

# Brigade

winter 2016

Protecting lives  
and property

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## ▼ Rehab units safeguard crews



**INSIDE**  
Member  
communications  
survey





04

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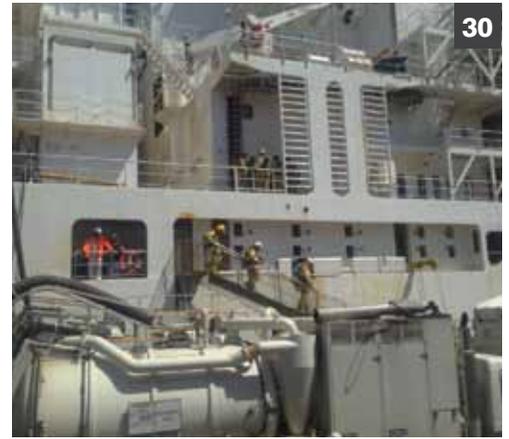
**Rehab units safeguard crews**

COVER PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIJN

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### Acting Chair John Peberdy



**The unusually warm April weather delayed the declaration of the end of the fire season in some districts. While there has been rain about not all parts of the state have benefited, and it remains dry and therefore dangerous on warmer days.**

Thank you for the ways in which you have delivered on our commitment to the community through a very long summer and a busy spring. It's stirring to hear community members affected by fires and other emergencies offer their heartfelt thanks and admiration for the work of CFA crews.

Please take their words to heart.

#### **The Red Paper**

Progress on the development of the Red Paper was provided at the April Board meeting. As we develop a framework for the coming years, this document will clearly articulate our core strategies.

There has been broad consultation with a cross-section of CFA members and stakeholders. Over the next few months, this document will be further refined to create a defining document we can all refer to when we talk about CFA's strategic intent.

#### **Budget preparation**

The finance team is preparing the budget for the next financial year, working closely with the Department of Treasury and Finance. The government has clarified that we are in a tight fiscal environment

and there is an expectation that all departments and agencies will exercise tight financial control.

We will receive funding for stations, trucks, equipment and recruitment of firefighters, but there won't be sufficient funding to meet the wishes of all brigades. Many of the grants we receive from government are specifically targeted, so we do not necessarily have the discretion to move the funds from 'one pot to another'.

Be assured there are criteria used in determining the methodology for replacement of trucks, stations and equipment, to ensure you can continue to deliver your exemplary service around the state.

#### **Michael Tudball**

Michael is known and respected by thousands of CFA members. He has been a member of the CFA Board since 2003 and is also an active VFBV member. He currently chairs the Board's Finance, Risk and Audit Committee and has also attended numerous brigade events around the state over the years.

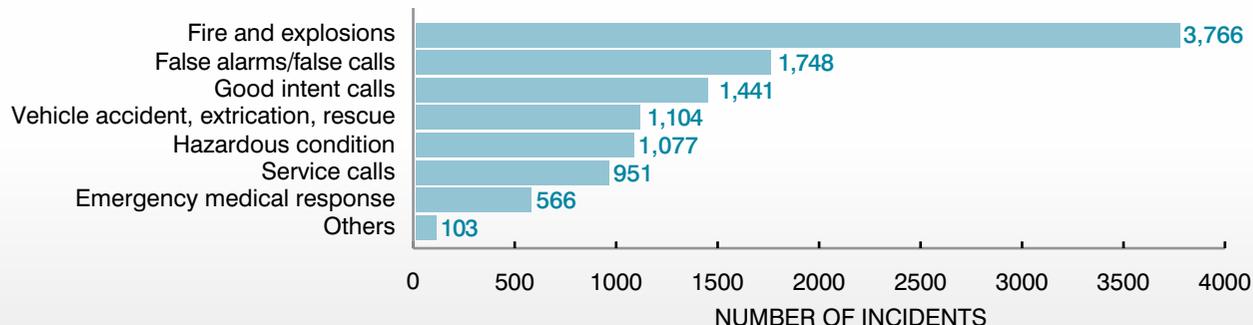
Michael was recently appointed CEO of Southern Grampians Shire and he and Vicki have moved to Hamilton. Weighing up his other responsibilities, he has decided to step down from the CFA Board at the end of June. He will be greatly missed.

We thank him for his service to the Board and the wider CFA and wish him well in his new role. He will continue to be a member of Bacchus Marsh Fire Brigade.

# Incident summary

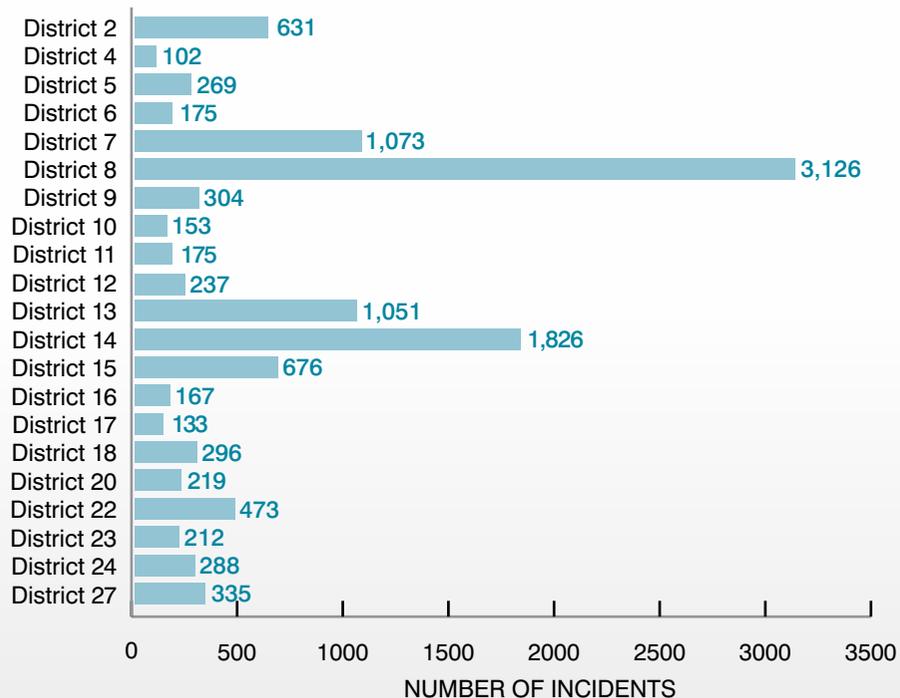
## STATEWIDE INCIDENTS BY TYPE

1 January – 31 March 2016



## STATEWIDE INCIDENTS BY DISTRICT

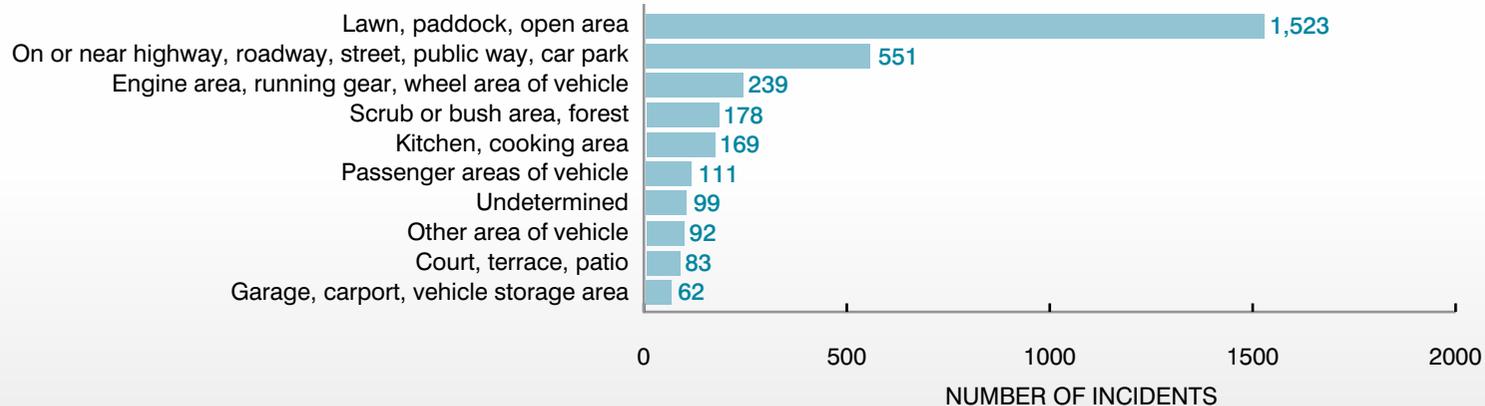
1 January – 31 March 2016



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 January – 31 March 2016



# Complex response to Tasmanian fires



## SETTING UP STANLEY BASE CAMP

**VEMTC Facilities Manager Martyn Bona was deployed to Tasmania in January as the logistics unit leader to oversee the establishment of a major north-western base camp.**

There were a number of cricket finals underway which put some ovals out of action. Three sites were earmarked but only Stanley had good enough radio communications which also enabled crews to be in regular touch with their families.

"The Stanley Recreation Reserve also has a large hall and a good water supply," said Martyn. "The winds in Stanley were phenomenal and it was snowing 20 minutes away which made for some pretty harsh conditions.

"We had one day to set it up with 40 support staff and readiness for 200 firefighters that first night, all in individual tents. Six containers were flown to Hobart by the RAAF in a Hercules then came five hours via road. Other freight came on the *Spirit of Tasmania* and via Toll Logistics.

"On the second day, 13 containers came by sea from Victoria into Burnie. Sixty South

Australian, NSW and Victorian vehicles came off a barge into Burnie.

"It was all DELWP base camp gear from bedding through to a mobile kitchen, cool rooms, 24 showers and 24 toilets.

"The Melbourne caterer has worked with DELWP for five years. This was their tenth base camp and the food was magic. They were able to cater for up to 1,000 meals per sitting if necessary but it was generally 280 meals twice a day plus 280 lunch packs.

"They stayed onsite in tents and used local suppliers. They also hired a local coffee van to come in on the weekend and help with team morale, and a Hobart musician to entertain the crews every night. They did just that bit extra which I hope really made a difference for the firefighters. The work on the fireground was very difficult but all these little touches made the base camp as comfortable as possible.

"We also used 30 local labourers plus local electricians, plumbers, truck and crane drivers and security and sourced local generators.

"It was a logistics masterclass with a high safety focus maintained throughout."

There were 300 firefighters on site at the height of the response.

## FROM THE TASSIE FRONT LINE

Frank Beukelman was in the second wave of deployments to Tasmania, operating as a strike team leader out of the Stanley base camp to the Pipeline Road fire on the west coast.

"They were long days," said Frank, "because the fireground was about two hours from Stanley. We were working off bulldozer tracks in terrain that was initially rainforest then forest and scrub. There were no towns; it was wilderness.

"We did a 200-hectare backburn protecting the Bass Highway and coastal communities working with RFS [NSW Rural Fire Service] and the Tasmanian forestry service. From the second day onwards, we were working blacking out the untracked edge and the most surprising feature was the soft, peat-like ground. That had an effect on forest stability with exposed tree roots meaning there was potential for trees to fall over. There were no tracks, no trails and you had the feeling that you could have been the first person to ever walk in that exact place.

"It was rewarding working with the other fire services – great camaraderie all round – and the leaders of the RFS and Tasmanian Fire Service [TFS] dropped in to see us."

RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons and TFS Chief Officer Gavin Freeman arrived by chopper to learn more about conditions on the ground.

District Mechanical Officer (DMO) Chris Harry was in the first wave of deployments and helped set up Stanley base camp to suit his team. They were doing preventative servicing of CFA, South Australian Country Fire Service, RFS, TFS and Forestry Tasmania vehicles within the base camp at the end of each shift.

"The most common faults with the trucks were air cleaners blocking and blowing out radiators," said Chris. "One power steering hose burst and we had to do a patch-up job in the field."

Geelong DMO Damien Hendy took over the tools for the second deployment.

"I've certainly seen a lot worse at other fires," he said. "We had a few damage issues on ultralights with the spare wheels underneath the vehicles torn off. There were a few melting issues like plastic indicator lights that got too close to the fire. Apart from that, if there was a problem people would leave us a list and we'd work through it."

## CHIEF TOURS FIREGROUND

Chief Officer Joe Buffone toured the Tasmanian fireground, going by helicopter across the Overland Track before landing at a number of remote sites including Arthur River, then on to the Stanley base camp.



"I met strike teams," said Joe, "and it was great to get a first-hand impression of the work our crews are doing alongside DELWP and Parks Victoria as part of the Victorian contingent."

"What I saw was a great example of different fire services working together on a campaign fire which is having significant impact on the Tasmanian community. It's been a great display of dedication from our crews who've been able to offer relief to our Tasmanian counterparts."

"They're in some very remote areas, carrying out really hard, physical work blacking-out and tracking the fire."

"Everywhere we went there was a very positive attitude. Everyone seemed upbeat about supporting our friends in need. I was very proud."

"The support we've offered extends beyond firefighters on the ground. We have staff working hard at a state-level in the fields of mechanics, communications, peer support and wellbeing."

"It shows the strength of CFA's volunteers and career staff in being able to provide this type of support over a long period of time while maintaining our own capability for the Victorian fire season."

STORY LEITH HILLARD

### Strike team on the ground

Strike team ST1431, was the last heavy strike team to be deployed to the Tasmania between 28 February and 3 March.

We were tasked with blacking-out along the road edge one hose length from the trucks in preparation for the roads to be opened.

The hazards included trees falling or dropping branches; peat smouldering underground, so we had to be careful where we stepped to avoid falling into a red-hot cavity; working with and around heavy excavators; and European wasps, bees, march flies and snakes.

We operated on heavy tankers from South Morang, Point Cook, Hurstbridge, Sunbury and Yarrambat, crewed by members from districts 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

It's a credit to the CFA training regimen and the individual brigades that their crews were able to integrate and work on tankers they had never seen before. Plus, of course, they were very well led by their crew leaders.

Three firefighters suffered severe migraines and two of them went to the Smithton Hospital. I would like to express my appreciation to CFA peer support who helped us immensely with the welfare of all the strike team members but particularly with those who were not well. The peers' dedication certainly impressed me.

All in all, it was a very worthwhile deployment and we also got to share two crayfish given to us by happy Tasmanians!

PHOTOS: FRANK BEUKELMAN



STORY MICHAEL CHAPMAN, ARTHURS CREEK BRIGADE

# Technical rescue's vertical climb

**From 24 to 27 March 2016, CFA crews participated in seven technical rescues across the state from a dog trapped in a mine in Bright to a woman stuck on a cliff edge in Allansford.**

Oscar 1 and Bendigo rope rescue followed a blood trail with police at Tooborac to find a dead kangaroo down a mine shaft.

