

Brigade

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**The important role of
community safety
coordinators**



**New app
to help
brigades**



**Swan Hill brigade
embraces
its changing
community**

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Useful resources

Brigade cfa.vic.gov.au/brigademag

 news.cfa.vic.gov.au

 facebook.com/cfachiefficer

 twitter.com/cfa_updates

CFA intranet:
members.cfa.vic.gov.au

Free CFA images for download:
digitallibrary.cfa.vic.gov.au

Community engagement material:
cfa.vic.gov.au/cecontentportal

CFA templates for download:
cfa.vic.gov.au/templatetoolkit



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Spring 2023

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Natalie MacDonald

As we head into spring, we're continuing to deliver improvements to support our operational response and our volunteers in the important work they do. We've seen some significant progress on a number of initiatives.

The Baseline Capability Profiling App (BCPA) was launched in April 2023 and released to all brigade management team members to track, manage and report on capability in their brigades. So far more than 1,100 members have undertaken training to use the tool, accessing a vast array of information to support their forward planning.

The Connected Brigades program has now brought internet connectivity to more than 1,150 brigades, giving them the ability to access CFA's online resources and tools.

CFA's Pocketbook App will give members instant and accessible information about the procedures, processes, checklists and available supports all in one place on their phone, effectively replacing the Pocketbook Guides. While there is still some work to do here, we are excited to see it on the horizon.

The Community Preparedness team has been working on bringing two core activity reporting processes (the Activity Reporting Tool (ART) and the Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP)) into one place. This will simplify things for our members and bring together significant data to give us greater visibility over activities and identify opportunities to share best practice.

We know we still have many improvements to make in training. We are working through these challenges to ensure we can support the varied needs of CFA members across the state as a high priority.

We've successfully piloted virtual reality (VR) training to build skills in a safe but realistic environment. Work is also underway to update and expand the Fire Safe Kids program to ensure the next generation of firefighters are building skills early and are inspired to continue their volunteer journey with CFA.

The Implementation Plan to address the External Review of Culture and Issues Management has been released. This provides a clear five-year roadmap for CFA to implement the 10 recommendations made in the Review and accepted by the Board. I'm proud of the work we're doing to build a strong, diverse, modern and capable CFA and I'm inspired to see the enthusiasm and the support as we continue to develop.

As we move into another potentially more volatile fire season, I want to thank all members for the work you have been doing in planning and preparing communities during the past few months. This may be a challenging summer but I am confident that the commitment and dedication of our volunteers and staff will ensure that Victorians have the best emergency service to support them.

CHIEF OFFICER



Jason Heffernan

Early indicators show we are expecting higher than average day and night temperatures this summer, with less rainfall in the coming months. This follows substantial growth due to the La Niña weather system.

I thank all members who participated in international deployments to Canada in recent months. The northern hemisphere fires demonstrate just how a volatile fire season can impact communities and firefighters, with a number of tragic deaths on the fireground. It's a reminder that we must be prepared for what may lie ahead this summer.

We have continued to work closely with our partner agencies throughout the cooler months to undertake planned burns and engage with communities to help them plan and prepare for the coming fire season.

Our monthly Volunteer Forums are a great opportunity for members to engage with senior leaders and get the latest updates about training, new equipment, trucks and operational information, as well as asking the burning questions directly to those responsible for delivery.

In June the forum was broadcast from the State Control Centre to provide an outline of how emergencies are managed. In July we held our session in Berriwillock with a tour of the new ultra heavy tanker, while in August we were live from Mallacoota in East Gippsland. I'm pleased to see the level of engagement with the forums, with the July forum reaching more than 5,000 members.

If you haven't had the opportunity to be involved in one of these forums, I strongly encourage you to view the previous events (members.cfa.vic.gov.au/brigades-operational/supporting-volunteers/volunteer-forum) and also make sure you tune in to the upcoming sessions.

It's been a great privilege to present many members with a National Emergency Medal for their work during the 2019-20 fires. We know our members don't give up their time for praise or awards – they do it to help their communities. However, the 2019-20 fires significantly impacted many Victorian communities and these medals are an important and formal way to acknowledge that commitment.

We have also had several significant brigade anniversaries recently including the 150th anniversaries of Eaglehawk, Buninyong and Kangaroo Flat brigades, and the 140th anniversaries of Geelong West and Warragul.

Our rollout of workwear is accelerating across the state, following some supply issues, and we have now delivered more than 14,000 sets. The new generation PPC is due to come online from the latter part of this year, so please keep an eye out for the sizing sessions in your area.

I know you are all working very hard to ensure your communities are ready for a longer and more dangerous fire season. I thank you all for your ongoing efforts to prepare and protect your fellow Victorians.

DCO SOUTH WEST REGION



Adrian Gutsche

While undertaking higher duties as a Deputy Chief Officer across several regions, I have been humbled by the incredible volunteers and staff who continue to be dedicated to the community and CFA.

I've been impressed by how brigades have adapted the way they engage and recruit volunteers and share these strategies with other brigades, groups and districts, which is evidence that CFA is still relevant in Victorian communities.

I've noticed several successes and challenges experienced by CFA members that are common across CFA regions.

- The workwear rollout continues and the garments are being proudly worn by volunteers across the state as they represent CFA and their brigades. While it has been several years in the making, the workwear resonates well with the public and is quickly becoming as recognisable as our trusted yellows.
- Succession planning has been adopted by many brigades and groups with help from the Succession Planning Framework. The framework provides opportunities and direction for brigades and groups to focus on the future leadership of CFA. The framework also appears to work well with the Captains Peer Mentoring Program that is used across the regions.
- The commitment of volunteers remains high around the regions. Fire Service Reform has reimagined CFA as a volunteer-only service delivery organisation. Brigade volunteers continue to provide the CFA services they did prior to reform. Volunteers continue to prepare, respond to and support the community before, during and after emergencies.
- Our volunteers continue to be supported by a dedicated workforce, both CFA and seconded employees, who are also dedicated to the safety of communities and CFA. I have heard and witnessed many volunteer success stories that are also the successes of staff.
- The increase in populations of towns, regional cities and outer metro areas is significant for many brigades, groups and districts. This has become a focus for CFA with the recent Fire District Review Panel report. At the other end of the scale, districts have the challenge of viability in rural communities where farms and agricultural pursuits are increasing in size and complexity with less labour needs. This has led to many areas having a reduced base of volunteers available for brigades.

The next fire season is just around the corner and we are preparing both ourselves and communities for a potentially different season from the past few years. As an emergency services organisation, safety is paramount at CFA. We want all CFA members to come home safely.

