



BRIGADE



**COMMUNITY
SAFETY CHAMPIONS
INSPIRATIONAL VOLUNTEERS
TELL THEIR STORIES**

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KERRY MURPHY CHAIRMAN

The June Board meeting was held in Swan Hill in recognition of the sustained work of Loddon Mallee CFA members during the floods earlier this year. It was also recognition that, for many members, the flood crisis is still exacting a heavy toll.

Loddon Mallee Regional Manager Pat O'Brien hosted a dinner for Board members, the Chief Officer and CFA members representing a range of brigades from across the region. It was an opportunity for those members to pose forthright questions about immediate needs, channels for assistance and other matters of concern.

The State Budget was good news for CFA with funding received for 101 new vehicles and 60 new or upgraded rural stations to be built in 2011–12.

The Fire Services Commissioner consulted with the CFA Board on his reform plan. More detailed information will be passed to members as it becomes available.

Work on the CFA strategy and a preferred organisational structure was supported by the Board and has been communicated across CFA. Reaffirming who we are and what we do unites us and helps focus our energies as preparations for the next fire season pick up pace.

JULY BOARD MEETING

Final positions on community safety policies for the 2011–12 fire season were progressed at a multiagency workshop in July. Plans are in place for multiagency pre-fire season briefings to take place from September.

Chief Officer Euan Ferguson has proposed an annual bushfire burnover drill. The drill would reinforce CFA's safety first culture and ensure that critical survival drills are known, practised and instinctive. Consultation is proposed with District Planning Committees, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria and the United Firefighters Union.

Meanwhile CFA has proposed the documentation of high level intent, Command and Control arrangements and community safety policy in a single handbook for this fire season.

Significant rainfall in Gippsland in late July once again saw CFA supporting SES in flood response and incident management.

The interim report of the Comrie Victorian Floods Review has been received with great interest. Mr Comrie shed a new light on the State's emergency management framework, calling for an all-hazards all-agencies approach to managing emergencies. Upcoming reviews soon to be released (at the time of writing) include Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission implementation monitor report, the report on the Tostaree fire in Gippsland this year, and the Honourable David Jones Review into CFA arrangements for volunteers.

We welcome the rigorous scrutiny of these reviews, recognising that their recommendations will be catalysts for further improvement. The proposed new structure for CFA will position the organisation well in driving changes from these reviews.

Finally, two employees respected as strong contributors to a progressive CFA are moving on. Robert Rankin has retired after many years of dedication to our truck fleet. Deputy Chief Officer Geoff Conway has resigned having achieved excellence in a number of key roles. He will be missed when he steps down at the end of September. ■

INNOVATIVE RESEARCH INTO HEAT STRESS

Victorian researchers and CFA are leading the way in finding out the types of situation that cause heat stress and how firefighters can manage heat stress effectively when it occurs.

The Health and Wellbeing team is trialling an exciting new technology called CorTemp, which is a small capsule that transmits a person's body temperature to a data recorder. This can help CFA to find the best ways to manage heat stress in a variety of fire situations.

Firefighters swallow the CorTemp capsule and a remote control unit records their core temperature while undergoing tests. The capsule then passes through the body naturally and is discarded.

In June, tests were carried out at Peshurst, Echuca and Mt Hotham in conjunction with Deakin University's Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre.

Volunteer firefighters from Portland, Port Fairy, Hamilton, Echuca, Echuca Village, Moama and Hotham brigades took part in simulated structural fires after they'd taken the CorTemp capsule. The new personal protective clothing (PPC) and flash hoods were also trialled and compared with results of the old PPC.

"Once all the results are in, we will have some great insight into the most effective ways to cool the body down during and after an incident," said Peter Langridge, CFA Health and Wellbeing Project Manager.

A second trial was carried out to validate the results of the research and the data will be available soon. ■



OUR INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES GO LIVE

In July 2011, the final sites of one of CFA's largest information technology infrastructure projects went live.

Two years ago the Victorian Government provided funding to CFA to upgrade 17 Incident Control Centres (ICCs) and 155 Divisional Command (DivCom) facilities across the State after reviews showed that ICCs and DivComs needed to upgrade their communication, IT and office infrastructure.

ICCs operate during a level 3 incident. These incidents are characterised by a degree of complexity that may require establishing divisions to manage the situation. ICCs have a designated footprint that involves a network of DivComs responsible for making sure local command is exercised. DivComs are also responsible for smaller incidents.

All DivComs now have improved access to maps, manuals, forms, checklists, contact lists and software to provide divisional command teams with the information they need during a large and complex multiagency incident. Relevant pre-plans, township protection plans and local management arrangement protocols can also be accessed from DivComs.

For the first time CFA DivComs have broadband connectivity to ICCs and access to CFA and DSE websites and systems. ■

NEW MEMBERSHIP AND CLASSIFICATION MODEL

CFA brigades from all districts have finished a trial of the new Brigade and Membership Classification change process. Deputy Chief Officer and Project Manager Geoff Conway said the brigades in the trial gave crucial feedback.

"Thank you to all the brigades who provided feedback from the trial," Geoff said. "Your input has been invaluable to the progression of the project. From the feedback we've formed a list of lessons learned, which will enable us to make some refinements before the project is rolled out."

Geoff said most brigades thought the transition process went smoothly. "Concerns raised about the change management process will provide feedback to the Board and the Project Steering Committee regarding management issues surrounding the project," he added.

Changes to the Brigade Membership and Classification will give greater flexibility in the way brigades are structured and managed. The project also introduces membership classifications based on the role that each person plays in the brigade and the wider service.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria's support for the project included conducting a survey of brigades to address some of the fundamental issues of brigade management.

In future, brigades will be grouped into one of five classifications that reflects the risk profile of the area in which they operate and the role they play in supporting other brigades.

All our brigades will switch to their selected model of brigade management and membership classification by the 2013 election cycle. ■

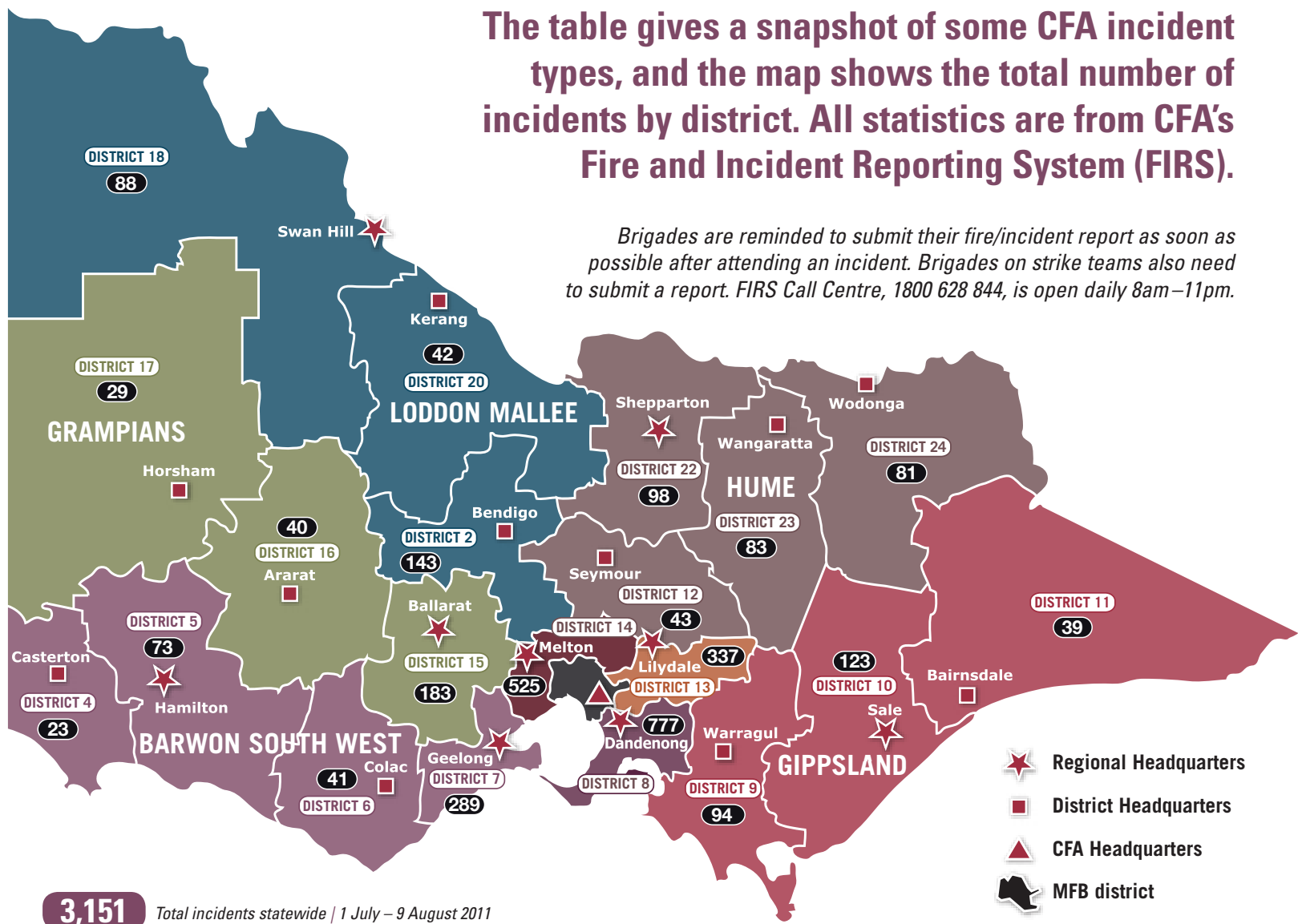
THE LATEST INCIDENT STATISTICS

INCIDENT TYPE	1 JULY – 9 AUGUST 2011			1 APRIL – 30 JUNE 2011		
	Est. loss	Est. ha burnt	No. of incidents	Est. loss	Est. ha burnt	No. of incidents
Bush and forest		0	0		133	17 ^a
Car fires and MVA			481			1,291
False alarms			570			1,606
Grass fires		9	4		404	47 ^b
Hazardous materials			196			624
House fires	\$4,340,415		133	\$10,577,290		322
Industrial fires	\$1,653,500		24	\$42,309,610		69
	\$5,993,915	9	1,408	\$52,886,900	537	3,976

^aForest and bushfires and scrub or bush and grass mixture fires larger than one hectare; ^bLarger than one hectare

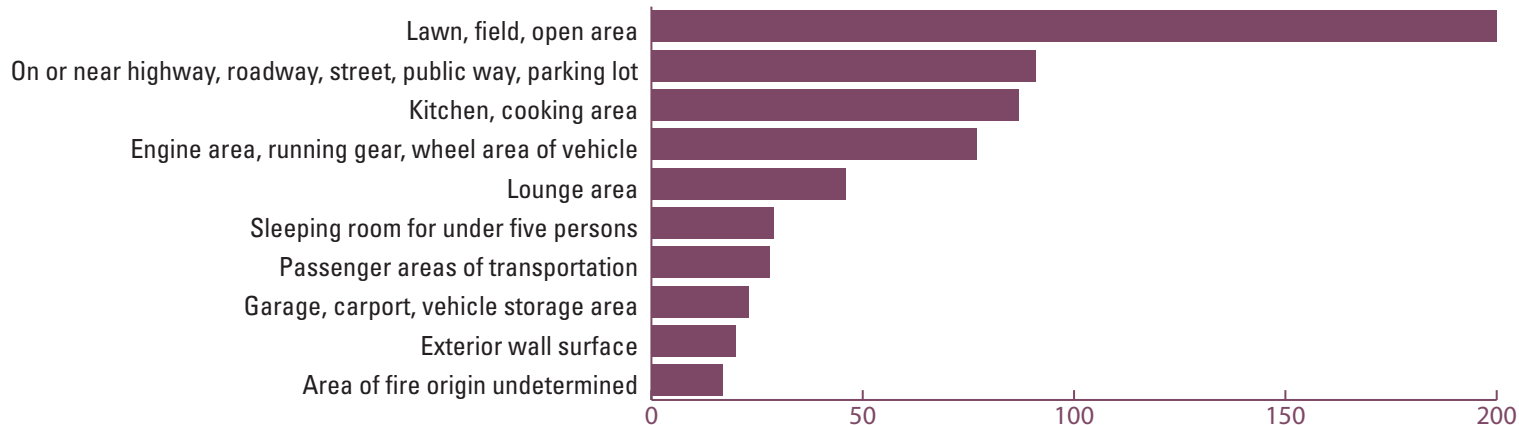
The table gives a snapshot of some CFA incident types, and the map shows the total number of incidents by district. All statistics are from CFA's Fire and Incident Reporting System (FIRS).

