesasi, volunteers Darren McGrath, Vickie Linaker and Chris Wilkinson and CO Euan Ferguson



PHOTO: SAM WILSON



PHOTO: EMMA McDONALD

Far left: Volunteer James Witham and staff member Sherene Mounier at Stockland Wendouree shopping centre

Left above: Federation Square employee and Gembrook brigade volunteer Thomas Dawe



PHOTO: LIBBY SYMONS

Left below: Volunteers Eddie Wilson and Charlie Vella with Dean Manson at District 7’s morning tea

PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIN



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIN

RECORD GOOD FRIDAY APPEAL

STORY CHRISTINA BUCCI

PHOTO: DOUG RICHARDSON



Congratulations to CFA members across the state who collected an astounding record amount of \$1,408,853 for this year's Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal. That's around \$200,000 more than last year.

Our achievement wasn't the only record, with the final tally of \$16.4 million smashing last year's amount of \$15.8 million.

CFA members joined forces with their communities and participated in many ways throughout the year and on Good Friday to raise funds. There were numerous brigade activities across the state from Werribee to Wonthaggi and Mildura. Well done to all brigades who got involved and showed their true community spirit.

For the first time, Captain Koala and CFA's Moomba Queen April Himmelreich from The Basin brigade visited the Royal Children's Hospital wards on the day, entertaining children, and spreading some CFA cheer. One ward in particular – the Koala Ward – eagerly awaited CK's appearance.

Together with our Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) colleagues and the Uncle Bob's Club, CFA members raised a record \$27,115 for the cause by running laps of around 800 metres in Melbourne's CBD. More than 120 people from across Melbourne and regional Victoria gathered for the 14-hour event on Thursday 28 March.

A high-angle rescue challenge between CFA and MFB took part at MFB's Burnley Complex. The pre-recorded rescue aired on Channel 7 on Good Friday. Well done to Senior Station Officer Darryl Owens, Leading Firefighter Brad Trewavis and Leading Firefighter Alec Draffin who all did Team CFA proud. ■

Top left: South Morang Fire Brigade Captain Lindsay McHugh

Top right: Counting the cash at Etihad Stadium

Left above: Newstead & District brigade

Left below: Cash arrives at Etihad Stadium

Bottom left: Gisborne brigade

Bottom middle: MFB and CFA members carry out a high-angle rescue challenge

Bottom right: Riddells Creek brigade members Mario Ciminelli and Luke Sanderson

PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIN



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIN



PHOTO: MEG RANIER, MFB



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIN



MOOMBA CROWNS A CFA QUEEN

STORY EMMA McDONALD

The annual Moomba Parade in Melbourne saw a break in the 58-year tradition, as all Victoria's emergency services led the parade on an emergency services kings and queens float.

CFA Moomba Queen April Himmelreich, a community relations officer with The Basin brigade, did a fantastic job representing CFA.

"I felt so proud of who I was fortunate enough to be representing," April said. "It was a very emotional experience. Quite surreal to be standing on the float thinking, 'Is this actually happening? Am I really a queen on a float at Moomba?'"

"Many families were there who typically wouldn't attend the parade but for the incentive to pay tribute to emergency services. It was all very exciting."

Eight CFA volunteers from across the state walked in uniform

to proudly support the royal float, as well as volunteers and staff from Victoria Police, State Emergency Service, Ambulance Victoria, Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Department of Environment and Primary Industries and the Salvation Army.

Ian Hamley from Portland brigade said it was great to be part of the parade.

"I would do it again at any time," he said. "The public were amazed that CFA was built on volunteerism and were very appreciative of our dedication to the organisation. This was a great way to get the message out to the metropolitan public about what we stand for and what we do." ■

To see video and more images go to news.cfa.vic.gov.au/moomba2013

Above: CFA in the Moomba parade and (inset) Moomba Queen April Himmelreich

QUEEN MARY SUPPORTS EMERGENCY SERVICES

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL

Right: CFA members, from left to right: Paul Finnigan, Colin Brown, Noel McWilliams, Julie McWilliams, Leigh Dwyer, Julie De La Haye, Phil De La Haye and Wolfgang Krause with Queen Mary 2 Commodore Christopher Rynd



A group of CFA members had a memorable two-day cruise from Brisbane to Sydney on the Queen Mary 2 ocean liner in early March.