GROUP OFFICER, D9



Walter Aich

South Gippsland Group was founded on 1 July 2015 after five groups were realigned to become three. The group consists of 13 brigades, including one Coast Guard brigade. We cover an area from the southern slopes of the Strzelecki Ranges to the coast, with Hedley brigade to the east, Inverloch to the west, Milford to the north and Yanakie to the south. It can be an hour's drive from one part of the group to another.

We face a range of operational challenges including forested areas, plantations, coastal areas, peat deposits, steep country and river flats. In addition, some communities almost triple in size during the summer holidays because of an inflow of tourists. The area hosts festivals, camping grounds and caravan parks, and we work with Parks Victoria and Forest Fire Management Victoria on public land, including Wilson's Prom.

The group realignment brought together brigades that were from different groups, each with their own way of doing things and their own culture. The first challenge for the group management team (GMT) was to build engagement between all the stakeholders and ensure that governance and management practices brought the brigades together and built a common purpose. These challenges are still being discussed eight years after realignment.

The GMT has worked hard to ensure that both it and brigades can meet operational challenges within the group and deploying to other parts of the state by encouraging participation in training and skill development. This includes operating local command facilities (LCFs) and supporting incident controllers during incidents.

Our group successfully applied through VESEP for a group ultralight tanker (ULT) to increase our operational capacity and deliver a 'common purpose'. Brigades initially promised to contribute almost all of the costs, but thanks to GMT fundraising, brigades had to pay just over half. We have put in place ACFO-endorsed group operating procedures that will govern how the ULT is used across the group and on deployments. We're now waiting for delivery.

The GMT is looking to the future by working to expand the pool of senior firefighters with Level 2 and Level 3 endorsements. We are also developing planning papers for the District Planning Committee about the number of ULTs needed across the group, consolidating the LCFs across the group and establishing a group headquarters. Our team is committed to achieving good outcomes for members including working within and across portfolios, ensuring our duty officers support incident controllers and ensuring deployments run smoothly.

We encourage ongoing engagement with an annual group dinner, group meetings every two months and training exercises twice a year.

Giving help in medical emergencies

CFA is setting up a Fire Medical Response (FMR) Program in consultation with Ambulance Victoria so that our volunteers can help at medical emergencies related to cardiac and respiratory arrest. When it launches, 50 brigades will be trained to use specialist equipment.

A lot of work is being done to build the program including sourcing equipment; developing a standard operating procedure; developing a joint-agency training package; arranging an extensive member vaccination program; developing a digital Patient Care Record (PCR); and much more.

Recently the FMR team received Samsung tablets that will be distributed to each FMR brigade. These tablets will be set up with a range of resources to help deliver the FMR Program. The tablet will feature the newly-created digital Patient Care Record (PCR) which allows members to complete FMR records without the need for paper-based forms – a huge step forward for privacy and confidentiality. This PCR

also quickly and easily allows CFA to send all PCRs to the Victorian Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry (VACAR) at Ambulance Victoria for auditing purposes.

In addition, the tablet will contain clinical practice protocols (CPPs) written by AV for use by CFA members when attending FMR incidents. CPPs are work instructions for various scenarios but are written specifically for FMR and as such focus on cardiac and respiratory arrest events. The tablets will also include additional first-aid information.

Joint-agency working groups and a steering committee have been created (including VFBV representation). A consultation group will also be formed to allow CFA members to become involved in shaping the FMR Program.

For more information about the program search for 'Fire Medical Response' on members.cfa.vic.gov.au or email fmr@cfa.vic.gov.au.

STORY FIONA MACKEN

Wildfire respiratory protection trial

During the 2022-23 fire season, CFA began a trial to evaluate wildfire respiratory protection methods. Volunteers are testing the equipment and their detailed feedback will be used to determine any change in direction from our current practices.

About 300 operational CFA volunteers from brigades across the state are participating in the trial of alternate wildfire respiratory protection products from four manufacturers. The products are being trialled in a bushfire (smoke) environment and planned burning programs.

The trial is not a product selection process, rather a subjective feedback trial of alternate respiratory wildfire protection methods ahead of an open market tender process.

A range of products including half face and full face P3 masks with ABEK cannisters are being trialled, to compare wearability and functionality in addition to the current P2 disposable respirators.

By enhancing the offering of wildfire respiratory protection for volunteers, we will improve safety by reducing the occurrences of harmful smoke inhalation.



The delivery of this project demonstrates CFA's commitment to providing a great place to volunteer and work, with the core value of safety underpinning the commitment to deliver this initiative.

This trial is being funded as part of the Victorian Government's CFA Capability Measures Program.

CFA is committed to receiving and analysing all feedback during the trial period, which will help inform any future business case for funding.

For more information contact wildfirep@cfa.vic.gov.au

STORY NICKI LUND

Molka's new station opens

CFA members came together to celebrate the official opening of the new Molka Fire Station in mid June.

Chief Officer Jason Heffernan joined Molka Fire Brigade Captain Bruce Rennie and Minister for Emergency Services the Hon Jaclyn Symes for the opening of the new facility.

The \$500,000 station is located on Longwood-Shepparton Road and has replaced the brigade's previous station which was built in 1975 and no longer served the needs of the members.

The new site has two generously-sized engine bays which provide adequate space for modern firefighting vehicles as well as a dedicated turnout room, toilet and kitchenette.

Bruce said the upgraded station was a fantastic asset for the brigade and the local community.

"Our members can enjoy more space inside the station as well as new facilities such as the kitchenette and meeting space," Bruce said.

"We'll also have more space outside the station which will assist with access to our fire trucks and brigade training. It will also allow members to park near the station.

"The new station will help our brigade better respond to incidents in our local district, so this brings a huge benefit to the wider community."

The brigade has 17 members, which represents half of the town's total population of 34.

Jason Heffernan said the old station had served the brigade and the district for many decades, and he was pleased to see the delivery of an improved station for Molka Fire Brigade.

"The station will be a great community asset for the brigade, allowing our volunteers to continue doing what they do best, which is protecting lives and property," he said.

"Thank you to the brigade for their continued service and invaluable contribution to CFA and their local community."

Below: Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes and CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan joined Molka brigade members.



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We're asking Victorians to Give us a hand

Give us a hand, CFA's new statewide volunteer recruitment campaign officially launched in mid-August. The campaign included billboard, cinema, newspaper, radio and social media advertising in rural and regional Victoria through to October.

The campaign was designed to provide a consistent theme and style for recruitment across the state. Materials developed for the campaign are also available for brigades to use on their own channels with the option for brigades to customise some of the assets if required.

The scenarios in the adverts, which included both still images and videos, were carefully selected to ensure they represented the most common activities carried out by most CFA brigades.

