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WINTER 2026

Brigade

**Fallen
firefighters
remembered**



PLUS: New recruits ● Working with industry ● Road to recovery

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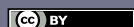
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We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of
the land. We pay our respects to Elders, past and
present.

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Greg Leach AFSM

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In April, the Victorian Government announced investment of \$148.6 million into CFA infrastructure, equipment and resources as part of the 2026 State Budget. This includes funding for CFA tankers and pumpers, new stations and upgrades, protective gear, training resources and wellbeing support including:

- an additional \$100 million over 10 years for CFA tankers and pumpers to assist firefighting efforts
- \$26.2 million for CFA station builds, upgrades, planning and land acquisition for members at Lakes Entrance, Barongarook West, Charlton, Nar Nar Goon, Beveridge, Dereel, Mirboo North, Kingston, Woodvale and Yarrambat
- \$22.4 million for CFA wellbeing, additional personal protective equipment including P3 mask rollout, and continuation of driver training.

We are working through the specifics of the funding and starting on the work needed to bring these assets and services to reality. The overall focus is to enhance our ability to respond more efficiently and effectively to emergencies.

CFA staff and volunteers played an important role in the Legislative Council's Environment and Planning Committee's inquiry into the January fires. I would like to thank all CFA members who took the time to make a submission to the inquiry or attend a hearing, and to everyone who was involved in supporting the entire process.

The Committee's report is scheduled to be tabled in Parliament in late July and as part of our post season review, together with the findings of the committee, CFA will seek to better understand the challenges of managing bushfires and make the necessary improvements.

The 2025-26 fire season was long and challenging, but our members stood up time and again to protect communities.

Many Victorians recognised the effort of CFA members, both firefighters and those in support roles, and showed their appreciation by donating to CFA. Between 1 November 2025 and 31 March 2026, members of the public donated \$2.96 million to the CFA and Brigades Donations Fund for the benefit of the donor's nominated brigade. These funds have been distributed to be used in accordance with each brigade's needs. A further \$97,000 was donated to CFA's Public Fund. The Public Fund has recently funded several initiatives including upgrades to infrastructure, and purchasing vital equipment to support volunteers and service delivery.

Infrastructure enhancements continue at our training campuses. The Safe Working at Heights prop at Bangholme training campus was completed in May this year. The rectification works to the Longerenong training campus off-road driver training tracks are finished, and tenders have closed for rectification works to the track at West Sale training campus. Next, we will release tenders for rectification works to the remaining two driver training tracks. Design and tendering works have also commenced to build gender diverse change rooms at Sunraysia, Penshurst and Bangholme.

On a final note, we celebrated our 50th Volunteer Forum at Upper Ferntree Gully fire station in April. These live events are a perfect way to showcase our hard-working brigades and the vital work they do in their community every day. At Upper Ferntree Gully, I learned a lot about the local fire risk and the Black Saturday fire that burned close to the station. Broadcasting a live event is always unpredictable and I witnessed the hive of activity as members rolled out appliances to attend a call. I encourage everyone to tune into the forum every month or watch the recording on Members Online.



Jason Heffernan

CHIEF OFFICER

With all fire restrictions lifted on 1 May, we marked the official end to an intense and challenging fire season. It continues to be a time of reflection, with all lessons from the past four months welcome, especially as we navigate the Upper House Parliamentary inquiry.

The inquiry examines government preparedness, emergency responses and the broader impacts on communities, infrastructure and the environment.

Many areas across CFA contributed information to support the inquiry, including during many site visits and hearings over recent months; I sincerely thank everyone who has been involved in this important work.

While conversations continue, I encourage anyone who has found this process confronting to reach out for support.

Alongside the inquiry, we are running our own after action review. I encourage everyone, if they haven't already, to get involved in this process to look at how we can improve the way we work and acknowledge the many great things that worked well.

Another key part of the post fire response is the extensive emergency stabilisation works being carried out by CFA across the south-west, west, north-west and north-east of the state. These works are the largest emergency stabilisation works CFA has ever conducted.

CFA volunteers and staff, partner agencies and external contractors are conducting works to repair and replace private infrastructure that was impacted as a result of fire suppression activities during fire response, which includes fencing that was cut, gates that were

damaged, replacing water that was used, and fixing water lines that were damaged, amongst a raft of other works.

At the time of going to print, the majority of these works were complete, with some ongoing works on the Harcourt and Longwood fires that will hopefully wrap up soon.

The Annual Firefighters Memorial took place on Sunday 3 May. The day was a fitting tribute to those firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty, and an honourable acknowledgment to the personal sacrifices and commitment our firefighters make every day.

In our 75th year supporting the Good Friday Appeal – an annual event I know is extremely close to the hearts of our volunteers – I could not be prouder. The generosity of Victorians across the state alongside our incredible members far exceeded expectations to raise a record-breaking \$2,150,000 for the Royal Children's Hospital. Thank you to all participating brigades.

Our volunteer recruitment campaign, ***Give us a hand***, is running again, with more than 3,400 Victorians already walking through station doors to express their interest in joining CFA following the January fires. I wish all those who have expressed interest in joining the best in their recruitment journey, and I know whatever brigades they are to become a part of will welcome them with open arms.

As we head into the cooler conditions, I encourage you to take the time to rest and recover where possible and to continue looking after yourselves and one another.

**Becca Rizzi**

CAPTAIN HOMERTON FIRE BRIGADE

When I stepped into the role of captain at Homerton Fire Brigade, I saw it as an exciting opportunity and also a significant responsibility – a responsibility to my brigade, to my community and to the future of volunteer firefighting.

Like many brigades across Victoria, we've faced challenges. There were times when numbers were low, callouts were few and sustaining momentum felt difficult. But what I've learned through CFA is that leadership is about providing opportunities and empowering others to come along on the journey. There is something incredibly powerful about watching someone realise what they are capable of when they are supported to step up and have a go.

Over the past few years, our brigade has focused on rebuilding with purpose, both operationally and at the core.

We're not just increasing capability but creating a culture where people feel they belong – a place where new members are welcomed, supported and given real opportunities to grow. That's what sustainability looks like in volunteer brigades.

That effort has recently been recognised with the Frank Angelino Encouragement Award through VFBV. For our brigade, it reflects acknowledgment from across the district that the work being done matters, the progress is real and we are building something solid for the future.

A big part of that has been bringing training back into our own brigade. By creating local training opportunities, we've removed barriers that often stop volunteers from progressing. When training is accessible, members can engage equally which strengthens the entire brigade.

Leadership to me is also about creating pathways for others. I'm particularly passionate about supporting young leaders and encouraging more women to step into operational and leadership roles. As the first woman captain of my brigade, I don't take the responsibility lightly. I'm helping strengthen the future and pave the way in a diverse and evolving organisation.

Through CFA I've had opportunities to work alongside multiple agencies, respond beyond our local area, and deploy on strike teams to our own Budj Bim National Park, the Grampians and the High Country. These experiences build resilience, teamwork and a deeper understanding of what it means to serve the community in times of need. Sometimes that understanding hits on a deeper level.

More recently, while driving the tanker through a town in the High Country, we passed a man on his porch with his family. He held his baby in one arm, waved with the other, and tears rolled down his face. His community was scared, facing the possibility of losing everything all over again. In those moments, it's not about lights and sirens. It's about presence, reassurance and showing people they are not alone. And that's what giving back is all about.

One of the most rewarding parts of leadership has been taking members of my brigade on that journey, giving them the opportunity to deploy, grow in confidence and step into leadership roles themselves.

At its core CFA is about community – showing up when it matters most and building something stronger together.

CFA commemorates lost lives of heroic firefighters

CFA members, families and friends came together at Central Highlands training campus in Ballan on 3 May to honour firefighters who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their communities.

Held annually, the Firefighters Memorial Service acknowledges the dedication and courage of CFA firefighters and allows families, brigades and community members to remember our fallen heroes, while reflecting on their exceptional service in protecting their local communities.

Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said the annual memorial service was an opportunity for all Victorians to take the time to remember those members who lost their lives while serving.

“CFA has a proud legacy built through the challenges and sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of our volunteers and staff working tirelessly to defend lives and property,” Jason said.

“But it also comes at a terrible cost at times – claiming the lives of 85 brave members who we continue to acknowledge, honour and remember at all times.

“They all have a story of selflessness, bravery and service, and are a significant part of our history. Their story has helped shape CFA values today and they continue to inspire firefighters past and present.”

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria executives and government representatives also attended to pay tribute to the commitment firefighters make each and every day.

“The loss of life is also a continual reminder and driver of CFA’s ongoing commitment to safety, training, support and innovation to ensure we provide an environment where our members are safe,” Jason said.

“Today, we also reflect and honour more broadly, the loyalty, devotion and hard work of all CFA people and our firefighting community.

“I encourage all Victorians to take a moment to reflect on those who are no longer with us and recognise the incredible contribution our members make to protect others.”

Each year, the memorial is held on or close to International Firefighters’ Day which was established following the death of five CFA firefighters near Linton in 1998.

Recently, CFA recognised a further three historical deaths in the line of duty – Joseph Thomas Smith (who died in 1906), Francis Edward Symington (1937) and Walter James Anderson (1961).



STORY LUCY BISHOP



More information and audio stories about each fallen firefighter can be found on CFA’s Roll of Honour webpage.



Watch the livestream of the service using this QR code.



Road to recovery

Recovering after a major incident can take years. From the 2019-20 fires to the January 2026 fires, we talk to people in the middle of it.

Pomonal balances risk and recovery two years on

On 13 February 2024, a lightning strike near what's now known as Blaze Rock ignited a fast-moving bushfire that went on to claim 45 homes in Pomonal. More than two years on, recovery in the small Grampians town means different things to different people.

Of the 45 homes lost, just five have been rebuilt. In some instances, tiny homes now sit on blocks as residents continue to face difficult decisions, while the wider community adjusts to what has changed.

"It's a slow process. You ride that emotional rollercoaster after a fire," Pomonal Fire Brigade Captain Steve Field said.

"You've just lost everything – your memories, your family heirlooms – and you can't get that back.

"Some people remain in temporary accommodation. Others, particularly older residents without the means to start again, have left for good. Our town gets a different personality as new people come in and old ones go out," Steve said.

"When new people come in, it's up to us to educate them about fire safety and what living here means. Teaching people about fuel reduction, property maintenance and staying ahead of regrowth is an ongoing thing.

"The risk doesn't go away just because we're in recovery."

That risk re-emerged sooner than expected. Just 10 months after the fire, Pomonal was once again threatened in December 2024 as a significant bushfire burned through the Northern Grampians.

"It got within a couple of kilometres and people were wondering, 'surely we can't burn again?'" Steve said.

"The smoke really ignited people's fears again."

Pomonal Fire Brigade Community Safety Coordinator Andrew Cross said it was a challenging moment for the whole community.

"Pomonal got dusted with ash again and that put the fear of God back into everyone," Andrew said.

The near incident blurred the line between recovery and preparation.

"You owe a duty of care to your neighbours. If you're going to live in and be part of a town, you need to come to some agreement about how much you're going to clean up."



That work is becoming more urgent as the landscape continues to recover.

"Two years on, the regrowth is already getting out of hand in some areas," Andrew said. "You've got to get in there and deal with it before it becomes a real problem."

As attention shifts to more recent fires in other communities, Pomonal's recovery continues without the spotlight.

"The focus was all about us in that first year," Steve said.

"Then this year, the focus has shifted, we lose some attention as to what happened here, and we just sort of fade away into the shadows.

"I think that shift in thinking really emphasised how recovery cannot be seen as a short-term process.

"Everybody plays their part within a small community. That's what you need. Recovery is ongoing, it doesn't stop."

STORY JAMES TAYLOR

Rochester four years after the floods

Rochester is a town that knows the ropes of recovery all too well having battled back from the devastating 2022 floods.

The inquiry into the floods found that in many communities, including Rochester, support in the days directly after peak floods was from local first responders, community and spontaneous volunteers.

Luke Warren (pictured) was captain of Rochester Fire Brigade at the time. He said as the water kept on rising, he knew it would be years before the community was back on its feet.

“Many of our members faced personal loss during the floods but continued to serve our community with sandbagging, cleanup and rescue efforts,” Luke said. “Our crews did a lot of the heavy lifting to support SES and other partner agencies.

“Recovery comes in stages and in the days after we continued to help with the cleanup alongside looking after our own places.”

Luke said recovery was a slow process and everyone moved at a different pace, but there were certainly larger challenges that the community faced as a whole.

The inquiry found challenges with financial supports, housing and other broader issues.

But recovery isn’t just about the physical assets lost. The 2022 floods caused significant and enduring trauma to many of those affected, manifesting in mental health challenges that require ongoing support.