Cunard Line and its parent company Carnival invited members of CFA, the NSW Rural Fire Service, Queensland State Emergency Service and Tasmania Fire Service on board as a symbol of thanks to all volunteers who gave so much, and so selflessly, to battle bushfires in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania and floods in Queensland.

CFA ran a competition to choose five members and partners to take part in the trip. Anyone who had worked on a fire this season was eligible to put their name into the draw. However, given the spirit and

camaraderie of CFA members, perhaps it wasn't surprising that many people nominated fellow members instead of themselves.

The five winners were Wolfgang Krause from Christmas Hills brigade, Phil De La Haye (Hastings), Noel McWilliams (Erica), Colin Brown (Corryong) and Leigh Dwyer (Toolong).

Onboard, CFA members took part in a charity auction to raise money for the Australian Red Cross 2013 natural disaster appeal. Most of the items auctioned were Queen Mary 2 memorabilia including a pen holder made from a piece of handrail, photos of the liner and cookbooks written by the liner's chef.

Volunteers were also given a tour of the bridge and three CFA volunteers, along with their partners, had dinner at the Commodore's table.

"The food was nothing short of excellent," said Phil De La Haye. "We talked about anything and everything over dinner ... sport, politics, you name it. The Queen Mary 2 is magnificent and we had a fabulous time."

When the liner arrived in Sydney, there was a press conference on the top deck, where the Red Cross was presented with a cheque for more than \$31,000.

A big thanks to Cunard Line and Carnival Australia for giving our members this unique opportunity. ■

THROUGH THE AGES Bendigo

COMPILED BY KEITH PAKEMHAM



FACES OF CFA

ALLAN SMALL THE BASIN BRIGADE, DISTRICT 13

Why did you join CFA?

In late 1967 I was courting my wife Joyce. Her brothers were in the brigade and there were many scrub/bushfires. In those days most of the local men were brigade members, so I was taken to some fires to help out. The mateship and community spirit kicked in and I joined up.

What was the first incident you attended?

Smallish, deliberately-lit bushfires near Mountain Highway. At times there were four or five responses a day. In those days firefighters went direct to the fire as there was only so much room on the Austin tanker and Land Rover that towed a trailer tank and pump.

Which incident has had the greatest impact on you?

Two come to mind. Around 1968, when a bushfire was lit near The Basin/Olinda Road, it rapidly developed into a crown fire above us. An *Age* reporter with us at the time suggested we should leave. We did so quite promptly, and by the time we returned to the Mountain Highway intersection at the shops, the fire was crowning over Ferndale Road, heading for Sassafras and Ferny Creek.

The other incident was a bushfire in the national park above Mountain Highway. Captain Don Maguire and I were at a house on Tobruk Avenue as we watched the fire roar up on us. We did what we could to prepare the house – axed the water tank and threw buckets of water over the walls – then we went inside as the fire approached and engulfed us. As the house burned down we left by the rear, by which time the main head fire was well gone. I learned a valuable lesson from one of the best-ever bushfire captains in Victoria.

What have you done around your home to prevent fires?

We have all the usual protections: smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, hoses and taps to cover all areas of our house and block. I clean up the leaves and deadfall regularly. Firewood is placed well away, and I keep an eye on neighbours and advise them about fire safety when the need arises.



PHOTO: DUNCAN RUSSELL

What do you do when you're not firefighting?

I've been retired for some years, so much of my time is taken up with family, Vietnam Veterans Association and the brigade. As a Level 3 operator with District 13, I continue to work with VFBV and CFA to ensure our current and future volunteers have adequate training and career paths. In many ways CFA has advanced admirably, but there's more we can do to ensure tomorrow's leaders have the skills and attributes that previous volunteer leaders demonstrated.

After a long stint of firefighting, what meal do you crave?

Anything is fine as long as it's not stew, vegetable soup or spaghetti. And a cold light beer!

What do you like to listen to on the drive home from a job?

Mostly the crew discussions. You gain a lot of knowledge about individuals, the job just done and what the brigade energy and spirit is all about. ■

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