Campaign development was guided by a working group consisting of CFA volunteers, regional and state volunteer sustainability managers, and VFBV. The group met fortnightly and discussed many important elements for a statewide campaign, including target audience and representation.

Hamish Fletcher is the Regional Volunteer Sustainability Manager for North East Region and was a member of the campaign's working group.

"While I attended the meetings in my capacity as VST regional manager, I also brought my perspectives as captain of a rural brigade," Hamish said. "As a wildfire brigade captain, it was important that campaign materials represented the work and efforts of such volunteers. I wanted to ensure equitable representation of wildfire and rural landscapes to balance with urban and structural firefighting representation."

District 7 ACFO Brendan Lawson has been highly engaged and shared intelligence as part of a needs analysis about brigade recruitment during the early stages of campaign development.

"The Geelong Group of brigades is surrounded by career stations and has specific needs that I believe can be supported by this campaign. It's an opportunity for regions and districts to dial up



Can you give us a hand to protect your community?

[Brigade Name] is looking for help in a number of volunteer roles including [list]. Full training and ongoing support is provided, so you can learn new skills to fulfill a vital role in your community.



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their own efforts and not feel as if they're doing it on their own," Brendan said.

"In District 7 we're already taking advantage and looking at how we can include recruitment drives and promote CFA volunteering at large local events including the Geelong Revival in November."

Michele Abbott is a support member at Truganina Fire Brigade. She's also one of the brigade's rehab operators and its community safety coordinator. Michele is featured in the campaign with a focus on her community education and engagement work.

"I think it's important to show just how much volunteers can contribute to a brigade through support means like myself," Michele said. "While there's always a need for operational volunteers, support volunteers are just as critical for brigade survival and community safety."

"I'm glad the campaign recognises and showcases these opportunities."

"Brigades have been asking for centralised recruitment support from CFA for some time, and I believe the *Give us a hand* campaign provides this support to them," Deputy Chief Officer, Operational Performance and Capability, Kaylene Jones said.

"The campaign shows the diversity of our brigades, volunteers and roles and I think this comes across very strongly."

"We're aiming for a 10 per cent increase in volunteer enquiries throughout the state as a result of the campaign and are basing that on volunteer enquiry levels from 2022. We'll be able to monitor response rates through the Volunteer Recruitment Hub which is the entry point for all new expressions of interest."

Brigades and members can download and use all materials developed for the campaign (without restriction) from the Template Toolkit on Members Online.

If you have any questions, comments or technical queries email volcampaign@cfa.vic.gov.au

STORY LERNA AVAKIAN

EDUCATING COMMUNITIES IN FIRE SAFETY

Supporting brigades to engage effectively with their community about fire safety is the responsibility of the community safety coordinator. We talked to four brigades about the work they do.



Jim Buchan

For 36 years Jim Buchan has dedicated his time to Eldorado Fire Brigade and protecting the 300 tight-knit residents who live in the small town near Wangaratta.

Proudly representing the brigade as their community safety coordinator, Jim is passionate about continuing to help educate the community to keep themselves safe, particularly as the area is virtually surrounded by national and state parks.

Jim works with other community safety coordinators (CSC) in the Wangaratta Group throughout the year to evaluate and prepare for upcoming fire and winter seasons.

“We learned back in 2003 when there was quite a large fire just outside town that people didn’t quite know what was going on and what they were supposed to do,” Jim said.

“It’s really important that we keep reinforcing key messages. It helps keep people up-to-date and aware of what’s going on and encourages them to make efforts to prepare their properties.”

In his role he oversees many safety initiatives including updating the Fire Danger Rating board, contributing articles to local newspapers and uploading safety messages to member portals.

“We’ve previously joined with neighbouring brigades Everton, Tarrangingee and Wangaratta North for open days at a central school, where we keep the community updated about what’s going on,” Jim said.

“We maintain a presence at the monthly food share at Eldorado and run the smoke alarm program for older community members who are unable to go up ladders to change their batteries.

“We’ve also done the ‘red bucket appeal’ where we distributed thousands of red buckets in collaboration with the Benalla and Wangaratta groups.

“We went to people’s front doors and handed them a red bucket containing leaflets and fire safety information, essentially saying ‘this is your fire truck’.

“We had a bit of a discussion while we were face-to-face, indicating that while we do the best that we can, we can’t always provide a truck to every house, so this red bucket represents a safety net and a tool to prepare.”

STORY LUCY BISHOP



Chloe Watts

Chloe Watts is the CSC for Koondrook Fire Brigade on the Murray River in the state’s north-west. She works on a range of community safety projects throughout the year, with the latest idea targeting the younger generation.

“Our brigade has self-funded a community education fire truck which is essentially a large wooden fire truck for kids,” Chloe said.

The fire truck, which cost \$5,500, is being constructed now and is expected to be complete by October. It will be transported to community events in a trailer which has been provided by CFA’s local district mechanical officer.

“The truck will be purpose-built for kids to climb on. There are hose reels so they can squirt water, a steering wheel, flashing lights and a pretend radio,” she said.

“We’re excited to have this resource to further boost our interaction with kids. If we can continue to teach kids about fire education at schools and get them engaged at community events, then it helps get the parents involved too.

“I’d like to thank our 2nd Lieutenant Nathan Goble, who is super handy, for constructing this truck. It’s fantastic having members in the brigade who are passionate and willing to put their hand up and help build something that will benefit the brigade, the community and other brigades.”

Chloe is dedicated to engaging her local community about fire safety so they’re ready for any emergency.

“We plan for the worst but we hope for the best. If the community is prepared, it helps the brigade too,” she said.

Chloe has been a community safety coordinator for more than 13 years with Wandin and Koondrook brigades. She works closely with the Koondrook Development Committee which comprises volunteers who work together on local community events. The brigade also partners with cross-border NSW brigades at events such as the Barham Koondrook Show.

“These events give our brigade a great opportunity to be involved and engage with the community,” Chloe said. “Our brigade loves being the face of the community and through the work that we do we recently recruited six new members.”

STORY AMY SCHILDBERGER



Rob Bartorelli

Despite having only a few years of CFA volunteering under his belt, Rob Bartorelli is kicking goals in his role as CSC with Halls Gap Fire Brigade.

As a police officer by profession, Rob knows the importance of effective community engagement and his combined approach of face-to-face engagement and maintaining a strong social media presence is working well.

“Halls Gap has a small population of fewer than 500 residents, but as a tourism hot spot, we see large numbers of visitors frequent the area, especially during summer,” Rob said.

“We have some beautiful camping locations in the Grampians, but the downside is limited mobile phone coverage. Some tourists travel from places where they rely heavily on mobile phone emergency notifications, and they aren’t aware of Fire Danger Ratings or what you can and can’t do on a day of Total Fire Ban.