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



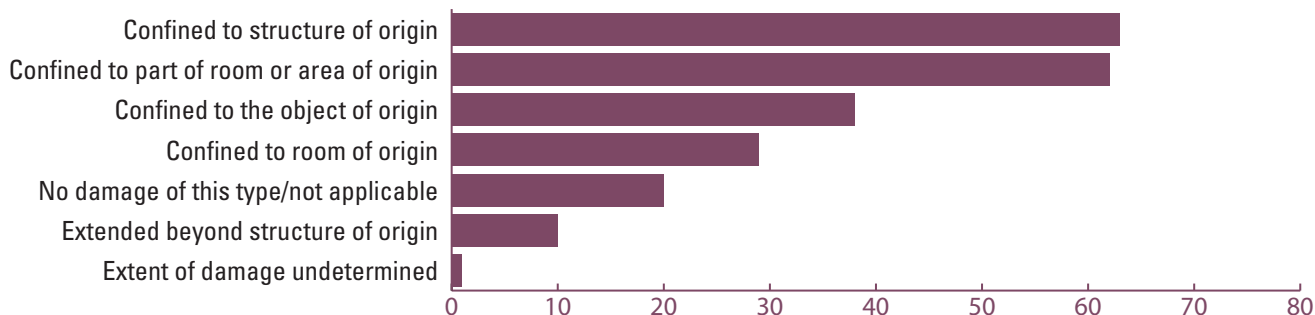
ORIGIN OF FIRE

1 JULY – 9 AUGUST 2011



EXTENT OF FLAME DAMAGE

1 JULY – 9 AUGUST 2011



FOG FILTERS FACTORY FIRE

INCIDENT: Structure fire

DISTRICT: 8

DATE: 12 June 2011

BRIGADES: Dandenong South, Hallam



In the middle of thick fog, Dandenong South and Hallam fire brigades responded to a smoke alarm at the Colmax Glass factory in Stephens Road, Dandenong South.

The fog had enveloped the area and crews couldn't see the smoke or factory until they were within 50 metres of the site. Once there, they found machinery in the glass recycling plant well alight and impinging on the roof area.

An aerial appliance (Dandenong ladder platform) and an additional pumper responded when Senior Station Officer Rick Owen completed his size-up of the fire.

Firefighters in breathing apparatus cut through a steel roller door with a quick-cut saw to get access to the seat of the fire in the factory. Specialist vehicles from Scoresby (hose layer) and Frankston (breathing apparatus van) also responded to help fight the fire, bringing the total number of firefighters at the scene to 25. ■



KEITH PAINHAM



Fan heater SETS UNITS ABLAZE

At around 3am the manager of a block of 19 units on Tocumwal Road woke to the sound of breaking glass and flames. She quickly got all the residents out of the block and no one was hurt. The residents then stood in the freezing cold and watched nine crews tackle the fire.

The blaze destroyed the manager's home and car, one of the units and a house behind the units on McCarthy Avenue.

Alan Eley, CFA fire investigator, said a small fan heater caused the blaze. "Quite a lot of fluff was around the element," he said. It took the crews about 50 minutes to get the fire under control. ■

INCIDENT: Numurkah structure fire

DISTRICT: 22

DATE: 29 June 2011

BRIGADES: Waaia, Katunga, Kaarimba, Nathalia, Numurkah, Wunghnu, Shepparton Hazmat, Strathmerton, Naring



BIRTHDAY BLUES

INCIDENT: Structure fire

DISTRICT: 13

DATE: 28 June 2011

BRIGADES: Lilydale, Wandin, Mount Evelyn



Early in the morning three brigades attended a house fire in Clegg Road, Mount Evelyn, but couldn't save the owner's house. To make matters worse, it was owner Barry Houghton's 55th birthday.

CFA Operations Officer Jason Lawrence said the single-storey weatherboard house was fully involved when crews arrived at the scene. It's thought the fire started in the roof.

Mr Houghton escaped uninjured and was thankful for the speedy arrival of CFA crews.

"The CFA were great, they were down here in no time," he said. "I was impressed with the way they got stuck straight into it as soon as they arrived. They did a fantastic job."

As well as his house, Mr Houghton lost a motorbike and a van. ■



ELIZA ANDERSON



DARREN APPS

A COMPLEX CUT

STORY **DARREN APPS**

INCIDENT: Traffic accident
DISTRICT: 7
DATE: 31 July 2011
BRIGADES: Corio, Geelong City, Corio SES



It took CFA, SES and Ambulance Victoria crews just over an hour to free a driver from his car after he collided with a pole at high speed. Corio and Geelong City brigades and Corio SES responded to the incident at the intersection of Ballarat Road and Church Street, North Geelong. At the scene crews were confronted with a Holden SS ute that had hit a traffic pole just forward of the driver's door. The pole was trapping the driver's legs. While CFA and SES crews worked to free the driver, ambulance crews provided pain relief and treated the driver's extensive facial injury. Just over an hour after arriving at the scene the driver was released, transferred into an air ambulance and taken to one of the Melbourne trauma centres, in a serious but stable condition. ■

BOAT BLAZE AT DUCK ARM

STORY **ADAM TOWNSEND**

INCIDENT: Structure fire
DISTRICT: 11
DATE: 9 July 2011
BRIGADES: Paynesville, Bairnsdale, Paynesville Coast Guard



At around 8.15am, CFA brigades responded to a boat fire on the Gippsland Lakes at Duck Arm, Paynesville. When the boat's owner noticed the fire break out, he ran the vessel into a sand bar to escape the flames and to raise the alarm. The owner wasn't injured. When CFA crews arrived at the scene, the vessel was fully alight and the crews attacked the blaze from land and sea. LPG cylinders were seen and heard venting during the fire. Gippsland Water Police were on site to oversee the firefight, which included putting out a small grass fire that was started by floating embers. Crews donned breathing apparatus towards the end of the firefight to gain access to the vessel. ■



ADAM TOWNSEND



Ultralights TACKLE Paddock BLAZE

Nine crews and several ultralight tankers were needed to control a 25-hectare grass fire at Shepparton-Violet Town Road, Kialla East.

Region 22 Operations Officer Rob Van Dorsser said the ultralight tankers were needed because the paddock was muddy. "The tankers we had for the normal response were too big and heavy," said Rob. "Ultralight tankers get into forests and paddocks easier."

Rob said the crews managed to stop the easterly wind spreading the fire to nearby trees. ■

INCIDENT: Kialla East grass and scrub fire

DISTRICT: 22

DATE: 20 June 2011

BRIGADES: Miepoll, Kialla, Karramomus, Caniambo, Shepparton, Benalla, Nagambie, Tallygaroopna, Toolamba



BOGGED BEAST BURNS BUSH

INCIDENT: Grass and scrub fire

DISTRICT: 8

DATE: 5 June 2011

BRIGADES: Hallam, Dandenong, Narre Warren, Hampton Park



A four wheel drive caused a grass and scrub fire after becoming bogged in a paddock off Leggo Court in Dandenong South.

In the early evening, brigades were paged to a vehicle on fire near a factory. When the Hallam crews responded they could see a large amount of smoke visible from Princes Highway. When they arrived at the scene they found a large grass and scrub fire in the swamplands at the end of Leggo Court. A bogged Nissan Patrol was found several hundred metres away, along a muddy track, and a fire was heading away from it towards the LeMans Go-Kart Circuit.

As the ground was so soft and boggy, Incident Controller Shaun McRoberts from Hallam brigade set up vehicles around the perimeter to make sure the fire was controlled. An additional four tankers were called to supply water as crews watched from strategic points as the fire eventually burned out when strong winds and rain arrived later in the evening. ■



KETH PANKHIM



DANIEL WILLIAMS

ICY VIGIL AT TANKER CRASH STORY PATRICK SHAWCROSS

INCIDENT: Road accident and scrub fire

DISTRICT: 6

DATE: 21 June 2011

BRIGADES: Bungador, Irrewillipe, Colac, Simpson, Carpendeit-South Purrumbete, Cobden SES



On an early, cold and damp winter's morning, three brigades initially responded to a pager message about a person trapped in a vehicle. But there were only scant details about the accident's location.

Several kilometres from the reported location, the Colac tanker topped the crest of Patons Hill, Irrewillipe, and was confronted by a detached gas trailer lying sideways down the centre of Irrewillipe Road and the prime mover belly up in the table drain.

Corangamite Deputy Group Officer Greg Harrington arrived in the Irrewillipe slip-on unit, quickly sized up the situation and took control of the incident. Fortunately, the driver of the tanker escaped with minor injuries.

Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, VicRoads and WorkSafe responded to the incident, and we also needed a heavy crane and haulage equipment, plus specialist gas decanting/flare off personnel.

Traffic management points were set up to divert vehicles and catering became necessary because of the adverse conditions and the ongoing duration of the incident.

One of the success stories of the day was our use for the first time of the newly acquired wet weather jackets. It had been previously pointed out that it was difficult for rural brigade members with Proban turnout gear to attend long duration incidents in cold or wet conditions.

Given how long the incident dragged on for, as well as the extremely cold and intermittently wet weather on the day, the wet weather jackets were warmly welcomed by the dedicated volunteers who resiliently monitored the situation and assisted throughout.

The prime mover was righted and removed from the scene just after 10am, with the subsequent recovery of the trailer just after midday. The force of the impact was such that the turntable on the trailer sheared off and remained attached to the prime mover.

We used a gas detector at the scene and found nothing there. The tanker was effectively empty but there was a lot of gas vapour in the tank. To reduce the amount of vapour in the tank so that it could be transported safely, a flare-off was done around 500 metres from the accident site. The flare-off started in the early afternoon and took several hours, monitored by a small crew from the Colac brigade. ■

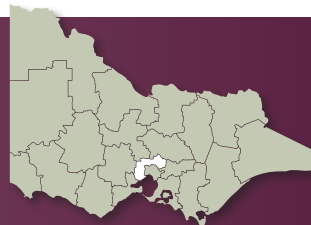
COUNCIL OFFICE DESTROYED

INCIDENT: Greensborough structure fire

DISTRICT: 14

DATE: 15 June 2011

BRIGADES: Doreen, Plenty, Diamond Creek, Eltham



On a chilly winter's morning crews were called to a fire in a portable office building at the back of the Nillumbik Shire Council offices in Civic Drive, Greensborough.

The portable building was being used as a temporary office for 50 staff while the main building was being renovated.

District 14 Operations Officer Phil Peacock said the building was fully involved when firefighters arrived.

"It was a long portable building around 20 metres by 40 metres," he said.

More than 30 CFA firefighters worked to battle the blaze, which took around two hours to control.

"We also had crews from MFB at the scene and there was great cooperation between both agencies," said Phil.

Plenty brigade Captain Adrian Marshman said the building was gutted and would need to be demolished.

Although the main council building had power cut off and suffered some smoke damage as a result of the fire, Nillumbik Council spokeswoman Joanne Hammond said it was "business as usual" for the council. ■



Old station UP IN SMOKE

When CFA crews arrived at the historic general store and post office on the Old Calder Highway at Diggers Rest at about 4.45am, the building was engulfed by fire.

Diggers Rest brigade Fourth Lieutenant Tim Welshe said crews managed to save about 40 per cent of the building. It's thought that the building formed part of the town's original railway station dating back to 1882.

"Flames were in the area of the main shop front, the post office box room and two store rooms. However, the entire building has been affected by smoke and heat," Tim said.