Wandin's road rescue unit extricated two occupants from a car down an embankment after a collision on Mt Dandenong Tourist Road in Kalorama on 24 March. Rope rescue operators from Monbulk and Dandenong brigades performed the steep-angle rope rescue.

"It came to rest on rocks 10 metres down," said Monbulk member Paul Willoughby, "with men in their late 70s/early 80s inside. The passenger was believed to have spinal injuries as he had a loss of sensation in his legs. The stretcher crew had to turn him on to the spine board, secure him on the litter [stretcher] and prepare him, the stretcher and the four-person crew to be hauled up the steep embankment."

The rescue operator, belay operator and haul team hauled both men up in succession. As they were transferred to hospital, police, CFA and an ambulance commander did a full roadside debrief.

From 1 July to 30 April, 63 technical rescues were carried out across the state with 38 pets, people and/or bodies being retrieved. These included steep angle, high angle, confined space, trench, mine rescues and structure collapse.

"This financial year has been unusually busy," said Dandenong Senior Station Officer Daryl Owen who is a technical rescue instructor and a District 8 technical rescue coordinator.

While this could be a spike in numbers, Monbulk Captain Simon Schroeder believes it's "more just that we're using it where we should be".

Daryl agrees. "The increase can be linked to a better understanding by emergency workers of how to make our work environment safer. Rope rescue systems reduce manual handling and so reduce the risk of injury to rescue workers."

Monbulk, Mt Beauty, Mirboo North, Fish Creek, Loch, Casterton and Nar Nar Goon are all steep-angle rescue brigades. Apollo Bay, Warrnambool, Ballarat City, Bendigo,

Mildura, Morwell and the Hume response out of Wodonga/Mt Beauty/Wangaratta are all high-angle brigades.

Dandenong and Geelong City are the two technician locations with rappelling skills and the capacity to operate a high-directional frame to get a stretcher over a vertical edge.

"We have been working closely with SES and developed a joint training package, so it's all interoperable and about joint capability," continued Daryl. "We will both use the same systems and techniques."

Nine career staff and one volunteer are qualified instructors who lead technical rescue teams in decision-making about equipment and technique standards. They also lead operationally when dealing with complex anchoring, for example, or running vector force analysis, at incidents involving extreme distances and loads, or those where CFA supports another agency such as at cave and mine rescues.

To become an instructor, each member completes a task book and skills testing and is mentored during training courses. Some instructors have attended seven-day intensive rescue courses run by international companies and trained with other agencies including MFB, SES and Victoria Police Search and Rescue. Instructors perform around 100 hours of skills maintenance a year.

STORY LEITH HILLARD



PHOTOS: SUPPLIED BY DARYL OWEN

CEO

Lucinda Nolan

follow Lucinda on [Twitter](#) @cfaceovic

# Reflecting on the year so far

**Our focus on being One CFA is something I have spoken about often.**

We are a large organisation made up of many different people. This means we won't always agree on everything that happens at CFA. It also means that, at times, issues such as EBA negotiations will attract community and media attention.

Everyone at CFA, whether they are a career firefighter, a volunteer or support staff, is working towards one goal – keeping Victorians safe. It's why we joined CFA and it's what each of our roles is focused on.

Despite the divides we have seen in the past few weeks and months, it's important to remember we are all working for one purpose.

We are an organisation made up of both volunteers and career staff, and we will continue to be.

It's been pleasing to see that, as I travel across the state, the spirit of CFA is on display in so many different ways.

In April I attended CFA's Urban Championships at Mildura and the Rural Championships in Colac. It was a privilege to meet with so many members from across the state and witness some amazing skills and the camaraderie between our members.

I also had the opportunity to attend my first Annual Memorial Service for Firefighter, held this year in Wodonga.

It was an impressive and sobering experience that reflected the terrible cost and sacrifice of 67 members who lost their lives in service to the community.

The number of people directly affected by this loss is even greater, and we pay our respects to their friends, families and loved ones.

We are continuing our search for a new home for the Firefighter Memorial and we thank those brigades and families that have provided their ideas and feedback to us during the process. We will keep you informed of progress.

The first half of the year has certainly gone quickly but, as I reflect back, I believe we have already achieved so much. We have much more to do as we plan and implement a new direction for CFA. As well as working on our 10-year strategic plan titled the Red Paper, we have developed a draft Learning Action Plan aimed at making sure you are getting the training and learning opportunities you need to do your jobs safely. (See pages 11 and 13 of this issue for more about the Red Paper and Learning Action Plan.)

We've also taken a number of steps towards making CFA a more diverse workplace that is attractive for both men and women.



As well as establishing a taskforce to address any issues that are impacting our culture and diversity, CFA made a joint submission with MFB to the Fair Work Commission to seek provisions in our award that will allow us to employ part-time firefighters.

Allowing part-time work will provide a more flexible and inclusive workplace and is a step towards ensuring we have the right employment conditions to attract a more diverse workforce.

Other emergency service organisations, such as Victoria Police, provide operational staff part-time work and it's time CFA did the same.

**Above:** Lucinda visits the Rural Champs in Colac  
**Below:** The Annual Memorial Service for Firefighters



## CHIEF OFFICER

 [facebook.com/CFACHiefOfficer/](https://facebook.com/CFACHiefOfficer/)


# Joe Buffone

**CFA is a broad church. Our services cover 3.3 million Victorians, from metropolitan Melbourne to remote rural areas, but it's our people, volunteers and staff who are at the core of our services and our unique community-centred organisation.**

We should all be working towards preserving and valuing these strengths and valuing the contribution that all members make to CFA. Career firefighters and volunteers rely on one another to keep Victoria safe and we must not do anything that puts the relationship at risk.

CFA's leadership is committed to negotiating a new enterprise agreement for our career firefighters that is fair and reasonable for both CFA and the community, and equally remunerates and recognises the skill and quality of work undertaken by career staff. CFA continues to work through a process to achieve this as expeditiously as possible. Any new agreement must contain the flexibility to enable those with direct accountability to be able to meet their legislative obligations and not compromise public safety.

It's imperative that public scrutiny, opinion, emotion and debate about the enterprise agreement do not detract from the collective level of service we provide. Some of my immediate priorities are:

- the safety and wellbeing of our members underpinned by an end-to-end program
- operational readiness and addressing long-term vacancies
- understanding and baselining our operational capability and revisiting CFAs Command and Control arrangements
- our preparedness for hostile acts including updating our organisational and operational security arrangements and procedures
- the introduction of a Fire and Emergency Management Headquarters Service Delivery operating model and structure that ensures CFA is a modern, agile and influential leader and connects HQ to the field
- a developmental program for our operations managers and operations officers that provides our front line managers with the tools and skills they need and deserve to be effective
- flexible training options for volunteers against their local risk-based training priorities
- working with our agency partners to deliver 'Safer Together', a risk-based and community-focused approach to bushfire management
- delivering on government's commitments including the expansion of emergency medical response to all integrated stations and other priority locations
- delivering our statutory fire safety responsibilities and the continued provision of advice and recommendations on strategic issues
- Adopting and championing the vision of the sector and partnering with critical stakeholders.

## ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER South East Region



# Trevor Owen

**As predicted in October 2015 in the AFAC/Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Seasonal Outlook 2015-16, South East Region experienced a relatively normal bushfire season. We saw abnormally dry conditions along coastal areas and in South Gippsland.**

A number of fires had potential, but they were kept relatively small by the weight of attack which included the new predetermined dispatch for fire suppression aircraft across Gippsland, and aggressive direct attack (hit it hard and fast) strategies.

At the end of the fire danger period, our focus turned to our fuel reduction burning program. Under the leadership of our manager of community safety and our three vegetation management officers (VMO), many planned burns have been carried out in some favourable weather and fuel conditions. Significant time and effort by volunteers and staff have delivered results that have far exceeded our expectations. I would like to thank the VMO team and brigade members for this success. Job well done!

At the heart of CFA is a strong culture of firefighters, with career staff and volunteers working side-by-side. It's the responsibility of every CFA member to ensure the culture and relationships remain strong. Members understand the importance of working together as one. I've witnessed many examples of strong relationships and respect between our career staff and volunteers across many of our integrated brigades. I commend those who stand up as leaders across CFA and actively seek to maintain, and strive to build, a stronger integrated culture.

Our community safety team has provided some interesting data recently that demonstrates there is a downward trend in the number of structure fires and an upward trend in the number of members arriving at the fireground within our service delivery standards. Did you know that South East Region responds to more than 32 per cent of all primary responses in CFA? Every 36 minutes, a CFA brigade in South East Region responds to an emergency in our community. But let's not forget that prevention is our first line of defence and we all need to play an active role in educating communities about safety.

The functional managers of the Regional Leadership Team have begun to rotate across the District Planning Committee and VFBV District Council meetings in South East Region. It's important they understand the challenges our front line members experience. This will lead to better decision-making and an improved appreciation. If you attend either of these regular forums, make use of the opportunity and engage the attending manager so we can all gain a stronger understanding to inform priorities in our accountable portfolios.

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## ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER North West Region



# Gavin Thompson

**First I would like to thank and congratulate Mildura Fire Brigade and organising committee for running another successful VFBV State Urban Championships. While competing brigade numbers were down, everyone attending had a great weekend. It was great to see brigades from North West Region not only compete but also excel, with Kangaroo Flat finishing second in A Class, Werribee winning B Class and Whittlesea winning C Class.**

Next year, the championships will be hosted in Bendigo. As this is closer for other brigades, it would be good to see more teams back on the track competing and enjoying the camaraderie that exists between brigades, officials and CFA officers.

Changing tack, I was recently asked to speak to a community group about the summer activity and CFA's work. It was interesting to note the perception that we would be quiet now that summer is over. There was genuine shock to realise CFA was involved in many more activities than bushfire. As we all know, CFA is a 24/7 fire and emergency management service.

The recent Inglewood petrol tanker rollover is a good example of the work CFA and brigades undertake in the community, and this was an excellent platform for discussion within the group. This was a complex incident which could have had catastrophic impacts on the Inglewood community, and truly demonstrated how much CFA actually does. It's also worth noting the incident was well handled by all responding personnel. In particular, great work was done by initial responders from Inglewood and Bridgewater brigades, Victoria Police and Ambulance Victoria.

Recently, I attended District 18 Women in Firefighting Day at Sunraysia Training Ground. The drills began with basic hose and ladder work followed by some pump operations. Then there was a demonstration on how all these skills come together. A crew of three – Sophie, Codi and Zoe – from Sunraysia Group combined forces to demonstrate to the larger group how to tackle a car fire. These very competent women showed they can do anything the blokes can. By the end of the day, everyone had had the opportunity to practise and hone their skills. It was a terrific day and planning is now underway for the next event.

I would like to congratulate Regional BASO Bec McDonald on pulling this together and our volunteer instructors from around the district who gave up their Sunday to participate in this great initiative. But most of all, I'd like to thank the participants for putting into the day to ensure it was a success. Well done everyone!

Recently, I've attended a number of brigade functions where I've been privileged to present a number of National Medals, CFA Life Membership and CFA service medals. It has been a pleasure to meet so many of you doing great things in your brigades and communities, and I look forward to meeting more members in the coming months.

## ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER West Region



# Peter O'Keefe

**Over the past few months there has been a large amount of work done by our whole team to develop the district/region tactical risk and issues registers. While there is more work yet to be done, it has been a great testimony to the commitment of the team to begin this very important piece of work.**

This first version will allow us to focus on the important matters that make a difference to the community, and empower the front line to ensure they continue to respond to the local issues in a connected approach. I know this work will continue to be refined as we better understand our risks and the consequences of them. I encourage you all to continue to contribute to this process to better understand and focus on the priorities that will make a difference.

Doing the same old things in the same way is clearly not an option, so if you haven't yet had the opportunity to make a contribution or if you have a question, please contact your local district headquarters. We welcome your input.

As the summer weather finally starts to draw to a close and the last of our debriefs are finalised, it's important to take the time to consider what happened. We need to start to consider what we learned from this season and how we will ensure that we put these lessons into action so we can do things better next bushfire season.

For this to occur, the key is proper planning. Now is the time to consider what we need to do before next summer. This will enable us to be ready.

Congratulations to everyone who participated in activities to celebrate International Women's Day. Well done! It was great to see the women in our teams recognised and their contribution appreciated. The day organised at VEMTC – Longerenong was a great success. Well done to all involved.

Every year we hear of accidents and incidents that result in physical injuries to our members right across Victoria, and West Region is not immune. In recent months, there have been a number of incidents and accidents that have impacted on our people. When this happens we have great networks and processes to ensure everyone is supported. Let's not forget that the role of a firefighter includes many dangers, some of which can be controlled while others can't. Safety must always come first.

Be safe and continue the great work you do.

**Twitter: @CFAWest ACO**

## ACTING ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER South West Region



# Gregg Paterson

**As the fire season, which extended well into autumn, draws to a close, we have the opportunity to reflect on the huge effort made by our staff and volunteers, DELWP partners, Victoria Police and other emergency services in what was a demanding and eventful season in the south-west. In addition to some major events, the region supported Tasmania and South Australia with crews and vehicles deployed.**

As operational activity begins to slow down, there are a number of key activities beginning across the region. We move into a review process in regard to the fire season with the upcoming after-action reviews (AARs), while some key projects are moving into their final stages.

A major focus will be on the Wye River-Jamieson Track fire, with a review being led by Victoria Police. In South West Region, we will be seeking to broaden the region's AARs to all operational activities. This work is being led by Acting Operations Manager and Regional Commander Mark Gunning. The AARs will focus on fireground, district and incident control centres, and regional activities. By implementing an 'all hazards-all risk' approach, we ensure all lessons learned are captured which will lead to continuous improvement. This review process is also a great opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate successes.

After much hard work on what were major capital build projects, the new Warrnambool and Portland fire stations are now operational. Final inspections were completed on 22 and 23 March, with both brigades completing the move into their stations the following week. (See page 20 of this issue for more about these station openings.)

Friday 1 April marked the first operational day for the new aerial pumper at Warrnambool. To support crewing for the new vehicle, minimum staffing has increased from three to six career firefighters per shift. As one of the fastest-growing regional areas in South West Region, implementing a new specialist vehicle will result in a marked increase in response capability and service delivery to the Warrnambool and south-west Victorian community.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of the project management teams led by Operations Officers Gary Harker and Henry Barton for completing these key projects. It's an exciting time for both brigades with formal station openings to come.