“To overcome this, we make sure we visit these locations in person during peak periods, educating campers about fire risks in the area especially ahead of a day of TFB.

“We’ve also changed our approach on social media to ensure diligent messaging during the Fire Danger Period and connecting with local visitor pages, tourism groups and community pages.

“I also started sharing images and footage from incidents we’ve attended, to show people exactly what happens when we attend a job. This helps drive home the message about preventable fires. These posts have seen a huge boost in the engagement on our Facebook page, along with the large number of posts being shared, which is almost like digital word-of-mouth.

“Then there are the small, but important changes like the location of Fire Danger Rating and TFB signage. These have been relocated to high traffic areas like the supermarket and service station to provide greater exposure and increase awareness, especially for visitors to the area.

“These simple changes have seen a significant drop in the number of callouts for illegal fires during TFB.”

STORY NAOMI GALVIN

Sandra Beasley

For almost 15 years, Bellarine communities have been hearing about local fire risks and safety from CFA’s Sandra Beasley. Her knack for engaging local residents and businesses means the broader community is safer thanks to the work she’s done.

Sandra wears many hats. She is the CSC for Mannerim Fire Brigade and the Bellarine Group, as well as chair of the Bellarine Group Community Safety Committee. She is also chair of District 7’s Community Safety and Engagement Committee.

“Mannerim is a farming community without a town centre, so I engage with local farmers and landowners, caravan parks and community groups,” Sandra said.

“To do all this, I set out a brigade community engagement plan, which is well supported by CFA district staff and our brigade members. This outlines how and when we speak to our community and what we speak to them about.”

The brigades in Bellarine Group have similar fire risks, stakeholders and engagement challenges. The Bellarine Group Community Safety Committee allows CSCs to meet more than four times a year to support each other in executing their engagement plans.

“We work together to help each other upskill by sharing information about what worked for us and what didn’t, as well as inviting guest speakers,” Sandra said.

“I encourage neighbouring brigades to work together on community engagement activities. For example, our brigade has similar risks to Wallington so we co-produce a community newsletter and distribute it to residents in our respective response areas.

“If there’s ever an opportunity to work together on community engagement, I encourage it.”

Sandra has been a brigade member since 2007 and took on the CSC role in 2009. From there she built a growing passion for it.

“I really believe community safety works and is so important for prevention,” she said. “I’d much prefer to organise a presentation to prevent a fire than to respond to put one out.

“We can’t do this role without a great support group at the brigade level. It’s fantastic to work with people who value community safety and understand that it goes hand-in-hand with operations.”

STORY MITCH GASTIN



How to use ART to engage your community

The CFA Community Engagement Activity Reporting Tool – or ART – is used by CFA members to capture information about community engagement activities. ART was developed by CFA members in 2019 and since its introduction our people have reported 13,000 activities that directly engaged more than 370,000 community members.

Now that CFA members have returned to face-to-face service delivery, more brigades are planning open days and getting involved in local events to engage their communities – and ART offers brigades a new way to plan these activities.

In the past you may have used ART to report an activity but now you can also use it to plan and coordinate activities, promote them on the CFA website and communicate with other CFA members to streamline activity planning and delivery.

You can enter your activity in ART as soon as you know when, where, or what you would like to do. As your plans develop, you can update the activity record with new information, then publish it to the 'What's On' page on the CFA website. After the activity has been delivered, you can return to the activity record to add the final information, then submit a completed record.

While you are planning your activity or when it is completed, you can share information with other CFA members using email or a new chat feature, to seek additional resources or to invite them to participate.

Make a start by visiting Members Online (members.cfa.vic.gov.au) and navigating through to the ART page. When you select the ART Portal, you will land on a home page with a red 'Create Activity' button. Just click on this button to begin.

ART includes some new features to better capture brigade contributions toward community safety, such as recording when an activity belongs to your brigade and where it is linked to your brigade community engagement plan. Brigades can easily view a list of their activities by using filters in the list view.

All CFA members have access to these new features in ART, which replace the longstanding Brigade Events and

Activities Application and the Community Engagement Dashboard.

"Seeing the activities being proposed or planned by brigades is terrific. As a CEC, it makes it much easier for me to support brigades in my district," Matt Ahern, District 12 Community Engagement Coordinator said.

NEED HELP?

Your group community safety coordinator, district or regional community engagement coordinator or brigade administrative support officer can help you to plan and report on your engagement activities using ART.

CFA members in regional Community Safety teams have access to a few extra features, such as a link to the Victorian Bushfire Risk Register. If your brigade activity will treat a specific risk, you can get help to add this to the activity record.

The ART page on Members Online includes a user guide and a range of resources and FAQs that are updated regularly.

If you have difficulty accessing or using ART, please submit a request for assistance to the CFA ICT Services Centre via the Service Portal or phone on **9262 8207** or **1300 883 734**.

CFA's Learning Hub (learninghub.cfa.vic.gov.au) includes the following training modules for community engagement coordinators:

- Introduction to community engagement – what community engagement means at CFA and why it's important.
- Community safety coordinators – your roles and responsibilities, and the tools, resources and support people to help you.
- Risk-based community engagement planning – everything you need to know to develop a community engagement plan for your brigade or group.

STORY SOFIE ANSELM

New facilities in the Bundarra Valley

The Bundarra Valley community has joined with CFA, Forest Fire Management Victoria and East Gippsland Shire Council representatives to celebrate the opening of the Bundarra Community Centre.

The new building and upgraded services were made possible through funding from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal, East Gippsland Community Foundation, East Gippsland Shire Council, CFA and the McCoy Family on whose land the facility is situated.

The centre, which is next to Bundarra Fire Station (a satellite of Omeo brigade), is the result of grants received after the 2019-20 fires. Residents now have a place to meet to discuss fire plans with DEECA staff and hold social celebrations. Omeo brigade members will also be able to hold brigade meetings at the facility.

The building includes an oven, fridge, mains water, solar power and concrete pathways. Thanks to a further grant, East Gippsland Shire Council installed the STAND system ('Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters') to enable direct communication to an incident control centre. Omeo brigade is also funding a monitor and laptop so that community members can get the most up-to-date information about fires from Emergency Management Victoria, CFA and other agencies.

"This is a wonderful achievement for the people of Anglers Rest and the Bundarra Valley," Omeo Fire Brigade Captain Graham Symons said. "It will increase community discussions, cohesiveness, resilience and be of great value for the future."