Luke said there is a lasting tension in the community.

“Every time that water level comes up people are put back in that place,” he said.

Something that helped Rochester brigade rebuild was receiving a care package that contained a new CFA flag.

Luke said the flag wasn’t going to sweep away water or remake the roads, but it was a symbol of strength.

“Our flag hanging up on the flagpole was tattered, faded and worn — exactly how we felt,” Luke said.

“The new one became a reminder that we could rebuild.”

The floods highlighted the need for emergency services to work together and the wheels really got turning for the creation of the

emergency services hub, due for completion in 2027.

CFA District 20 Assistant Chief Fire Officer Mick Sporton said the hub was a welcome relief to both agencies and fellow community members.

“It was vital that SES and Rochester brigade worked together in both the height and aftermath of the floods, and it’s great to see them being able to bring that partnership together under the same roof,” Mick said.

Luke said people in the community really look to CFA at times of crisis and they become integral in both response and recovery.

“We certainly felt that expectation from community. People trust us to look after them,” Luke said.

“It’s very difficult to see helicopters flying over so low you could almost touch them, and convoys of aid just passing us by on the way to other impacted areas.”

Luke said it’s not just the local CFA that played a role, but the wider CFA network.

“When you see those CFA trucks roll in, there is this overwhelming sense of relief that significant support has arrived,” Luke said.

There are still reminders of the flood in Rochester today, but Luke said the town feels solid again.

“We will never forget the kindness and generosity that was shown to us in that time,” Luke said.

“That’s the real recovery; helping to rebuild the spirit of the town and I know myself and the brigade couldn’t be prouder to have been a part of that.”



STORY BRITTANY CARLSON



Small town unites in recovery

The small township of Wairewa in East Gippsland was tragically hit hard during the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires, with 11 of its 22 homes destroyed, and farmland and livelihoods ruined.

Six years on, some houses have been rebuilt, quite a few blocks were sold with no houses on them, and some temporary units that were built as part of the bushfire recovery program are still present.

Wairewa Fire Brigade Captain Jadon Dennis said mental health has been a big challenge for a lot of community members.

"For some community members it was too traumatic to stay," Jadon said.

"Through the local hall and the Community Recovery Committee there was proactive support offered – seminars and sessions at the hall – which was great.

"The hall has also since had hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on it with bushfire safety sprinklers, backup generators, solar and other things. It's turned the hall into a community hub."

The road to recovery has been long and ongoing, with COVID-19 lockdowns only a few months after those fires hampering recovery efforts, and the lasting effects of trauma throughout the close-knit community.

Jadon was one of the brigade's lieutenants when the fire swept through the town just after 11pm on New Year's Eve in 2019.

"We knew we weren't going to get out at that point. The fire created its own weather pattern. We all got blown to the ground and I ended up on my stomach on the road with a hose trying to stop spot fires.

"Many people in the town took shelter in the local hall so the strike team kept the hall from burning to keep the community safe."

Jadon said many brigade members felt helpless, watching homes burn, livestock, farming land and businesses obliterated to ash – a trauma that will stay with them forever.

There was a huge response from the local community in the days and weeks following the fires.

"The aid was incredible. No one could believe how much there was and how quickly it came. The local hall became a place where everything went including food and supplies or whatever people needed," Jadon said.

"The local Baptist church pulled together and came out and put temporary fencing up so cattle were kept inside land of non-burnt areas."

When COVID-19 hit everything shut down, recovery stopped, there was no debrief, and people had to move on in their own ways with no support.

Jadon said recovery is still ongoing and the town has changed a lot, but the regrowth is back close to where it was before the 2019-20 fires.

"The main vegetable grower and employer here is back close to full operation which is great to see," Jadon said.

"Rebuilding continues and some people have moved into the area since COVID-19, along with some new brigade members which has helped give us a fresh start."

The brigade was also grateful to receive a VESEP grant recently for a new ultralight vehicle that Jadon said will be an important asset in another event like this.

Other bushfire recovery projects include an updated concrete bridge crossing Hospital Creek, extra concrete water tanks and new tourist signage.

"Now the challenge is what's coming and the uncertainty of what will happen next fire season," Jadon said.

"It's the nature of the country we live in, but our focus is building that trust back into the community and ensuring they're well prepared for future fires."

STORY AMY SCHILDBERGER



Koriella community jumps into action

Four months on from the Longwood fire in January 2026, the towns of Koriella and Fawcett are slowly getting back on their feet. The Fawcett Hall, which has been a vital recovery hub for the community, is now open every other day, and after recent rain the landscape is regenerating. It's a far cry from the immediate aftermath of the fire.

"We had no power, no phones, no data, no Wi-Fi. Those that lost water tanks had no water. We had no services. It was a moonscape," Koriella Fire Brigade Captain Scott Reeves said (pictured).

The fire impacted Koriella and Fawcett on the catastrophic fire danger day on 9 January. About 20 homes were lost, countless sheds and outbuildings, plus livestock. At one stage during that fateful day, the Fawcett Hall was directly under threat but the brigade successfully defended it.

"The first big job we had to do was save the hall, because that was where we'd base our recovery hub. The crew were great; nothing was a problem," Scott said.

While Scott and the brigade were busy managing flare-ups in the days following 9 January, local resident and Fawcett Hall President Sam Hicks sprang into action and set up the recovery hub at the hall.

"Sam's been fantastic for the community, and she's still running it, albeit a couple of days a week now. In those first few days [after the fire] it was about getting the basics – water, food, clothing – anything people had lost. Sam put all those calls out.

"The next phase was animals. What are we going to do about all the cattle and sheep? She coordinated a lot of that too.

"A lot of our farmers are quite self-sufficient, but there were also locals who needed the hall for that talk and chat. An instant message group was also set up and anyone could join it. It was a good way to communicate what was happening at the hall and what supplies had come in" Scott said.

For Koriella Fire Brigade, 2026 has been one of their busiest years. The brigade usually averages five callouts a year, but between 8 January and 21 February, Scott and his crew were on the truck for 35 days.



In the months after the fire, the brigade has experienced the generosity and support of both CFA and wider communities. In those crucial first few weeks, members of Peer Support were on hand to support brigade members, and Wallan Fire Brigade loaned their ultralight tanker for a 10-day deployment. In addition, Kallista-The Patch Fire Brigade donated a generator which means Koriella can now power their station during a power outage. They have also received significant donations from the community.

"Four months down the track after that event, we're in pretty good shape as a brigade. Just this week we had someone volunteer to join us. So morale is not too bad" Scott said.

While the recovery effort is far from over, Scott is quick to acknowledge the efforts and resilience of his community.

"I'm very proud of what the brigade's done, I'm very proud of those people who have put in the effort. I love this place. And now when it's blossomed into green again, where else would you want to be? It's God's country."

STORY ALISON SMIRNOFF



Wellbeing recovery after the 2026 fires

The 2026 summer fire season tested CFA members, families and communities across Victoria. From intense early response through to long months of recovery, one thing remained constant: people looking out for one another. CFA's wellbeing support focused on connection, trust and ensuring no one had to carry the impact alone.

CFA Peers and Member Wellbeing Advisers were visible early and remained engaged well beyond the fireground. That early presence mattered. As Peer Coordinator Gloria Turner explained, seeing wellbeing support nearby sent a powerful message.

"When fires are at their peak, members remember seeing peers in the distance, at a staging area or at a fire station. They know peers have their backs if anything happens," Gloria said.

"At the end of a tiring and difficult day, when members are heading home, they know they can talk candidly about what happened. Experiences and fears are voiced while adrenaline is still high, instead of being carried home."

Member Wellbeing Advisers play a key role in longer-term work, supporting brigades as recovery unfolds. According to

Wellbeing Team Leader Michelle Collins, the recovery phase is about meeting people where they are.

"There's no single pathway through recovery," Michelle said. "Our role is to walk alongside brigades and individuals over time. Listening, helping them make sense of their experiences, and supporting them to choose what recovery looks like for them."

Michelle noted that recovery often brings forward issues that are not always spoken about straight away.

"As things slow down operationally, that's when cumulative fatigue and other issues can surface," she said. "By maintaining contact and keeping wellbeing visible, we reduce the pressure on members to push through on their own."

CFA recognises that wellbeing impacts don't follow a timetable. Feelings can surface weeks or months later, which is why support remains available through Peers, Member Wellbeing Advisers and the Member Assistance Program. Recovery is ongoing, and CFA remains committed to standing with members during response, through recovery and every day in between.

STORY CARA MCINTYRE

Emergency stabilisation at Longwood fire

The Longwood-Berrys Lane fire started on 7 January 2026 near the Hume Freeway, three kilometres south-west of Longwood. The fire burned to Alexandra and surrounds, 48 kilometres away.

Most of the area affected by the fire was private property, and to control the fire many control lines were put in place on private land by dozers and graders. Some private property fences were damaged or cut during the fire suppression efforts. Aerial mapping estimates that about 850 kilometres of control lines were established.

At the Seymour Incident Control Centre, an Emergency Stabilisation Team was established using incident management team (IMT) principals to:

- repair the fences damaged by fire agency staff or machinery during bushfire suppression activities
- stabilise land used as fire control lines by fire agencies in the suppression of bushfires. Fire control line stabilisation

involves pushing back top soil and undertaking erosion control measures to protect the land from soil erosion and protect water quality

- identify where essential water needs to be replaced, and refer the work to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)
- identify fences that were damaged by bushfire that cross national park, state park and state forest boundaries and adjoining private agricultural land, and refer to DEECA.

CFA Vegetation management Team Leader Dan Idczak worked within the IMT as deputy incident controller – emergency stabilisation manager.

"A number of CFA staff and volunteers have been working in the field to support this operation and work with the community, alongside other fire agencies including Forest Fire Management Victoria," Dan said. "In particular, I'd like to acknowledge the CFA volunteers who are helping on the ground with this big job."

STORY PAULINE PENDRICK



CFA strengthens Pacific partnership

CFA is helping to build capability among its Pacific partners. We recently hosted seven firefighters from the Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority for a 10-day fire investigation training program at Huntly training campus.

Held from 20 April to 2 May 2026, the course was designed to strengthen specialist skills in determining the origin and cause of fires. Fire investigation is important for prevention, helping identify the cause of fires, preserving scenes and analysing trends to reduce future incidents.

The program combined theoretical learning with practical, scenario-based exercises at CFA's purpose-built fire investigation training facility, allowing participants to train in a safe and controlled environment.

The Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority provides firefighting, rescue and ambulance services to more than 205,000 people across four islands. The agency is made up of about 250 career and volunteer firefighters, and prior to this training it had only one qualified fire investigator.

Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Senior Station Officer Usufono Latu said the training delivered valuable skills and knowledge that the team could take back to Samoa.

"We really need more people in this field so that whenever there's an incident or a fire one of us can attend," she said. "This training has been on another level. I've been involved in a little bit of fire investigation back home, but it doesn't add up to the

content we've learned in the [burn] room.

"This facility is one of the best facilities I've been in since I've been...training in firefighting and fire investigation."

DCO Operational Doctrine and Training Rohan Luke said the training program reflected CFA's commitment to supporting regional partners and sharing expertise.

"We're proud to support our Pacific neighbours in building specialist capability," he said. "Fire investigation plays an important role in fire prevention. Understanding how and why fires start helps prevent them from happening again.

"Training like this not only strengthens technical skills, but it also builds lasting relationships between our agencies."

The fire investigation training program aligned with nationally recognised Public Safety Training Package units and covers key areas including structural fire investigation, scene preservation and fire cause analysis.

"This initiative forms part of CFA's broader commitment to supporting international partner agencies and strengthening collaboration across the Pacific," Rohan said. "By sharing knowledge and building capability, CFA is helping enhance fire safety outcomes beyond Victoria."

STORY SHAUNNAGH O'LOUGHLIN AND ALISON SMIRNOFF



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New CFA recruits

Many members of the community recently joined a brigade. Here are some of their stories.

STORY LUCY BISHOP



ROB MURPHY, GELLIBRAND FIRE BRIGADE

This year was Rob Murphy's first year being affected by bushfires, with his farm in Gellibrand in south-west Victoria impacted during the January fires.

Following his bushfire plan, he made the decision to evacuate. Rob and his daughter Veronica were quick to jump into action to help the community, and now together they would like to do more, putting their hand up to join their local fire brigade.

"During the fires, I spent my time at the Gellibrand Hotel with Veronica, helping the publican to share information with the community," Rob said.

"I acted as a bit of a community liaison when the locals came in and they just needed a friendly ear to talk to or when they wanted to know the best place to find more information to help them make a decision."

Living deep in the Great Otway National Park, Rob is keen to understand how fire behaviour works and how he should be preparing his property more.