More widely, I would like to thank all those who provided operational support during the fire season and those who continue to provide ongoing operational support throughout the year. It's fantastic to see what can be achieved when our teams rally together under one joined-up vision. The contribution made by all our people is greatly appreciated.

## ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER North East Region



# Garry Cook

**As we wrap up another lengthy, seven-month fire season, I have attended a number of debriefs and reviews of 2015-16 across the region. Like most years past, we expressed our gratitude to volunteers, staff and our support teams who rallied at short notice, often in changing deployment circumstances, to provide support to other areas of the state and interstate when needed.**

Once again we stood tall and delivered at a time of greatest need and for that we are thankful and proud.

What is also clear is the 'lengthy' fire season is no longer a new phenomenon; it's the new normal, at least for now and into the foreseeable future. Sure, we can still have a summer season like this one just past that delivered mid-summer rainfall in the eastern parts of the state and created some respite for four to six weeks. But the evidence of longer, hotter and drier periods for Victoria is compelling, and we must continue to be agile at every level and adapt to these changing times.

My view is there is no longer a summer fire season as such, just a heightened level of readiness and response activity driven by the weather and other seasonal factors, and our preparations for this spans all 12 months.

I want to also mention the importance of maintaining focus on our readiness and response activities for structure fires and other incidents. CFA provides services across a diverse mix of communities and with that comes the responsibility to protect lives and property from all fire hazards, along with our specialist response requirements.

Over the coming months, the district teams will continue to support and work with our brigades in these areas to ensure we remain focused on all our risk environments and are well placed to deal with any challenges that might be presented to us in the future.

During the seven months of the fire season across North East Region, we also dealt with significant numbers of structure fires, hazardous materials incidents, attended accidents and rescues and many other assistance calls. It certainly wasn't just about grass or bushfires. So despite the summer fire season, our service delivery is balanced across all these hazards. It further reinforces that our organisation and the great people who make it all work must be ready for anything at any time. It's the nature of what we do, but it's no longer seasonal.

Take care and stay safe.

# Fire Services Review

## Work has begun to implement a range of recommendations from the independent Victorian Fire Services Review.

The review and the State Government's response were released in March and focused on culture, training, resourcing, management and interoperability.

Each member of CFA's Organisational Leadership Team (formerly the Executive Leadership Team) has been allocated responsibility for responding to and delivering specific recommendations.

While the review found the Victorian community remained well serviced by firefighters and the "passion, courage, competence and commitment of the state's firefighters ... remain outstanding", it also identified a range of issues that need addressing.

CFA's Chief Executive Officer Lucinda Nolan said the review built on work already underway to strengthen CFA's operations.

"Victoria is changing and the State Government's response to the review is about making sure CFA volunteers and paid firefighters are supported to continue serving our community effectively."

As part of CFA's response, a new dedicated independent hotline has been established to provide members a place to report bullying, harassment and other unreasonable behaviour. The hotline number is **1800 795 075**.

A taskforce has also been established to address workplace culture, diversity and inclusion.

The review also identified the need for stronger focus on interoperability between CFA and MFB, while emphasising it did not mean amalgamating or making CFA and MFB the same.

"Ensuring fire services can share resources, equipment and have common protective clothing, breathing apparatus, communication and training is a sensible approach and will improve our members' safety," Lucinda said.

"It's important we review how we operate in different communities to keep up with changing demographics, volunteering patterns and growth of our regional communities.

"We are looking at different ways to provide our service to communities. This could be through seasonal staffing, day staffing, hub-and-spoke models or industry partnerships.

"There is no one-size-fits-all approach to delivering our services, and we will work with our members to determine the right model for our brigades and the communities they operate in."

STORY EMMA TYNER

# Prioritising training needs

## Volunteers and staff members provided valuable feedback on a draft Learning Action Plan which sets out the short-term priorities that will make real improvements in training to support our front line.

Some of these improvements are already underway and more initiatives will be rolled out. CFA's Executive Director (Acting) Learning and Volunteerism Kate Harrap said the key priority is to ensure that members have access to appropriate training so they can perform their role safely and effectively.

"We want to ensure that every member feels confident and capable to perform, with training an essential component of this. Beyond that, we

want to build on collective skills and capability and shift to a culture of learning," said Kate.

The draft Learning Action Plan outlines commitments for new training packages, facilities and better access and timing, as well as making it easier to recognise prior learning. Since 2008, there have been 13 independent reviews, strategies or plans about CFA training. They have identified issues with our training program and processes and this feedback has shaped the action plan.

CFA members have consistently said that they want training in suitable formats, places and times that recognise and respect members. Some volunteers want to minimise training and

just focus on the basics. More experienced members may want to continue to advance and learn new skills so they can take up diverse roles, incident management team positions, leadership or advanced firefighting.

Members can read the draft action plan online at [cfa.engagementhq.com/cfa-have-your-say](http://cfa.engagementhq.com/cfa-have-your-say).

### Learning Action Plan priorities

- Crew leader training, driver training, volunteer recruit firefighter pilot, leadership and mentoring, career staff development (joint Victorian recruit firefighter training, operations officers and operations managers development, continuation programs, promotional programs)
- Volunteer trainers and assessors network
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- Regional training facility improvements (ICT, off-road driver training, new facility in Central Highlands, Environment Protection Authority clean-up)
- Learning management system implementation
- Remote access pilot – accessing training through alternate locations.

STORY DARREN GREVIS-JAMES



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

# Small mistakes can cause fires

Victorian firefighters attended 3,211 preventable house fires in 2015. Most of these fires were caused by small mistakes – moments of carelessness, neglect or distraction.

“The frightening thing is, these figures don’t capture the close calls that go unreported,” said CFA Chief Officer Joe Buffone.

“We want people to think twice before putting themselves and their homes at risk.”

So in May, MFB and CFA launched their annual home fire safety campaign, ‘Safe Mistake Zone’, to once again raise awareness of the simple mistakes that cause preventable house fires each year.

Joe said the Safe Mistake Zone is a fun and quirky approach to delivering important home fire safety messages to the community.

“The Safe Mistake Zone has been a great way for us to engage the community on common causes of house fires and how to avoid them,” Joe said.

The campaign launch in Federation Square saw the two fire agencies create a large mural



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMUN

of Victoria, with origami houses representing the number of preventable house fires they respond to every year. Members of the public were asked to consider common unsafe mistakes that cause fires, and make a safe mistake instead – such as getting a badly-spelt temporary tattoo, or posing for an embarrassing photo in the Safe Mistake Zone photo booth.

Safe Mistake Zone pop-up events are now being held across Victoria as part of a winter regional road show aiming to raise broader community awareness. The campaign will run until the end of July 2016.

Visit [safemistakezone.com.au](http://safemistakezone.com.au) to find out more.

STORY JESS ESLER

## New hotline to report bullying

**CFA members have access to a new hotline to report bullying, harassment or other types of unreasonable behaviour.**

The hotline was launched in March following the release of the independent Fire Services Review.

The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It will be managed by an independent external team. Each call will be managed confidentially, with the consent of the caller helping to determine the way the report is best managed.

These complaints will then be referred to an external consultant who specialises in complaint and issues resolution. They will follow up with the caller within 72 hours of the initial complaint, and will help manage the case until a resolution is reached. The type of resolution chosen will vary depending on the nature of the complaint.



CFA CEO Lucinda Nolan said that while she didn’t believe harassment and bullying were widespread in CFA, this type of behaviour would not be tolerated.

“Our workplace must be one free from bullying, harassment or discrimination,” Lucinda said.

“If you experience any of these types of unreasonable behaviour, we want you to feel safe to report it.

“All callers will be treated with dignity and respect – there will be no judgement about the information they are providing.”

CFA members can also continue reporting complaints to their direct manager.

“I want to reiterate again that changing our culture will not be solved alone by initiatives and strategies,” Lucinda added. “We all need to do our part.”

The hotline number is **1800 795 075**.

STORY EMMA TYNER

# A time to honour our fallen firefighters



PHOTOS: KEITH PAKENHAM

## Victorians paid respect to the state's fallen firefighters at the Annual Memorial Service for Firefighters on 1 May in Wodonga.

CFA Chief Executive Officer Lucinda Nolan said the service was dedicated to remembering firefighters who had given their lives in the line of duty.

"There are 67 members who have lost their lives through service to the community," Lucinda said.

"The number of people directly affected by this loss is even greater, and we pay our respects to their friends, families and loved ones.

"More broadly, it's a time to honour the personal sacrifices and commitment that our firefighters make each and every day.

"We are forever changed by each of these losses, and lessons we've learned as a result continue to shape our organisation."



CFA Chief Officer Joe Buffone said the service would also mark the 10-year anniversary of the deaths of Barnawartha Fire Brigade member Rebecca Helwig and former Campbell's Creek Urban Fire Brigade Captain Trevor Day.

"The passing of both members in separate accidents in 2006 hit the CFA community hard," Joe said.

"It's a constant reminder of the inherent dangers posed by not just firefighting, but within any emergency services organisation."

Three new CFA memorial banners were unveiled at this year's service as a representation of CFA's Memorial Wall.

The memorial is held on the Sunday closest to International Firefighters' Day, known as St Florian's Day (4 May).

STORY ALYSSIA MORISON

# Red Paper sets out the future

## Think back 10 years. The first iPhone had yet to be unveiled, Facebook was just some new website, and you still visited your local video store to rent a movie.

A lot can change in a decade, so what will life be like 10 years from now? Will CFA be equipped with the right resources, ready to embrace new technology, tackle any challenges, and continue to protect Victorians?

A new strategic plan, titled the Red Paper, is being developed to make sure CFA is ready for 2026.

It will outline CFA's environmental and external challenges, its goals and objectives, and will inform what resources and capability CFA will need to meet the state's needs.

"The world in which we operate is increasingly complex and we need to make sure CFA is adapting and transforming so we can continue to deliver for our communities," said CEO Lucinda Nolan.

"As Victoria's population grows and there's increasing demand for fire and emergency services, we need to have a clear understanding about what resources we will need and what changes need to be made to ensure we remain leaders in the sector.

"For example, how can we attract the next generation of volunteers to our service? Are there different ways of educating the community about how to prepare themselves better against risks such as fire? And what

technology should we be using to improve what we do?"

The Red Paper will help CFA influence and inform future governments about what investments we need – from fire trucks to stations to new front line or support staff.

"No one knows CFA better than our members – we need to set the agenda and determine our own future and that's why we are developing the Red Paper," Lucinda said.

Hundreds of CFA members have already contributed suggestions to the paper.

Further workshops will be held in June, before the final paper is released in July.

STORY EMMA TYNER



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FIRE SERVICES MUSEUM

## Join the Fire Services Museum team

**If you want to take your passion for the fire services in a new direction, why not get involved in the 100 per cent volunteer Fire Services Museum?**

"Women, men, members of any age, we welcome anyone who wants to make a difference to a community organisation," said museum secretary Tim Hughes.

"There's no minimum time requirement – we just ask people to give us the time they can spare. The biggest issue is finding the right balance between work, family and their other community engagement commitments and that's a challenge CFA members know all about."

When most members think of the museum, which is on Gisborne Street, East Melbourne, they no doubt think of the trucks, and there are some beauties among the more-than 60 vehicles. These range from an 1851 Lady Don Merryweather horse-drawn manual pumper through Lulu, the 1947 Austin tanker, to the 1975 M series Bedford tanker.

While many of the vehicles – both MFB and CFA – are owned by the museum, others are on loan. Some are fully operational and self-propelled, but others are in various states of maintenance and restoration at the old Newport Rail Workshop under the care, once again, of volunteers.

Some of the later models are simply retired vehicles still in their prime and remain on the reserve fleet list, ready to get their motors running during major bushfires.

"Our volunteers take some of our vehicles to special events like the Echuca Steam Rally, brigade anniversary dinners or torchlight parades," continued Tim, "but not all our volunteer opportunities are vehicle related."

"We have volunteers performing tasks from general cleaning and administration, and we're always looking for more people to conduct tours. The more information and passion we can pass on, the better chance we have of preserving our history."

"There are also opportunities for volunteers interested in archiving and research. We have large photo, equipment and uniform collections and all of it needs to be cared for and catalogued."

"For a lot of our volunteers, the social aspect of the museum is just as important as the tasks they carry out. They share yarns of yesteryear and we all learn the nuts and bolts of what the fire services were about."

Members interested in preserving Victoria's proud fire service history can phone the museum on **9662 2907** or email [fsmv@tpg.com.au](mailto:fsmv@tpg.com.au)

STORY LEITH HILLARD



# Youth programs a priority

**In 2020, it's anticipated that almost half CFA's membership will be aged over 55 years, so we need to better engage young people and change the way we recruit and develop volunteers to meet the needs of today's youth.**

CFA already engages thousands of young people as brigade members as well as in a number of programs specifically targeted at young people such as the Junior Volunteer Development Program, Advance and VCAL programs at secondary school level, Latrobe University's Aspire, CFA Challenge and a number of local and regional initiatives.

There are ways we can better target young people, but first we need to better engage with our current young members. With 10,000-plus current youth members, it's important we create initiatives that better engage, develop and support them, and create opportunities for them to have a voice in the organisation so their current needs can be heard and to help CFA retain them.

We began this process by holding the Young Members Forum at the end of May which brought together CFA members aged 18-30 years old, with peers from SES, St John Ambulance, Red Cross and Ambulance Victoria.

They discussed topics that affected young members, such as recruitment, development, support, cultural challenges and emergency volunteering in the future. It also introduced young people to two new Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria initiatives – the VFBV Youth Network and the State Youth Advisory Council.

We also need to get better at engaging other young people, because outside the CFA family and friendship circles there's limited knowledge of what we do, and the opportunities available to CFA volunteers. We need to target secondary schools and talk to young people about the benefits of joining CFA at a time when volunteering is starting to be part of their thinking.

We can also create greater opportunities for short-term and project-based volunteering that supports CFA and brigades without young people having to volunteer in the traditional way.

If you have any ideas or are involved in local projects aimed at engaging 16 to 30 year-olds, we'd be interested in hearing from you. Email [diversity@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:diversity@cfa.vic.gov.au) or phone Sherri McKerley on **9262 8670**.

STORY SHERRI MCKERLEY

## National Volunteer Week

This annual celebration to acknowledge the generous contribution of our nation's volunteers took place 9 May to 15 May.

CFA is one of the world's largest volunteer organisations and this year CFA said 'thank you' to its volunteers with tours of the State Control Centre, special offers through Memberlink, a variety of local activities and the launch of a new coffee table book, *Community – the essence of CFA*.