Another success story for Omeo brigade can be found at its second satellite station at Cobungra, a small cluster of houses and farms on the Great Alpine Road on the way to Mount Hotham. This community was greatly impacted by the 2019-20 fires. Families spent countless days fighting the fires as they came very close to houses and grazing lands.

After the fires, some strike teams at Cobungra donated a trailer, firefighting pumps, two 500-litre slip-ons, a generator and money to buy a community defibrillator and fund an extension of the shed. The extension holds all the donated equipment and has been designed to house an ultralight tanker, which may be given to Omeo brigade during a campaign fire.

The extension will also have the STAND system to improve communication needs in the area.

The community received a building permit in June 2023 and the extension was finished in August. The local builder used local contractors so that the economic benefit remains in the Omeo area.

The project was funded by Omeo brigade with additional assistance from CFA HQ.

"We'll be forever grateful for the donations from strike teams who came to Cobungra to assist, local donations and the support of Omeo Rural & Hardware shop, which since the 2003 fires has given equipment to Omeo Fire Brigade," Graham said.

"Small towns and small brigades can achieve great things when they work together. Omeo Fire Brigade is very appreciative."

This is an exciting time for Cobungra residents, who didn't previously have any community facilities in their area. And they can also look forward to next year, when they will receive a replacement fire truck which will be housed at Cobungra Fire Station.

STORY RONDA MANHIRE, OMEO FIRE BRIGADE





Reach out for help if you need it

Doreen Fire Brigade Captain Robert Bury and his family are coming to terms with a devastating loss. He wanted to share his story with CFA members to emphasise the importance of asking for help.

Earlier this year Robert's daughter passed away at the age of 43 leaving behind her daughter and son.

"Our lives were changed in so many ways. Our careful plans of retirement vanished as we became responsible for our grandchildren," Robert said.

"Obviously we were all shocked by this but I thought I could handle the emotions and be a guiding hand for my immediate family.

"My ability to turn chaos into calm – something we do as CFA volunteers – was severely tested. I thought I would be fine because I was widowed 35 years ago and knew how to cope. It turned out that I didn't."

But first Robert wanted to make sure his wife and grandchildren were OK. He reached out to the CFA counselling service to arrange bereavement counselling for his wife who moved to Queensland to look after their sick daughter and the grandchildren. One grandchild has decided to remain in Queensland.

"CFA's Wellbeing Support Line is an excellent service that many of us

unfortunately choose not to use. This has really helped my immediate family come to grips with a devastating experience," Robert said.

"The compassionate call taker guided me through the process. My wife had to contact them personally to arrange suitable counselling. Face-to-face counselling was quickly arranged in Queensland after she called.

"I thought I was coping well until I had a third out-of-character outburst directed at people who may or may not have deserved my verbal wrath. This happened both at work and on the fireground and I knew I had to reach out for help.

"I was guided through the process and a phone consultation was quickly made available. I talked about my emotions as I was guided by my very thoughtful counsellor."

Robert said the counselling definitely helped him.

"My eyes still well up, but I have a better understanding of my feelings.

"I encouraged my grandson to have counselling, but he said he wasn't ready. Then on Mother's Day the realisation of what had happened to him and his family hit him hard.

"I'm pleased that he then reached out and had a chat with the counselling service. He told me it has helped him. I believe it has helped my wife and I know it has helped me cope and better understand my emotions.

"CFA provides a lot of support and my brigade was always there to assist us. But don't overlook the amazing job done by our peers, and the CFA Wellbeing Support Line is truly a wonderful service.

"I was the guy who didn't need any help until I realised that I did. I encourage each and every one of you to seek assistance if required. If I can do it anyone can."

The Wellbeing Support Line, 1800 959 232, provides CFA members and their immediate family members access to one phone number to manage their wellbeing 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The service links CFA members and their immediate families to psychologists, counsellors and social workers for short-term, solution focused counselling. The service is available for personal and CFA-related issues.

New online training packages are also available to help you to build knowledge, understanding and skills in mental health and wellbeing. Search 'Mind Matters' on The Learning Hub to find out more.

CFA members help Canadian colleagues

More than 13 million hectares of land have burned in Canada's worst wildfire season on record. According to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, there were still more than 1,000 active fires burning across the country at the end of August, and 658 of those were defined as out of control.

These wildfires have claimed the lives of three Canadian firefighters on the fireground and a helicopter pilot working in the area.

More than 700 Australian firefighters and incident management team (IMT) personnel have been deployed to assist since the wildfires started in March 2023. One of those deployed was CFA's Nicki Lund (pictured below), a Level 3 logistics officer, who was initially deployed to Rainbow Lake Alberta but was relocated a few days later to Keg River, Alberta. Nicki is also captain of Eildon Fire Brigade and a staff member.

After completing an Expression of Interest for International Deployment, Nicki said she was contacted by the State Capability Team (SCT) to see whether she was interested in deploying to Canada.

"It was like a whirlwind," Nicki said. "I was on a plane less than six days after seeking approval from my line manager and informing the SCT. During that time, I also had to squeeze in visa applications, last minute shopping and of course, packing my bags."

Nicki and her fellow Victorian deployees flew from Melbourne to Sydney where they received their first formal briefing and gained a true understanding of the fire situation in Canada. From Sydney they flew to LAX and then onto Alberta's capital city Edmonton.

"We received an in-depth briefing covering the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System, indices and codes for fire behaviour prediction, different fuel types and fire terminology, safety, and code of conduct." Nicki explained.

"I was a little worried during the wildlife section of the briefing, especially about the danger of bears. Being taught how to act, by either looking big or playing dead, didn't fill me with much confidence. When I was first told about 'bear spray', I thought it was a joke. But it is a very real item that should always be carried with you.

"Other wildlife discussed during the briefing were moose, bison, lynx, coyote, deer and wolverine.

"While in the safety of my car, I was fortunate enough to see a black bear and her three cubs, as well as a woodchuck."

Two firefighting taskforces from Victoria and WA were initially deployed to Rainbow Lake in north-west Alberta. However, because of increased fire activity they were soon redeployed to Keg River about 700 kilometres north of Edmonton.

"The Keg River fire was being run from the Rainbow Lake Incident Control Centre (ICC), but due to increased fire activity it required a designated ICC," Nicki said.

"As logistics officer, I was responsible for setting up Keg River's base camp with accommodation, laundry, showers, toilets, generators, supply trailers and equipment, catering plans, fuel, and facilities.

"The base camp grew as the fire activity grew. Our camp initially started with 80 personnel and quickly grew to 300, requiring more accommodation, kitchens, laundry, showers, toilets, etc."

Nicki said the fire behaviour and firefighting techniques were different to those she has witnessed back home, and she had to adapt her usual systems to work in with the local methods. However, there were many similarities between Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS), which is used in the US and Canada.