About 30 firefighters and 10 CFA appliances attended the fire, and two tankers remained at the scene for seven hours.

This isn't the first time a historic building has been destroyed in Diggers Rest. The 157-year-old Diggers Rest Hotel burned down in October 2008. ■

INCIDENT: Diggers Rest structure fire

DISTRICT: 14

DATE: 28 June 2011

BRIGADES: Caroline Springs, Sunbury, Toolern Vale, Diggers Rest



CREWS SAVE \$20 MILLION FACTORY PRESS

INCIDENT: Structure fire, Wangaratta North

DISTRICT: 23

DATE: 14 July 2011

BRIGADES: Wangaratta, Wangaratta North, Tarrangingee



Efforts to search for the source of the fire were hindered by large amounts of smoke and steam, but eventually flames were found in the press and the fire was contained in around 45 minutes.

At one stage firefighters were on the press itself (a long conveyor belt), on an internal roof above the press and on the factory roof.

Paul Scragg, Senior Station Officer at Wangaratta, praised the efforts of factory crews who held the fire until CFA brigades arrived.

"It's good to note that the company has been very cooperative with us in the past and adopted a number of our recommendations which may well have helped to limit the damage," he said.

"This type of factory by nature is a very high fire risk. There was a massive potential for loss and it was great to hear that they had production up and running by 3pm the same day.

"It was a good job done by all," said Paul. ■



SCHOOL ART ROOM LOST TO FIRE

INCIDENT: New Gisborne structure fire

DISTRICT: 14

DATE: 28 June 2011

BRIGADES: Macedon, Sunbury, Gisborne, Riddells Creek



Operations Officer Rohan Luke said the fire was contained to the art room, which adjoins an administration building and a number of classrooms.

“Crews prevented the travel of fire through the rest of the building which, given how quickly the fire took hold, was an exceptional save,” he said.

The four brigades and seven appliances brought the fire under control in just over an hour.

Acting school Principal Mr Marcus Ward said: “While it is devastating to us all to see a cherished part of our school destroyed, the scenario could have been so much worse. Fortunately, our cleaner was on site and able to raise the alarm.

“Thanks to the rapid response of CFA the extreme damage was limited to one room,” he said. ■

At around 8pm, brigades were called to a fire at New Gisborne Primary School, Station Road, where an art room was fully alight.

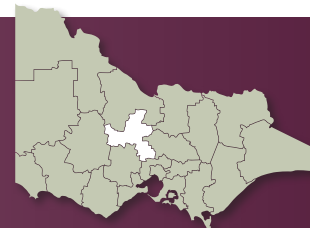
WORKSHOP GUTTED

INCIDENT: Chewton structure fire

DISTRICT: 2

DATE: 10 June 2011

BRIGADES: Chewton, Castlemaine, Campbells Creek



Three CFA brigades were called to a fire at a former Chewton petrol station and milk bar on the Pyrenees Highway.

When CFA arrived, the fire was fully involved, both businesses had been evacuated and the highway was blocked to traffic.

Operations Officer Alun Hughson said the fire had engulfed an old service station – currently being used as a mechanic’s workshop – and an adjoining milk bar.

“Both businesses were operational at the time so those inside had to be evacuated,” said Alun.

“The elderly gentleman from the workshop suffered superficial burns to his forehead and hands and was treated on scene by Ambulance Victoria.”

Alun said multiple crews attacked the fire on the inside using breathing apparatus. ■



JO WILLEN



Water CHALLENGE

STORY BLAIR DELLEMIJN

BLAIR DELLEMIJN

On a Sunday afternoon Gisborne and Sunbury brigades were paged to a reported house fire in Gisborne South. At the scene Gisborne Captain Anthony Wade requested more tankers because of difficulties sourcing water. By this stage most of the house was engulfed in flames and the roof was collapsing.

A water shuttle was set up, with tankers supplying water from a street hydrant at the end of the 200 metre driveway to a Gisborne tanker and Sunbury's pumper. The Bullengarook tanker also supplied water via relay from a dam on the property 150 metres away.

When the fire was out, overhaul operations were put in place for the rest of the afternoon and crews were at the scene blacking out well into the night. ■

INCIDENT: Gisborne South structure fire

DISTRICT: 14

DATE: 10 July 2011

BRIGADES: Gisborne, Sunbury, Bullengarook, Toolern Vale Carlshru, Diggers Rest



TEENAGERS LUCKY TO SURVIVE FIRE

INCIDENT: Mt Wallace structure fire

DISTRICT: 15

DATE: 7 July 2011

BRIGADES: Ballan, Fiskville, Morrisons, Mt Egeron, Mt Wallace



Two teenage girls were lucky to escape a fire that destroyed a Mt Wallace home that had no functioning smoke alarms.

CFA crews were called to the scene just before 11.30am and it took two hours to control the blaze. The fire was caused by an old, leaky flue belonging to a Coonara wood fire. The wood fire had been put out earlier in the morning, but it's thought that it continued to smolder up into the roof.

The two girls, who were sleeping at the time and woken by the smoke, were taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation.

Eight CFA appliances from five brigades attended the scene and four firefighters used breathing apparatus to enter the building.

"No property should be without a smoke alarm. Had this fire occurred at night time, these two girls may not have survived," said Operations Officer Gavin Hope. ■



KATH PANENHAM

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP WILDLIFE? STORY ELIZABETH FOGARTY

Over the past couple of years you may have noticed two new tabards on the fireground, around staging areas and in incident management teams – red for wildlife field operations coordinators (WFOC) and yellow for wildlife welfare officers (WVO).

These new fire roles were introduced to plan wildlife rescue operations following a bushfire (as part of fire operations and recovery) and, perhaps most importantly, to coordinate and manage the actions of civilian wildlife rescue volunteers to make sure everyone on the fireground is safe.

Wildlife rescue volunteers at fires perform a legitimate activity that is well-regarded by the community and helps the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to meet its obligations under the *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*. However, it's important that wildlife rescue is done in a structured way to ensure the wildlife volunteers, all agency staff and CFA volunteers are safe.

Wildlife rescue volunteers at fires must abide by the joint CFA-DSE document *Working with Fire Agencies at Bushfires: Protocols for Volunteers Involved in Wildlife Rescue Operations* (the Protocols). Conditions outlined in the Protocols include holding appropriate accreditation (by taking either DSE's Basic Wildfire Awareness training course or CFA's Maintain Safety at an Incident Scene course), registering attendance before deployment, not accessing the fireground without permission from the Incident Controller, and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.

To distinguish them from fire agency personnel, wildlife rescue volunteers have to wear red fireproof overalls.

The WVO and WFOC direct and manage the actions of the wildlife

volunteers to ensure they operate safely and according to the Protocols, while still achieving good outcomes for wildlife welfare. The WVO determines the priorities for wildlife rescue and develops a wildlife rescue plan. The WFOC provides the WVO with onground information to assist with planning the wildlife rescue. In addition, the WFOC works with wildlife volunteers in the staging area and on the fireground to ensure wildlife rescue is carried out safely and in line with the Protocols.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

The WVO and WFOC roles will improve the fire agencies' ability to manage the safety of everyone at a fire. We are currently looking to train more people in the roles and are keen to get any interested and available CFA members involved.

"This role is suitable for many of our members," said Operations Manager Peter Baker. "We'd like to hear from members who are prepared to be trained in these roles and who are available to assist with wildlife rescue."

Not only will you need to have a strong interest in helping injured wildlife, you will have proven experience in, and knowledge about, biodiversity and native wildlife in Victoria.

If you're interested in finding out more about these roles contact your regional IMT capability coordinator (RICC). A DSE-run two-day training course is planned for 15-16 November. Contact your RICC as soon as possible if you would like to attend. If you miss out this year, or are unable to attend the training, you can still register your interest as there will be more courses in the future. ■

Above: Louise Bonomi (Help for Wildlife), Benni the Koala, Sean Earl (DSE) and Talissa Croxford (Badger Creek brigade)



MICK BOURKE CEO

HOW YOUR FEEDBACK IS SHAPING OUR FUTURE

A key theme of feedback we've received from around the State about Creating our Future Together is to include a reference to our volunteers in our description of who we are. The Board has now adopted these words:

CFA is a volunteer and community-based fire and emergency services organisation.

This emphasises that our essential community links come from volunteers. The Volunteer Charter and legislation will also be referenced more clearly in our strategy as a result of your feedback.

Other feedback included:

- our mission 'to protect lives and property' has been well received
- our organisational structure needs to reflect more strongly the line of command from the Chief Officer to volunteer brigades. This will be reflected in ongoing structure design work
- Volunteers and Operational Training (VOT) should report to the Chief Officer via Fire and Emergency Management
- we agree that these two areas will work closely together; and also that the relationship between Business Services and Fire and Emergency Management is equally as important. Fire and Emergency Management will be the key support focus of VOT and Business Services. The final structure will also show who is responsible for the Royal Commission Implementation Program
- the role of Communities and Communication needs to be clearer
 - this area will advocate the community's needs within CFA
 - it's also where we will research and develop the best ways to assist communities to manage their risk

- Communities and Communication will rely heavily on the experience of Fire and Emergency Management, which delivers our services and works with communities every day
- leadership must be strong and visible to achieve change. The Executive and Regional Managers have recently formed the Senior Leadership team to support consistent and visible leadership.

Over the coming weeks and months we will form functional design teams, ask for feedback on the next layer of the functional structure, and develop team work processes and work flows.

How long this change process takes will depend on the level of engagement and how many issues need to be resolved along the way. I am now looking to fill the top line of the structure through executive appointments. Those executives will lead design teams to develop key functions in each of the areas under the structure. In doing that work they will engage relevant people in their areas. There will be opportunity for feedback and consultation.

Later, we will be looking to fill and confirm roles. Again, there will be opportunities for input as we engage CFA members and brief Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria and union representatives throughout the process.

Thanks for your input so far. Please continue to provide your feedback to me, your directors and leaders and also let them know your concerns. Change can be unsettling.

I value your support and look forward to continuing our work together into the future. ■

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE STORY PETER BAKER

The theme of this year's Emergency Management Conference held in mid July was 'working together better'. It was a valuable opportunity for agencies and organisations to hear from a broad range of experts.

Aimed at agency managers, operational managers, security personnel and emergency service personnel, the conference covered a range of current and evolving topics that related directly to agencies, organisations and the community working together better.

Keynote speaker Jerry Monier, from the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness in Louisiana, set the scene with a talk about strategic and tactical planning and response associated with recent and historical natural disasters, including Hurricane Katrina.

Many parallels were drawn with our own planning and response aspects, including the need to build lasting



CFA's Operations Manager Peter Baker speaking at the conference

relationships and networks across agencies and into communities to ensure an integrated approach with systems that operate together.

Topics from local speakers included the increasing use of social media in emergency management and working with emergency services in developing countries.

The conference is an annual event developed by an active and dedicated multiagency committee that ensures the conference theme and topics are relevant, timely and of interest to those attending.

The conference was an outstanding success. The range of topics provided something for everyone, numbers attending were up, we shared an enormous amount of knowledge and, importantly, a lot of business cards were swapped.

This networking and relationship-building is a positive sign for the future collective work of our emergency services, local government and supporting organisations. ■



STATE FIRE FORUM EMPHASISES COLLABORATION

Local government emergency management practitioners had the opportunity to network and exchange ideas at the Fire and Emergency Management Officers Forum in early June.

Hosted jointly by CFA and Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB) at Tabcorp Park, Melton, the third annual forum was attended by Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley.

It was an opportunity for local government emergency management practitioners to speak with experts about key fire and emergency management issues.

It also allowed CFA and MFB representatives to give guidance to 160 guests from around the State, including people from 46 municipalities, Victoria Police, Parks Victoria, private industry, Integrated Fire Management Planning, Department of Human Services and regional CFA staff.

The opening address by MFB set the underlying theme of the day. It acknowledged the importance of the collaborative efforts and shared responsibility of agencies working in emergency management.

Craig Lapsley then spoke to the group about changes to fire prevention planning as a result of the implementation of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommendations, and discussed the 'all hazards' approach and emphasised that many of the recent changes will also be useful in emergencies other than bushfires.