## CFA shooters on target

**CFA members shot to the top at the recent Victoria Police and Emergency Services Games, taking out gold for clay target trap shooting.**

Members Andrew Smith, Andrew Ferrari and James Patterson (pictured) won the trap team event, while CFA volunteers also emerged victorious in the individual competitions.

As well as his team win, Lismore Fire Brigade's James Patterson also dominated the AA Grade competition for the very best shooters. He went home with a gold medal in single barrel shooting, plus bronzes in the double barrel and point score events.

Bolinda and Monegeetta Fire Brigade volunteer Peter Lee was the overall winner of the single barrel competition, while Bookaar brigade's Andrew Smith took out the double barrel competition.

James shot during his high school years but then gave it up. He went back to the sport four years ago because many of his friends were high-level competition shooters.

"There's a lot more skill and mental toughness involved than most people realise," James said.

"You've always got to be accurate in shooting, but with clay targets you just can't afford to miss. If there are 25 targets you've got to hit all 25 or you won't make it through to the next round."

Bendigo Clay Target Club has proven a lucky venue for James. He won the AA Grade overall and single barrel championships there at the 2014 Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games, and single barrel at last year's Victorian championships.



PHOTOS: SALLY PATTERSON

Teammate Andrew Smith has represented Australia overseas in trap shooting.

STORY CHRISTOPHER STILL



# The dangers of hoarding

Over the past few years, fire services have been increasingly recognising hoarding as a common feature in fires and other emergencies. Hoarding can pose significant risks, not only to residents but also to CFA members attending the premises.

Limited statewide research about hoarding and squalor led the MFB, with assistance from CFA, to carry out the first Victorian statewide study in 2015. The study heard from CFA members about properties they had attended where hoarding or squalid conditions concerned them. All reports of hoarding between 2012 and 2015 were analysed.

The study confirmed that hoarding incidents are not confined to one fire service area and can affect people from all social classes and educational backgrounds. It found properties with hoarding present were less likely to have working smoke alarms.

It also identified that compared with normal residential fires, a fire in a house in an advanced state of hoarding was less likely to be confined to the room of origin and often needed more firefighting resources.

The study also concluded that CFA members' awareness and reporting of the issue could be improved by providing them with appropriate advice and reporting mechanisms.



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

CFA is currently exploring appropriate reporting mechanisms and developing guidance materials to increase the knowledge, preparedness and safety of CFA members when responding to incidents where hoarding may be present. When completed, these materials will be available to all CFA members.

Basic public information about the fire risks of hoarding and how to reduce them can be found at [cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/fire-risks-of-hoarding/](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/fire-risks-of-hoarding/).

STORY KATE WATERMAN

## VFBV survey goes national

**The 2016 VFBV Volunteer Welfare & Efficiency Survey is going national this year. It will be open to volunteers in all states and territories and CFA volunteers are invited to register now to receive the survey by email when it opens on 15 July.**

More than 2,500 Victorian volunteers completed the 2015 survey and the new VIC/SES version last year. The survey is now being rolled out across the country by the Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations.

The annual survey asks 33 questions on issues chosen by volunteers as the most important to them. The survey is a cooperative process, allowing VFBV to provide reliable facts and figures to support its representation of all volunteers. Each year's results are compared with previous years' figures to show trends in how volunteers feel about each issue. VFBV and the CFA Board continue to use the survey to highlight aspects of volunteer support that need attention.

The annual survey's final report is also given to CFA's senior management, SES, the Emergency Management Commissioner and the Minister for Emergency Services.

The survey questions are grouped into seven themes: respect and professionalism; my role as a volunteer; cooperation; support from CFA; training by CFA; recruitment and retention; and people management – my brigade.

If you took part last year and provided an email address, you are already registered for this year's survey. Otherwise, email your name, brigade and email address to [vfbv@vfbv.com.au](mailto:vfbv@vfbv.com.au) or call **9886 1141** to get a printed copy of the survey.

STORY PETER BEATON

# CFA apprentice wins award



PHOTO: BILL WILSON

**CFA's Ash Menz has been recognised as one of the Wimmera's most outstanding apprentices.**

Based at CFA's Horsham workshop, the 21-year-old won Best Apprentice, Third Year in Trade at the Skillinvest Regional Awards. Independent judges handed him the award after two months of interviews and other assessments.

His award reads, "Ashley enjoys his work and it shows".

The apprentice mechanic said it's an easy job to love. "I like just everything. The variety, different types of trucks every day," said Ash.

Ash started training in CFA's Horsham workshop when he was still in high school before receiving a full-time apprenticeship. He's now in his fourth and final year of a Certificate Three in Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology.

He was nominated for the award by his manager, District Mechanical Officer Bill Wilson. "First and second year he was a good worker, but in his third year he really hit his straps," Bill said. "He just blossomed and, boom, away he went.

"He's just one of those people who has a passion for the job. He's diligent, he's reliable, he's trustworthy and he's a good team member."

Taking the initiative, Ash got training and received licences to operate forklifts and heavy rigid vehicles, as well as a plant operator's qualification, all to make him more useful around the workshop.

"Ash is just a good country kid. He travels about 60 kilometres a day to work but he's never, ever late. On his worst day, he was on time," Bill said.

Ash said the key to being successful is listening. "The blokes around you are the ones with all the experience. You've just got to take it all in."

STORY CHRISTOPHER STILL

# Cruise for a cause with the Red Knights



PHOTO: DAVE FREEMAN

**The Red Knights motorcycle club is specially for current or retired members of the fire services and their immediate family members. But it's more than just a group of people going on motorbike rides.**

Club members do enjoy socialising while on motorcycle rides, but they also take part in charitable and educational activities to help community members, to promote motorcycle safety and increase fire awareness.

There are 15 Red Knights groups (called chapters) in Australia and 10 of them are in Victoria based at Craigieburn, Bendigo,

Geelong, Narre Warren, Sale, Yarra Valley, Wonthaggi, Wyndham, Lockington and Ballarat.

Dave Freeman, president of Red Knights Australia Chapter 3 based in the Geelong area, always welcomes new club members.

"Members of Red Knights have in common the pleasure of riding bikes, staying upright and promoting fire awareness and motor cycle safety," said Dave.

"Most of us have motorcycling war stories which we all understand. We're always willing to listen to each other's riding adventures,

have a laugh and enjoy the company of like-minded people."

If you enjoy riding and would like to have some great experiences with fellow CFA riders, email [australianassociation@redknightsmc.com](mailto:australianassociation@redknightsmc.com) to find out about a chapter near you, or visit the Red Knights National Association of Australia Facebook page.

If you're interested in joining Chapter 3, phone Dave Freeman on **0407 317 198**.

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL

# Important research on show

New research covering fire modelling, mapping local knowledge, citizen-led recovery and fire law will be on show at AFAC16, the annual conference of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) and the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC.

A range of bushfire modelling talks will cover new science about how regrowth and topography impact fire behaviour, pyroconvection experiments, and smoke plumes and long-range spotting, while the opportunities and challenges of citizen-led recovery will also be examined.

On the mapping front, a new study on how online mapping at the local level increases community bushfire preparedness will present a range of valuable insights. Fire law will also be in focus, with a leading expert analysing who actually owns the fire from the perspective of the law.

New insights from leading scientists on prescribed burning, resilience, shared



Citizen-led recovery will be discussed at AFAC16.

PHOTO: EVE WELCH, UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

responsibility, disaster risk reduction, leadership, diversity and Indigenous knowledge will also be presented.

The conference will also focus on the latest equipment, with an expanded trade exhibition thanks to a partnership with Interschutz, the leading exhibition for firefighting, fire protection and rescue.

This year, the conference is in Brisbane from 30 August to 2 September.

All papers from the conference will be available online during the conference week. To see the full program and register for early bird tickets, visit [afaconference.com.au/program](http://afaconference.com.au/program).

STORY NATHAN MADDOCK

## Promoting your event made easy!



CFA's newly-updated **Event Registration System** can be used by all members.

When you register your brigade's events, the details will be on CFA's 'What's on' page and interactive map.

### What's new:

- Register multiple brigades for one event
- Search events by location and/or date
- Display multiple events in same location on map
- Improved event status updates

### What's in it for you:

- Helps promote your event
- Release funding for CFA Open Day
- See what other brigades are doing
- Share with others and get recognition



Go to [cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au), find the 'What's on' page under 'About us' or visit [cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au) and find the Events page under 'Community & Risk'.

For more information contact your CEC or email [cfaevents@cfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:cfaevents@cfa.vic.gov.au).

# Meaghan Cooper Barongarook West Fire Brigade, District 6

faces of  
CFA



PHOTO: IAN MORRISON

## What are your CFA roles?

I've been a planned burn resource coordinator since November 2015 and, since early April, I've been the acting vegetation management officer for Districts 6 and 7. It's a big opportunity.

I'm also a volunteer at Barongarook West. My brigade is very supportive of planned burning and knows that it's my passion.

## Why did you join?

I started my volunteering with SES 10 years ago and did a lot of courses, then took annual leave and leave without pay because I knew that I wanted to get into emergency management. That led me to a job as a municipal fire prevention officer with Colac Otway Shire before I joined Colac Fire Brigade as a volunteer.

I took a really keen interest in reducing the bushfire risk in the landscape and

understanding fire, so becoming an operational CFA member was a stepping stone to learn more about fire behaviour in different landscapes and vegetation types.

## What was the first incident that made an impact on you?

I went on a strike team to the Grampians in 2013 and it was an eye opener looking at the operational structure on the ground.

DELWP were doing some strategic burns and I found it absolutely fascinating to see how the different agencies do things.

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

It was an SES incident – a drunk driver had a head-on with a family. I had to perform CPR on an 18-month-old boy but unfortunately he didn't make it. I got home about 2am and woke up my three children, hugged them and told them I loved them.

It happened on a road I drive down a few times a week. The family has since put a cross on the side of the road and I remember the incident every time I pass by.

## What CFA training have you got the most out of?

The training at CFA is second to none and so is the support. You can't go past training in the environment. Fire is a living, breathing thing and you have to respect it. If you're burning, you're learning.

The planned burning and vegetation management sector is male dominated but there's been nothing but encouragement and complete and utter respect as I develop my skills.

## What has been your volunteering highlight?

I was at the Cape Otway burn camp for the first time three years ago. Mike Evans put me on with a drip torch and that's where I got the planned burning bug. He's said that I have a knack with fire and reading fire. He and Ian Morrison saw something in me and have mentored me ever since.

Last year I again attended the Cape Otway burn camp as a volunteer and was assigned the ignition commander role. Mike trusted me to choose the lighting patterns and it was very satisfying to be given that accountability and then achieve the goals.

There were career staff on my lighting crew and they were rapt and got so much out of it. They were very encouraging.

My volunteering has helped me achieve my career goals. If I hadn't joined the brigade, I wouldn't be where I am now. Three years ago I was brand new to planned burning and now I'm mentoring, and that's because of the support.

## What has been the highlight in my paid role?

Being entrusted to undertake the acting vegetation management role. With hard work and determination, anyone can achieve their goals.

INTERVIEW BY LEITH HILLARD

# Two new stations for the south-west

**On 1 April, firefighters at Warrnambool and Portland turned out for the first time from brand new stations. For both integrated brigades, the moves came after months of planning, construction and logistics.**

At Warrnambool, the change in location has also meant an immediate change in staffing, with crewing increasing from three to six per shift in line with the addition of an aerial pumper.

While Warrnambool received its new station in response to the fast-growing population and associated increase in demand, Portland's new station is largely to address the risk closely linked with local industry.

Portland Fire Brigade Officer-In-Charge Gary Harker said the expanded facility would enable the brigade to introduce 24-hour staffing in the future; a goal being progressed despite some challenges attracting full-time career firefighters to the area.

"Portland has a unique risk profile and a lot of long-running incidents," Gary said. "We have the largest port in Australia, with a truck every minute into the port and 12,000 tonnes of both sulphuric acid and tar pitch each month. The biggest woodchip exporter in the world is based here.

"We now have far superior facilities for operations, administration and training, which also benefit the surrounding brigades coming into Portland.

"This gives the brigade a home for another 50 years."

These building projects represent major milestones for CFA's Project 2016, which began in 2011 with the aim to increase career firefighter numbers and associated infrastructure in growth areas of the state.

Warrnambool Fire Brigade is already seeing the benefits of its new aerial pumper, which has allowed it to double its water pumping capability and ability to attack fires through the roof or second storey of a structure.

The truck has added another string to the bow of the busy brigade, which over the years has built itself up as a specialist response hub.

Warrnambool Officer-In-Charge Henry Barton said both volunteer and staff members at the brigade were trained in several distinct areas

of specialist rescue and hazardous materials response.

"Our members are using those skills to support other brigades in an area stretching from Portland to Hamilton to west of Colac," he said.

"We have a very strong skills base among our volunteers and that means we have volunteers as well as staff involved with, for example, every area of specialist rescue.

"We also call volunteer brigades in to help us just as often as we go out to support them. And when we do go out to support them we certainly rely on their local knowledge.

"It's about getting the right people and the right equipment to every job."

Richard Bourke, Operations Manager for District 5, was keen to acknowledge the work done by Henry to make the transition as smooth as possible for the brigade.

"There are hurdles, such as construction issues, that come with the building of any fire station and Henry has done a fantastic job of working through those," Richard said.

STORY SONIA MACLEAN

PHOTO: COURTESY OF WARRNAMBOOL FIRE BRIGADE



# CFA Member Communications Survey 2016

We appreciate that CFA members have busy lives, with study, work, community activities and family commitments, and so we want to ensure the information we send to you is relevant, timely and easy to read. We'd like to hear what you think of the ways we currently

communicate with you, so we can improve the way we give you information.

You can tell us what you think by completing this survey, removing it from the magazine and returning it to us in the supplied reply-paid envelope. If you'd like to make

further comments, write them on a piece of paper and attach it to the survey.

If you'd prefer to complete this survey online, go to **surveymonkey.com/r/279JLN6**. The survey closes on Friday 15 July. Thank you in advance.