"The crews ran kilometres of hose out on the fireground, and when no longer required the hoses were rolled up into melons and left for collection.

"We worked long hours on the ICC, 14 to 16 hours each day, for 14 days straight with two days' rest. Then back for another 14 days before returning to Australia.

"I'm so grateful for the opportunity to support our Canadian colleagues, especially after they came to Australia to support us during the 2019-20 fire season.

"It was an experience I will never forget, and one I am extremely grateful for."

STORY NAOMI GALVIN



Update on the Culture Review Implementation Plan



Following the release of the CFA External Review of Culture and Issues Management Report in 2022, our focus has been on engaging with stakeholders to develop a comprehensive action and implementation plan to address the report's 10 recommendations which were accepted in their entirety by the CFA Board. We have also made progress on some early foundational actions.

A draft Implementation Plan was developed drawing on the detail contained in the report and the focus of the 44 sub-recommendations within it and in consultation with departments and senior leaders responsible for implementation. The draft Plan was released to members for comment and feedback in December 2022, and the final Implementation Plan was released in July 2023. The final Implementation Plan charts a course over the next five years for making CFA a great place to volunteer and work, with 136 discrete but inter-related actions, with accountability and responsibility clearly assigned and agreed with relevant departments and at the Executive level.

Ongoing governance oversight of progress against the Implementation Plan will be through CFA's Executive Committee and through the People, Culture and Remuneration Committee of the CFA Board. A formal Progress Report will be published twice a year in January and July.

In parallel to the development and finalisation of the Implementation Plan the following actions were delivered in response to the Report's recommendations:

- 'Lead cultural and organisational reform' embedded in Chief Officer's Annual Expectations of Districts as well as targets for

gender diversity to increase the number of active operational women members (response to Recommendation 2.5 – 'working with ACFOs and Commanders to set clear priorities')

- In consultation with VFBV, we reviewed the terms of reference for the CFA-VFBV Joint Consultative Committees (response to Recommendation 2.8 – 'formalised and regular engagement opportunities at senior levels of CFA with the VFBV')
- We commenced development of comprehensive frameworks technical capability and another for leadership capability (response to Recommendation 3.5)
- Developed and published a new Issues Management and Resolution Support Dashboard providing greater transparency and accountability of complaints (numbers, types of issues and outcomes) through reporting (in response to Recommendation 4.1).
- We finalised all legacy complaint matters (response to Recommendation 4.4)
- We finalised and launched our Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2026 and developed diversity and inclusion KPIs that will be included in the performance development plans for people managers (response to Recommendation 7.1 – 'build a strategic approach to diversity and inclusion')
- We continue to deliver Captains Mentoring, Women's Challenge Camps, Women's Captain Forum and Women's Leadership Mentoring Programs (in response to Recommendation 7.3)

The External Review of Culture and Issues Management, the Implementation Plan and the first Progress Report are available on CFA's website and Members Online.

King's Birthday Honours



Dawn Hartog AFSM

Dawn Hartog is highly regarded in CFA and across the emergency management sector for her dedication, compassion and outstanding leadership.

"I had to re-read the email three times to make sure it was correct," Dawn said. "I then thought of all the people before me who've been awarded an AFSM – the award that is the highest accolade we can receive in the sector – and I was humbled that I was considered for such an award.

"I still feel like I have so much to give and being recognised for what I have already contributed is a true honour."

Dawn's broad emergency management experience coupled with her compassionate and inclusive nature has established her as a trusted leader and advocate for CFA members. She joined CFA in 2005 as a community development coordinator and her experience living in Kinglake during the 2009 fires prompted her to become a volunteer with Toolangi Fire Brigade. She held several leadership roles before being elected captain in 2017.

Dawn's volunteer contribution and broad-reaching experience and influence in the emergency and risk management sectors led to her appointment to the CFA Board in 2019.

An active firefighter, Dawn regularly attends fire calls, car accidents, rescues and emergency medical calls. She has led incident control and crews on the frontline for fires, storms and floods and was deployed as part of strike teams to the 2019-20 fires. She is currently the deputy group officer for Yea Group and District 12's Planning Committee Chair.

Dawn has actively engaged in the education, leadership and training of others within brigades, incident management teams and the community while at CFA, and she sits on CFA's Youth Advisory Committee which gives her the opportunity to support the development of young volunteers.

"For CFA to continue to be the backbone of our community, we need to get those new generations involved," Dawn said. "Along with their membership comes new and diverse ways of thinking, working and responding. This is one of the real strengths of our younger members."

Dawn has directly influenced and advocated for gender equality at CFA and is a member of CFA's Women's Advisory Committee.

"There is a strength and new ways of looking at things that I think women bring to our sector. You can see this change actually benefiting the entire membership, whether it be through improvements to PPC or the way our vehicles are designed."



Paul Denham AFSM

Paul Denham has made an exceptional and distinguished contribution to CFA for more than 45 years, attending thousands of callouts with three brigades: Barmah, Boronia and Buxton. He is currently the captain of Buxton brigade and still actively deploys to emergencies and frequently performs the role of incident controller.

As well as his leadership roles with Boronia and Buxton brigades, Paul is a VFBV state councillor and has extensive experience in command roles as a strike team leader and division commander. Previously, he held the senior volunteer role at Boronia Fire Brigade and was a deputy group officer of Knox Group.

After the 2009 fires, Paul headed up the administration team tasked with clearing up the thousands of destroyed homes and buildings throughout Victoria. During this work, Paul routinely travelled to each of the impacted areas liaising with government officials and administration teams. This project was completed ahead of time and under budget.

"The clean-up gave me an appreciation of what people went through. Seeing the aftermath of the fires and the effort needed for recovery made me want to work harder to make sure brigades had the training, skills and equipment to ensure these catastrophic events didn't happen again," Paul said.

Through his participation in many committees and working parties, Paul has championed the welfare and interests of volunteers and contributed to better informed, educated and resourced volunteers. His contributions have resulted in improved performance and safety of CFA clothing and equipment, and advances in training.

Paul was nominated by VFBV for membership of the CFA Board where he was a forthright advocate for volunteers.

"During my time on the Board, I advocated strongly for improved amenities including the provision of toilets for the many rural stations that didn't have toilets at that time. This was an important issue to me and now there are very few brigades that don't have a toilet at, or adjacent to, their station."

Like most successful CFA leaders, Paul has a supportive family.

"I wouldn't have achieved anything without support from my family, especially my 93-year-old mother and my wife Carmel," Paul said. "As a young man, my mum supported my involvement with the brigade at Barmah and she has supported me through 45 years of service. Carmel is also a CFA member and has accompanied me to countless activities both when I was a CFA Board Member and now as a VFBV state councillor."