"It's a bit of a dad and daughter thing, and we said we'd join CFA so we were able to learn a bit more together," Rob said.

"It's going to be a really great opportunity for Veronica and me to learn about this environment we're living in and how mother nature flexes her muscles; how we adapt our behaviours and learn what we need to do to be safe."

Rob has kick-started the process to becoming a volunteer, and is currently getting all the paperwork signed, sealed and delivered before he dives into his training.

"I'd love to be ready to go by spring so I can be there to support the community in the lead-up to the season," Rob said.

"Everyone is starting to prepare their properties for the next fire season and I'm really keen to be involved in that.

"For me it's a journey of learning. It will be invaluable, both through the training and when I'm able to apply it."



CHARMAINE SOULSBY, RHEOLA FIRE BRIGADE

Charmaine Soulsby recently qualified as a firefighter with Rheola Fire Brigade, and for the first time in the brigade's history three generations are able to respond to callouts together.

Seventeen-year-old Charmaine has been heavily involved with the brigade's Juniors program since she was 13 and has enjoyed growing up around the fire station with her father Tony and grandfather Lindsay (pictured above).

"I had always watched my family out there and I always wanted to get on the back of a fire truck. When I started Juniors I really enjoyed it and thought it would be fun to go and fight the fires and help save people," Charmaine said.

"It's nice to have my dad and grandfather there so they can help build my confidence because I haven't been to many fires yet – just one small one which was a good one to start with."

Finishing her General Firefighter course in September 2025 was a highlight for Charmaine.

"I finished the physical component back in May with three other girls. One of them was my friend Rebecca who was also in Juniors with me. She's from the next town over. It was nice to do it together" Charmaine said.

"The online modules took me a bit of time to complete as I juggled Year 11, but I really enjoyed them."

Charmaine completed her physical component at Inglewood Fire Station in May across two consecutive Sundays.

"We were given our fire gear, and during the first day we went through some of the theory such as map reading, and how to use the radio and what to say," Charmaine said.

"Then in the second week we did a couple of mock scenarios where we got to run through different callouts in our fire gear and put the theory into practice."

Having grown up through the Juniors program, Charmaine still attends some of their monthly meetings to lend a hand.

"When I was in Juniors, we got to learn how to use the hoses and branches and about all the different types of fires we could fight," Charmaine said.

"The activities involved simple skills that don't seem like much, but they really do add up."

Charmaine continues to encourage her friends to join the brigade too, especially those in her cricket team, and she's looking forward to her brother moving up to seniors in a couple of years.



KELLY TIMMS, MOLESWORTH FIRE BRIGADE

Kelly Timms is one of six new recruits at Molesworth Fire Brigade. She has already put her training to use, jumping on trucks to help with the January 2026 fires just a couple of months after she finished her training.

Kelly said it was a whirlwind to finish the training and be thrust into one of the most challenging fire seasons in the state's recent history.

"My partner has been involved with the brigade for more than 30 years and I always thought I didn't have the time. But I wanted to do more for the community so I decided CFA was a way I could do that while also doing something with my partner," Kelly said.

Kelly said her confidence grew ten-fold after training and she was able to use that to protect her own property.

"I was really nervous because I hadn't even been to a little grass fire down the road, but our trainers John Morris and Shannon Roach had always said to me 'trust in your training,'" Kelly said.

"But it was because of that training that my partner and I were not only able to save our home and our business but also help other people in the community."

Kelly said she was also able to refine her skills in the weeks after the fire.

"There was a lot of mopping up to do so I spent so much time on the truck – I really knew it inside out," Kelly said.

"All those hours on the truck cemented my knowledge and will help even when I attend a small grass fire. It was such valuable experience."

Kelly also said there really was a role for everyone in the brigade beyond firefighting.

"There are so many things you can do that don't involve fighting the fire – brigades always need help sweeping the floors or washing the trucks.

"You're a volunteer so you can work it around your life. The more people there are in a brigade, the more the workload can be shared and the more flexible it can be."



LEONARDS HILL FIRE BRIGADE

Leonards Hill and District Fire Brigade has received a welcome boost with several new members joining in recent months after making the move from the city.

Brigade Captain Marc Dankers said the new members had arrived at an important time for the brigade after several years of recruitment challenges because of people moving away.

The recruits include two couples who recently moved from Melbourne and became neighbours – social worker Alanah Cant and her husband Ash, a train driver, and gardener Belinda Jouhki and her husband Niko, an MMU operator. Belinda and Niko's daughter Lara has also joined CFA as a Junior recruit.

Also joining recently is Sebastian Streat who is following in his grandfather Barry Phyper's footsteps, who is still an active member with the brigade.

Alanah said joining the brigade felt like a natural step after moving to the area.

"We wanted to meet people in our new community and get a better understanding of the area and of our land," Alanah said. "Having an incident on our property and seeing how the brigade responded really inspired my husband and me to get involved."

Belinda said joining the brigade was something she and Niko decided to do alongside Alanah and Ash.

"We got the pamphlet in the mail and thought we might have a look, and then Alanah and Ash came over and said they were interested too, so we all decided to go along," Belinda said.

"I thought it was the perfect opportunity to get some training and learn some new skills," she said.

Niko said volunteering was also about giving something back and becoming part of the local community.

"I'm a mechanic by trade, so I thought maybe my skills could be useful down the track," Niko said.

"Our daughter's keen to get involved too, so it's become a bit of a family journey for us."

UPDATE ON CFA PROJECTS

In each edition of the magazine we update members with the progress on some of our key projects. More information about all our projects is on Members Online: members.cfa.vic.gov.au/CFAProjects

Women's boots and gloves

It's important to equip our firefighters with modern and comfortable firefighting gear. CFA has been an active member of the Champions of Change Coalition Gender Inclusive PPE/PPC Federal Working Group, and CFA is working on providing boots and gloves specifically designed for women.



CFA is currently undertaking a procurement process with selected suppliers, with an evaluation approach that includes an extensive wearer trial involving a diverse group of 15 women from across the state. During the trial, which is taking place at the moment, the products will be used in different weather conditions and terrains, as well as during CFA activities. After the trial the women's feedback will be analysed to assess the suitability of products.

Child Safety Action Plan

To prepare for the release of the Child Safety Action Plan later this year, we have updated child safety policies and practical tools and continued to improve the *Playing Your Part* training. The Child Safety Risk Assessment process has been redesigned to make it easier to use at brigade level. We will finalise governance arrangements and test the updated training and risk assessment processes. We will give a link to the new Child Safety Action Plan in the spring edition of Brigade magazine.



Training infrastructure works

Infrastructure enhancements continue at our training campuses. The Safe Working at Heights prop at Bangholme training campus was completed in May this year. The rectification works to the Longerenong training campus off-road driver training tracks (ORDTT) are finished, and tenders have closed for rectification works to West Sale training campus ORDTT. Next, we will release tenders for the rectification works for the remaining two ORDTT. Design and tendering works have also commenced to build gender diverse change rooms at Sunraysia, Peshurst and Bangholme. Consultants have been selected to scope a future expansion of the Central Highlands training campus that would include accommodation and conferencing facilities.



Volunteer leadership development

To enhance the leadership skills of our volunteers, the following programs ran in 2026:

- Captains Peer Mentoring Program
- Emerging Young Leaders Mentoring Program
- Regional Leadership Scholarship Program
- Fireline Leadership
- Linton Staff Ride
- Certificate IV in Leadership & Management course
- Four regional Women's Challenge Camps took place in May and the South East Region camp is in June.

Expressions of interest are being sought for the 2026-27 Women in Leadership Mentoring Program. EOIs close on 30 June 2026.

CFA is expanding the Leadership Essentials (foundational leadership) courses that will be available to all volunteers. We plan to release them later this year.



Driver training

The Volunteer Driving Training project will continue to deliver additional opportunities to upskill to heavy vehicle licences and complete on-road and off-road driving training until June 2027.

Development of five driving simulators is underway. Two simulators will be provided for pilot testing purposes in July, with the remaining three simulators expected to be delivered in November 2026.

Key highlights as at 30 April 2026:

- 1,791 heavy vehicle licences have been approved since we began to deliver them in July 2023, and 1,238 have been completed
- 22 off-road courses have been scheduled and 19 completed
- 39 on-road courses have been scheduled and 32 completed.



Virtual reality training builds firefighting skills

Virtual reality (VR) is continuing to expand how CFA members train, offering an immersive, practical way to build skills, confidence and operational readiness.

Designed to complement – not replace – traditional training, VR gives members the opportunity to practise complex and high-risk scenarios in a safe and controlled environment. When combined with classroom learning and live fire exercises, it helps strengthen critical thinking, communication and decision-making skills before members face real-world incidents.

Using VR headsets and specialist firefighting equipment, members can practise responding to structure fires, petrol station incidents and bushfires. These scenarios can be repeated multiple times, helping reinforce situational awareness and sharpening tactical decision-making – all while allowing members to learn from mistakes without real-world consequences.

Accessibility is one of VR's greatest strengths. Training can be delivered locally at brigades, training centres, or district and regional facilities, reducing the need for long-distance travel or reliance on large-scale exercises. This helps make training more achievable for members while supporting consistent learning outcomes.

VR is especially valuable for preparing members for rare but high-risk incidents. Repeated exposure in a virtual setting helps build both muscle memory and mental readiness, so members are better equipped when these challenging situations arise.

A major step forward for CFA is the introduction of a new VR Skills Acquisition course in Wildfire Suppression. This course enables members to complete accredited training using VR, while giving them the opportunity to practise and demonstrate key competencies earlier in their development.

To support the rollout, CFA instructors had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the course and how to facilitate VR sessions at the Instructor Conference in late May and June. The focus on instructor capability is critical to ensure VR is used effectively, safely and consistently across CFA.

Across the past year, VR kits have been progressively introduced across regions, supported by familiarisation workshops and engagement sessions. Feedback from members and training teams has been positive, particularly around the realism of scenarios and the value of practising operational decision-making in a controlled environment.

Looking ahead, VR is also opening the door to new training



opportunities and possibilities. One area currently being considered is incident control module (ICM) training using virtual reality. Early evaluation has shown how coordinated, team-based learning could be delivered within a shared virtual environment, allowing participants in different locations to practise communication, supervision and decision-making across defined operational roles in real time.

While in its early days, ICM VR training has the potential to enhance how incident control concepts are introduced and practised, particularly for roles that rely on shared situational awareness and structured communication.

Live fire training remains essential but VR is becoming a valuable additional tool in CFA's training toolkit. By combining immersive technology with hands-on experience and strong instructor support, CFA is continuing to evolve training delivery and the preparation of members for the demands of modern firefighting.

STORY CLAUDINE DURAND





Supporting the community

Here are some of the many varied ways that Truganina brigade supports its community.

STORY LUCY BISHOP

Greg Haeusler

Training Team Leader



"I liaise with the Brigade Management Team (BMT), Brigade Training Coordinator (BTC) and my team to organise brigade Monday night training. This includes planning our training calendar for the year, making training plans and finding suitable facilitators to run training sessions. This team takes the pressure off the BTC."

Linda Townsend

Secretary



"I support the BMT and brigade by monitoring and distributing any correspondence that affects the brigade or its members. I also take meeting minutes, arrange elections and paperwork and assist the treasurer with local purchasing as needed."

"I support the group and broader firefighters with health monitoring and rehabilitation. This gives me great insight into what happens on a fireground or at a structure fire."

Brad Pilbeam

Communications Officer



"I'm responsible for radios and pagers and I'm also a member of the IT team helping to develop new IT functions and systems."

Shane Bullen

1st Lieutenant & Group Delegate



Darren Carle

Treasurer



Liam Green & Hanoch Thomas

Catering & Social Functions
Joint Team Leaders



Michele Abbott

Community Safety Coordinator/
Multicultural Liaison &
Social Media/Media



"I coordinate everything involving community engagement and safety. I and my team work together to formulate our annual brigade plan, and plan and run our annual Brigade Open Day which attracts between 1,000 and 1,500 community members. The brigade is part of a large multicultural community which means our engagement is challenging and interesting."

"I'm also a member of our Rehab team that is responsible for firefighter welfare at incidents within the Mt Cottrell Group and beyond."

Matthew Organ

2nd Lieutenant &
Junior Coordinator



Not present in photograph

Aaron D'Abaco

Rural Running Team Leader



Zac Mortimer & Aaron D'Abaco

VFBV Delegates



Aaron Hocking

4th Lieutenant & Specialist
Response/Driving Facilitator



Graham Abbott

3rd Lieutenant



"I manage and develop IT and security and surveillance systems for the brigade. I'm also responsible for change management and researching and developing Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) grants."