## Section 1: General use of CFA information

1. Which of the following have you used in the past 12 months to get information? (mark all the appropriate boxes)

### Websites

- Brigades Online/CFA Online (intranet)
- CFA News & Media (news.cfa.vic.gov.au)

### Email

- CFA News fortnightly update
- CFA News email update
- CEO Updates and From the Chief Officer

### Social media

- CFA Members Facebook
- District or region Facebook page
- Brigade Facebook page (yours or nearby brigades)
- Chief Officer's Facebook
- CFA Instagram
- CFA YouTube videos
- Member Updates Twitter

### Magazines and newspapers

- Brigade* magazine (paper version and eMag)
- Fire Wise* (formally *The Fireman*)

### Q&A with Chief Officer and CEO

- Livestream video sessions
- Q&A sessions on CFA Members Facebook

### Other

- Correspondence relayed via brigade meetings
- Pinboard notices
- External media (newspapers, radio, TV)
- Non-operational pager or SMS messages
- Talks given at pre-season briefings or exercises
- Forums, conferences, expos or events
- Other .....

2. Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

### Quantity

The volume of communication I receive from CFA is about right for me

disagree agree

1  2  3  4  5

### Quality

The information I receive from CFA is relevant

disagree agree

1  2  3  4  5

The information I receive from CFA is accurate

1  2  3  4  5

The information I receive from CFA is concise

1  2  3  4  5

The information I receive from CFA is in plain English

1  2  3  4  5

### Timeliness

I receive information in time for me to make decisions

disagree agree

1  2  3  4  5

I receive information in time to participate in further discussions

1  2  3  4  5

I can access a variety of communication channels to get the information I need

1  2  3  4  5

### Accessibility

Information I need is readily available to me when I need it

disagree agree

1  2  3  4  5

It takes too long to find information I need

1  2  3  4  5

3. To what extent do you feel informed about the issues that affect you in your daily CFA activities?

- Very well informed
- Well informed
- A little informed
- Not at all informed

4. Do you get the opportunity to contribute to discussions about the issues that affect you in your daily CFA activities?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

## Section 2: Strengths and weaknesses of current communication channels

### 5. Overall, how satisfied are you with communications at CFA?

- Very satisfied                       Dissatisfied  
 Satisfied                                 Very dissatisfied  
 Neutral

### 6. To what extent do the following communication channels meet your needs? Leave blank any channels you don't use.

Brigades Online/CFA Online (intranet)  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

News & Media section of website (news.cfa.vic.gov.au)  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

CFA News fortnightly update  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

CFA News email update  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

CEO Updates and From the Chief Officer  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

CFA Members Facebook  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

District or region Facebook page  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

My brigade's Facebook page  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

Chief Officer's Facebook  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

CFA Instagram  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

CFA YouTube videos  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

Member Updates Twitter  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

*Brigade* magazine (paper version and eMag)  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

Livestream video sessions  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

Q&A sessions on CFA Members Facebook.  
 Does not meet needs  Meets needs  Exceeds needs  Don't know

### 7. Which one of these is your preferred way to receive a short update online?

- 1-minute video  
 Written story  
 Don't care  
 I don't access information online

## Section 3: Demand for information

### 8. Which of the following topics would you like to receive more or less information about?

Information/updates on training  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

Occupational health & safety  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

Community education  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

Volunteerism  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

Incident case studies  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

Operational bulletins  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

Organisational news  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

Industry news  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

CFA projects  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

Equipment and resources  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

Leadership  
 More  Less  Same amount  Don't know

Other – please specify


### 9. How often do you like to receive information from CFA headquarters?

- Daily     Monthly  
 Weekly     Quarterly  
 Fortnightly                                       Never

### 10. How often do you seek out information from CFA News and Media (news.cfa.vic.gov.au)?

- Daily     Monthly  
 Weekly     Quarterly  
 Fortnightly                                       Never

**11. How often do you seek out information from Brigades Online/CFA Online?**

- Daily                                       Monthly  
 Weekly                                         Quarterly  
 Fortnightly                                    Never

**12. Do you feel you receive too much, too little, or about the right amount of information from CFA?**

- Far too little                                    A bit too much  
 Not quite enough                            Far too much  
 Right amount

**13. Who from CFA leadership would you like to hear from?**

- Chief Executive Officer  
 Chief Officer  
 Organisational Leadership Team (formerly ELT)  
 Assistant chief officers  
 Operations managers  
 Operations officers/BASOs  
 Captain/BMT/officer-in-charge

Other – please specify


**Section 4: Ways to improve communications**

**14. Please provide suggestions for ways to improve communications at CFA**


**15. Would you be interested in gaining more skills in the following areas?**

- Dealing with local media  
 Using social media  
 Writing and posting stories on CFA News & Media website  
 Fundraising and partnerships

**Section 5: Brigade magazine**

**16. Do you read *Brigade* magazine?**

- Yes  
 No [Go to Section 6]

**17. Which version do you read?**

- Printed magazine  
 Online magazine  
 Both

**18. How much of the magazine do you read?**

- Generally read all of it  
 Read most of it  
 Read some of it  
 Only skim through it

**19. What is your overall impression of *Brigade* magazine?**

- Excellent  
 Very good  
 Good  
 Fair  
 Poor

**20. Please rate how useful you find each of the main sections of *Brigade* magazine, where 1 is very useful and 5 is not at all useful.**

	very useful	not useful			
Statewide news	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Brigade news	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Incidents	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Learning from incidents	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Health/safety	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Training	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Through the ages	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Events	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
ACO columns	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5



# PAVS takes off

Brigades worked tirelessly last fire season, visiting more than 9,000 properties in the highest-risk areas to deliver the Property Advice Visit Service (PAVS). This great work had some particular successes this year and has quickly become an important way for CFA members to educate communities about fire safety.

With smoke in the air around Wye River in December and the situation escalating, community safety team members gave information face-to-face to residents and holidaymakers in the line of fire. Combining PAVS kits with localised messaging helped to raise awareness of a serious incident.

In January, CFA and SES joined forces to deliver PAVS and storm safety messages to householders in the Kinglake and Kilmore areas. CFA also worked with DELWP in the far south-west to raise awareness about planned burns and to carry out PAVS. Feedback from the residents who received the service showed that cross-agency approaches work well.

Over 300 brigade members have been trained to deliver PAVS this financial year, and many new brigades can see its benefits.

"Locals have been very receptive. They're happy we're there to help," said Darryl Sutton of Wairewa Fire Brigade. "Even long-term residents felt they learned something new, and we've seen a few people out clearing their properties after receiving the service.

"We've also identified vulnerable residents, fire plugs that need maintenance, missing road markers, local hazards and council issues. It's been of real benefit to both residents and the brigade."

Last year, CFA surveyed residents who received PAVS and found that more than 60 per cent hadn't been involved in any CFA program until they received a knock on the door. More than eight of 10 respondents rated PAVS as very good. Before receiving the PAVS information, 44 per cent of respondents said they were likely to leave early in the event of a fire. After the PAVS session, 56 per cent said they would leave early.

This feedback shows that PAVS is a useful tool for raising fire awareness of residents who may not otherwise engage with CFA.

STORY NEIL MUNRO



PHOTOS: MICHAEL CHAPMAN

## Helping people to identify bushfire risks

**Diamond Creek Fire Brigade has had consistently poor attendance at Fire Ready Victoria meetings, despite being in a relatively high bushfire risk area. So the brigade tried a new strategy – and it worked.**

The brigade believes that many Diamond Creek residents aren't aware of their risk, so don't attend Fire Ready Victoria meetings. To overcome this problem, the content of the meeting at the end of February focused on risk awareness rather than personal survival and planning.

The meeting was marketed as a fire insight and risk recognition event and CFA members presented a simulated fire scenario using Phoenix RapidFire software. The local municipal emergency manager and Victoria Police representative spoke from their perspective about the scenario, and an MFB representative gave advice after the presentation.

The fire scenario was an eye-opener for many local residents who saw firsthand the potential impact of a fire in the local area. A lot of questions were asked about fire behaviour, personal survival, traffic management, and many more topics, and there were some fantastic discussions.

Around 140 community members attended, including 35 children – there was a range of kids' activities to encourage families to attend. In Diamond Creek, Fire Ready Victoria meetings



normally attract no more than 10 people, so the latest meeting far exceeded the brigade's expectations.

The meeting's success was put down to the heavy advertising; the naming of high-risk streets in the advertising material so locals could see it was relevant to them; and promoting it as a child-friendly event.

Since the meeting, there has been momentum including the formation of a new Community Fireguard group in one of the highest-risk local streets.

STORY FIONA MACKEN

# Market boosts brigade's funds

**Twenty years ago, Longwarry and District Fire Brigade launched a car boot sale that raised \$350. Since then, it has developed into a monthly market that has enabled the brigade to buy catering trailers and support vehicles and fund half their satellite station in Labertouche.**

Instead of the brigade being on the fringe on a community market, they are at the centre as the organisers, doing everything from grunt work through to running all the food stalls. They also share the benefits, with Hallora and Pakenham brigades taking it in turns to fire up the barbecue and share the profits.

The secret to their success is no secret – it's just hard work. Auxiliary President Judy Campbell orders the food from local suppliers on a Monday, picks the goods up on Thursday and Friday, and is one of the troops who spends three hours on Saturday preparing the food. That's a heavy duty task with members wearing brigade goggles as they peel 20 kilograms of onions.

Glenise Smith and Jim Mowat (pictured right with scones) have been involved for the long term and are on the scone-making front line, turning out about 240 scones.

"It's just lemonade, cream and flour," said Glenise, "and don't knead them too much. They're \$2.50 with jam and cream so they're great value. We always try to have some left over to put in the freezer so they're ready to go for the catering trailer.

"We all just work in together and make an average of \$5,000 each month. Earlier this year we made \$7,000 and we couldn't believe it – we had to count it twice."

The money builds up with an average of 200 stalls selling everything from fresh fruit and vegetables, plants, kitchenware and bric-a-brac to new clothing, woodwork and other craft items. There are also two coffee

vans on site pumping out caffeine to the Sunday morning shoppers.

"We charge \$20 for a single site and \$30 for a double," said Captain Tim Hickford (pictured above) who oversees proceedings along with First Lieutenant Kylie George. "We try to keep it country style and keep prices reasonable.

"We don't do any other fundraising, just this and the catering trailer. We're self-sufficient. We don't often apply for any other grants because we don't need to steal the thunder from other brigades that need it.

"The money means we're able to plan ahead. We went dollar for dollar with CFA on our satellite station. We face-lifted our fire station and upgraded the power and we've bought an FCV and a support vehicle along with our \$35,000 catering trailer. We'll upgrade the vehicles in two years and the five-year plan is to get an ultralight at Labertouche."

The Longwarry and District Fire Brigade Market runs from March to December on the first Sunday of the month from 8am to 1pm.

STORY LEITH HILLARD



# Saw improves roof access

**A world-first firefighting pole saw developed by Bendigo Fire Brigade is well on the way to finding a home on CFA's Bronto ladder platform fleet.**

Bendigo, Ballarat, Traralgon and Dandenong brigades are trialling the equipment following the production and testing of a prototype in 2013.

Although a generic pole saw can be bought from just about any hardware shop, Bendigo's 1.7-metre hydraulic model, which features a nine-inch rotating disc, is the first to be developed specifically for firefighting purposes.

The key to its design is its ability to connect to the Bronto's existing hydraulics via outlets at the front of the cherry picker cage.

Bendigo Leading Firefighter Jaron de Prada, who led the research and development, said there was a clear need for firefighters to have safer and more efficient access to roofs.

He hopes that the introduction of this new equipment will limit scenarios where firefighters are forced to wait for the



PHOTO: JARON DE PRADA

roof to collapse before they can gain access.

"The pole saw allows firefighters to create quick, clean and safe access to get water on to a going fire, or to target specific smouldering areas during overhaul and salvage," Jaron said.

"It lets us get to covered hot spots or trim up precarious debris, which means ground crews can enter the building earlier and more safely.

"We thought we had nailed the design initially, but every station that has trialled the saw has added something to make it better.

"What we're finding now is that firefighters are finding applications for it in their own local areas that we had never even thought of in Bendigo."

In 2015, the Bronto Pole Saw won second prize for innovation across all categories in the Bendigo Inventor Awards.

STORY SONIA MACLEAN

## Stolen scanners

Two new Uniden UB436HP-ES digital scanners have been stolen from the home of a Lake Bolac Fire Brigade member. These listening sets are not available to the general public. If you see one for sale or are offered one, please contact District 16 HQ on 5352 9600.



# Children's book raises money for Wye River

**Out of the ashes of the Wye River and Separation Creek fire has come a beautiful book and a fitting memorial for this significant event.**

*The Christmas Day Fire* is an account of the fire written by local children Juna Hack, aged 11, and his seven-year-old sister Pema. They sheltered in Wye River Surf Lifesaving Club with their mother Karyn while their father and Wye River Fire Brigade First Lieutenant Andrew helped to protect the town.

Pema had received a journal from her cousin as a Christmas gift and she started writing as the fire approached. She continued to write over the following days as the family helped to support all the fire crews that arrived in the town.

"I sat at the front door and gave out water bottles to the firemen," Pema said.

Her brother Juna was also encouraged to

record his thoughts. He recalls now, "As the fire hit I had this feeling that the town would never be the same again".

Their stories have been published along with a number of photos to give a graphic record of the day, and a book launch was held at the fire station just before Easter.

It was a great opportunity for brigade members, families and friends to celebrate the book and enjoy each other's company. Gatherings like these are really important at the moment.

All the money raised from book sales is being donated to Wye River Fire Brigade to help towards renovations, and so far the siblings have raised more than \$3,500.

*The Christmas Day Fire* costs \$15, plus \$3 postage. Orders can be made at [wyerivercfa@outlook.com](mailto:wyerivercfa@outlook.com).

STORY ANDREW HACK

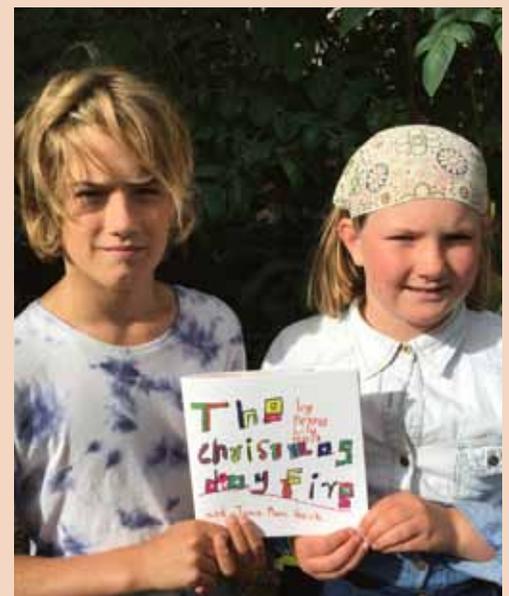


PHOTO: ANDREW HACK



# District 15 road rescue day

**The road rescue brigades of Ballan, Daylesford and Ballarat worked on five cars during a collaborative April training day.**

"We had a mix of sturdy old cars and new cars with seat belt pretensioners and airbags," said Ballarat Fire Brigade Captain Mark Cartledge. "Of course undeployed airbags and pretensioners have a pyrotechnic charge which can be a hazard to crews so that's always an important thing to go over."