Presentations during the day included Parks Victoria talking about regional Integrated Fire Management Plan (IFMP), MFB on protective action decision making during chemical emergencies, Maribyrnong City Council on single incident response, a multiagency presentation on the Plenty Gorge IFMP, La Trobe City Council on local community planning, and MFB on hoarding and performance-based design. ■

CFA WORKS WITH HACKERS

Hackers gathered in Melbourne in early June to work on technological solutions for helping communities prepare and respond to disasters.

The Random Hacks of Kindness (or RHoK, pronounced rock) workshop was one of more than a dozen held in cities across the world including Seattle, Nairobi, Sao Paulo and Bangalore. RHoK brings together software programmers to tackle problems such as disaster relief and climate change.

Hackers at the Melbourne event considered natural disasters, such as bushfire, flood and earthquakes to see how modern technology could help communities prepare, survive and recover.

CFA Digital Media Manager Martin Anderson joined other agency and government representatives at the event to provide emergency service advice to the hackers.

One of the projects the programmers worked on was the Bushfire Connect website (www.bushfireconnect.org), a community initiative aimed at harnessing the power of online information and social media during bushfires.

Keren Flavell from Bushfire Connect said the event was valuable in developing the site. "We had eight people hacking away at map functionality, mobile moderator tools and the user interface," she said.

The event generated many useful ideas that will be developed over the coming months. ■

EUAN FERGUSON CHIEF OFFICER

On 15 August, Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley released the report of the Review into the Tostaree Fire in February 2011.

Lessons must be learned, and improvements made, following every fire. With that view in mind, I welcome the release of the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC) *Review of the Tostaree Fire*. The review into that February 2011 incident – the largest of the season – will be of interest to many CFA members and features a number of key findings and recommendations.

Importantly, it also contains recognition of the good work done by emergency service people in dealing with this difficult, fast-moving fire. The report says:

“The personnel involved at all levels of the incident control structure performed well under the conditions they faced and with the resources they had. They worked within the new arrangements and utilised the new information and warning systems.”

The fact that there was no loss of human life and limited asset loss was also a major positive that should not be overlooked. While this review was never designed to be a finger-pointing exercise, it does contain a number of observations on where and how things need to be done better. Significantly, many CFA people willingly took part in this review and their comments helped shape the final result and will drive further improvements.

Coinciding with the release of the report was the release of the Fire Services Commissioner’s (FSC) action plan that directly addresses the 29 key findings and recommendations and the work required as a result of the review. This FSC plan says the majority of the recommendations will be implemented before the next fire season. This will

give members comfort that work has been underway since the February fires to keep improving in key areas, and there is now a detailed timeline and set accountability to do just that.

While I encourage you to read the Tostaree review, I want to highlight some key areas identified for improvement:

- Interoperability between agencies – including improving command and control procedures, information flow and resources
- One Source One Message (OSOM), Emergency Alert, Standard Emergency Warning Signal – including integrating them better and further improving timely, relevant and tailored messaging
- Community preparedness – including developing a way to measure how prepared communities are
- Vegetation management – including improving legislation and developing risk-based standards for fire-breaks and asset protection.

A power of work has already been done by the emergency service organisations to improve in the above areas but, when tested under pressure during a fast-moving fire in February, OESC found that there is still more work to be done. Some areas identified for improvements were being tested under real-life fire conditions for the first time since being developed, and we have learned greatly from that.

As we digest this review and move towards another fire season, I would like to thank you for your dedication to CFA and encourage you to remain positive and focused on the job ahead of protecting lives and property. ■



FIRIES REVEAL NEW STATION WEAR

In a few months, career firefighters will step out in new station wear designed for general use around the stations and to wear under their personal protective clothing at structural incidents.

The new station wear means firefighters will move away from the combined work wear and dress uniform that they’ve used for many years. All 600 career firefighters will receive the new clothing before the end of the year.

Chief Officer Euan Ferguson said it’s desirable that the concept of ‘station’ or ‘field’ wear be extended to CFA’s field and volunteer members.

“The intent is to have a uniform ensemble that is more functional, practical and hard wearing than the current uniform,” Euan said. “It’s important that we have, to the greatest degree possible, commonality in uniform appearance.”

The clothing fabrics are better suited to the work roles of firefighters – they are durable, offer an inherent flame retardant performance, and maintain a professional appearance.

Two specifications have been agreed between CFA and the United Firefighters Union – an interim Metropolitan Fire and Emergencies Board specification and a CFA specification. Both specifications will be issued to CFA career firefighters according to agreed quantities and will be reviewed in February 2012. ■

Questions about the station wear can be emailed to stationwear@cfa.vic.gov.au





HOW RITCHIES BENEFITS CFA

Since Ritchies started its community benefits program in 1993, more than \$2 million has been donated to CFA. The program has benefited many CFA members and brigades, helping brigades buy equipment and improve member training.

Over the past six months, Ritchies store managers have been busy presenting plaques to many of our CFA brigades to commemorate over 18 years of this important partnership.

Below is a list of some of the brigades that have received significant funds from the program:

- **Balnarring brigade:** \$117,000 to help buy a 2.4C tanker, replacing the brigade's ageing 2.4D tanker.
- **Somers brigade:** \$27,000 to help buy specialist gas support service as well as other salvage equipment for cleaning up after structure fires.
- **Clematis brigade:** \$47,000 to help buy additional equipment and two brigade-owned vehicles.
- **Shoreham brigade:** \$20,400 to maintain its vehicles and equipment.
- **Beechworth brigade:** \$14,000 to help buy a trailer equipped with a 500-litre water tank and a 20-metre length hose on a reel and pump and a staging hut.
- **Yarra Glen brigade:** \$53,000 to buy a new 2.4C tanker, renovate the fire station and buy T-shirts and helmet torches for members.
- **Edithvale brigade:** \$83,400 towards its appliances and to buy a brigade-owned car, renovate station facilities including a room to store turnout gear, carry out vital building works and maintenance and buy other necessary vital emergency management equipment. ■

Above: Balnarring Brigade Captain Kevin Berry presents a plaque to Ritchies CEO Fred Harrison

Q&A FIRE INVESTIGATOR

INTERVIEW AMY SCHILDBERGER



Colin Booth is a volunteer fire investigator with District 8.

Q. Why did you become a fire investigator?

A. I did a two-day course then one day a rostered duty officer asked me if I fancied being a fire investigator. I thought it sounded interesting so I started in 1996.

Q. What training do you need for the job?

A. There's a two-week course at Fiskville then you spend two weeks with Victoria Police forensic science. Then there's ongoing training every few months with the Victorian Fire Investigation Association.

Q. Which scenes need a fire investigator?

A. Any fire where the brigade can't determine the cause of the fire.

Q. How do you determine the cause of a fire?

A. First, we need to find where it started. We look around the outside of the building, at the windows – any smoke stains outside the windows, or any broken windows. Then we go inside the building and go to the least burned area first, then the most burned, looking for smoke stains, burn patterns and charring. When we find the area that's been burning the most or the longest, we can usually then get a point of origin. Once we find that, we look around to see what could have started it.

Q. How often are you unable to find a cause?

A. About half the time we find a cause. A lot of the time you can find the spot where it's been burning the longest but you can't find anything that's electrical so you can't discover the cause. A lot of the time it's just put down to what's called a 'viable material' which is, for example, a carpet or clothes.

Q. Did you have much involvement on Black Saturday?

A. Yes, I went out with a team from District 8 to Marysville. We were mainly working on victim recovery.

Q. You must be dedicated to the job, especially as you're a volunteer. Do you get satisfaction from being a fire investigator?

A. I love it! I could talk about it all day. I even visit brigades to give fire awareness talks.

Q. What would you say to people who are considering becoming a fire investigator?

A. Do it! It's such a fascinating job and every fire is different. You're always learning and discovering new things.

MACCLESFIELD VOLUNTEER GETS 000 AWARD



SHARON MERRITT

Macclesfield brigade volunteer Paul Rothville was rewarded for his outstanding contribution to the emergency services and the community by receiving the Rotary '000' Award in early June.

The award recognises not only people who are good at their 000 jobs, but also contribute to the community. Paul has been an active member of the brigade for the past eight years.

He's attended many local fires and incidents including the Emerald Golf Course fire on Black Saturday and the more recent Stewart Road fire, as well as extended duty on many campaign fires and strike teams, including Kinglake and more recently the Black Saturday fires.

Within the fire brigade, Paul has also been responsible for several roles including the occupational health and safety facilitator, a representative for Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria and a brigade procurement facilitator where he worked tirelessly to secure donations for essential training equipment and other materials valued at \$4,000.

As well as being a firefighter in the brigade, Paul's contribution to the regular tasks of attending meetings and administrative work have made a significant difference to the brigade's morale, knowledge and skills. ■

CFA volunteers rewarded

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS FOR CFA

Three CFA members were recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

VFBV District 9 President Bill Rodda and CFA Board member Michael Tudball both received the Australian Fire Services Medal (AFSM). The medal recognises distinguished service by members of Australian fire services.

Bill has given exemplary service to CFA since joining the Korumburra Fire Brigade in 1974. His outstanding dedication and commitment are exemplified by his contribution to the safety and welfare of the community, and by his leadership and support of the volunteer culture in general through his involvement as the leader of the Korumburra brigade over a considerable period of time.

He also actively represented volunteers at the State level as a member of the governing body of the (then) Victorian Urban Fire Brigades Association, now known as Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria.

Michael Tudball's contribution to CFA has been unique and exemplary at all levels. His service includes leadership roles in Bacchus Marsh Fire Brigade and the Bacchus Marsh Group, and he has been heavily involved in all aspects of CFA as a volunteer representing his brigade and group on numerous committees.

He has also contributed significantly to the development of major organisational improvements and initiatives within CFA and is widely known and respected throughout Victoria for his contribution.

Also honoured was CFA veteran Kevin Humphrey, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the general division for services to the community of Cressy.

Kevin served as a captain of the Cressy Rural Fire Brigade, as well as a committee member for countless other community projects.

In the Australian honours system, appointments to the Order of Australia confer the highest recognition for outstanding achievement and service. ■



BLAIR DELLEMIN

Left: Michael Tudball was awarded the Australian Fire Services Medal

CFA NATIONAL MEDAL FOR SHARON

PHIL SPENCER



Macclesfield brigade Captain Sharon Merritt was surprised at the annual presentation night in early July, when she was awarded the CFA National Medal. The medal recognises prolonged exposure to hazard while serving the community, and is awarded to operational members of agencies such as ambulance, correctional, emergency, fire and police forces, and voluntary organisations such as lifesaving and search and rescue groups.

"I am very embarrassed but honoured to receive this award," Sharon said. "When I saw my family, close friends and Tunde Meikle (CFA board member) I thought, 'Oh oh, what's going on?'"

"I had planned for a quiet, straightforward night but did not expect this."

Sharon joined Macclesfield brigade in 1996 and became Captain in 2003. She's fought local fires and led crews in strike teams through many incidents including the Ferny creek fires, Longford gas explosion, Sydney fires, the Black Saturday fires and Shepparton floods. Sharon is also a fire investigator and determines the causes of many bushfires, structure and vehicle fires. She also carries out training and assessment for other brigades.

Recently, she helped the brigade to get a new ultralight tanker that allows firefighters without truck licences to turn out quickly to incidents. She also worked tirelessly to get a new fire station built on the current site. ■

for their commitment

YOUNG CFA VOLUNTEER A LIFESAVER

CFA volunteer firefighter Josh Ailey is no stranger to emergencies. But when an emergency in March involved performing lifesaving CPR on his grandfather, the pressure felt a whole lot different to the 20-year-old Taylors Lakes man. And for his lifesaving efforts, Josh was presented with a Bystander Commendation Award from Ambulance Victoria in early June.

Josh's grandfather, Gary Miewand, suddenly collapsed with a

heart attack. "I was just talking to him and basically it was like he'd just fallen asleep. At first I thought he was joking and then all of a sudden he started shaking violently," said Josh.