Miranda Preston

Fundraising & Special
Events Team Leader



"I liaise with members of my team to create events that help raise income for the brigade so that we can complete works and buy new equipment. My team also organises events such as the Good Friday Appeal and our annual Santa Run. I'm also one of the Junior leaders and help to foster our up-and-coming senior brigade members."

Teal Kiddier

OH&S & Fundraising &
Special Events Team Leader



Mark Hatton

Captain & Group Delegate



"I work with my Brigade Management Team members to ensure the brigade meets both CFA and community expectations."





Chief Officer's message

During late April and early May a Parliamentary Inquiry was conducted following the 2025-26 summer fires across Victoria. The purpose of the Inquiry is to examine the preparedness, response and recovery efforts of government and emergency services agencies relating to these significant fires.

Many of the insights informing the Inquiry have come directly from the lived experience of our members. Their willingness to share what worked well, what didn't, and what can be improved is critical to ensuring real, practical outcomes that support safer and more effective operations.

To those CFA members who participated in the Inquiry hearings I want to acknowledge and thank you for displaying high levels of humility, honesty and professionalism. The inquiry is an important activity for the Victorian community, and we have also welcomed the opportunity to listen to the experiences of the many witnesses and hear first-hand what they saw, felt and experienced in their community.

This inquiry will assist us significantly to capture lessons learned, translate them into meaningful change and ensure they are reflected in our ongoing training and operational arrangement. We must continue to listen and learn from this experience and look to the opportunities for improvement and, in some cases, get back to basics.

Before speaking about readiness or response, I want to acknowledge what so many people across Victoria have endured. This 2025-26 high-risk weather season brought frightening days, and long, uncertain nights. For many, the impact did not end when the fires were contained. Homes, livelihoods, livestock, community infrastructure and the sense of safety were lost, leaving deep and lasting impacts.

Tragically, a member of the public lost his life and on behalf of CFA I extend our heartfelt condolences to the Hobson family. Two CFA firefighters also suffered significant injuries requiring hospitalisation, and I thank them for their endurance, courage and sacrifice as they continue their recovery journey.

Our Post-Season Debrief Program is progressing well, with strong member engagement. The feedback and insights being shared will, along with matters arising from the inquiry, help us identify opportunities to improve and strengthen our operational performance. We look forward to updating you on this work in our spring edition.

Looking ahead, early climate outlooks are already signalling the potential influence of an El Niño pattern for the 2026–27 fire season. While there remains uncertainty in these long range forecasts, it reinforces the importance of maintaining strong training, readiness and community engagement well before next season arrives.



As we move into winter, our operational focus shifts. This is a time to concentrate on structure fire risk, skills maintenance and training, brigade and equipment readiness, and engaging with our communities about home fire safety. Winter is also an important opportunity to look after yourselves and one another. Take the opportunity to rest and recover from what has been a demanding season.

Finally, I extend my sincere thanks to all of you, the people who make up CFA, our volunteers, our frontline and support staff, and our DMOs. Regardless of the role you play in this great organisation, I thank you for your unwavering commitment to serve your communities throughout this past high-risk weather season. Your dedication makes a real difference and I am deeply grateful for the contribution each of you continues to make to CFA.



Scan the QR code to read the latest Quarterly Operational Update information sheets and case studies.

2025–26 Post Season Debrief Program update

The scale, complexity and duration of the 2025-26 fire season has generated a significant volume of feedback and observations, collected through after action reviews (AARs) and surveys as part of the Post Season Debrief Program. Analysing this data is well underway, and this information sheet provides an update on the findings so far. This information was prepared in early May so some information may have since been updated. For the latest program updates visit Members Online.

Emerging insights from fireground AARs

Initial analysis has identified many opportunities for improvement, which are summarised below.

Preparedness and readiness

- Strong brigade and group preparedness supported effective initial response, though property preparedness and fuel management remained uneven.
- Targeted community engagement improved preparedness outcomes where applied.

Operations

- Inconsistent application of tanker tactics and suppression approaches reduced effectiveness.
- Variability in member experience across fire types (bush versus grass) impacted confidence and effectiveness.
- Roadside vegetation significantly influenced fire behaviour.
- Benefits were observed where local members filled fireground leadership positions, to embed local knowledge in tactical decisions (terrain, access, priorities).

Resources

- Heavy machinery and private vehicles were critical, but not always engaged early or well-coordinated.
- Reliance on aircraft created capability gaps when grounded or unavailable.
- There were challenges with bulk water supply, couplings and attachments, but there were clear benefits when a reliable supply was established, particularly through the Elevated Seasonal Response Initiative (ESRI).

Command, control and coordination

- There was inconsistent or delayed sectorisation and establishment of fireground structures, but they were effective when applied.
- A limited depth of trained sector/division commanders increased the reliance on key individuals.
- There is a need for clearer integration of local and group knowledge into incident control centre (ICC) structures.
- Misalignment between ICC strategies and fireground conditions.

Communication

- Inconsistent information flow from ICCs, including gaps in briefings, maps and plans.
- Radio/network issues and congestion reduced situational awareness, increasing reliance on workarounds (eg UHF).
- Inconsistent adherence to communication plans.
- Importance of tested, locally informed communication plans and redundancy solutions.

Communities

- Inconsistent warning timing and mapping led to community confusion.

- Varying community understanding of VicEmergency increased reliance on local CFA members for information.
- Local engagement (eg door knocking) was effective where warnings lagged.
- There was a reliance on informal community communication channels, increasing the risk of misinformation.

Survey results

Strike Team Leader survey

There were 117 responses to the 2025-26 Strike Team Leader survey from 101 members. Overall, the results showed a positive shift compared with 2024–25, with improvements recorded in most measures. Strike team leaders reported high performance in the following areas:

- Catering provided on the fireground (86 per cent)
- Communication protocols being followed (81 per cent)
- Fatigue was well managed (80 per cent).

Additionally, when compared with 2024-25, improvements were most evident in logistical aspects of deployment, with significant decreases in travel time to accommodation from the fireground, and catering availability improving by about 20 per cent.

The results also reinforced ongoing challenges. Many respondents reported issues with:

- radio (60 per cent) and mobile (58 per cent) reception
- gaps in pre-deployment information, with 55 per cent of respondents indicating they did not clearly understand their role prior to deployment
- not receiving key resources such as ISPs (55 per cent) and maps (43 per cent).

Sector and Division Commander survey

The Division and Sector Commander survey received 32 responses. It highlighted strong operational leadership but also raised ongoing challenges. While performance was high in key areas such as adherence to communication protocols (88 per cent) and inter-agency communication (84 per cent), many respondents reported gaps in information and planning. Notably, 72 per cent experienced communication issues, with further gaps in receiving ISPs (66 per cent) and communications plans (56 per cent).

Next steps and acknowledgements

Work has commenced to align opportunities for improvement with appropriate actions. This will include actions that can be implemented prior to next fire season, as well as long-term improvements that may take further time to complete.

Some activities have already commenced, including a deep dive review of communications. This covers both the technical and operational aspects to provide further insights into this season's communication challenges.

The Performance Improvement team thanks all members and staff for their strong engagement. This feedback is essential to strengthen CFA's preparedness and response for future fire seasons.

Scan the QR code for up-to-date information about the program.



First on scene – factory fire

Factory fires can bring a level of complexity, scale (and drama) that may prove intimidating for the incident controller (IC) first on scene. Whether it's the pager message with 'that address' or the further information on turnout, the building column of smoke on the horizon is not the only indicator of a potentially complex event.



Before the fire

Site familiarisation and access are essential for pre-planning. Understanding what the factory is used for and what is stored there is essential to understand the risk and help you to plan your response in the event of a fire. Site access and water availability in an industrial complex – whether bulk tanks, sprinklers and internal hydrants on a ring main or just street hydrants – will help you plan the need for hose layers and escalations of pumper support, bulk water or multiple tankers for relays in remote or isolated areas.

Before the fire starts (and you are dealing with information overload, evacuating occupants, onlookers with their phones recording) accurate and up-to-date knowledge of risk potential is essential.

Site inspections help build a clearer picture of the risks in the area. Some of the factors present at many factories include chemical storage, flammable liquid storage, photovoltaic installations and internal BESS (battery energy storage systems).

Effective preplanning and a comprehensive size-up will greatly assist in the first 15 to 30 minutes of operations and can have a significant influence on operations over the coming hours.

By attending many and varied smaller jobs as crew members, we develop a practical understanding of the principles of our must dos: size-up (intelligence gathering and analysis), SPADRA (safety and risk management), RECEO (a principled approach to operations) and SMEACSQ (effective briefings of crews).

When first on scene and faced with a developing factory fire, those acronyms become an essential resource for safety of your crew and a foundation for successful operations. Safety of our people and other emergency services personnel, protection of the community from harm and minimising damage are our best metrics of success.



En route

Time of day and week, traffic, further information from the caller, multiple calls, accessing pre-plans and protected premises information...all of these can assist your size-up.

Size-up starts with the preplanning your brigade has done, it continues with the initial pager message and with further information provided by Firecom en route. Further information is essential to help form a picture of what you know and don't know. It can assist in developing an accurate sitrep and paints a picture for oncoming vehicles and the district duty officer (DDO) allowing for efficient resource planning as the incident develops.

On scene

Your size-up should include a visual of the structure from as many sides as possible, identifying people involved/evacuated, emergency information (such as protected premises information and manifests identifying dangerous goods or flammable liquid storage), services connected and whether they have been isolated, fire involvement/impact, exposures, water availability and community impacts from smoke.

Factors that can affect a full size-up include heavy smoke, security measures preventing access, and a developing fire that makes it unsafe to get around the property. If you can't complete a full size-up, include this in your briefing as one of the safety aspects.

First wordback and escalations

For an IC, managing the complexities of a factory fire in the early stages can seem daunting because you have a lot to consider and a lot of information to gather and analyse.

Your first wordback and sitrep can help save time as the fire develops giving the DDO and group a picture of the fire. This can assist with escalations and planning requirements as the fire develops. Deploying a field operations vehicle or mobile command vehicle can make the management of the fire significantly easier, especially for complex or protracted incidents. Having a base of operations with access to mapping, water supply, weather and the Incident Management System will make incident control easier. Regardless of whether you keep control of the fire or decide to transfer control, a properly set up and located incident control point in the initial stages of the fire is essential.

Adhering to the principles of AIIMS (management by objectives, establishing functional management - planning/operations /logistics, monitoring span of control, maintaining unity of command (one incident controller), and ensuring flexibility (or scalability by sectorisation) with the early establishment of an incident management team (IMT) will assist greatly in your management of the fire. Appointing a safety officer with appropriate experience and skill can help ensure you and your crew operate safely.

In the early stages of the fire, incident control and operations can be kept together, however escalations and additional resources are heavily affected by time and location just as they are in the bushfire environment. Understanding the impact of logistic management on operations is critical. Assigning planning and logistics roles to others can assist you as the IC as the fire develops.

Planning for your first IMT meeting ensures a coordinated response and, as the fire progresses, consider setting up an incident emergency management team (IEMT) for broader consultation and to ensure outcomes such as consistent and detailed community messaging and impact assessments are addressed.

Responding specialist resources such as hose layers and aerial appliances is not just about logistics. The IC needs to ensure planning is undertaken for the time taken to respond and management of where and how they are set up. By setting up initial operations at a factory fire that allow for the arrival of aerial appliances, you can save significant equipment relocation headaches and prevent a delay to firefighting operations when they arrive.

Safety zones and the potential of structural collapse, especially where tilt slab construction is involved, must be considered in your operations planning.



It's essential to consider hazardous materials/dangerous goods stored or used at the premises in both your preplanning and size-up. Emergency information, often found at the entrance to the premises, should be supplemented if possible by on site or after-hours contacts to gain a full and accurate picture of risk. Involvement of these materials in fire should also be a flag to consider Hazmat response and notification of Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The EPA can give advice about fire water run-off and basic plume modelling for smoke. Depending on the complexity of the fire, consulting the scientific officer through Firecom is advisable when industrial chemicals are involved in fire.

Using innovations such as RPAS (remote pilotless aircraft systems) to gather intelligence and assist with fire investigation after the event can be requested through Firecom. The FSCC will determine if the response sits within CFA District 8, 9, 12, 13, or 14 (or other districts upon request). RPAS has the capacity to provide significant intelligence to the IMT.

When responding specialist equipment and personnel from supporting agencies such as FRV additional command resources will often be dispatched to attend with them. Command personnel are an excellent resource for both liaison and to help with operations and support the principles of the complementary fire service model.

Conclusion

When you are the first on scene of any emergency, the systems and processes you implement will often dictate how well the emergency is handled and resolved over the next few hours. Preparation and planning for response to emergency events can be the key to success. You know your brigade area and its risks better than anyone. Training and preparing with your group and district, using AIIMS and following SPADRA ,all help ensure the safety of your crew and the community.