Ten experienced members worked with a car on its roof on uneven ground and extrication of a patient once the car was stabilised. Fifteen less-experienced members worked on a vehicle on its side, while others maintained their first aid skills using a trauma dummy.

All members then worked on a collision scenario with one car on top of another and victims trapped. The final scenario was a car on its side winched back on its wheels in a controlled manner while testing some new ropes.

"We were lucky enough to have the CFA Rescue Association state training trailer on site so we could use all their gear rather than strip our own vehicles," continued Mark.

"Fortunately we didn't get a call out, but we were able to maintain our road rescue coverage if required.

"It's good to cross train. I can't say enough about the value of networking with guys and girls we might see at a rescue one day – hopefully not but it's always possible. We came together as one so we're prepared to get people out of situations of harm."

STORY LEITH HILLARD



Training scenarios included a car on its roof, two on their side and one on top of another

PHOTOS: BLAIR DELLEMIJN





## Josh's hopeful path to a CFA career

Prompted by a desire to give back to the community, Phillip Island second Lieutenant Josh Smith, 23, is making a second attempt to become a CFA career firefighter.

He has a rock solid emergency services base, starting with Nippers at Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club, one of the most hazardous beaches in Victoria. He's now a patrol captain as well as a member of the Phillip Island Marine Rescue Service.

Straight out of school he completed a Certificate 3 in Public Safety which sets students up for emergency response in mining or gas plants. That was followed by a Diploma in Paramedical Science aimed at non-emergency patient transport.

One year after Minimum Skills he was a brigade lieutenant and is now a crew leader and training officer with breathing apparatus and hazmat qualifications along with recognition of prior learning of his Cert 3.

Running parallel on the volunteer track has been his pursuit of surf life saving qualifications and expertise.

"In 2013, I was selected to do a life saving development camp," said Josh, "which gives you five qualifications including spinal management. On the way back from that course we got called to a car versus tourist bus accident. My initial task was to provide fire suppression to the crew cutting the two out of the car. One of them had suspected spinal injuries, so I helped paramedics to spinally package him using a vacuum mattress using my new first-aid skills. I heard afterwards he was OK."

Josh was faced with another emergency in mid-2015, when two arborists doing cliff weed removal suffered an equipment malfunction that dumped them on Cape Woolamai rocks as the tide was coming in.

"Only 30 minutes earlier, emergency services were responded to a nearby cliff fatality," said Josh, "so they were at strength in the area."

"I had the keys to the surf life saving club and, at the request of Vic Pol, I got our all-terrain vehicle and an inflatable rescue boat. Police had the skills to take the boat but they didn't know the area. I'd been there heaps of times before so I



PHOTO: GARY GRACE

piloted them into the crevice [see main photo]. It was a case of life over limb: we had to get them off the rocks before we could think about spinal injuries."

The complex incident took four-and-a-half hours from fall to helicopter evacuation, and led to Josh, a nearby crayboat pilot and three unaffected arborists being awarded an Ambulance Victoria community hero award.

Cert 3, CFA and life saving qualifications and volunteer experience helped land Josh his current job as a firefighter at the RAAF base at East Sale.

His sights are now firmly set on a CFA career.

"I love the community aspect of being a firefighter and helping people in need," he said. "Now I just have to get my fitness up for the next career firefighter physical aptitude test."

STORY LEITH HILLARD

# Pine Grove social nights

Around two years ago, members of Pine Grove Fire Brigade were thrilled to get a new fire station.

Since then, on the first Friday of every month, brigade members and their families, neighbouring brigade members and their families and other community members gather for a casual barbecue dinner at the fire station.

The aim of the night is to bring together local families, enjoy a meal and a few drinks and catch up on what's happening around the area. The last people leave at around 10pm, with very tired children who've spent the night riding bikes, scooters and playing ball games at the front of the station.

The summer menu is sausages and hamburgers with coleslaw on bread, and in winter the meat is served with hot potatoes and vegetables. The meal is provided at a minimal cost.

"We all really enjoy our monthly barbecues and they are an important way to keep our small brigade together," said Captain Lincoln Munroe.

STORY WENDY SIMS



PHOTO: WENDY SIMS

# CFA is Daniel's second home



PHOTO: KURTIS HICKLING

**Daniel Neilson is a revelation at Chiltern Fire Brigade in District 24. He's proven his ability around the fire station and taught his peers about pushing beyond your boundaries.**

The 12-year-old, who has autism spectrum disorder (ASD), joined the brigade in September 2015 and has come along in leaps and bounds.

Junior development coordinator Kurtis Hickling said Daniel has made a home for himself in the brigade.

"He's been really supported by his peers and he's having a ball," Kurtis said. "Everything used to be about his Xbox; now it's all about firefighting.

"At the moment we're focused on competition training and running through all the different events. Daniel does a great job. He's really aware of his team mates and always makes sure they're OK.

"He knows his way around a fire truck. He can hook up a hydrant and pump water through the

truck. He possesses all the skills and qualities of a firefighter which, considering his disability, is quite remarkable. We're so proud to have him in the brigade."

Kurtis said Daniel's presence around the brigade has also been an inspiration for others.

"The kids look forward to seeing him. They see his ability and what he can achieve. It just shows there are no boundaries or barriers. Anyone can accomplish anything. Daniel has demonstrated that by putting his mind to the job and putting it in action."

Daniel's mother Tammy said the brigade has helped his social skills, something which doesn't come as naturally for kids with ASD.

"It's been really good to find somewhere that's accepted him, given him a go and treated him like one of the family," Tammy said. "We're happy he's found somewhere else besides home where he feels he belongs."

STORY ALYSSIA MORISON



# Rehab units safeguard crews

PHOTO: TIMOTHY MCNEILLY

**Three years after the establishment of the first CFA rehabilitation unit at Dandenong, there are now 11 operating across the state.**

Eight units have an additional health monitoring capacity underpinned by medical expertise.

"We asked those eight to recruit nurses, doctors and paramedics who would volunteer in the rehab role," said Manager Health Monitoring Peter Langridge. "We got 48 new members, one third of them women, and they're now in place as health professionals in this newly-created volunteer role who also promote health initiatives in brigades.

"Greg Parker from Smythesdale is a nurse and he has recruited five. Rochester now has five nurses and a paramedic.

"Their enthusiasm is unbelievable and about seven of them have already completed Minimum Skills on top of a season of rehab."

The rehab crew and health professionals have been trained to assess fireground injuries and exposures using medical monitoring equipment. This includes the Masimo unit which measures heart rate, oxygen saturation, carbon monoxide in the bloodstream and hydration levels.

During the 2015-16 fire season, rehab units were deployed to all major Victorian incidents starting in November with the Portland ship fire, where the eight specialist units worked in rotation over 10 days.

Unsurprisingly, a number of those incidents presented significant health challenges.

"There were high levels of carbon monoxide at the Somerton tip fire," said Peter, "and each of our rehab units was there over seven days. The Strathdownie peat fire produced dust and carbon monoxide and a number of volunteers were affected before our units were deployed, with atmospheric monitoring done by Geelong hazmat."

At Scotsburn, the rehab chairs were placed at ops or fill points. In Tasmania, the health monitoring units also set up at ops points mid-shift before assessing members from all Australian fire agencies at the staging area at the end of the day. The carbon monoxide exposure and dehydration that presented before the rehab units deployed were reversed within 24 hours.

Mernda attended the MFB-territory Broadmeadows tyre fire and worked with Ambulance Victoria at the Somerton tip fire. DELWP accessed rehab at Wye River, and Victoria Police and SES have also felt the benefits.

Yellingbo brigade established the first purpose-built rehab vehicles and Captain Paul Spinks is one of the unit's champions.



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

"We set it up to generate interest and were prepared to work hard," he said. "While there was initially some hesitation from some members, everyone is now saying what a great asset it is.

"We now have eight members with medical expertise and we're still getting new applicants. We're building a culture of looking after our own. Our work might make the difference between responders working the next day or not or being more energetic with their kids after a fire call. It's giving back to the front line.

"We're protecting lives and getting maximum satisfaction."

"Rehab is about prevention, not cure," continued Peter. "We shouldn't expect injuries. They should be out of the ordinary. There were a number of heat stress cases as the fire season began but the rehab units have proven to be invaluable for the safety of firefighters.

"The ambition is to get one in each district and I've already got a waiting list.

"Chief Officer Joe Buffone is right behind our work because it's all about looking after the safety of our people."

It costs \$10,000 to set up a rehab unit which is all funded by the brigades. All current units are working towards funding their own purpose-built vehicle if they don't have one already.

STORY LEITH HILLARD

# Devon North's tough Black Saturday recovery



PHOTO: LEITH HILLARD

**While Devon North brigade and CFA life member Peter Nye says that bad weather generally moves into the area from the north-west temperate rainforest of the Tarra Bulga National Park and through pine plantations, on Black Saturday fire brands rained down all around as the Delburn Complex came to town.**

"The first pager message at 12.02pm called us south to Alberton West," said Peter, "but we told them it wasn't safe to travel. We needed everyone here. We warned our two caravan parks that something was coming and on the way back I was putting out fires all over.

"We then got a page to go to Koornalla near Traralgon South, but it would have taken us up to an hour to get there. By then the fire was four kilometres away in the bush and we saw how quickly it travelled; it rocketed in seconds. Heaps of people were coming down the Tarra Valley leaving the Callignee fire."

The brigade was then called to the paddocks at the back of Yarram. Comms was scratchy, radio chatter was rife and members were also fielding calls from locals asking, "What's happening? What should I do?"

The 6pm wind change was imminent when nearby pine trees exploded and local brigades were called into the Yarram industrial park to safeguard the area's major employment centre. Another 100 metres and it would have reached the main street.

"The wind howled," continued Peter. "The pager started off again but this time about houses under threat in Devon North, but we had a battle on our hands in Yarram."

If magical thinking is the power of hindsight to come up with a perfect solution which was never possible in the real world, this is where Devon North members would apply it.

"We saved Yarram but we lost Devon North," said Peter – a small statement that sums up countless sleepless nights thinking, 'If only we could have, we would have, we should have...'

"I called Ops and said, 'Send help' and they said, 'We have no help to send'," continued Peter. "I said, 'Then I reckon we're nearly knackered and you can kiss our arses goodbye!'"

Two locals came close to losing their lives. Six or seven houses were lost and numerous sheds and outbuildings, while one person lost their herd of beef cattle.

The fire went through quickly. Julian Hay, Paul Harkin and others drove around in the fire truck all night while Peter drove around in his ute, talking via UHF to his son Shannon who was road clearing in a tractor.

The brigade was then out every day for weeks fighting fires.

For Julian, Black Saturday is so clear he can almost give a timeline, but the weeks afterwards blur. One good memory was arriving at Yarram Fire Station covered in dust, ash and with filthy goggles and being handed face wipes by the local Juniors.

"We could clean out our eyes and almost feel human again," he said.

There was a community gathering in Devon North after the fires.

What stuck with Peter was the question, 'Why was Devon North brigade not here when you should have been?' That hurts, but we all know that the initial thing is always to stop the fire spread. What would have happened to people's jobs if we'd lost the industrial zone?

"People say stupid things and don't see the bigger picture," said Julian. "There were irrelevant comments like, 'Why did you knock over my fence?'"

"It seems now that people are more prepared but, when the adrenaline kicks in, will they do what they've planned?"

District 10, 11 and 27 Peer Coordinator Allan Cracknell is familiar with the struggle members may face once the emergency has passed.

"Disasters dislocate and disrupt. All combatting and support agencies do the best they can with the resources and personnel available," he said.

"Life is never quite the same after the event. Getting back to normal is a new normal.

"Fortunately people look out for each other and support comes from many sources. We have survived not because of the millions spent but by the many acts of kindness and care, seen and unseen, from individuals and groups.

"As part of that, the CFA peer program is available to all CFA people and their families. Best wishes to all in the Yarram area."

STORY LEITH HILLARD

# 'Don't do it alone' ride

**From late July, Operations Officer Terry Heafield will embark on a 2,500-kilometre bike ride, called 'Don't do it alone', stopping off at fire stations around Victoria to engage members in open conversations about depression and anxiety.**

About three years ago, Terry recognised he was in trouble.

"I've always been a laid-back sort of person," he said, "but I noticed I was always mad, always upset."

He did beyondblue's online self-check and all his answers pointed to depression and anxiety. His GP referred him to both a psychologist and a psychiatrist, with medication also prescribed.

"The anxiety had been accumulating for a few years," continued Terry, "but I'd come to think it was just me. I have high expectations of myself so I put the pressure on.

"I'd been a blokey bloke but that was one of my detriments. I was hiding behind my masculinity and thinking, 'Blokes don't go to docs. Blokes don't go to psychologists.'"

It was soccer that pushed Terry over the edge.

"I got a yellow card and promptly walked off the field thinking, 'Poor me'. It was all hitting me at once."

Terry spent the following days in bed, unable to perform even the most basic everyday tasks. His escalating me-against-the-world thoughts so

alarmed his wife Kylie that she accompanied him to his next psychiatrist appointment.

"I'd contemplated suicide," continued Terry. "I could see the shock on Kylie's face as I voiced my thoughts, and from there I was admitted to a specialist unit for a few days."

Terry was off work for six months with the full support of Operations Manager Stewart 'Sooty' Kreltszheim and Operations Officer Ashley Mills.

Terry wasn't able to take the night medication when on night shift so, to safeguard his mental health, he has moved from being a career firefighter to an operations officer.

He's now also a White Ribbon ambassador, which is an opportunity to teach boys and young men about respectful behaviour towards women.

"I feel I'm on the mend and the ride is the first step," said Terry. "Anyone who wants to come along to the fire stations is welcome. My message is that it's not a weakness; it's an illness. Seek help. Use the resources inside and outside the organisation.

"It's a long, hard road but you've got to look after yourself because there are people out there who love and need you."

To find out where Terry is visiting, go to [facebook.com/dontdoitalone2016](https://www.facebook.com/dontdoitalone2016).

STORY LEITH HILLARD



PHOTO: DUANNE ANDERSON

To access peer support contact your local Peer Coordinator via your district headquarters. For more information about managing your mental health visit [cfa.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth). For the Member Assistance Program (24-hour counselling) phone **1300 795 711**. For the Chaplaincy Program phone **1800 337 068**.