Joint training for joint response

Located in the Macedon ranges, Heskett-Kerrie and Newham brigades know that planning and training together is important because emergencies don't respect brigade boundaries.

Looking after an area with a mixture of farms and bush properties, with parts of the Cobaw State Forest to the north, Macedon State Forest to the south and Hanging Rock in between, these two small brigades respond together to incidents in each other's communities, surrounding brigades' areas, as well as joining forces to form strike teams and composite crews for fire and other emergencies.

The brigades know that getting to know each other's skills and resources ensures a collaborative effort that enhances capabilities and response to incidents.

Heskett-Kerrie and Newham work together in several ways including fundraising, supporting events at Hanging Rock, and community days at each other's stations. They realise a connected community is a more resilient one.

The two brigades have also shared resources including crews and vehicles. For example, when Heskett-Kerrie's tanker 2 was out of commission during the 2022-23 fire season, Newham lent its tanker 1 to Heskett-Kerrie's Cherokee satellite station. Joint knowledge meant brigade members understood the significance of having a truck in this extreme risk area, and that Heskett-Kerrie would support response into Newham from the Heskett station. Heskett-Kerrie is now fundraising for a new medium tanker.

"It's not about empire building, it's about community risk and knowing how best to cover each other's backs," Newham Fire Brigade Captain Bryan Hornbuckle said.

Each brigade brings unique experiences and lessons learned. Sharing these experiences through joint training sessions helps identify best practice, areas for improvement, and fosters camaraderie. Training has included mobile props, scenario drills, burns-offs and members sharing knowledge such as air support expertise.

The brigades' two training officers recently organised a joint training day at VEMTC Central Highlands. Heskett-Kerrie and

Newham were the first brigades from District 2 to use this new training ground. Members ran through a motor vehicle accident and structure and smoke house props and drills, which provided an excellent insight into what members can expect.

One member commented that the training was well planned and that it was a really effective day. Another praised Central Highlands' facilities and its catering and recommended other brigades to do joint training there.

Heskett-Kerrie and Newham brigade members compiled the following checklist to help other brigades make the most of their training.

- Brigades need to have at least one person who has completed VEMTC induction training and is accredited to run the training. Accreditation is only valid for one year.
- Ask if the training centre operators have any tips for drill planning.
- Create a drill plan early and ask for feedback from PAD operators.
- Make your booking months in advance with your district office training team because training centres can be in high demand.
- Consider the best time of year for training and your likely operational commitments.
- Tell your brigade (and neighbouring brigade) members about the training in advance and get commitment from members. Training centres need to know early on the number of members attending so they can plan staff rosters and catering.
- Assign crews in advance, making sure to give everyone an opportunity to do each drill and change roles.
- If training with other brigades, consider mixing crews for some drills.
- If staff and training supervisor numbers permit, try to run drills in parallel so people aren't standing around.
- Plan to use the whole day with a break for lunch.

STORY HESKETT-KERRIE FIREFIGHTER J KELLY



QUARTERLY OPERATIONAL UPDATE



Chief Officer's Message for Spring 2023

Victoria is expected to enter the warmest fire season in more than three years as a result of the La Niña weather period ending. As brigades, districts

and regions begin preparing for a period of higher operational activity, I want to thank everyone for their commitment to their community.

With quieter fire seasons in the past few years and many members new to our organisation, we need to ensure we are well prepared, have not grown complacent and are equipped with the knowledge and skills we need to keep safe.

The September Quarterly Operational Update includes information about:

- Entrapment drills
- WATCHOUT/LACES/dynamic risk assessment
- Smoke/heat and hydration
- Heart health
- Health monitoring and rehabilitation teams

It is my expectation that all members responding during the summer bushfire season have currency in:

- Minimum Skills/General Firefighter
- The annual entrapment drill as per SOP 9.32
- Tree Hazard Awareness training. In 2021, new nationally accepted tree markings were introduced. I encourage all members to complete the new Tree Hazard Awareness course to become familiar with the new marking system. I encourage you to complete the package and always maintain situational awareness when working around trees. This is not compulsory if your three-year endorsement is still current.

I expect members to demonstrate our values at all times and ensure their crews' and own personal safety above anything else. Additionally, I encourage all members to consider how the information shared in this update can be incorporated into brigade, group and district operations, training and exercises.

Although burnunders and burnovers have posed a risk in the past three years, the upcoming season is expected

to bring a higher number of grass and bushfires. Therefore there will be a higher risk of entrapment. It is vital that you know how to respond in an entrapment scenario, not only for your own safety but the safety of your crew.

An increased number of grass and bushfires also means our members need to be familiar with the impacts of heat, including the risk of dehydration and heat stress. It is important that members know how to monitor themselves and their crews, and how to manage the risks.

In addition to this material is an update on the HeartWatch program and case studies from the Lessons Management Centre including an aviation response in difficult terrain and a mayday incident at Carlisle River. These case studies provide valuable insights from incidents you can use to prompt discussion during brigade training. All members should read these and consider the application of the lessons identified in their own operational response.

I would like to acknowledge the valuable work that each of you contributes during what can be extremely difficult circumstances and acknowledge the impacts that these contributions have on you and your families. Thank you for your continued commitment.

Use this QR code to access the Quarterly Operational Update material and other topics of interest, or go to www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/brigades-operational/resources/quarterly-operational-updates



Dynamic Risk Assessment

This is the process of applying an ongoing 'likelihood versus consequence' or 'risk versus reward' analysis to a task. If the likelihood of danger outweighs the consequence or the risk outweighs the reward, it's not appropriate to pursue the activity and a change must be made. See diagram, below.

To view a video describing the dynamic risk assessment process go to

<https://vimeo.com/user57746438/review/231792374/9f617d6a67>



LACES

In some emergencies as conditions change, firefighters rely on the use of safety zones and timely use of escape routes for safety. In these situations LACES provides a system to maintain safety.

SOP 11.13 outlines that LACES should be used as a guide to help mitigate the risks that firefighters face, including turnover and entrapment during bushfire, planned burning operations and when a weather change increases tree hazards.

Lookouts: A fixed, aerial or mobile lookout shall be deployed to maintain a clear appreciation of risks and to give timely advice of the need to use escape routes and safety zones.

Awareness: Responders shall be aware of the impact of changes in incident behaviour, including those resulting from variations in weather and topography and of other incident ground hazards.

Communications: All responder crews shall follow the communications plan and communicate with their crew and surrounding crews to discuss and address safety issues.

Escape routes: At least two escape routes should be agreed and made known to all relevant personnel. The suitability of an escape route should be continually reviewed to ensure it remains effective.