"I didn't really have time to think too much. I yelled out to my grandmother to call 000 and then started the CPR."

Paramedic Niki Petropoulos, who nominated Josh for the award, praised his great work. "He did such a great job and I remember being at the job and really hoping that it all worked out for them," she said.

"They were so calm and helpful, exactly the type of bystanders you want at a cardiac arrest."

Gary was placed into an induced coma by paramedics and was taken to Royal Melbourne Hospital, where he remained in a coma for three days. After only eight days he was discharged, largely due to Josh's intervention.

But despite the Ambulance Victoria award, and the immense appreciation from his grandfather and family, Josh doesn't see himself as a hero.

"It's like volunteering. You do it because you want to help and you want to make a difference. I hope this raises awareness for others about how important it is to know CPR," Josh said.

Josh has been volunteering with the Noorat and District Fire Brigade in Victoria's south-west for about four years and has recently moved to Taylors Lakes, where he's looking for another brigade to join.

"I love volunteering for CFA. It has always been something I've wanted to do and hopefully one day I can become a full-time firefighter." ■



AMBULANCE VICTORIA

Left: Josh Ailey (left), paramedic Niki Petropoulos and Gary Miewand

YOU'VE EARNED IT

Emergency Memberlink is a key recognition program that thanks members for their significant contribution and dedication to CFA and creating safer communities.

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

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

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

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- **Discount Vouchers** – time limited, special offers updated regularly. Members can download these vouchers from the Memberlink website or call the Memberlink Team.

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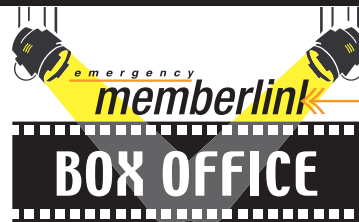
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SIMON WOOD

Above: Wonga Park's new Big Fill may not have been built without community support

SPECIALIST BIG FILL JOINS WONGA PARK

STORY WENDY CORMACK

Wonga Park brigade was presented with its new Big Fill in mid June when Evelyn MP Christine Fyffe officially handed over the keys to Wonga Park Captain Kingsley Allen.

Kingsley spoke about the roles Big Fills have played in incidents in the region, including the February 2009 bushfires and, earlier this year, the fire that damaged golfer Aaron Baddeley's parent's home.

The concept of this vital piece of equipment began in 2005 and it may never have been built without the generous support of the local community. "To the Wonga Park brigade members and their families I thank you for your support," Kingsley said.

The Big Fill has four wheel drive and a cab that fits seven firefighters. As it approaches an incident, an inbuilt message display board for road safety can be turned on. It also has LED scene lighting, an overhead lighting mast and generator, plus a hot water drink dispenser to help crews through those cold nights.

The main pump is a Fox 3 Rosenbauer, which pumps 2,300 litres a minute and is capable of filling four tankers simultaneously. Other additions are two portable, high volume Quickfills that deliver 1,500 litres a minute, bulk unleaded fuel for filling Quickfills on the fireground, and a collar tank suitable for filling aircraft. ■

FOOD PARCEL DRIVES

STORY BILL WATSON AND GRAHAM CRICHTON

Bayswater brigade members have been strong supporters of relief work over many years, and in early June they visited Bayswater West Primary School (shown right) to see how they were progressing with the food parcel drive for flood-affected northern Victoria.

The children were thrilled by the local brigade's visit, and enjoyed displaying the contributions being made by their community for the appeal.

Also in June, Ferntree Gully brigade donated \$700 worth of food, made up into hampers, to northern Victoria. The brigade also sent \$700 to the Queensland flood fund for volunteer firefighters. These funds were raised by rattling tins at the Knox torchlight parade.

All donations are combined into food parcels in District 13 and delivered directly to households in need using the fire brigades' peer support network in Northern Victoria. If your brigade would like to help the Flood Food Parcel Drive, please contact VFBV D13 Vice President Bill Watson on 0432 585 315. ■



DAVE TANCY

IN BRIEF

MAXIMUM SERVICE

At Portland brigade's annual dinner at the end of June, Max Grace was presented with a 50-year service medal. He also received recognition for being Portland's Santa in the Street for 38 years.



DAYLESFORD'S SESQUICENTENARY

STORY DARREN GREVIS-JAMES

April 1861 was a momentous year in Australia. Australian astronomer John Tebbutt discovered the 'Great Comet of 1861', a cricket team set sail from England for the first tour of Australia, and the inaugural Melbourne Cup was won by Archer at Flemington.

Victoria was still riding the wave of the gold rush and Daylesford was one of its most prosperous towns. One night in early 1861, the Freemasons Hotel burned down. No one could save it from destruction. Shortly after, the police magistrate and other community minded citizens decided Daylesford needed a fire brigade.

Within a few months all arrangements were made to form a brigade, and on 5 April 1861 a captain and lieutenants were elected.

At 150 years, Daylesford Fire Brigade is among the 10 oldest in regional Victoria. Its rich history has been captured in a book by Ian Morrison, who's been a member of the brigade for 36 years.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

An advert was placed in the local papers calling for other volunteers to join the new brigade. "Some 30 townsfolk put up their hand to join and that really signalled the start of the brigade," says Ian.

Like most brigades of that era, Daylesford's equipment was basic. "It consisted of five canvas buckets, two axes, two tomahawks, a grappling iron, and a long pole with a hook on the end," says Ian.

Ian discovered that the local council paid for the equipment. "In fact, about £200 was raised to start the brigade and a block of land was obtained to erect an engine house."

In that era, fire brigade vehicles were rudimentary. "The brigade's first vehicle was a hand reel that was bought from Williamstown for £100 and when it came time to buy the first hand pump, quotations were sought from as far away as America," says Ian.

One hundred and fifty years later Daylesford remains a renowned CFA fire brigade.

DON'S MEMORIES

Don Anderson is the 28th and former Captain of Daylesford brigade. He led the brigade for almost 25 years and continues to run a car repair business in the town.

He remembers the first serious bushfire he attended, which was in summer 1969. A fire started around Campbell's Creek and swept through to Mount Franklin. "We were in the yard of a house that was under threat and suddenly the fire just swept over the top of us. We all lay under the truck, there were five of us including my father on the old inter tanker," Don says. "But we all managed to survive unharmed. I think we saved the house but lost some sheds."

In 1986, Don witnessed the introduction of aerial firefighting in the district. "Campers lit a fire and it got away at the twin bridges, jumped a creek and crossed the Midland Highway." Don recalls that it was difficult terrain. "I remember it was the first time we had helicopters overhead. They were sent from the National Safety Council."

More recently, at Hepburn Springs fire gutted the Bellinzona Guest House in 2003 causing \$4.5 million damage. And Daylesford was heavily involved in the 2009 Muskvale fires that burned more than 2,500 hectares of land and destroyed part of the Hepburn Tourist Railway.

Today, Daylesford Fire Brigade runs a fleet of four firefighting vehicles and operates a road accident rescue unit. "We average about 90 jobs a year," Don says. "We've had a decrease in fires but a surge in call-outs to motor vehicle accidents in recent years."

And today's brigade members maintain the passion of the pioneers. "It's the people that make the success and history of the brigade. Today our volunteer members continue to serve the community with the same commitment to fire and emergency service as those founding members of the brigade did in 1861." ■

Above left: The latest gear alongside a mid 20th century uniform

Above top right: Don Anderson, captain of Daylesford brigade for 25 years

Above bottom right: Daylesford's mid 19th century fire wagon

IN BRIEF

END OF A PEER

Alan Macqueen is retiring from CFA's Peer Support Program after 16 years of valued commitment. In recognition of his service to the program, fellow peer Rob Auchterlonie presented Alan with an Appreciation Certificate from CFA. Alan will continue as a volunteer with Yanakie brigade, where he has served for more than 30 years.



MANDURANG GETS EXTENSION

STORY SHARON MOLONEY

At the beginning of June Mandurang brigade celebrated the opening of its station and refurbishment.

The brigade used its initiative and raised the funds to add a major addition to its building that extends the existing station and provides a new training and meeting room, and additional storage for equipment. The site was also improved with new drainage, paving and landscaping.

Flash flooding affected the fire station five years ago and this prompted the brigade to get community support to build the new station addition.

A commemorative plaque was unveiled by Loddon Mallee Regional Manager Pat O'Brien and certificates of appreciation were presented by District 2 Operations Manager Mark Gilmore and Mandurang Captain Graeme Pearce to local businesses to acknowledge their contribution.

This project helped the brigade win a Loddon Mallee Region Initiative Award. The certificate and \$1,000 were presented to a delighted Graeme. ■

IN BRIEF

FORTY YEARS OF DEDICATION

After 10 years as group officer of the Whittlesea/Diamond Valley Group, Rod Holland is stepping down.

When describing Rod, phrases such as 'a true gentleman' and 'a quiet achiever' spring to the mind of North West Metro Regional Manager Greg Esnouf.

Lindsay McHugh, the new group officer, said: 'There are many people in District 14 who can attest to Rod's outstanding character and his service to CFA for over 40 years. He has been a great leader.'

30 YEARS WITH SWIFTS CREEK

STORY KAYE RICHARDS

At the Swifts Creek brigade annual meeting in early June, Peter Sandy was recognised for his contribution to CFA. He received a service medal for his 30 years with Swifts Creek.

For the past 22 years, Peter has been captain of the brigade. He decided to stand down this year though he'll continue to be active in the brigade. In recent years, he's been elected group officer for the four brigades in the Omeo Region.

The medal was presented to Peter by long-time friend Mark Reid, former District 11 operations manager and now Gippsland regional manager.

"Pete is an excellent CFA member, officer, leader and bushman. He's practical, has common sense, is down to earth and he has a good understanding of fire," said Mark.

Peter's family is also involved in CFA and firefighting. Wife Robyn is a brigade member, daughter Claire works at CFA headquarters in Melbourne and son Ben is a brigade member and a project firefighter with the Department of Sustainability and Environment. ■



TIM ROTHMAN



Above: Maryborough's street parade, with Captain Darryl Wagstaff

MARYBOROUGH HITS 150

STORY STEPHEN BRAUNTON

A torchlight parade in late June featuring 13 brigades, 20 fire appliances and three bands kicked off the celebrations for Maryborough brigade's 150th anniversary.

Past and present members gathered at the Central Goldfields Art Gallery, as it was the brigade's original fire station from 1861 to 1982.

There were 190 guests at the anniversary dinner including Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley, Chief Officer Euan Ferguson,

Loddon Mallee Regional Manager Pat O'Brien, VFBV President Hans van Hamond, Joe Helper MP and Councillor Chris Meddows-Taylor, mayor of Central Goldfields Shire.

An anniversary cake was cut by Euan and Maryborough Captain Darryl Wagstaff using the 123-year-old trowel used to lay the foundation stone of the brigade's bell tower built in 1888.

The highlight of the evening was the rousing rendition of the Maryborough Fire Brigade song dating back to 1862. ■

SEBASTOPOL VALUES COMPASSION

Sebastopol brigade established its core values after some of its members attended a Fireline Leadership course.

"It was an idea inspired by the course," said Lieutenant Bill Cook. "We asked the Fireline course instructor, Jamie Mackenzie, to help us establish what was really important to us. Writing the values down gave a greater awareness of how we work together.

"The process of working the values out as a group showed us that we respected each other's thoughts and were able to listen. It was a true collaboration."

Sebastopol's values are: tradition, commitment, compassion, integrity, courage, community and family.



BILL COOK

"Compassion is an important value for us. It's about a feeling for the people we're dealing with – both the public and fellow brigade members – and what they're going through. You don't just go into an incident, boots and all, and squirt water."

The brigade has printed its values on T-shirts and displays them proudly on a banner (see photo).

"We don't have to keep reinforcing that they're there," continued Bill. "Now it's just part of the way we operate."

"Recently two members looked like losing their jobs when their factory closed. Numerous members contacted them with messages of support. It let them know 'we're thinking of you and is there anything we can do?'" ■



SHEPPARTON NEWS

Rescue at SHEPPARTON

STORY KAYLA MASKELL

“I FOUND THE EXERCISE PUT ME UNDER A LOT OF STRESS”

A group of CFA volunteers from across the Hume region never thought they'd find themselves in Central America for two weekends, but that was the scenario put to volunteers doing the Fireline Leadership Program at Shepparton in late June.