## One year on for Nathan

**Anzac Day 2016: it's exactly one year since career firefighter Nathan Shanahan completed his walk from Mildura to Adelaide to help lift the stigma surrounding mental health issues.**

Calling it 'Walking off the war within', Nathan achieved this major goal while actively combatting his own diagnosed depressive disorder and anxiety and raising funds for Soldier On, a charity that supports injured soldiers and those suffering post-traumatic stress (PTSD) and other mental disorders.

One year on, how is Nathan faring?

"The physical recovery took up to four weeks. I could really feel it through the knees and

hips," he said. "I didn't notice it so much on the road because I was so focused on achieving my goal and was really buoyed by all the support I got along the way.

"To be honest, I think a lot of healing happened during training. Walking more than three hours to work gave me a lot of time most days to be on my own and think over the past. A lot of things were worked through by the time I left and I think I'm more likely to see any major issues coming next time.

"I saw that people were looking and listening and it was perhaps helping them. One of the biggest hurdles for me was telling people for the first time that something was wrong

and fearing their judgement, but I think the negative stigma is starting to lift and I'm just happy to be a voice and an advocate. It got me some respect in a way, and lots of questions about what I'd gone through and how I first recognised it.

"I'm in a much better place now but I still have to manage it. I'm much more aware of my moods, and tiredness can bring on a flat feeling when negative thoughts can creep in. That can be a factor for any shift worker, but now I'll just have a sleep during the day to recharge the batteries.

"I'm in control of it; it's not in control of me."

STORY LEITH HILLARD

# Learning from incidents

## Portland stock ship fire

### SUMMARY

Port of Portland is a deep-water bulk port between the ports of Melbourne and Adelaide. The port specialises in bulk commodities, particularly forestry, agricultural and mining products as well as aluminium and fertiliser. It delivers \$2.5 billion into the region and the nation each year and it's Victoria's largest value export port.

On 3 November 2015, a fire was reported on a stock transport ship in the port. The fire was in a 700-tonne grain silo within the ship. The grain was to be used to feed the stock for export to Russia. The vessel has a 17,000 cattle transport capacity and, fortunately, there was no stock on board at the time of the fire. There was no risk to the crew of around 50 on board.

### INCIDENT OVERVIEW

At 8.01pm, CFA was advised of a potential fire in a stock transport vessel. The call came during a Portland Fire Brigade meeting and the crew responded and was on scene at 8.10pm with full brigade response including two pumpers, two tankers and a multi-purpose vehicle (MPV). They received support from Heywood and Warrnambool brigades.

On board the ship, CFA crews discovered that the front starboard side of the fodder storage was on fire and was it spreading to the rest of the storage area. The colour of the smoke was a greyish-yellow and being

discharged from the vent holes of the vessel, indicating the fire was burning well.

An operations point was established wharf side, and the fire was sectorised into a silo sector and breathing apparatus control. There was a direct attack on the fire and an indirect attack cooling the steel in the deck to prevent spread of the fire through conduction.

The operations point was then moved to the bridge of the vessel so an emergency management team could be formed. This included the ship's captain and master, Port of Portland duty officer and CFA Incident Controller Operations Officer Gary Harker. This allowed communication to the ship's crew and firefighting crews and seamless operation.

Firefighting activities included the use of carbon dioxide gas (CO<sub>2</sub>) and injection of A class foam and water used for area cooling. At 9am the following morning the fire was still going and temperature probes were used to identify hot spots.

The fire intensified. It was decided to use medium expansion foam on the surface fire and then fill the silo's void with high expansion foam to reduce the chances of a dust explosion.

Firefighting efforts concentrated on isolating the fire and then slowly removing the stock feed while continuing to contain any fire or explosion risk.

By 12pm, a base level incident management team (Level 3) was established at the Portland local command facility.



The incident response lasted 13 days and nights and involved several agencies. It was a very complex incident and CFA ensured every step of the process was ticked off and that all agencies involved worked closely to avoid a catastrophe in the port and significant delays to the vessel's operations.

A real time performance monitoring (RTPM) team was deployed during the fire, and after-action reviews were carried out to learn from this incident and continue to build strong relationships across the agencies involved.

## LESSONS IDENTIFIED

**Training and exercises** In early 2015, Glenelg Municipal Emergency Management Committee conducted a Level 3 exercise which focused on a ship fire. This allowed engagement and relationship building within the sector and all port-related industries. In addition, pre-incident exercises were conducted by Portland Fire Brigade and these benefited the crews dealing with the incident. Previous experience and discussions also helped the emergency management team make high-level decisions early on.

Pre-incident opportunities to do training, exercises and collaboration in a marine environment should continue and be expanded, including practical training on ships.

**Pre-incident relationships preparation** At a local level the relationship between CFA and the port and the relationships within the Glenelg Municipal Emergency Management Committee are solid. However, it was identified that connections with personnel at national and international levels could be enhanced through exercising at a significant incident level.

**Local knowledge** The initial responding personnel had solid knowledge and the skill sets to combat such an incident at the port. However, it was identified there could be benefits in continuing to develop and enhance response to incidents and ensure specialist skill sets can be used appropriately.

**Safety** The safety of personnel is always paramount and it was in the forefront of everyone's mind from the beginning of the incident. It was identified there was duplicated effort of health monitoring, though this was an opportunity to finetune the system and processes to ensure two agencies didn't undertake the same role. This also presents an opportunity for future exercising.

**Importance of research** Extensive research was undertaken by the IMT to increase the team's knowledge about similar incidents, particularly with regards to creating an inert environment within the silo. For example, using nitrogen rather than carbon dioxide reduced the risk of static electricity production in a flammable atmosphere and gases that would asphyxiate people working around it. These dangerous activities required long, tedious and methodical processes, and it was a very slow operation mainly because of the safety systems put in place. The research paid off.

**Understanding the risks** Agencies and individuals involved had an awareness of the dangers of fire on ships and exposure to extreme temperatures in confined spaces. Specialist skills operators were called in, including confined space operators, breathing apparatus operators and personnel used to working with heights and ladder platforms. In addition to these operators, any firefighters who worked within three metres of the wharf edge wore a personal flotation device to enhance fireground safety. A CFA marine capability is currently under review and this review will also help develop appropriate resources and training for the risk.

**Multi-agency response** It was clear from the level of shared responsibility and willingness to be involved, that there were strong relationships between Port of Portland, insurers, the ship owners, ship masters, shipping company, Landmark, Victoria Police, Glenelg Shire Council, Australian Border Force, shipping agency Monson, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, Australian Maritime Safety Authority and CFA/MFB scientific officers. Although CFA led the incident, the support agencies were excellent.

## CONCLUSION

This fire was a complex, unfamiliar and unique circumstance for several reasons: the marine environment, access and operating on a vessel, feed pellet characteristics, unique equipment, confined space operations, use of inert gases to limit combustion/explosion risk, and engaging with multiple agencies and stakeholders. Yet despite this, those involved did an exceptional job managing this incident. As a result, the overall Port of Portland operations were not affected by the fire. Business continued as normal with negligible impact to the port and community.

STORY OPERATIONS PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT TEAM



PHOTO: DAVID HARRIS



PHOTO: PETER STANLEY

# Marina boat fire

## SUMMARY

On a windy Saturday afternoon on 20 February 2016, multiple calls were received about a number of boats in a blaze at Blairgowrie Marina on the southern Mornington Peninsula. The newly-reopened marina has berths for about 330 boats, and three boats were seriously damaged by the fire. The area was still in the middle of peak tourist season and was flooded with visitors. The fire became a major spectacle for the day for both those on the land and at sea, with the marina packed with boat owners. Swift action by the responding CFA and marina operations crews kept damage to a minimum and prevented a major catastrophe.

## INCIDENT OVERVIEW

At 2.36pm, a call was put through that a boat was on fire in row A at Blairgowrie Marina and there were a lot of flames and black smoke. Rosebud Fire Brigade pumper turned out first followed by Rye and Sorrento brigades. Safety Beach Coast Guard brigade was requested, though they had already responded after they saw the smoke while patrolling the waters adjacent to the Peninsula.

Police and Ambulance Victoria were also requested within minutes of the brigade arriving on scene. A man who suffered burns during the fire was stabilised by ambulance crews on scene and then taken to Frankston Hospital in a serious but stable condition.

When the brigades arrived at the marina, three boats were well alight. Due to a swift and aggressive firefight following the principles of rescue, exposure, containment, extinguishment and overhaul (RECEO) only a small number of boats sustained damage. However, there was significant damage to the marina infrastructure.

Sorrento brigade Captain Darren Croad was incident controller with Station Officer Mark Flower from Rosebud brigade taking the operations officer role and Operations Officer John Francis was District 8 rostered duty officer providing emergency management team (EMT) support.

The incident area was immediately sectorised into beach sector, marina sector and on-water sector.

The beach sector was run by Fourth Lieutenant Paul Baiguerra from Rye Fire Brigade. The marina operations team followed the procedures in the Blairgowrie Yacht Squadron Emergency Management Plan and two vessels on fire were towed towards the shore and extinguished with a hand line from the beach by a CFA crew.

The marina sector was run by Station Officer Flower. The crew concentrated on providing exposure protection and extinguishing the vessels still at berth using 38mm hand lines.

The on-water sector was run by Mark Woollard from Rye brigade and was placed on the coast guard vessel to help the coast guard brigade extinguish the vessels that were freed from the berth.

Overall, this sectorisation assisted in managing and controlling the incident.

To combat the fires, the positioning of the crews was important because fires were burning in three distinct areas. The Sorrento pumper was allocated close to the marina via the main connecting ramp and was connected to the marina's 64mm fire service with hand lines supplied direct from Sorrento pumper to the marina pontoons. Rosebud pumper helped by boosting the main 64mm hydrants via the boost point that extended on to the marina and the supply of hand lines to the beach.

## LESSONS IDENTIFIED

**Early activation** Within minutes of turning out, the crew leader requested the response of Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and, importantly, Safety Beach Coast Guard brigade. This early activation of the coast guard was identified as important because of travel time and distance involved, and to ensure we continue to develop our partnership with coast guard.

**Initial actions** The yacht club's personnel and management gave important assistance to the brigades by clearing the traffic so that brigade trucks had access to the main and boom gates. These actions contributed positively to the incident outcome.

**Appropriate vehicle responded** Each brigade that responded to the fire made the decision to take their pumper. This was appropriate for the type of risk which required breathing apparatus crews and the ability to perform boost point activities.

**Strategies and tactics** The decision to relocate burning vessels to the shore definitely reduced the spread of fire and subsequent damage to other surrounding vessels.

**Incident management team structure** It was recognised that the IMT developed was appropriate and suitable for the event. The sectorisation of the area helped to control the incident.

**Pre-planning and local knowledge** Although the pre-plan had not been updated since the marina's renovations, it was still very useful under the extreme circumstances. Understanding of the facilities helped to formulate the strategies and tactics, in particular the location and use of the hydrant boost point. The use and success of the boost point at this location should be noted and referenced.

**Safety concerns** It was identified that the hazard of operating in a marine environment meant there was a real risk of emergency service personnel falling into the water and possibly drowning. Safety measures need to be addressed by crews when working in a marina and, in particular, a deep water marina.

**Emergency partner response** It was identified that local CFA crews had limited knowledge of the coast guard's and MFB's capabilities and capacity. There are opportunities to further integrate training within brigades where a marine risk is present.

**Fireground communication** Fireground communications posed some difficulties during the fire. Establishing fireground channels was of some help, but further work is needed to fully understand the causes of the problems.

**Identified roles** Although the EMT structure was developed immediately at the incident, it was identified that the use of tabards would have helped agencies' members to talk to the appropriate people.