PHOTO NICOLE HARVEY

Accurate reporting of fire causation

Based on data from the Fire and Incident Reporting System, the undetermined rate for the cause of fires is currently about 20 per cent. It is essential that all fire brigades record their attendance at fires and accurately complete and submit fire reports using the relevant codes to clearly record the origin and cause of the fires.

By monitoring CAD event chronologies we can see that in a high proportion of fires attended, the origin and cause of the fires was established by incident controllers (IC). However, when the fire report was completed, the fire causation was not entered or was recorded as 'undetermined' or 'not specified'.

Where the origin and cause of fires is clearly able to be determined by the IC all the relevant details must be recorded as part of the fire report using the relevant ignition codes. The accurate identification of origin and cause of fires, along with the recording and reporting of the causation of fires, is essential to help CFA identify fire trends leading to the development of fire safety, prevention and education campaigns.

Data and information contained in fire reports relating to the origin and cause of fires is used extensively by the Fire Investigation Section as part of the fire trend identification process.

Below, we give an overview of the operational process the IC should follow to ensure that the fire causation is correctly reported and notifications to relevant agencies are done in accordance with relevant standard operating procedures.

Appliance and equipment-related fires

Where the fire is determined to be caused by electrical or gas appliances, equipment, infrastructure or assets, the IC is required to notify Energy Safe Victoria via Firecom.

For fires involving electrical or gas appliances or equipment, record all the relevant information about the make, model and serial number in the fire report.

Suspicious fires

In the event of the fire being deemed suspicious, the IC must preserve the scene and request via Firecom that Victoria Police attend the scene. When Victoria Police arrive on scene, the IC should provide details of why the fire has been deemed suspicious and advise Victoria Police and fire investigators of any previous fire history in the surrounding area.

In the fire report the ignition code for the cause of the fire should be recorded as 'suspicious'.

Fire investigator attendance at scenes

If the IC is unable to determine the origin and cause of the fire, or the fire meets the attendance criteria of fire investigators in accordance with Standard Operating Procedure 14.03 – Fire Investigation, a request can be made through Firecom to the duty officer to arrange fire investigators to attend the scene.

If possible, photograph and record details of the scene to ensure accurate information is available to complete relevant notifications and reporting. Provide the photographs to the fire investigators on their arrival.

When fire investigators arrive on scene, they will report to the IC to obtain a briefing on the observations and actions performed, suppression strategies and tactics, and risks or hazards identified. Fire investigators will examine the scene to determine the origin and cause of the fire and will prepare a detailed report outlining the investigation findings, which will update the relevant codes in the fire report.

For more Information about fire investigation check the CFA Pocketbook app or use the QR code to access Members Online.



Benefits of recording accurate fire causation

Through accurate recording of fire causation as part of fire reports CFA can:

- decrease the number and percentage of undetermined rate of fires
- identify fire trends
- obtain valuable data, information and evidence to inform fire prevention strategies, community safety, education messaging and media campaigns
- identify appliances, equipment, vehicles and machinery that are displaying a risk of fire, fuel leakage, gas leakage or overheating that could lead to product safety recalls
- fulfill its reporting requirements in accordance with relevant legislation and standard operating procedures.

Bayswater factory fire

Summary

On 14 February 2025 crews responded to a reported factory fire on Jersey Road, Bayswater in District 13. This factory is in an industrial area containing many large factories with hazardous and dangerous goods. The response highlighted how clear incident structure and effective delegation can make the day.

Incident overview

In the early hours, a call was made to Triple Zero stating flames and smoke were issuing from the loading dock of a factory in Bayswater. At this stage it wasn't known whether the factory contained dangerous goods. FRV Pumper 85 was the first on scene and immediately transmitted a NYUC wordback "make pumpers four". Within a few minutes, the Bayswater brigade pumper arrived with the Bayswater captain. The resource request was escalated to "make pumpers seven", plus a ladder platform, the Scoresby hose layer, field operational vehicle and a CFA commander.

The FRV senior station officer (SSO) and Bayswater captain worked together and completed a full 360-degree size-up of the fire. Upon returning to the control point a transfer of control was completed with the SSO assuming operations. A sit rep was transmitted stating a 50m x 70m factory was fully alight with chemicals stored on site.

The business owner soon arrived and advised that large quantities of oil were stored including two 20,000-litre bulk tankers. An initial strategy of a defensive external attack using ground monitors, hand lines and the ladder platform was successfully employed to protect exposures and reduce the size of the fire.

A further wordback for "make pumpers 10, B class foam, POD and Hazmat for atmospheric monitoring" was made. An incident management team (IMT) meeting was held and it was determined that because the fire had sufficiently cooled, a change of strategies should be implemented. Crews applied B class foam by hand lines and entered the structure for more targeted suppression. Concurrently, an emergency management team (EMT) identified impacts beyond the initial site and strategies were put in place to mitigate them.

The application of B class foam (3,000 litres of concentrate) successfully suppressed the fire and emission of smoke. At 2.25am the Bayswater captain declared the fire under control. A reduced day shift, which had been planned overnight, arrived at 8am. Contractors arrived with 'suck trucks' to remove remaining oil stores. The scene was handed over to Victoria Police at 11.14am.

What worked well

It was agreed by both District 13 commanders and IMT members on scene that the fire was extremely well managed. An after action review was conducted to establish why the operation had gone so well.

Delegation: Extensive IMT and EMT teams were formed and all members were briefed. Strategies and tactics were agreed, tasks were assigned and members completed them. The IC was identifiable at the control point and constantly reviewed the incident information and delegated tasks.

Control point: The Basin FCV was responded and quickly established a control point. It completed a log of events,



provided radio communications on behalf of the IC and maintained a 'battle board' noting the location of all vehicles on scene by sector. It managed a 'to do' list for the IC and was a focal point for the IC.

Interrogation of strategies and tactics: The IC in conjunction with the IMT and EMT members constantly reviewed their strategies and tactics and adjusted them as required. It takes courage to cease all water operations to understand where the seat of the fire is and its extent. However, it was this decision that led to a transition to B class foam application and final extinguishment.

Working together: Bayswater brigade and the wider Knox Group have excellent working relationships with CFA Commanders and neighbouring FRV fire stations. When all parties arrived on scene, respect was shown for the role they had to perform and the focus was on the safe extinguishment of the fire.

Conclusion

Thirty vehicles were responded across a 12-hour period and an EMT was formed consisting of many support agencies. Understanding the AIMS incident management structure, delegation, and cooperation were key to a successful outcome and safe firefight.





BlueScope Steel industrial rescue

Summary

CFA and FRV crews were called to what was reported as a structure collapse in Hastings. It was later confirmed that this incident has occurred at BlueScope Steel which is a heavy industrial site.

Incident overview

In the evening of 1 July 2024, CFA and FRV crews were paged to what was thought to be a structural collapse. En route further communications established that the incident involved persons trapped under a 10-tonne steel roller and heavy rescue was required immediately. The incident required rescue equipment that Hastings brigade vehicles were not set up to carry. This meant Langwarrin Rescue, FRV Station 87a pumper, FRV Station 10 heavy rescue POD and FRV Station 87 rescue all continued to the incident.

Ambulance Victoria (AV) was already on scene attending to two casualties when crews from Hastings and Langwarrin brigades arrived. On arrival, a size up was undertaken and it was determined that there was no structural collapse, but two 10-tonne rollers had fallen from about five metres onto two workers below, trapping one of them from the hips down and pushing the other worker out of the way.

When Langwarrin Rescue arrived on scene, an incident management team (IMT) was established with the Hastings captain as the incident controller (IC), Hastings Lieutenant as the operations officer, and Langwarrin crew leader as the rescue commander. The IC and crews made the scene as safe as possible for AV paramedics, who were assisted on scene by emergency response crews.

As well as the IMT, an emergency management team (EMT) was established with the CFA Commander and group officer, and representatives from FRV, BlueScope Steel, AV, Victoria Police and, later on, WorkSafe Victoria.

Sectors were established at the 'hot zone', the entrance to the structure and the main gate. Due to the distances involved and the building layout, equipment that was required at the hot zone (such as stabilisation timber from the FRV Rescue POD from FRV Station 10) was relayed from operations to the sector commander to have them delivered. Other vehicles were directed into the incident location from the main gate sector to ensure an efficient response was maintained.

CFA and FRV rescue crews integrated into one rescue team to undertake the controlled lift using CFA 50-tonne jacks. Several factors made this a complicated rescue: the distance from the Rescue POD and Langwarrin Rescue to the incident scene; environmental conditions from noise, lubricants, grease and dust; and the need to carefully stabilise and pack the rollers to prevent further movement as they were lifted.

After close communication and coordination with AV paramedics, the trapped man was released about one and a half hours after the extrication began and air lifted to hospital. The release and extrication of the man had to be carefully planned because of the amount of time he had been crushed, presenting several major medical issues. The safety of everyone on scene was paramount because of the circumstances and cramped conditions.

What worked well

Command and control

- The early establishment of the command structure on arrival was a key to the success of this operation, allowing for good communication flow.
- The early creation of the incident EMT established the control agency and support agency arrangements, and allowed for good communication and early requests for resourcing and welfare support.
- Having the health commander as a member of the EMT allowed the rescue Commander and IC to plan and adjust requirements without having to interrupt paramedics who were treating the patient.

RMR radio channel

- The use of the paged RMR radio channel allowed for early, accurate situation reports directly to the oncoming rescue units. This enabled some resources to be cancelled and others to be requested.
- The use of an RMR rather than a local channel allowed communication before the rescue units arrived. This was beneficial because some rescue assets were travelling from Dandenong and Richmond.

Integration of agency rescue teams

- The integration of CFA and FRV rescue operators into one team worked smoothly and allowed for free flow of suggestions while still maintaining the IC's objective and extraction plan.
- The addition of rescue operators to the scene provided extra safety officers at the scene (more sets of eyes) and allowed for multiple tasks to be undertaken simultaneously.

Operational tools

- This was the first time Langwarrin brigade used the 50-tonne jacks operationally. They had been issued to the brigade several months earlier as part of a suite of new tools issued to brigades. The training undertaken by the brigade on these jacks proved invaluable and the investment in new equipment provided an option not previously available to the brigade.

Equipment familiarisation

- Langwarrin brigade and FRV Station 87 recently undertook an equipment familiarisation session to gain a better understanding of the equipment available on FRV Rescue PODs. Further familiarisation sessions are being planned with the plant emergency response team to gain a better understanding of their capabilities.

Lessons identified

Staging area and coordination

Due to the distances involved and the inability to have all the required vehicles close to the scene, a staging area was initially set up outside the building. This lacked early coordination and ambulances and fire vehicles had to be moved around. Early considerations en route or on scene as soon as the size up is completed could lessen vehicle movements and double handling of equipment. Staging of vehicles was also a problem as the rescue units and the ambulances could get to within only 50 metres of the hot zone, and there was a maze of paths through the industrial work area.

AIIMS (Australian Interagency Incident Management System)

The Chief Officer directs via Standing Orders 9.00 that "All fires and incidents will be managed in accordance with the principles of the Incident Control System of AIIMS". The use of the AIIMS structure allows for objectives to be set and communicated clearly while allowing operations personnel the adaptability to use a variety of strategies and tactics. The sooner the incident management structure is in place, the more efficient the resolution of the incident becomes. Members need to understand the principles of AIIMS and how to apply them to all incidents.

Conclusion

This incident occurred in an industrial environment with hydraulic oil on the floor which made it hazardous for all the responders. The area of work was cramped due to the nature of the incident, with two 10-tonne rollers taking up a large portion of the work area.

It is worthwhile establishing an incident management structure which allows for delegation, improved communications and will take some of the stress from the IC. In addition, setting up a communications plan early allows communication with oncoming resources ensuring crews are prepared on arrival.

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

If you have any lessons to share email lessons-management-centre@cfa.vic.gov.au



New drone fleet strengthens emergency response

Drones have become CFA's latest eyes in the sky, already proving their effectiveness during the 2025-26 fire season.

CFA embarked on the trial using Remote Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) a year ago to boost our firefighting intelligence from above.

The 12-month pilot program, hosted at Rowville and Edithvale brigades including volunteer pilots from Melbourne's outer east and southeast, has proven to be a valuable tool in fighting fires and other emergencies, allowing incident controllers and fireground command personnel to make timely and informed decisions.

RPAS is used for a range of emergency situations including identifying hot spots, hazmats, rope rescue and urban search and rescue, aerial thermal imaging, impact assessment, fire investigation, searches, amongst other live video and training benefits.