Run by US-based Mission Centered Solutions, Fireline Leadership promotes the development of skills, behaviours and cultural attitudes that enable first-response leaders to make good command decisions, communicate effectively and prepare cohesive teams.

Volunteers were faced with a number of challenges and difficult circumstances in responding to emergency situations and in leading their teams.

The 40-hour program strikes a balance between theory and practical training, and this year there will be 20 courses run statewide between CFA, Department of Substantiality and Environment, Victoria Police, State Emergency Service and Department of Human Services.

Coordinator of courses in the Hume region CFA Senior Instructor Andrew Payne-Croston said the skills learned by program participants were invaluable.

“It is called Fireline Leadership, but the skills learned can translate into various aspects of a CFA volunteer’s life,” he said.

“Someone told me the skills they developed through Fireline Leadership have helped them in their job, with their wife and family and in their football club – it gives people the tools to become effective leaders in their brigades and in other aspects of their lives.”

Kelvin View brigade volunteer Andrew Mackrell said taking part in the night exercise had already shown its benefits.

“It pushes you right outside your comfort zone. It allows you to work with a variety of people from across the region and helps you appreciate the importance of different

roles that people are required to perform in an emergency,” he said.

Toby Dawson, a volunteer with Euroa Fire Brigade, said the exercise provided some healthy stress that gave him a good insight into the ‘real thing’.

“I found the exercise put me under a lot of stress. It was healthy stress and gave me an opportunity to experience that pressure as you would in a real emergency,” he said.

Last year a new leadership course called VFBV Darley Future Leaders Scholarship program was launched, and it produced its first volunteer firefighter graduates in June 2011. This program is the result of a partnership between Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, international racehorse breeding organisation Darley, the Victorian Racing Club, and Chisholm Institute of TAFE.

VFBV Chief Executive Officer Andrew Ford said the scholarship program will have a positive impact on many communities. “We intend to take it into the future with hundreds to be trained over the coming years, influencing a generation of Victorians,” said Andrew.

Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley praised the project and VFBV’s work on behalf of volunteers. He said he had seen the program grow from an idea four years ago into something that is building the skills and experience base for volunteers across a range of ages. ■

To find out more about the Fireline Leadership Program, email j.mackenzie@cfa.vic.gov.au or a.paynecroston@cfa.vic.au.

To find out about the Future Leaders Scholarship, see VFBV’s website: www.vfbv.com.au.



MID MURRAY HOSES DOWN STORY JOEL DAVEY

On a chilly late June morning in the Mallee, members of the Mid Murray Group put their pumping skills to the test at the Swan Hill Abattoir.

Second Lieutenant Kelvin Mathews from Swan Hill brigade ran the exercise with help from Mid Murray Group officers.

Group Officer Noel Harvey was delighted with the outcome of the training. "The exercise was very successful," he said.

"We now know we have enough pumping capacity in the area to run the entire fire suppression system if the onsite pumps fail."

Noel said brigades were well represented, with around 60 firefighters from 11 brigades doing the training, including Koraleigh from NSW.

By lunchtime members had experienced many aspects of pumping and hose handling techniques and came away from the day with a sense of achievement. ■

COMMAND AND CONTROL IN D11 STORY PETER WHITE

PETER WHITE

Officers in the Tambo Fire Brigades Group in District 11 took part in a tactical exercise without troops (TEWT) in late June.

Group Officer John Upton explained that the tactical exercise was to provide an opportunity for local brigade officers to come together and work through a scenario that presented all the complexities of a fast spreading, impacting fire.

The scenario generated challenging problems and issues that were discussed by brigade representatives.

"Local knowledge provided insight for the newer officers of brigades and highlighted the complexity of decision making," said John.

The needs of the brigades and support required depend on the scale of the incident. This scenario became more complex in terms of decision making and support required by brigades when escalating resources.

Brigades' opinions contributed to a greater understanding of local control arrangements and helped to define the role the group could perform, while supporting the brigades during an emergency.

The leadership of the group was evident in the way the scenario was facilitated and presented on the night, with individuals giving their time, skills and knowledge to make sure the training flowed smoothly.

The group presented a spreadsheet to the brigades for hot day preplanning. This spreadsheet allows early information to flow from the ground to the group/divisional command and then to the incident control centre.



Operations Manager Bryan Russell acknowledged the good work and planning put into this table-top exercise and the outcomes that were gained from it. He expressed his gratitude for the constructive input to refine the command and control processes and enjoyed being part of this group exercise.

"The understanding gained of the local command and control arrangements will benefit all volunteers and our brigades," Bryan said. ■

IN BRIEF

INTERAGENCY TRAINING AT COBRAM

Personnel from CFA, VicPol and Ambulance Victoria joined forces in May for a multiagency training day in Cobram, hosted by Tocumwal and District Search and Rescue Squad. Crews tackled simulated tractor rollovers, car accidents and other scenarios, giving participants the opportunity to try out Tocumwal SRS equipment – hydraulic spreaders, rams shears and glass handling equipment.



Agencies JOIN FORCES

STORY MELISSA MEUGLITZ

Funding from the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner was put to good use as crews from CFA, SES, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, Department of Human Services and Red Cross took part in a training exercise in mid June.

The scenario, which involved an explosion and building collapse with possible trapped people, was set up at the McKinnon Quarry in Warrnambool. Crews from CFA and SES worked together to implement processes from the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System, USAR Category 1, and confined space rescue to achieve a successful outcome.

“The exercise gave us an opportunity to test the municipal emergency response plan and determine any resource and training needs for the future,” said Warrnambool brigade Officer in Charge Henry Barton.

The District Incident Control Centre at Warrnambool was manned to a Readiness Level C for the exercise. ■

LENNIE PICKETT, WARRNAMBOOL STANDARD

SHIPPING CONTAINERS AID TRAINING

The Gippsland Fire Training Complex in Cowwarr Road, West Sale, has undergone major improvements, including new concrete surfacing and a new multistorey training structure.

“We got the two-storey structure as a result of recent recruit training exercises conducted here by the MFB, and it’s allowing our volunteers to do hose work and ladder drills across both levels,” said Practical Area Supervisor Brian Smith.

“It’s built from shipping containers and we’d like to clad it eventually and connect it to the nearby fire attack building so it can be filled with smoke and used for search and rescue training,” said Brian.

The training complex is at a former World War Two aircraft training base that stored around 280 planes. While the aircraft hangers come in handy for exercises, a lot of the concrete is being replaced after it cracked under the weight of firetrucks.

Volunteers from the Mallacoota, Cann River, Newmerella and Goongerah brigades spent a weekend in June at the training complex to carry out low structure training and exercises with cars, gas cylinders and various extinguishers.

“The facility was set up and managed well – it was very thorough. We had the opportunity to train with lots of smoke, flames and simulated explosions,” said Mallacoota brigade’s Fourth Lieutenant Lyn Harwood. ■

COBRAM COURIER



EVAN BOUCHER

BUSHFIRE TRAINING FOR COBRAM STUDENTS

CFA brigades from around Cobram are giving Year 10 students an unusual experience.

Cobram Secondary College students began training in June and continue for 15 weeks as part of the CFA Advance Program. Volunteers from Cobram, Yarroweyah, Strathmerton, Boosey Creek, Muckatah and Katamatite brigades are delivering the weekly sessions, which work towards a bushfire Minimum Skills qualification.

Cobram Secondary College regularly runs community service and leadership programs for its Year 10 students, but this is the first time CFA has been involved.

John Parnell, brigade administration support officer for Moira Catchment, said this was a great recruitment opportunity for CFA and students had already shown a lot of interest.

Cobram student Catherine Nicosia (who also has a family

connection to CFA with her father a recent Captain of Muckatah) said that if CFA hadn't run this program at the school, students wouldn't think to get involved.

"No one would have the courage to go to a meeting or follow it up themselves. It's good that they are doing this in schools and I think they should do it more," she said.

John said the students had shown real maturity for their age.

"I'm looking forward to seeing them grow in both skills and confidence before their graduation in October," he said. "It's also great to have female students making up more than half the group."

After graduation, any student who decides to join CFA can become a fully fledged member with bushfire qualifications by completing a six-month introductory period mentored by a senior member. ■

Above Left: Shenae Bowyer and Darcy McCormack with Strathmerton brigade Captain Evan Boucher

Above Right: Catherine Nicosia and Mat Hodge

OH&S DAY FOR DISTRICT 13 STORY WENDY CORMACK

The serious business of occupational health and safety was the focus at Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) at the end of June, when all staff participated in an emergency preparedness and response skills maintenance day. But a lot of fun was also thrown in for good measure.

While newer members of the EMR family were given a presentation about how to report an incident, how to use communication radios and maintain safety, the 'old hands' checked fleet vehicles.

We learned from this that we sometimes take our safety for granted – basic vehicle necessities were out of date or missing and cars weren't correctly maintained. OH&S Systems Officer Sam Ryan said: "These outcomes will be fed back to the OH&S committee to develop and implement strategies to ensure the safety of the EMR family".

The day continued with staff going to the oval to practise using a fire extinguisher with instructors Richard Cromb, Mark Barrile and Simon Hrabe.

Acting EMR Manager David Baker said it was a fantastic day, and he acknowledged the support and hard work of the training department, the operations officers, Community Safety and the Hoddles Creek brigade. ■



Left: Instructor Simon Hrabe and Meredith Colombani

WENDY CORMACK

SPREADING the word

These volunteers love to get the fire safety message into the community

STORY SONIA MACLEAN



APRIL'S JUGGLING ACT

It wasn't until the birth of her third child that April Himmelreich decided to take a break from training and turning out, but she was never going to let a small thing like three kids under five stop her from being a champion of community safety.

April, a volunteer of 14 years with Basin brigade, said her days often see her with a phone in one hand and babies in the other, as she is a contact point for anyone from the local council to schools. She's even thinking about submitting a regular column to the local newspaper.

"There's always something in the works. At the moment I'm campaigning with the local councillor to get more information boards in our community.

"Often I talk with someone in an office and it becomes clear that they have forgotten I'm a volunteer. Then they hear kids make a noise. So I don't shy away from promoting the fact that we do it all in our own time."

April said it's great she can use her own social networks – the local shopping strip, her kids' playgroups and kinder – to

contribute her knowledge as a firefighter.

"I want to be a point of reference for those places, as well as others in our community, when people have questions about fire safety and fire prevention," she said.

Being a parent has made her acutely aware of how challenging it is to keep good routines in place while juggling children and household tasks.



"Parents with young children get tired and when you get tired you lose concentration. Little safety tips like setting an egg timer can save lives," April said.

As a brigade community relations officer, she's also keen to increase awareness of CFA's programs at the fire station, because she doesn't like to see firefighters stuck for words when a local asks them for advice.

"CFA is about prevention and suppression, and I think it's great if I can contribute to both aspects, especially while I can't do an operational role," said April. ■

Above: Instead of fighting fires, April Himmelreich is now educating her community about fire prevention

Below: April often gives fire safety lessons to school children

ELLEN'S KNACK FOR COMMUNICATION

Sometimes all it takes to get people worked up about fire safety is to put them in a room together and ask the right questions.

This is the experience of Ellen White, whose time working on a Loddon Mallee project – called Fire Ready Rural Women – inspired her to volunteer with Dumosa brigade.

“My role on the project was simply to sit back and start a discussion,” said Ellen, who’s a local councillor.

“But what surprised me was how quickly people got passionate about it. Once they got going, people were pretty soon turning to each other and asking ‘so why don’t we have a plan?’”

Ellen has only recently completed her Minimum Skills at Dumosa, but has a clear picture of the kind of difference she feels she is able to make as a brigade member.

“Once I’ve been a volunteer for a bit longer, I want to get out there to help people understand their risk.

“In the back of their mind people up here in the Mallee know that they should have a fire plan, but it doesn’t happen as often as it should.”