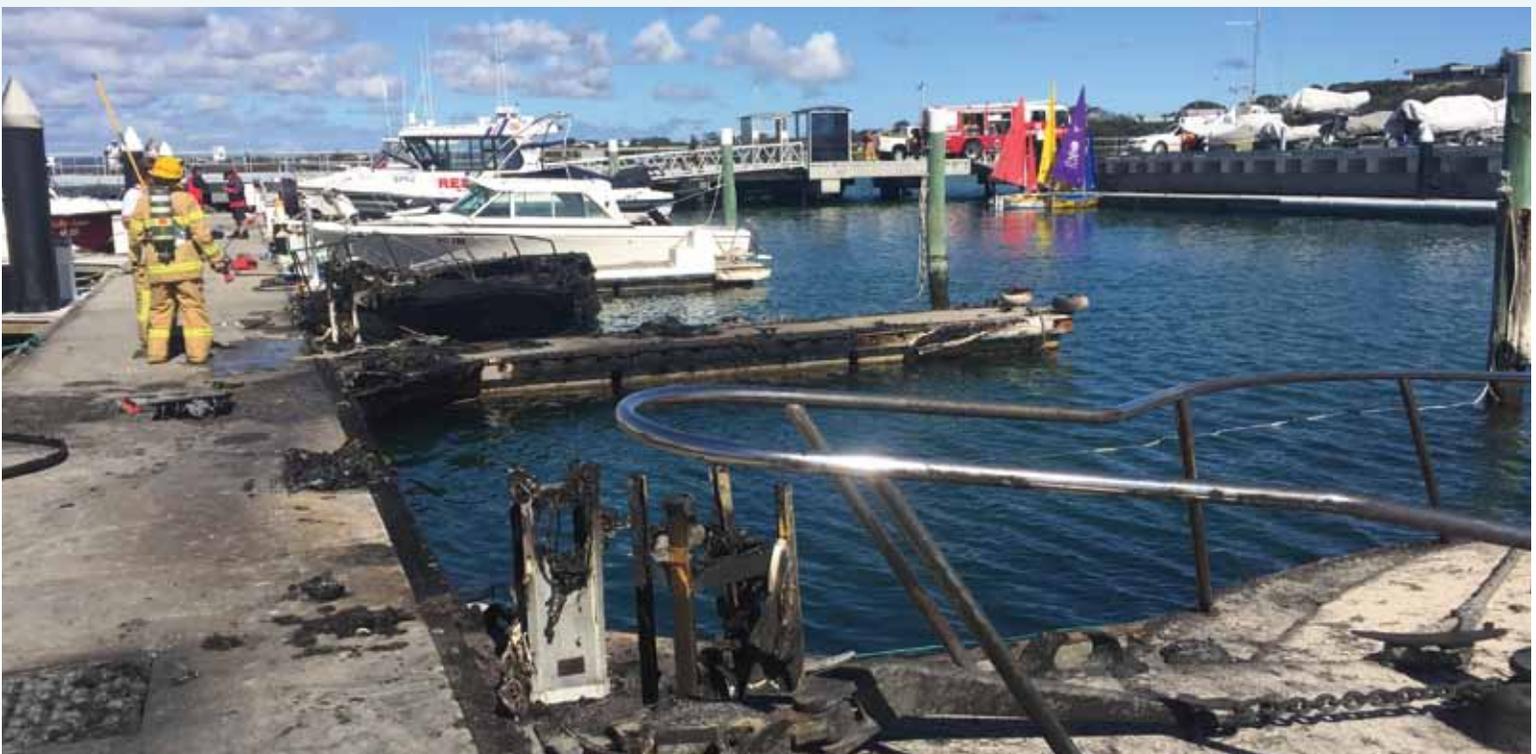
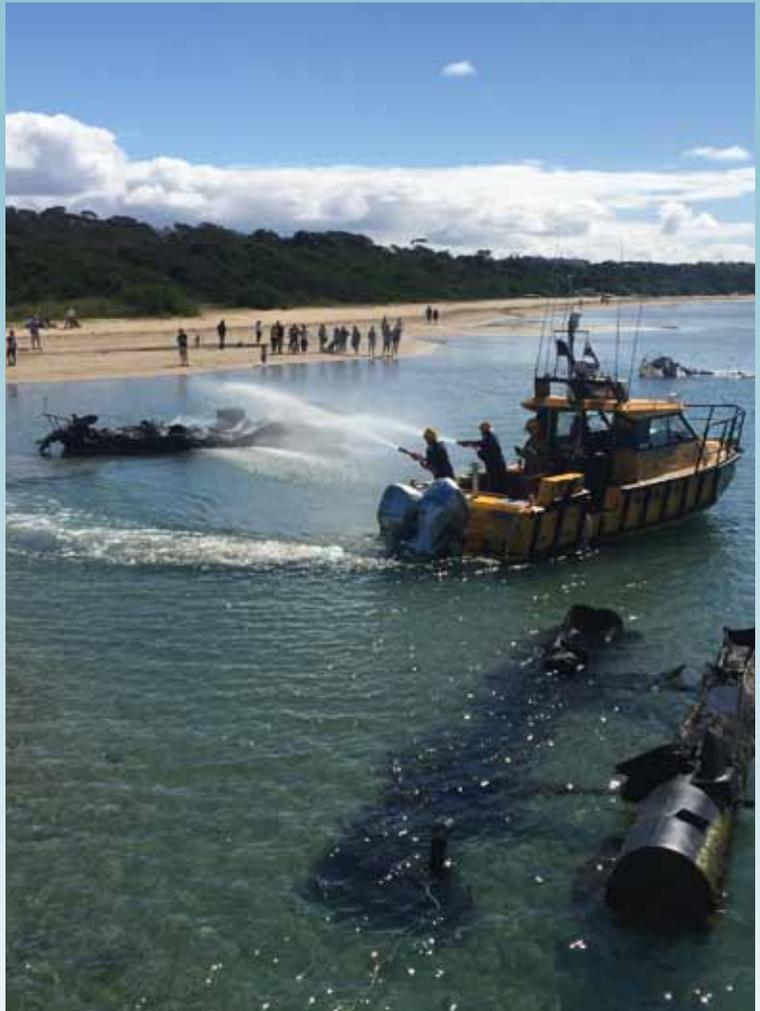
## CONCLUSION

CFA crews were faced with a difficult firefight because of the thick black smoke and strong winds, together with the complexities of a marina, the additional safety considerations and the significant potential for spread to other boats. The actions of the crews limited the spread of the fire and ensured there were no serious injuries to the community or to responding crews.

Lessons learned will help brigades and the yacht club's management refine the Emergency Response Plan to reduce the impact of fires in the marine environment.

To see a video of this incident go to [youtube.com/watch?v=oljYt4cfrjU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oljYt4cfrjU).

Alternatively, if you have a smartphone you can watch the video using the QR code, right. First, download the free QR Code Reader from Google Play or the App Store. Open the app and point your phone's screen at the QR code and the video will start.



# 2016 Champs

This year, 79 teams competed at the Urban Junior Champs in Tatura, 58 teams attended the Urban Senior Champs at Mildura, and the Colac Rural Champs attracted 71 senior and 66 junior teams.

The Champs also offered competitors a range of services including:

- A CFA shop sold more than \$57,000 of merchandise
- the Member Service Centre took orders for ID cards and updated members' personal details
- St John Ambulance gave a CPR display
- The Health Watch team tested members' glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure.



## URBAN SENIOR RESULTS

## Dry aggregate

1 Kangaroo Flat	21 points
2 Maryvale	16 points
3 Bendigo	13 points

## Wet aggregate

1 Maryvale	90 points
2 Werribee	46 points
3 Stanhope	44 points

## A Section

1 Maryvale	106 points
2 Kangaroo Flat	61 points
3 Melton	32 points

## B Section

1 Werribee	55 points
2 Patterson River	47 points
3 Sale	40 points

## C Section

1 Whittlesea	51 points
2 Stanhope	44 points
3 Knox Group	38 points

## URBAN JUNIOR RESULTS

## Dry aggregate

1 Tatura A	57 points
2 Sale A	26 points
3 Koo Wee Rup A	18 points

## Wet aggregate

1 Tatura A	32 points
2 Moe A	24 points
3 Sale A	15 points

## Under 14 years aggregate

1 Tatura A	61 points
2 Koo Wee Rup A	26 points
3 Melton A & Moe A	14 points

## Under 17 years aggregate

1 Sale A	41 points
2 Tatura A	28 points
3 Moe A	23 points

## Grand aggregate

1 Tatura A	89 points
2 Sale A	41 points
3 Moe A	37 points

## RURAL SENIOR RESULTS

## Division A aggregate

1 Greta A	64 Points
2 Hurstbridge A	46 Points
3 Greta B	42 Points

## Division B aggregate

1 Dunrobin/Nangeela B	74 Points
2 Connewarre B	28 Points
3 Strathmerton A	27 Points

## Division C aggregate

1 Plenty A	44 Points
2 Dunrobin/Nangeela D	41 Points
3 Dunrobin/Nangeela C	40 Points

## RURAL JUNIOR RESULTS

## 11-13 years aggregate

1 Greta A	36 Points
2 Mandurang A	26 Points
3 Sedgwick A	22 Points

## 11-15 years aggregate

1 Springhurst A	48 Points
2 Dunrobin/Nangeela A	34 Points
3 Ascot A	28 Points

## Champion team (following a countback)

1 Springhurst A	48 Points
2 Ascot A	48 Points
3 Greta A	48 Points



PHOTOS: KEITH PAKENHAM





# Good Friday Appeal breaks record again

Thousands of CFA members collected \$1,763,267 for the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal – almost \$50,000 more than last year. As with previous years, the amount collected by CFA was more than 10 per cent of the total \$17,445,624.38 raised.

CFA Chief Officer Joe Buffone presented the cheque during Channel 7's telethon on Friday evening. "I'm incredibly proud of every member and brigade involved. The amount raised is a fantastic achievement," Joe said.

"We owe a massive thanks to the community for their generosity and support. CFA brigades have been raising money for the Appeal for more than 60 years now. It's a very special tradition."

The money raised will be used by the Royal Children's Hospital to buy medical equipment and to fund research projects and scholarships.

STORY PAUL HUGGETT



PHOTOS: BLAIR DELLEMUN

## Support for cultural diversity

As part of Cultural Diversity Week in mid March, Springvale Neighbourhood House held its 2016 Harmony Festival in Harmony Square, Dandenong.

This special day was to celebrate the wonderful cultural diversity in the fabulous area in which we live and to educate the community about the different services available.

The aim of the day was to promote understanding and respect for diverse cultural, linguistic and religious groups and celebrate diversity through appreciation and sharing of different cultural experiences.

The event included community groups wearing their traditional or national dress, a concert of cultural singing and dancing, stalls with interactive activities and food stalls.

Dandenong Fire Brigade took part in the event by bringing along a variety of vehicles for the community to look at. Members answered questions and interacted with children which was well received by members of the public.

There was also a static display which showed people how to use a fire blanket and explained important issues about home fire safety.

"Numerous members of Dandenong Fire Brigade attended the event to educate about fire safety and the role of CFA within the community," said Dandenong Fire Brigade Firefighter Peter Basset.

"Strengthening ties between emergency services and local communities is crucial in such a culturally-diverse area, and events such as this go a long way to develop these relationships."

STORY STEVEN CORRIGAN



PHOTOS: STEVEN CORRIGAN



PHOTO: SASKIA VAN BEVER

## MCG applauds CFA members

The spectacle of around 200 CFA members marching around the MCG in mid April "would have brought a tear to a glass eye" said Broadford Fire Brigade volunteer Gaybrielle Burgess.

Gaybrielle joined other members as part of the parade which came about through a CFA partnership with both Essendon and Geelong football clubs. The round 4 game was called 'The Country Game' as a way of paying tribute to the contribution of rural and regional Victoria to the AFL.

The crowd was on its feet as the CFA parade – drawn from brigades across the state – marched around. Volunteers got high-fives from kids sitting on the fence, men dipped their hats and some even took their hats off as a sign of respect.

"We were given a standing ovation for something I love doing," Gaybrielle said. "To see young kids clapping and cheering for you just because you were wearing yellow. The feeling was amazing. People were saying, 'thank you, thank you!'"

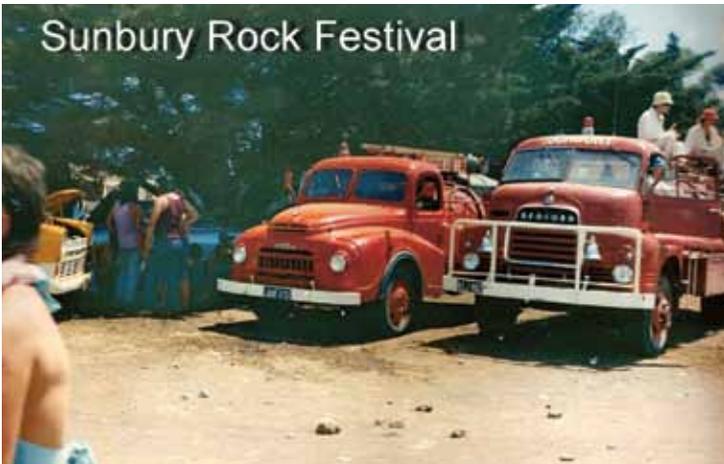
The Country Game was the idea of former Essendon coach Kevin Sheedy. He thought it was important to recognise CFA, because in most country towns the two community hubs are the footy/netball club and the CFA brigade.

Chief Officer Joe Buffone led the parade. "I was privileged and felt very proud to have led our CFA members who came from all over the state to parade around the MCG," he said.

"At one stage, I turned around and saw the 200 CFA volunteers in blues and wildfire gear. The crowd was giving them a standing ovation. It was a humbling sight and experience."

STORY JONATHAN GRAINGER

# Through the ages – Diggers Rest





# Emergency Memberlink

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



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

Details of the offers are in the Emergency Memberlink Guide, which is posted with all new Memberlink cards, and are also on the [emergencymemberlink.com.au](http://emergencymemberlink.com.au) website.

To get a Memberlink card, phone 1800 820 037 or register online at [emergencymemberlink.com.au](http://emergencymemberlink.com.au).

The Memberlink team welcomes feedback about the Memberlink Program and your suggestions about new benefits you think would be of value to you, your family and your colleagues. Phone the team or leave a message on the Facebook page – [facebook.com/emergency-memberlink](https://facebook.com/emergency-memberlink).

## POPULAR OFFERS

- Members receive 20% discount on **Silver Cross** baby and toddler products bought online.
- Discounted rates and reduced insurance excess with **AVIS** car rental.
- **South Eastern Communications** offers 10% discount on products including pagers, UHF CBs, emergency service receive radios and aftermarket accessories.
- Discounts on a range of pre-purchased **Gift Cards** including Woolworths, Coles, Myer, Kmart, Target, Supercheap Auto, Rebel Sport, JB Hi-Fi, Ray's Outdoors, BCF and Flight Centre.
- Treat yourself or someone you know to a **RedBalloon** experience and get \$20 off when you spend \$79 or more.
- Discounted fares when sailing on **Spirit of Tasmania**.
- 20% discount on **Lenovo** PCs and notebooks.
- **The Comic's Lounge** offers members one complimentary Dinner and Show Ticket when another Dinner and Show Ticket of equal or greater value is purchased.
- Members receive commercial pricing through the **Good Guys Commercial Division**.
- 25% or \$25 (lowest applies) off your meal at **Taco Bill Mexican Restaurants** Australia-wide.
- **Goodyear Airport Parking** has a 20% discount on parking at Tullamarine Airport when booked online.
- **Searoad Ferries** offers a 10% discount on ferry travel between Sorrento and Queenscliff when you present your Emergency Memberlink Card.
- \$5 off each new tyre, \$5 off a new battery and \$40 front wheel alignment with purchase of two new tyres at **Tyrepower's** Victorian stores.
- Get \$50 off your next booking when you spend over \$1,500 at **Flight Centre**.
- **Isuscribe** offers 10% off the listed price of some magazines including *Home Beautiful*, *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Gardening Australia*.
- Members have access to **Nissan Partner Program** pricing on a wide range of Nissan vehicles.
- Members have access to exclusive discounts and offers through the **JB Hi-Fi Family & Friends Program**.
- 5% to 10% off the best unrestricted rate of the day at over 2,400 **Accor Hotels** worldwide.
- Members receive 30% off the recommended retail price on **Icebreaker Merino** apparel.
- 10% off your next manufacturer's handbook service at **UltraTune Auto Service Centres**.
- 20% off Bath House bathing during off-peak periods (Tuesday to Thursday, excluding public and school holidays) at **Peninsula Hot Springs**.
- Save money on pre-purchased **movie tickets, theme park and attraction** tickets.
- Save 40% on **AIG Travel Insurance**.
- 10% discount on **Puffing Billy's** regular excursion train fare, Day Out With Thomas, Steam & Cuisine Luncheon Train and Dinner & Dance Train.
- Trade prices on audio visual, white goods, kitchen and home appliances through **Harvey Norman Groups & Associations Division**.
- 10% discount at **Tradelink** bathroom suppliers, on presentation of your Memberlink card.
- Free medium soft drink, medium orange juice, standard espresso pronto or small McCafe coffee with any purchase over \$3 at **McDonald's** restaurants in Victoria.



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