The success of the trial was proven during the January 2026 fire season on various firegrounds across the state.

Incredible vision was captured during a bushfire at Rhyll at Phillip Island on 22 January, on the edge of the Koala Conservation Reserve, where firefighters were seen standing over the top of a hot spot. The RPAS crew informed the firefighters on the ground, where you see them starting to rake and water down the hotspot, showing smoke billowing out of the ground.

Incident Controller Damien O'Connor stated that through the ability to have the holistic view, they were able to find several hot spots outside of the main fire.

"This prevented the fire restarting in unburnt land and gave us the confidence to leave the fireground knowing our suppression techniques were successful," Damien said.

"These hot spots were identified at night, and we were able to guide crews to their location through the use of the drone spotlight as well as by radio communications watching the image on the screen.

"I have no doubt the use of the RPAS program at this incident not only saved the local brigades many hours and potential outbreaks, it also ensured the conservation of the Koala program and its continual success to limit the spread of the fire."

Rowville Fire Brigade Captain and RPAS pilot Cien Pereira works as an air traffic controller and said she was keen for CFA to try a new specialty which happened to align with the work she does.



"Drones provide incredible intelligence and there are long term benefits of where this program can go," Cien said.

"There are incident controllers out there that don't realise this is an option for them, so we're doing demonstrations across the state to try and get the word out.

"RPAS provides more accurate, more up to date information and intelligence for better decision making, so this makes everything safer for both the community and our firefighters."

CFA Commander and Manager of Aviation John Katakouzinis AFSM said the 12-month pilot program had been successful and hopes to roll it out further in the future.

"We're got 21 highly trained drone pilots at the moment who have been responding to a range of incidents across the state, particularly over summer," John said.

"The varying capabilities such as still images, 4K video, HD video, optical zoom and thermal imaging provide invaluable insights to our incident controllers and firefighters.

"The RPAS program is a remarkable asset to CFA now and into the future."

STORY AMY SCHILDBERGER



Strengthening smoke alarm safety in 2026

Fires that start at night can escalate quickly and without warning. Smoke can spread silently, especially behind closed bedroom doors, overwhelming people before a hallway smoke alarm activates.

That's why CFA and Fire Rescue Victoria are continuing the 'Silence is deadly' smoke alarm campaign in 2026. Building on the strong results achieved in 2025, the campaign reinforces a vital safety message for our communities: smoke alarms should be installed in bedrooms, not just hallways.

Research conducted last year confirmed the campaign was having a strong impact on members of the public.



Approximately 28 per cent of people who saw the advertising went on to purchase or install a smoke alarm, with an even higher proportion reporting intentions to take action.

Attitudes toward smoke alarm safety and plans to change behaviour also shifted positively, demonstrating the effectiveness of the advertising in reinforcing the message (29 per cent compared to 21 per cent in 2024).

However, the research also identified ongoing challenges. Misconceptions about the cost of smoke alarms persist, particularly within culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Renters remain difficult to engage, with many unsure of their rights and responsibilities. Awareness is also low among higher risk groups about the importance of smoke alarms in every bedroom, especially when doors are closed at night.

This year's campaign continues to use 'Silence is deadly' resources which includes confronting animations showing everyday sleeping scenarios, reinforcing how dangerous smoke can be during a night time fire. The advertising campaign will run during July and August.

To support brigades and members on the ground, two new flyers will be available this winter. One addresses smoke alarm costs and types, while the other focuses on renters and rental providers, outlining legal obligations and practical steps renters can take. Additional promotional materials, such as pull up banners and corflute signs, are also being developed.



Smoke alarm and home fire safety resources are available to members via the Community Engagement Content Portal under Campaign Resources > Smoke Alarm. We encourage brigades to share these resources on their Facebook and Instagram pages.

Flyers and other promotional materials will be available through your local Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC). Contact your district office for details.



STORY NANCY THOMPSON

THE TWO OF US:

Michael Tempini and Lynda Rumbold



Former captain of Lake Boga Fire Brigade Michael Tempini and Wycheproof South Fire Brigade Captain Lynda Rumbold were paired as mentor and mentee through CFA's Captains Peer Mentor Program (CPMP). Although their brigade experiences were distinctly different, they quickly established common ground and have built a strong bond through the program.

Lynda

"I was put up for the CPMP team by the District 18 headquarters. When you're asked to do something that's not your everyday, it's nice to know that they think of you that way.

I first met Mick before the program actually started. Lisa Clinch (Volunteer Sustainability Manager – North West Region) organised a get-together and gave us all the info about what was going to happen. We were at District 18 headquarters and just had a meet and greet in the office to get to know each other before the program started.

Mick and I got along from day one, and I think Lisa did a great job pairing us together. Mick has been a mentor a number of times. He's been at it for a while, so it was great to glean information from him. The CPMP was an open, safe space for people to talk about what's happening in their brigades.

I think the biggest difference for Mick and me is our brigades. Mick's brigade (Lake Boga) is a really busy brigade, whereas at my little country brigade we basically put wet stuff on hot stuff and attend the occasional car accident. It's not as intense as what Lake Boga has to deal with on a weekly or monthly basis. So hats off to him and the guys up on that highway.

One of the key things we discussed [through CPMP] was succession planning. It's something we wanted to implement down here, so Mick went through how they developed their program. I went ahead and implemented it in our brigade which has been good. We've got a couple of new younger members so it's about getting them up to speed using some hints I got from Mick.

The CPMP is a brilliant idea and a reinforcement of everything that we do in our volunteering with CFA. Quite often up here

[District 18] I'm the only female captain in the room, but that doesn't scare me. I have faith in what I can do and hopefully I can impart that to other people in the program. We're all doing a good job and don't doubt yourself."

Mick

"I've had three different mentees during my time in the CPMP. I got a call from Gavin Wright (District 18 Assistant Chief Fire Officer) asking if I'd be interested in participating and ever since then I've been a pretty consistent part of the program. This time around, I was paired with Lynda, and the program was my first interaction with her.

Lynda is very experienced generally in life and so it's probably been just a little bit more conversation about CFA and a little bit around succession planning in the brigade. I've learned quite a bit from Lynda too. She's just a great human being. She has a lot of energy and is always helpful.

She took over the captain role from her husband and I think she's really stepped into that leadership role. She is also a really good, calm operator. I don't think she gets rattled by too much. She has gone to a few forums and is a great advocate for CFA and leadership.

Across the district, we cover a range of areas. Some brigades are pretty much urban brigades and others are extremely rural. There are different levels of responses, but there's still a lot of common ground among them. Even though I'm a mentor, I'm always learning from different people. There's lots of things that everyone goes through in CFA, but people come at a problem from different perspectives.

I think leadership is something that really does shape the future and you can see when people have a good understanding of it because things function well. Giving people the opportunity to be part of this program really helps with the future. It provides an understanding of the importance of looking after your teams, working together and being part of something bigger."

STORY ALISON SMIRNOFF



The Dandenong Ranges is home to Kalorama-Mt Dandenong brigade 2nd Lieutenant Peter Henwood and his fascinating and vast collection of fire-related items from tiny badges to a 19th century fire engine. From inside his personal museum, Peter explained the significance of some of his pieces.

"I began collecting fire brigade items about 33 years ago," Peter said. "I have thousands of items but I've never counted them. And I've made many friendships through collecting."

"The first item I bought was a street fire alarm because I remembered them as a kid. If there was a fire, people could break the glass to alert the fire brigade."

One of Peter's oldest and rarest items is a Shand Mason manual fire engine built in 1885.

"My Shand Mason was imported by an antique dealer years ago. It came from the railways in India. It's similar to the small manual pumps that were used by Country Fire Brigades Board (CFBB) brigades. It's priceless to me as it gets used at brigade open days and events. It still pumps as designed and is popular with kids."

One of the many items of clothing in his collection is the dress uniform worn by the much-respected former CFA Chief Officer Euan Ferguson AFSM.

"Euan enjoyed walking through the Dandenongs and he dropped into my fire station from time to time," Peter said. "I got hold of a uniform from CFA HQ and thought it was Euan's, so I asked him. He said it wasn't his, but he then rang me later to tell me he had found his uniform in a box. He asked me if I would like it and I obviously said yes."

Peter's knowledge of old firefighting equipment is impressive, but it's his sentimental connection to some items that is more striking. For example, his most treasured possession is a nondescript firefighter's helmet that was worn during the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires.

engines to protect his distillery and the surrounding area. The barrel was filled with gin. The fire engine won awards at the 1862 International Exhibition in London.

"I love collecting these small, unusual items. It's never ending."

When many brigades have open days or special events, they like to display fascinating pieces of fire brigade memorabilia for community members to look at. Recognising this demand, Peter has assembled a mini collection that he's happy to lend to brigades.

"I'm also happy to go to the brigade and set up a display," Peter said.

If your brigade is interested in borrowing some items, email Peter at phenwoodcfa@gmail.com.

Despite his vast collection, Peter is keen to hunt down a couple of items: a CFBB station keeper hat badge – he thinks he has all the other hat badges – and a CFBB American Civil War style cap. If you can help Peter

add these to his collection, email phenwoodcfa@gmail.com.

A remarkable personal collection



"Herb Detetz was the group officer of Dandenong Ranges and the duty officer during the Ash Wednesday fires," Peter said. "He was a mentor to me when I joined the brigade and I went to a lot of fires with him. He was an inspiration. When he talked, people listened. His helmet has so much sentimental value to me."

Peter can pick up any one of his many items and tell a fascinating story about it.

"Everything has a story. I have a small wooden barrel that was carried on a private fire engine in London before the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was formed in 1866. Captain Frederick Hodges was a gin distiller who also owned a fleet of fire

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL

Scan the QR code to see more items in Peter's collection.



Building the foundation for fire safety

Each year, CFA responds to thousands of industrial and commercial fires across Victoria—events that not only threaten lives but can destroy property, disrupt operations and damage an organisation's reputation. For small businesses, the financial toll can be critical; many are unable to fully recover.

To address these risks, CFA adopts a comprehensive approach to industry engagement and advocacy, providing guidance and working closely with brigades, regulators, industry and communities.

The goal is to create safer built environments and reduce risk before a fire begins.



Government and regulators

Stronger building regulations and improved safety standards come from this behind-the-scenes effort, helping shape the rules that protect businesses, people and communities.

CFA works closely with government authorities including local councils and the Minister for Planning, offering expert advice to ensuring fire safety is embedded in the planning and design of new and existing developments. Through the Specialist Risk and Fire Safety Unit (SRFSU), CFA engaged directly with designers, consultants and owners to advocate for fire-safe design.

CFA also supports land use planning, including through the Bushfire Management Overlay, which guides where and how communities grow – balancing development with bushfire risk.

At the national level, CFA contributes through groups such as the AFAC Built Environment and Planning Technical Group, chaired by CFA's Head of Community Infrastructure Andrew Andreou.

"As a fire agency, we have a responsibility to minimise fire risk in the built environment including where we build, how we design and the safeguards we implement," Andrew said.

"Outcomes of our advocacy include stronger building rules, improved fire sprinkler systems and higher safety standards - helping ensure new developments go beyond minimum requirements."

Business and industry

In holiday and coastal areas, bushfire risk can be significant, and inadequate planning can delay safe evacuation. Fires in caravans and caravan parks can spread rapidly, increasing the risk of serious injury or fatalities.

To manage these risks, CFA provides detailed fire safety guidelines for high-risk facilities, such as caravan parks and tourism sites. These cover fire systems, firewater tanks, emergency planning, safety assessments, and site layout and access - built in from the early planning stages.

CFA's Senior Manager Specialist Risk and Fire Safety Matt Allen said the guidelines are designed to reduce risk and save lives.

"In high risk environments like caravan parks where fires can escalate in seconds, clear standards for planning, equipment and evacuation give people their best chance of getting out safely.

"When operators apply them from day one, they're not just complying with rules; they're actively protecting lives."

As new challenges emerge, CFA's work continues to evolve. Renewable energy projects, for example, introduce unique fire risks that require careful planning and management.

Through the SRFSU, CFA provides guidance on bushfire risk, fire safety and emergency planning for renewable energy operators, including pre-planning, risk assessments and compliance education.

CFA has also developed Australia's first guidelines for the design and construction of renewable energy facilities, outlining expectations for fire risk management in both design and operation.

"The SRFSU has worked directly with hundreds of facilities in CFA response areas to embed fire risk controls over the past

four years to embed effective risk controls," Matt said.

"We also work closely with the Department of Transport and Planning during the application stage to ensure operators develop robust risk, fire and emergency management plans, and implement controls such as design modifications, fire breaks and vegetation management.

"This strong planning and early risk mitigation is critical to protecting lives, infrastructure and communities – especially as our built environment continues to change."