Ellen strongly believes in the importance of recruiting women.

“Fires up here tend to happen in late spring, early summer, and at that time farmers are out in the paddocks or out harvesting. If there were more women volunteers during harvest, they would be the ones to galvanise vehicles and crews.

“But it’s also about educating. Apart from having people on the back of firetrucks it’s so important to have people with the knack for communication and the enthusiasm for getting their communities on board.

“Often, women are the ones who can bring those skills to the table – or the fire station as it may be,” said Ellen. ■



A SOFT SPOT FOR KIDS

Robyn Gerrard and her husband David can only be described as brigade stalwarts. The couple, who are farmers, have been with Beaufort brigade for more than 20 years.

Robyn devotes many hours of her free time to promoting fire safety in the community, but emphasises that her motivation comes more from a genuine desire to educate than personal experience fighting fire.

Robyn works with people from all walks of life, from the local kindergarten to senior citizens and community groups. And, like many, she admits to having a soft spot for kids.

“The kids are the ones we believe we can get the messages through to,” she said. “We’ve been thrilled to have parents tell us that they are being hounded by their kids after one of our sessions – this is the best feedback we can get!”

“It is frustrating at times but all it takes is a breakthrough with one or two individuals and it’s all worth it.”

Robyn says that the key to working with older people is to give them the right encouragement rather than telling them what to do. For example, telling people to have a fire blanket isn’t enough. “We encourage people to place them in their kitchens and practise using them.”

“I believe that helping the community become more aware of its own responsibilities with regard to fire safety and giving people the tools to do so is one of the most rewarding roles that you can do in CFA,” concluded Robyn. ■



COURTESY BEAUFORT PRIMARY SCHOOL



MICHAEL CAWTHON

Left: Deb with her Epping colleagues

DEB'S HAT IS IN THE RING

Deb Azzopardi is a grandmother of seven, a fully operational volunteer with Epping brigade and a qualified trainer and assessor.

Deb says that people who aren’t volunteers don’t always understand what drives people like her to spend so much time out and about.

As well as doing 30 turnouts a month, she leads the community education team at Epping brigade and has a genuine passion for educating people about fire safety.

It was her grandchildren that first sparked Deb’s interest in fire safety. “In the course of educating them about fire I realised just how little they knew. I asked them what they did at school and the answer was basically ‘nothing’. So I decided to do something about it.”

In June, Epping’s Community Education team gave a presentation to more than 300 primary students. “If we only hit home to one kid, then we’ve done our job,” she said.

“I used to be a typical suburban mum. Maybe now that I’ve got time to think about fire safety, it makes me want to get out there.”

As well as working with primary kids, Deb gives talks in the community and contributes to the local high school’s Duke of Edinburgh program.

“If there’s an opportunity to educate people then my hat is in the ring. I steer the ship but I’m lucky to have a great team behind me.” ■



TEACHING ON THE MOVE STORY TOM CONDON

Above: Tom Condon with children from Whitfield Primary School

Locking up 4,000km on the highways and back roads of Victoria's fabulous High Country, I visited 43 schools in the Mobile Education Unit (MEU) between April and June.

With my wife Sandra, I started in Walwa, way out on the Victoria/ NSW border at the start of Lake Hume and wandered my way through the historic towns of Tallangatta, Tangambalanga, Mitta Mitta, Myrtleford, Wandilagong and Bright.

We then travelled through the Kelly Country towns, such as Greta, Winton and Glenrowan. We saw our soldiers' kids at Puckapunyal (home to an army base) and the fire-affected towns of Buxton and Kinglake West. We then headed back into the High Country and Merrijig and Jamieson.

Travelling west of the Hume freeway, we visited Violet Town, Dhuringile, Nagambie and Tatura and back on the flat we headed up to Katamatite and Strathmerton.

During my tour I gave 67 lessons to 1,637 children and 136 teachers.

For most of the schools this was their first visit from the 'new' MEU introduced seven years ago, and we were greeted by excited kids at every location.

At a number of schools we were met by local brigade members who willingly took part in the classroom activities.

We started each lesson with the need to have an escape plan from a burning house. We discussed the fire triangle – what you

need for a fire. We then looked at common causes of house fires, from kitchen and laundry appliances to the dangerous goods we use around the home and yard. We then moved through to the lounge room and open fires, and talked about burning candles and the safety of pyjamas and clothing generally.

We practised 'Stop, Drop and Roll' and then got serious about developing a fire escape plan that includes the 000 emergency number and contains clear information. Finally, we escaped a burning home by going low, testing the door for heat and meeting at the mail box.

This was an exceedingly strenuous trip, with many 10 or 11-hour days, and without Sandra I wouldn't have got through it.

I have a lifetime of experience in sales and marketing on four continents, and it has been proven that word of mouth is the most effective way to sell your product in the long term. The MEU reinforces the positivity of the message and using the mobile classroom sells the brand (CFA) effectively as well.

No other program can efficiently get to as many of our 'customers' with such a solid message, and it would be great to see new classroom initiatives, particularly about bushfires. ■



Tom Condon is from Bonnie Doon Rural Fire Brigade and the MEU educator.

Left: Tom at Walwa Primary School



AT LEAST WE DIDN'T LOSE

STORY GEOFF STEWART

In late June, Bayswater brigade members in full turnout gear fronted up to Bayswater North Primary School to take on Auskick kids in the third annual footy match.

Two years ago an idea turned into an annual community event, with humiliating consequences for a bunch of eager firefighters. In the first match, in 2009, Auskickers posted a great score and us, not so much. Last year Auskickers piled on another great score and we did a little better.

This year we decided it was time to claw back some credibility, forget this community stuff, and win the game. And we managed a 15-15 draw. Our improved performance was probably due to our secret weapon – Fire Services Commissioner and Bayswater volunteer Craig Lapsley.

We presented a BBQ barrier to show our support for the wonderful effort made by Auskick organisers for the children in Bayswater North. ■

ANGLESEA RAISES \$25,000

STORY PETER CECIL

At the Anglesea Golf Club in mid June, Anglesea brigade held its major fundraising event of the year – the Hotshots Golf Day.

Thirty-five teams took on the course, including CFA teams from Modewarre, Ocean Grove, Aireys Inlet, Torquay, Leopold, District 7 and Stawell. Team Red Till finished with the best score and Ocean Grove was the top CFA team.

In the evening, the brigade held an auction, where one of the most sought-after items was a Collingwood pack that included a signed jersey, tickets to a game with access to the room before and after the game, and the president's lunch. It sold for more than \$1,100.

The auction also featured caricatures of Melbourne football club president Jim Stynes and Prime Minister Julia Gillard drawn by former *Herald Sun* cartoonist Jeff Hook.

Anglesea brigade has now raised \$1.5 million to rebuild its fire station on the existing site. ■



PETER CECIL

Left: Modewarre brigade team at the Hotshots Day

OUT AND ABOUT with the Chief

“IT WAS UPLIFTING FOR THE VOLUNTEERS TO MEET THE CHIEF AND LISTEN TO HIS FUTURE PLANS FOR CFA.”

CAPTAIN LYNSDAY O'TOOLE

TOUR OF EAST GIPPSLAND

During a two-day tour in mid June, Chief Officer Euan Ferguson visited several District 11 brigades.

Euan discussed the proposed changes to CFA, including the importance of supporting the people at the front line of the organisation.

“Local command and control, role of the groups, firefighters, and community safety programs are the key issues facing CFA over the next few years,” said Euan.

His first stop was at Bemm River where he met with members of the Orbost Group of Fire Brigades and enjoyed a homemade lunch with members of the Bemm River Fire Brigade. Euan mentioned he “will never forget the lunch at Bemm River.”

Euan then had a Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria meeting in Bruthen. Johnsonville brigade Captain Lyndsay O’Toole said: “It was uplifting for the volunteers to meet the Chief and listen to his future plans for CFA.”

The following day Euan met with District 11 HQ staff, District 11 brigade members and Gippsland Region Manager Mark Reid. He then went to Tambo Crossing to meet with Mack Stagg (D11 DPC Chair), and saw the extensions at Swifts Creek station followed by afternoon tea at Omeo brigade to see the new station. ■



GLENN HARROP

JUNIOR LEADERS MEET AT PHILLIP ISLAND

Phillip Island hosted CFA’s Junior Volunteer Development Program in mid June.

The weekend camp gave the 90 junior leaders from 47 brigades across the State a great opportunity to network and share information.

There were workshops on leadership styles, conflict resolution, behaviour management, understanding young people and program development. The leaders also found out about games and activities they could take back to their junior brigades that are fun and develop trust and teamwork.

Chief Officer Euan Ferguson attended a dinner and gave a speech to the young leaders.

“This camp is a great opportunity for us to assist our junior leaders in the development of our 11-15 year old junior volunteers potentially one day being firefighters, responsible for protecting lives and property,” said Euan. ■



Above: Euan with Bemm brigade volunteers

Left: Euan with two *On the Land* authors: Lisa Keedle (CFA community safety) and Ken Sleep (Loddon Mallee community education coordinator)

MALLEE MACHINERY FIELD DAYS

Chief Officer Euan Ferguson chose the Mallee Machinery Field Days at Speed, held at the beginning of August, to launch *On the Land*. Around 8,500 people attended the agricultural machinery event.

Euan said that CFA took into account farm incidents over recent years – including increases in machinery and haystack fires, and out of control burn-offs – when it updated these agricultural fire management guidelines.

“This booklet combines farm fire safety advice with an explanation of farm restrictions and legal responsibilities,” he said. “More than 82,000 people live and work on the land in Victoria in industries worth \$9 billion to the economy, and CFA is committed to assisting them to protect their assets and to avoid loss of life.”

CFA’s stand at the event was kept busy with enquiries about a range of subjects including the impact that annual first aid CPR updates are having on rural CFA members, the cost and design of new rural fire stations, the need to get farmer firefighters to carry out the annual turnover drill, the need for a tanker to be designed specifically for Mallee sand country fires, and the new total fire ban district boundary. ■



IN THE HIGH COUNTRY

STORY GAVIN THOMPSON

Euan visited Falls Creek in mid July to get a better understanding of the alpine brigades' different operating environment. Following an informal dinner, the next day kicked off with a presentation to Euan about what the alpine brigades do, the unique issues they face and how alpine operations officers support the brigades. The presentation generated plenty of discussion.

The Chief then toured Falls Creek village in the Oversnow Pumper. When he reached the top road a group of CFA personnel discussed a scenario of a fire in one of the lodges. This highlighted the many issues faced by the alpine brigades.

Back at Falls Creek station Euan presented Falls Creek Captain Jason Nightingale with a 10-year service medal and Lieutenant Rock DeMarchi (the only remaining founding member of the brigade) with a 15-year service medal.

Euan met Hume Regional Manager Alan Davies, District 24 Operations Manager Paul King, Mt Buller brigade Captain Stuart Wadsworth, Falls Creek brigade Captain Jason Nightingale, Falls Creek Lieutenant Rock DeMarchi, the three alpine operations officers (Gavin Thompson, Brett Boatman and David Harris) and District 23 Operations Officer Paul Horton. ■

Above: Euan gets a ride in Falls Creek's Oversnow Pumper

Below: The Chief talks to Mt Buller Captain Stuart Wadsworth, and Lieutenant Rock DeMarchi and Captain Jason Nightingale from Falls Creek brigade



IN BRIEF

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Euan also attended the opening of Joe's Garden memorial next to Arthurs Creek station – see p36 for the full story – and he helped Maryborough and Daylesford brigades celebrate their 150th anniversaries.



ANITA NORRIS

JOE'S GARDEN MEMORIAL

STORY GEOFF SCHMIDT

The Arthurs Creek brigade celebrated the opening of Joe's Garden, a memorial garden built on Arthurs Creek fire station grounds, to honour firefighter Joe Shepherd and other local residents that perished in the Black Saturday bushfires.

The main feature of the garden is a circular rock seating area, dominated by a large vertical rock with a birdbath carved into its base. Ceramic tiles produced by local artist Andrea Tilley are based on sketches of local native orchids by Joe.