The local level

Investing in fire and emergency safety delivers clear economic and social benefits for businesses and community facilities. Fire-safe workplaces are more resilient, reducing the likelihood and impact of incidents while supporting business continuity and strengthening community confidence.

Maintaining on-site fire equipment - such as extinguishers, fire blankets and hose reels - is a legal requirement for all building owners and occupiers. Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) plays a critical role in meeting these obligations.

Industry Fire Prevention Manager Leigh Marsh said FEM not only supports brigades as an income stream; it strengthens their connection with local communities.

"Each year, CFA brigades visit more than 45,000 properties to inspect and service equipment, ensuring it is compliant, functional and ready to use in an emergency," Leigh said.

"Beyond compliance, these visits provide important local insight. By working directly with businesses and facilities, brigades build a stronger understanding of site-specific risks, fire protection systems and potential hazards, helping to prevent incidents before they occur."

In addition to maintenance services, CFA delivers a range of commercial training programs tailored to industry, business and residential care settings. These include First Attack Firefighting, Evacuation Preparedness, and customised training designed to meet the specific needs of individual workplaces.

This training equips participants with the confidence and skills to identify different types of fires and safely use appropriate portable fire equipment.

"Delivering practical fire safety education is a key part of CFA's commitment to working alongside businesses to build safer communities," Leigh said.

"In many cases, staff are the first on scene when a fire starts. Having the confidence to act in those first few minutes can make all the difference, helping protect people and reduce the impact of fires."

By building capability, supporting industry and delivering high-quality services, CFA is helping reduce risk and strengthen Victoria's ability to prevent and respond to emergencies.

These efforts also support the long-term viability of CFA brigades, particularly in regional and rural communities where volunteers play a vital role in local safety and resilience. By identifying hazards early, promoting best practice and supporting compliance, CFA helps prevent incidents and reduce their severity.

STORY SHAUNNAGH O'LOUGHLIN

Faces of CFA

What is your CFA role?

Fifth lieutenant and health & safety and communications officer. I'm also co-chair of the West and South West Region Fire Medical Response (FMR) Committee.

Why did you join?

There's a joke I tell that my father's burnoffs had a habit of getting away from him and that CFA claimed his firstborn as a result. The truth is I've always wanted to give back to my community. When we lived in Killawarra, the Warby Ranges and surrounds always had significant fire risk and joining the local brigade just felt like the right thing to do. It's more than volunteering – it's about being there for people when they need it most.

What incident has had the greatest impact on you?

The 2024 Grampians fires. I was crew leader on Stawell Tanker 1 when we were forced to retreat and shelter at the oval as the fire front came through. I learned a lot that day that took me months to process. My driver reminding me to clear the dash while we sheltered in the oval is a moment lodged in my memory. When the front passed, we went back out looking for properties to protect or save. Driving through, we saw fewer cars at houses than there had been on our reconnaissance run before the fire. CFA messaging and the language around Catastrophic days meant that people left early and as a result weren't home when the fire came through.

Who have been your mentors in CFA?

There have been many along the way. Stawell Captain Mal Nicholson has been a real mentor. He brings a level-headed approach to every situation, and on the fireground always seems to be a few steps ahead of any job. He's also someone who always makes time for a chat, which tells you a lot about how much he cares for the people around him. Looking back, Sue Sheldrick from Killawarra was an early influence. The positivity she brings to everything set a tone I've tried to carry with me. More broadly, CFA is loaded with good people giving their best. The organisation has more mentors in it than most people realise.

What have been the highlights of your time in CFA?

Strike team deployments and the big jobs always stand out. But some of the moments that stay with me most are the smaller ones. On a community safety visit to a kindergarten, I came in masked up in BA to help the kids understand that the noise it makes isn't something to be afraid of – a skill that might just save their lives one day. One boy was clearly frightened when I came through the door. I made calm eye contact and gave him a thumbs up and space to become comfortable and approach me if he wanted. By the time I unmasked, he'd come forward and seemed much less scared. That small moment meant a lot. It's also the little acts, such as going into a burned property to retrieve something of value to the owner, or getting a water container for a dog at a car accident, that matter.

How do you motivate your brigade members?

I try to listen and think about things from their perspective and look for ways to lift other people up. My approach is consultative. There are people around me who know a great deal more than I do in many areas and I try to learn from them whenever I can. Loyalty matters to me too. I want the people I work alongside to know I've got their back.

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

If you want to step up, speak up. There are a lot of good people in CFA but everyone has day jobs and lives outside CFA. If you want more, talk to someone on your BMT, find a mentor who leads the way you'd like to lead. And remember, there is so much more to contribute than just jumping on a truck.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

When I get a chance to switch off properly, I love getting out into the hills with my family. Walking through the Grampians is a particular favourite. There's a peace in the bush that's hard to find anywhere else and sharing that with the most important people in your life is important.



JOSEPH STUBBERFIELD, STAWELL FIRE BRIGADE, DISTRICT 16



PHOTO NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Better fuel prediction

Researchers from Natural Hazards Research Australia are developing ways to map landscape dryness to deliver important operational intelligence before a fire season.

Outcomes from this research will include improved accuracy of fire simulation systems and Fire Danger Rating systems, added value to seasonal forecasting and better interpretation of landscape condition monitoring systems.

The project comprises researchers from The University of Melbourne, Western Sydney University and Natural Resources Canada, and is supported by fire services agencies including CFA.

Project research leader Dr Jane Cawson from The University of Melbourne believes landscape dryness is a primary driver of wildfire risk because it indicates how much vegetation – that is, fuel – is available to burn. She said many metrics quantify dryness, but only a few are routinely used in season outlooks. While there are a range of new metrics available, their usefulness is unclear as there has been no comprehensive, nationwide evaluation of the wider set of metrics.

“Our project is testing a wide range of metrics to see which best predict the severity of a fire season in different regions of Australia,” Dr Cawson said. “The aim is to define clear, regionally appropriate dryness thresholds that can be incorporated into outlook products so fire agencies and communities get more reliable early warnings and can better prepare for a fire season.”

Dr Cawson said the research team had identified several metrics that perform better than those currently used.

“Two key metrics that show strong potential are remotely sensed soil moisture products and Standardised Precipitation and Evapotranspiration Index, a multi-scalar drought index. Using this information we can now produce maps of predicted fire season severity at different periods leading up to the fire season – three, six, and nine months prior – providing critical information for fire management,” she said.

Use the QR code to find out more.



How the community interprets bushfire prediction maps

Fire service agencies now have more critical information for designing and communicating fire spread prediction maps through Natural Hazards Research Australia’s latest Hazard Note, which will improve community safety and enhance these important tools.

The Hazard Note is a plain-language summary of findings of part of the project called ‘Predictions in public: understanding the design, communication and dissemination of predictive maps to the public’, which involved discussions with community focus groups to understand how people interpret and respond to fire spread prediction maps.

The Hazard Note explains how the focus group participants comprehended different types of maps, providing fire service agencies insights into what works and what doesn’t when designing these resources. Ultimately, the findings will improve community safety and resilience through giving fire service agencies the information they need to create clear and effective fire spread prediction maps.

Use the QR code to read the Hazard Note.



STORY OSCAR PARRY, NATURAL HAZARDS RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

Strengthening the role of District 6 groups

Groups play an important role in supporting brigades, coordinating incidents and developing the next generation of volunteer leaders. To further strengthen this role, a new volunteer-led initiative is underway to develop a Group Procedures Template.

The template provides a clear starting point for how groups operate, creating greater consistency while aligning with CFA regulations, Group Model Rules and Chief Officer Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). It has been shaped by input from group leaders across South West Region and beyond, capturing practical ideas and approaches already working in the field.

The template introduces several initiatives that are new to District 6, including a Group Duty Officer role, a single group contact number, and a Group Readiness Matrix supported by actionable checklists (pictured above).

For Group Officer Gavin Brien from Beeac Group (pictured), the duty officer model is a worthwhile improvement.

"The duty officer will make a big difference for us. It spreads the load from the group officer to the deputy group officers during the Fire Danger Period, instead of everything coming through one person," Gavin said. "With a single group number and a roster, we can better share the responsibilities across the group."

The Group Readiness Matrix is another key feature, helping duty officers understand the readiness tasks to be completed at different Fire Behaviour Index ratings. Paired with simple checklists, it makes these tasks practical and easy to follow.

Deputy Group Officer (DGO) Andrew Smith from Camperdown Group sees this as an important step to build leadership capability.

"A lot of what we rely on across groups and brigades is in people's heads – it comes from experience and isn't always written down," Andrew said. "In the past, we weren't always clear on what the group officer role involved or how best to support the group. These tools really help pull that together to give us a clearer idea of what needs to be done and to make sure we don't miss anything important."

Across District 6, groups are now reviewing the template, which they can refine to suit their own needs. This collaborative approach is helping ensure the document is straightforward, flexible and relevant across different operating environments.

Deputy Group Officer Phil Downie from Apostles Group reflected on how valuable this type of guidance would have been earlier in his journey

"When I first started as a DGO, I had no idea what was expected of me," Phil said. "Something like this would have really helped. It's a simple guide that helps new leaders understand what they're meant to do."

Gavin also highlighted the broader value of the initiative.

"It's a great opportunity for our group leaders to have real conversations about how we're doing things and get everyone on the same page. It should make it easier to work together – across brigades, between groups and with the team in the district control centre."

Overall, the Group Procedures Template is a practical step towards stronger, more consistent group operations in District 6. By making roles clearer, supporting shared responsibility and encouraging collaboration, it will help build more capable and sustainable groups into the future.

If you would like a copy of the Group Procedures Template and the tools, email the Volunteer Sustainability Team in South West Region: vst-swr@cfa.vic.gov.au

What is a Readiness Matrix?

- A simple table that shows what actions need to be taken at district, group and brigade level as fire risk increases.
- It links fire behaviour conditions to specific actions, so everyone knows what to do at each level of risk.
- Readiness levels are based on the Fire Behaviour Index (FBI), which indicates how dangerous a fire could be on a given day.
- As the FBI increases, the matrix outlines escalating actions (eg increased staffing, preparedness and coordination).
- It provides a consistent, shared approach to planning and readiness, helping ensure nothing important is missed.

STORY KIRSTEN DUDINK



Get ready for Get Fire Ready 2026



In 2025, more than 500 Get Fire Ready (GFR) activities were delivered throughout October to high-risk communities. Feedback from community members who took part in GFR 2025 showed that 70 per cent of attendees learned something new about local fire risks and preparedness actions.

Practical conversations about property preparation, fire plans and what to do on high risk days continue to be some of the most valued takeaways for community members.

These results highlight the unique role brigades play in sharing trusted information that can save lives and properties.

Start planning early

Your brigade can start planning now for GFR 2026 by reflecting on past community engagement activities, identifying new opportunities, and noting what worked well or things to improve. Early conversations as a brigade can also help identify roles.

Morwell Fire Brigade Community Safety Coordinator Jai Maher said Morwell brigade wanted to be more proactive this year when planning the GFR event.

"I spoke to the BMT and I believe that the brigade should have more of a say in the planning of our event. So from there we made a committee and we will get together every few months to plan what we are going to do," Jai said.

"What could we do better? What could we include that we didn't last year? We go to other brigade events to see what they do differently. Another thing we've introduced is doing a risk assessment for every event, which is signed off by our captain and read by all members."

What works for your community?

A GFR activity can extend from community conversations to a community session with local risk information or even a series of home visits. Em Avery from Mannerim Fire Brigade in District 7 asked for support from Junior members to deliver a tailored community session called *Morning tea with the Fireys* that focused on property preparation and grassfire.

"I asked members to help out with catering, setting up the displays and to talk to community members about the fire wise garden," Em said. "Before the event I gave them a guide, shared links to the CFA website and shared brochures with them to help them with their conversations. Some community members were surprised by the ways grassfires can behave on high-risk days. It was quite an eye opener for them."

Data from last year's GFR initiative shows that children's activities are powerful drawcards, with more than 56 per cent of attendees saying they came to the event because it was child friendly. Activities such as demonstrations also help open opportunities for deeper conversations with parents about fire safety.

Build your community engagement skills

Community engagement training such as *Communicating for community engagement* is a great way for members to build confidence in initiating preparedness conversations and tailoring advice.

"It's about being prepared for questions and if you don't know the answer, say that you'll find the answer and you'll contact them. It's all about having fun and putting a smile on your face in the community," Jai said.

Everyone can play a role in community engagement, and each member has specific skills to either plan events, conduct demos or lead children's activities. Break down the task list and match brigade members' skills and interests in your planning.

Use the QR code to visit the Community Engagement Pathway on the Learning Hub and encourage your fellow members to strengthen their skills.



TOP TIPS TO GET READY

- Enter your proposed activities in the Activity Reporting Tool (ART).
- Form a team to plan and identify roles.
- Reach out early to strengthen your event with regional and district support.
- Build or refresh relationships with local councils, schools, community groups, businesses and emergency services partners.
- Look at options to deliver an activity where people are already coming together.
- Train and upskill in community engagement.
- Plan how you will promote your activity using a variety of channels.

Use the QR code for more information about Get Fire Ready 2026 and other resources.

STORY STEPH DE BRUIN



THE DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

COMPILED BY TIAHN WRIGHT

A roundup of CFA stories across our digital and social networks.



Scan the QR code to see these stories and more

YOUTUBE



Bulk water carriers initiative

19 mobile bulk water carriers, each with the capacity to hold more than 20,000 litres, assisted our volunteers on the fireground this season.



State Champs roundup

A wrap-up of all the action at the 2026 CFA/VFBV Firefighter State Championships.



2025-26 bushfire season

A look at the efforts of our members over the 2025-26 fire season.



Ollie at Diamond Creek

Oliver, one of the Faces of the 2026 Good Friday Appeal, visited Diamond Creek Fire Brigade and became a firefighter for a day.

FACEBOOK



Geelong West member Catherine Eltringham shared her story for International Women's Day

"Great to see such strong women taking on massive challenges to keep the rest of us safe." - Nea

"Amazing folk - thank you for caring for us." - Sally



Euroa Fire Brigade rescued three kittens stuck inside a wall

"Fantastic result, thank you Euroa Fire Brigade." - Heather

"Well done guys, great job." - Carolyn

"Cuteness overload!!" - Jo

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INTERACTIVE CONTENT

January 2026 fires

Read an interactive story about the fires.



PODCAST

'From the frontline' is a new podcast series about the extraordinary work our members do to protect the Victorian community.

After a soft launch in 2025, the podcast series returns with episode two, featuring Roy Moriarty, former captain of Wye River Fire Brigade.

We hear Roy's first-hand account of the 2015 Jamieson Track fire that impacted the towns of Wye River and Separation Creek on Christmas Day 2015.

AVAILABLE ON CFA NEWS & MEDIA, SPOTIFY & APPLE MUSIC



Metcalfe opens the doors at new station

On Sunday 17 May Metcalfe Fire Brigade members joined together with CFA dignitaries and the local community to officially open the doors to their new fire station.

About 100 people gathered to celebrate the milestone which allowed the brigade to show everyone their new state-of-the-art facility.

The new station includes two motor bays, operational support areas, car parking and separate turnout areas with private change facilities to support gender diversity and accessibility.

Metcalfe Fire Brigade Captain Len Girvan said the new station was welcomed not just by the brigade but by the wider community.

“It has been a huge team effort, with a lot of different people putting in lots of work to make it happen,” Len said.

“It has turned into a really great space, with so much more room allowing us to grow as a brigade.

“The opening day was a great opportunity to celebrate with the community who are all so happy to see us in our new home.”

Metcalfe brigade was established as the Metcalfe Bushfire Brigade in 1944.

Lots has changed in the area since that time and Len said he is sure it will continue to change into the future.

Metcalfe is also close to Ravenswood where one of the major bushfires burned in the 2025-26 fire season.

“Our brigade was heavily involved in this fire season,” Len said.

“This is opening is a celebration for the whole area.”

Black Saturday also had a profound impact on the town of Metcalfe.

The brigade also supported the response to the 2022 floods in Echuca, the 2019-20 fires, and many other major incidents throughout the years.

The brigade has 26 operational members, with another 32 filling non-operational roles.

Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer for District 2 Archie Conroy said it was great to see the brigade move into a new space.

“It will allow the brigade to continue to grow and support their community,” Archie said.

“Metcalfe do an incredible job of servicing their community and I look forward to seeing the brigade use this station to its fullest potential for many years to come.”



Incident statistics

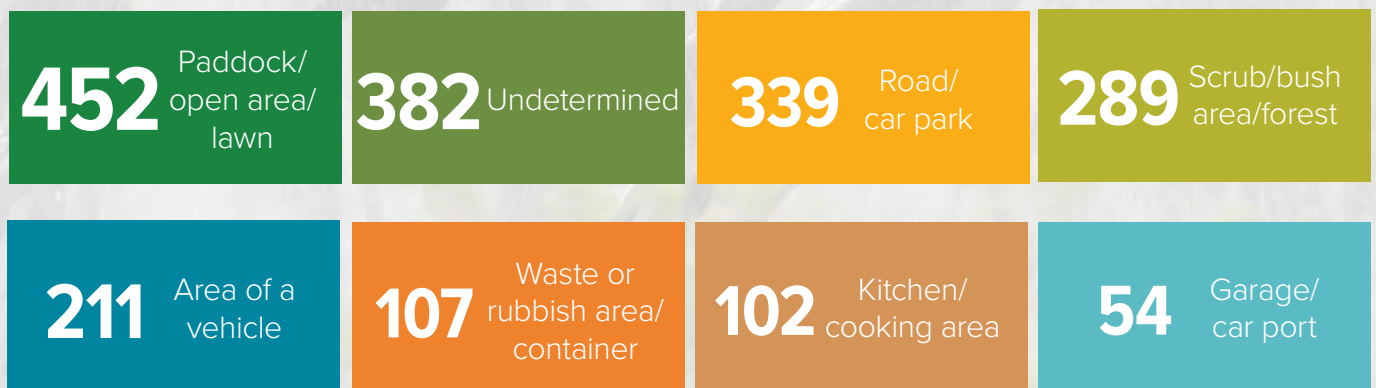
1 January 2026 to 31 March 2026

INCIDENTS BY TYPE



* Includes 3,186 callouts supporting FRV, 20 supporting DEECA, 7 supporting NSW

ORIGIN OF FIRE



INCIDENTS BY DISTRICT

SOUTH WEST		WEST		NORTH WEST		NORTH EAST		SOUTH EAST	
District	Incidents	District	Incidents	District	Incidents	District	Incidents	District	Incidents
4	63	15	811	2	658	12	759	8	2,610
5	203	16	227	14	1,883	13	983	9	405
6	312	17	240	18	315	22	575	10	209
7	799			20	273	23	344	11	206
						24	363	27	333

In brief

A round-up of shorter news items

Updated eLearning module for tourism businesses

CFA recently updated the *Bushfire planning for tourism businesses* eLearning module, which now features a refreshed design and user-friendly interface. There's also a new video that showcases South West Region businesses Go Ride a Wave and Wynnndean Holiday Resorts. The owners share practical insights about the importance of having a bushfire plan and how to communicate it effectively to staff and customers.

Brigades are encouraged to share these resources with their local tourism businesses. Scan the QR codes to find out more on the CFA website and to watch the video.



Video



CFA website

Learning Hub updates

We've made several updates to the Learning Hub (LMS) to improve usability and make navigation easier for members. These enhancements improve system functionality, support compliance and create a better overall member experience.

The key updates are:

- **Assessments:** Members will now only need to answer questions they got wrong when re-attempting tests.
- **Brigade course creation:** Volunteer numbers will be available in search when selecting members.
- **Submissions:** Once marked, submissions cannot be removed.

There are also a number of other smaller changes to improve our members' experience using the Learning Hub. There are also new guides under the 'Catalogues' tab on the Learning Hub to help members navigate the changes. Use the QR code for more details about the changes.



Claim your rebate

It typically takes 20 seconds or less for CFA members to complete the online eligibility check for the rebate scheme as part of the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF). CFA has released further resources for brigades and members to assist volunteer applications for the volunteer rebate on their principal place of residence or farm. Use the QR code to find out more.



Bushfire support and recovery resources

A range of support services and recovery resources are available for members in the wake of the 2025-26 fire season. A central hub on Members Online includes resources to help you understand common emotional responses after major incidents, along with practical strategies to manage stress and support others during challenging times.

There are direct links to government assistance, guidance for those impacted by fires and personal stories from members. Existing wellbeing services continue to be available, including the Member Assistance Program, Peer Support and the Chaplaincy program. Use the QR code to access the resources.



Improved phone view for Members Online

CFA Members Online has been updated to improve speed and simplify browsing on mobile devices. The new design has a cleaner layout, faster load times and enhanced navigation tailored specifically for mobile devices. Features include key content in collapsible sections to reduce scrolling, an easy-to-use main navigation and the inclusion of collapsible section menus at the top of content to easily navigate between pages.

Use the QR code to view Members Online.



Warragul Fire Brigade



Communication Officer

Peg Lacey



Original fire station, 1900s



Brigade's fire power demonstration, 1970s

1900s

1910s

1920s

1930s

1940s

1950s

1960s



Special Prize certificate, 1902



Foreman Mike Wilson demonstrating new Oxy-Viva, 1975

*Warragul
Fire Brigade*



Smith St fire station and trucks, 1970s



Firefighter Belinda Farr at West Gippsland Hospital coal bunker, 1990s



Supporting Red Nose Day, 1990s



Crews at hazmat exercise in Tarago, 2022

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

2010s

2020s

Today



Site of the Nilma level crossing incident, 1988



Hino pod transporter



Helipad at West Gippsland hospital, Warragul, late 1980s



Current fire station

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

PRINT
POST
100010934



Brigade

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

Emergency Memberlink

The Emergency Memberlink program is a way for us to recognise your commitment and contribution to emergency services and Victorian communities. By using Emergency Memberlink, you can receive discounts and benefits on a wide range of products and services in Victoria and interstate.

By using the program for things you already spend money on, you could save around \$8 to \$12 a week on fuel, about \$10 a week on groceries, and around \$20 on a family movie night. That's a potential saving of around \$1,500 a year without changing your lifestyle.

Not a member yet? Activate your access and start saving at cfa.emergencymemberlink.com.au.



EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

REAL SAVINGS ON WEEKLY SPEND

- **Shell:** save 3% on fuel.
- **7-Eleven:** enjoy 2.5% off fuel.
- **EG Fuel:** save 3% on fuel.
- **Coles, Woolworths & Grocery Cards:** save up to 4% on groceries.
- **The Good Guys Commercial:** access exclusive pricing on appliances and electronics.
- **JB Hi-Fi:** unlock corporate pricing on tech, entertainment, and everyday home essentials.
- **Harvey Norman:** enjoy special member pricing across furniture, bedding, and home upgrades.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

STAY ON TOP OF YOUR HEALTH

- **Doctors on Demand:** get \$5 off telehealth appointments and access quality care from home.
- **Specsavers:** enjoy exclusive member pricing on eye care and eyewear for the whole family.
- **Fitness First:** stay active this winter with 15% off 12 and 18 month memberships.
- **Goodlife Health Clubs:** 15% off 12 and 18-month memberships nationwide.

ON THE ROAD

KEEP YOUR VEHICLE COSTS DOWN

- **mycar Tyre & Auto:** save 10% on servicing, repairs and tyres.
- **Bridgestone:** save 15% on tyres.
- **Marshall Batteries:** get \$20 off a fitted replacement battery with convenient mobile service.
- **AJH New Car Brokers:** save \$250 on brokerage and access fleet pricing on your next car.
- **Nissan:** unlock fleet pricing and added benefits across selected vehicles.

WINTER WARMERS

COMFORT, FAMILY TIME AND SMALL LUXURIES

- **Apple Music:** enjoy a one month free trial.
- **Village Cinemas:** enjoy discounted tickets, Gold Class and combo deals.
- **Endota Spa:** save 8% on treatments and eGift Cards.
- **Petals Network:** save 20% on flowers.
- **Hoskings Jewellers:** enjoy 10% off jewellery.
- **iSubscribe:** save 10% on magazines.

GETAWAYS AND TRAVEL

PLAN AHEAD AND SAVE BIG

- **Accor Hotels:** save up to 10% on accommodation.
- **Best Western Hotels & Resorts:** save 15% on stays across Australia and New Zealand.
- **Hotel Planner:** access specially negotiated hotel rates.
- **Insure&Go:** save up to 15% on travel insurance.
- **Avis:** enjoy corporate rates and reduced excess on car hire.
- **Budget Rent a Car:** save 10% on rentals.
- **Europcar:** enjoy up to 15% off daily rental rates across Australia.
- **SIXT Australia:** save up to 20% on a wide range of vehicles.
- **Spirit of Tasmania:** save 5% on fares.
- **Searoad Ferries:** save 10%.

HOME, WORK AND LIFE ADMIN

SMARTER EVERYDAY LIVING

- **Plantmark:** access wholesale pricing on plants and garden products.
- **Dell Technologies:** enjoy exclusive member pricing on laptops, desktops, and home office tech.
- **Flie Legal:** receive a free consultation plus 20% off legal services.