There's a new rock path leading to the garden through a newly made grassed area surrounded by native garden to acknowledge Joe's love of the bush. The garden also includes a beautiful timber seat constructed by Fourth Lieutenant Warren Rees.

It's sure to be a relaxing area, particularly in summer, and an area for quiet contemplation.

Firefighter Keith Jephcott put in many hours of labour to organise and build the garden, assisted by many in the brigade and other locals.

The opening in early June was attended by the brigade, the auxiliary and locals. Chief Officer Euan Ferguson, Regional Manager Greg Esnouf, Operations Manager John Deering, and Group Officer Rod Holland.

Euan was pleased to attend the opening, and was impressed by the brigade's achievement.

"It's the inspiration and product of many hours of labour by Arthurs Creek volunteers," he said.

"I found an uplifting and spiritual connection in the garden. It's a wonderful tribute to one of our own who lost his life in the February 2009 fires. I recommend a visit to you all."

The brigade wished to create a lasting memorial to Joe, his son Danny who also died on Black Saturday, past brigade members Peter Avola and Henk Vreulink, and the many residents of the community who died as a result of the Black Saturday fires. ■

Left: Euan Ferguson praises the efforts of Arthurs Creek volunteers





KEITH PAKENHAM

COAL MINE FIRES BROUGHT TO LIFE

STORY DAVE WALTERS

A fire themed diorama built by Wonthaggi Fire Brigade members opened in mid June at the Wonthaggi State Coal Mine winch house.

It was officially opened by District 8 Operations Manager Trevor Owen in front of around 100 people from local brigades, Wonthaggi Lions Club, businesses, family and friends.

Just over a year ago Kim O'Connor from Wonthaggi brigade asked the Wonthaggi State Coal Mine whether the brigade could use its winch house to display the brigade's historic equipment and uniforms. It agreed and I set up a team to complete the project.

Ian Hendy designed and built the set, Kim O'Connor was the finance manager and builder, Kathryn Sloan did the painting, Greg Parkes did the carpentry and building, and Rod McLean was the electrician. We also had help from Dennis Leversha, a local artist.

As Ian explained his plan to build sets to house the memorabilia,

we realised we had a great idea as long as we could raise the finances and support from businesses and the community.

Kim raised most of the funds from the Wonthaggi Lions Club. We also contacted various businesses and asked for support with goods.

We started building the sets about a year ago. It was amazing to see what could be done with bits of wood and medium density fibreboard, especially when making the back end of a pumper. The sets were then installed in the winch house.

We dressed the sets with photos and memorabilia, including mannequins in past and current uniforms, fire equipment, and the running wheel.

Our display, which is operated by Parks Victoria, is just outside the Wonthaggi township. We welcome other members and their families to visit the display. ■

Above left: Part of the diorama showing a miner's cottage fire

Above right: Firefighter Greg Parkes standing with one of many replicas

WERRIBEE RESCUE TAKES ON THE WORLD

A team of six Werribee brigade volunteers returned from the Australasian Road Rescue Challenge in Wellington, New Zealand, in mid July, as winners for the second year running.

Last year's result meant they were automatically entered into the World Challenge – held at the same venue – where they claimed number two spot.

Werribee brigade Captain and paramedic Michael Wells said that the result underlined the fact that they are the best at what they have trained hard to do.

"CFA road rescue teams are up there with the best in the world," said Michael.

"The Champs are a great opportunity to practise all the skills that we use on our roads. It's also a chance to meet colleagues from agencies across the world and exchange experience and methods," said Michael.

Chief Officer Euan Ferguson was full of praise for the team. "This is a fantastic result. Congratulations to all involved and to their supporters," he said.

Now ranked second in the world, the Werribee team is looking towards the 2012 championships in London next October.

The team also participated in the Trauma Challenge for the first time and finished first. ■



KEITH PAKEMHAM

HQ STAFF DIG DEEP FOR CHARITY

STORY DARLENE PENTLAND

There was a strange sight at CFA Headquarters, Burwood, in mid June when Building 8 was overrun with witches, rock stars, Dame Edna wannabes, one-eyed purple people eaters, dancing girls and more. They were all on their way to the annual charity fundraiser.

Teams decked out in purple gear (the main colour of the Starlight Foundation) had a fun-filled evening of trivia, prizes, giveaways and plenty of auction action.

Sixteen teams answered trivia questions for two hours. The winning team, from Strategic Communications, trounced the opposition.

After the glitter and feathers had settled, we had raised more than \$5,000 for the Starlight Foundation and Cystic Fibrosis Victoria.

A huge thank you to the more than 20 companies that donated goods and services for this year's fundraiser. ■

FINE DAY FOR ART FUNDRAISER

Blue skies brought people out in droves to Kalkallo brigade's annual art show fundraiser in mid June. There were more than 480 paintings on display and for sale from more than 70 artists from Wallan, Beveridge, Kilmore, Seymour, Whittlesea and Hume.

"It is really our only fundraiser for the year so it's a big event," said Captain Ned Pannuzzo. "We were really lucky to have such nice weather and, overall, the weekend was a success."

Ned said in its 15 years the art show held in Mickleham has helped the brigade to buy and upgrade vital firefighting equipment. ■

BARREL BRIGADE PIPPED AT THE POST

STORY GLENN MARQUISON

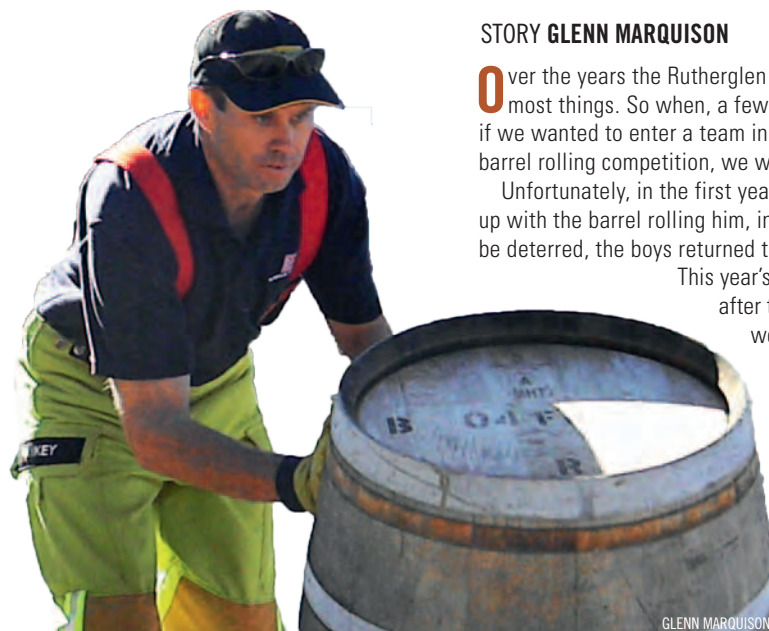
Over the years the Rutherglen brigade has been game to have a go at most things. So when, a few years ago, the local Apex Club asked if we wanted to enter a team in the annual Winery Walkabout Festival barrel rolling competition, we were up for the challenge.

Unfortunately, in the first year one of our team (Ash Baskett) ended up with the barrel rolling him, instead of him rolling the barrel. Not to be deterred, the boys returned the following year and finished first.

This year's event, in mid June, was going well after three legs. Going into the last leg we were leading, but a small mishap resulted in the mighty Baker Seeds team pipping us on the line.

Never mind, there's always next year for Fourth Lieutenant David Hawkey (shown left) and the rest of the team.

As always the Rutherglen Winery Walkabout was a terrific event. It's an annual event that showcases the winemakers of Victoria's north east and attracts around 20,000 people. ■



GLENN MARQUISON

THROUGH THE AGES Belmont





CALENDAR



SEPTEMBER

6-8	Mildura SAFE education program for students, St Andrews Tennis Club, District 18
9-11	Fireline Leadership Program at Kalorama, Eastern Metro; and Lyrebird Park, Yellingbo, Southern Metro (enquiries to district training department)
13-15	Bendigo SAFE education program for students, Bendigo Showgrounds, District 2
14	State Control Centre Project Belenus exercise, Melbourne
16-18	Fireline Leadership Program, Gippsland (enquiries to district training department)
17	Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria AGM. Fiskville, 12pm. Please advise VFBV if attending
24	Royal Melbourne Show, Melbourne Showgrounds, until 4 October
30-1	Swan Hill Rural Show, District 18

OCTOBER

4	Eastern Metro region's pre-bushfire season briefing at Dept of Primary Industries (DPI) Knoxfield
5	Loddon Mallee region Project Belenus exercise, Sacred Heart College, Kyneton, District 2
4-7	Australian National Fire Cadet Championships, Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre, NSW
7	Pre-Season Update published
11	Eastern Metro Project Belenus exercise, Karralyka Centre, Ringwood East, District 13
13-16	Mildura Rural City Show, District 18
15-16	Volunteer Community Engagement and Fire Awareness Forum, Macedon Spa Conference Centre, Macedon, District 14
16	Joint agencies emergency exercise, Tungamah, District 22
16	Southern Metro region Project Belenus exercise, Cardinia Cultural Centre, Pakenham, District 8

23	Grampians region Project Belenus exercise, Avoca Shire Turf Club, Avoca, District 16
25	Northern and Western region Project Belenus exercise, Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre, South Morang, District 14
27	Barwon South West region Project Belenus exercise, Kings College, Warnnambool, District 5

NOVEMBER

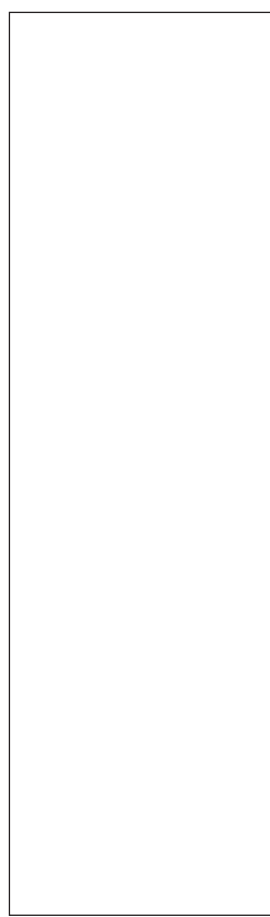
2	Hume region Project Belenus exercise, Benalla Performing Arts and Convention Centre, Benalla, District 23
5	Monbulk brigade's Emergency Services Expo, St. George's Church, Main Street, Monbulk, District 13
5-6	Whittlesea Show, District 14
6	Talbot brigade's 150-year celebrations. Family Fun Day at Talbot Football Ground, District 2
12-13	Annual Emergency Services Challenge (part of Cancer Council's Relay for Life), Boxhill Athletics Track, Melbourne
13	Emergency Services and Community Day, Langwarrin fire station, District 8
13	Gippsland region Project Belenus exercise, Sale Entertainment Centre, Sale, District 10
13-20	Fire Action Week
19	Reefton ROCS Community Festival to raise funds for Reefton CFA, Reefton Hotel, District 13
20	CFA Sunday
27	Joint agencies wildfire exercise in Manningham and Nillumbik shires, District 14
27	Werribee Harvest Picnic, District 14

DECEMBER

1	Fire Awareness Awards, RACV Club, Melbourne. Entries close 30 September
6	Eastern Metro CFA/DSE/VicPol forum, Ferntree Gully ICC, District 13
9	Summer edition of Brigade published

If there's an event coming up in December, January or February that you think we should include in the calendar, please email duncan.russell@cfa.vic.gov.au

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PO Box 701 Mt Waverley VIC 3149

Executive Manager Strategic Communications: Liz Armitage

Manager Corporate Communications: Guy Sigley

Editor: Duncan Russell (duncan.russell@cfa.vic.gov.au)

Contributors: Martin Anderson, Darren Grevis-James, Leith Hillard, Jason Leigh, Sonia Maclean, Kayla Maskell, Ann Moodie, Keith Pakenham, Natasha Rocca, Amy Schildberer, Gerard Scholten, Nancy Thompson, Hugo Zoller

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Cover: April Himmelreich teaching fire safety to school children