Safety zones: Identify safety zones and make them known to all relevant responders. Personnel need to consider escape time and safety zone size requirements which may change as incident conditions change.

WATCHOUT when...

Weather	dominates fire behaviour, so keep informed
Actions	must be based on current and expected fire behaviour
Tryout	at least two safe escape routes and review them
Communicate	with your supervisor, your crew and adjoining crews
Hazards	beware of variations in fuels and steep slopes
Observe	changes in wind speed or direction, temperature, humidity and cloud
Understand	your instructions and make sure you are understood
Think	clearly, be alert and act decisively before your situation becomes critical.

There are 18 listed situations when firefighters should WATCHOUT.

1. Building a control line downhill towards a fire.
2. On a slope – rolling material can ignite fuel below you.
3. The wind changes speed or direction.
4. The weather gets hotter or drier.
5. There are unburnt fuels between you and the fire.
6. Terrain or vegetation impedes travel or visibility.
7. In an area you have not seen in daylight.
8. Unfamiliar with weather and local fire behaviour.
9. Frequent spot fires occur over your control line.
10. You cannot see the main fire or communicate with anyone who can.
11. Unclear instructions or tasks are given.
12. You feel exhausted or want to take a nap near the fire.
13. Attacking a fire or constructing a fire control line without a safe anchor point.
14. Working alone with no communications link to crew members or supervisor.
15. You are not fully informed about strategy, tactics and hazards.
16. Safety zones and escape routes have not been identified.
17. The potential of a fire has not been assessed.
18. Water levels are getting low.



Entrapment drill

Fire behaviour is hard to predict, so everyone needs to be prepared. There's no substitute for practising the entrapment drill, especially when it involves ensuring clear communication and safety of crews during an emergency situation.

Seconds are critical. Repeated hands-on training on how to run an entrapment drill and perform it well could make all the difference for your and your crew's safety.

Always maintain situational awareness

Basic checklist

1. Look at your options and immediately act on the best one. Options other than the vehicle may be available.
2. Use all PPE/PPC.
3. Protect your airway.
4. Ensure the pump is running.
5. Account for all members.
6. Locate blankets.
7. Delivery lines turned off, except on deck.
8. Operate hazard lights, headlights and emergency warning lights.
9. Engine running fast idle - 1000rpm minimum.

Cabin

- Mayday if appropriate.
- Close windows and vents. Turn on aircon in recirculate mode.
- Roll down crew protection curtains and seal.
- Activate crew protection sprays just before impact of heat and flames.

Rear deck

- Where fitted with ROPS canopy sit in crew ROPS and deploy/secure crew protection curtains.
- Take charged hose line with fog branch into your safe area.
- Cover yourself with dry fire blankets for additional protection.

Backup

- If the crew protection system (sprays) fail, use fog branches directed towards heat source from the deck area.

When the danger has passed and it's considered safe, exit the vehicle.

Safety notes

- Ensure crews are briefed and understand the fire conditions.
- Crews operating a tanker with a crew protection system should ensure this is operational when attending bushfire and/or planned burn incidents.
- Ensure there are sufficient protective fire blankets for all crew members and all pumps and crew protection systems are tested and in working order.
- Consider conserving water to extend protection by deck-mounted branches or crew protection sprays.
- In the event of an entrapment situation, do not hose down crew members prior to the fire front passing, as damp clothes or wet fire blankets may cause steam burns.
- If an incident involves several vehicles, group them together and park command and control and/or slip-on type vehicles as close to the leeward side of tankers as possible. If it's safe to do so, members in command and control and/or slip-on type vehicles should exit and take refuge in the cabin or on the deck of tankers.
- If the crew protection spray is unserviceable during bushfire or planned burn sessions, it must be reported for priority repair to CFA's district mechanical officers. In this instance, the vehicle may continue to be used for emergency response, subject to the vehicle's crew leader doing a dynamic risk assessment and setting in place mitigation actions for the safety of the crew. Where possible an alternative vehicle should be considered.

More information

Follow SOP 9.32 Entrapment Procedures for Appliances -
<https://www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/mycfa/Show?pageId=displayDoc&docId=004921>



Heart health

Research shows that the leading causes of on-duty firefighter deaths are acute cardiovascular events. CFA has also identified that heart attack and stroke is one of our top 10 critical hazards in our operations with fatality potential.

There are multiple factors specific to field-based emergency work that act either individually or collectively to increase cardiac risk, including periods of high physical and emotional stress, strenuous activity, body heat, dehydration, sweating and exposure to a range of gases present at a fire.

A cardiovascular condition may affect your ability to safely undertake critical tasks and suffering a cardiac event while operating plant and equipment, firefighting, driving vehicles, or working in remote environments can severely jeopardise your safety and the safety of your crew members.

Members with underlying cardiovascular disease have a 35 per cent increased risk of heart attack and stroke which may occur at any time or during firefighting and emergency response activities. Members over the age of 45 years (or 35 years for First Nations people) are at increased risk of developing heart disease.

Heart disease is one of the leading causes of illness and death in Australia because the red flags aren't easily detectable without a medical examination, so many people may be at risk of having a heart attack without knowing it. Australians over the age of 45 should have regular heart health checks to test for high blood pressure and cholesterol.

Heart health checks don't need to be scary. There are plenty of things you can do to reverse or manage high blood pressure or high cholesterol, either with simple lifestyle changes or with the help of medication.

CFA's HealthWatch Program

HealthWatch is a voluntary program that has been offered to CFA volunteers for almost 20 years, providing free, confidential heart health checks at fire stations. The program is delivered by qualified health professionals from the CFA Health Services team and includes on-the-spot assessments and results for blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and other heart disease risk factors.

The team will explain your results to you straight away and provide some advice around lifestyle changes you may wish to make to improve your overall health where necessary. You will be provided with your results in a small booklet. You can then take the second step and make an appointment with your own GP or other medical practitioner on what you may need to do to improve your heart and overall health.

HealthWatch is separate to CFA's medical Fit For Duty referral program and does not record or collect individual health check results, nor do the outcomes affect your operational status. It is intended as a preventative program to support you to take action with your own medical practitioner.

To book a HealthWatch session at your brigade, search 'Health Watch Booking Form' on Members Online or email HealthWatch@cfa.vic.gov.au

Hydration

Heat stress is one of the top three leading causes of injury during bush fire suppression. Personal protective clothing (PPC) provides considerable protection from the external environment during fire suppression. However, PPC restricts the ability to dissipate body heat through sweating. As the environment becomes hotter, the body's natural cooling system is compromised.

The human body will tolerate a core body temperature increase of only 3°C before heat stress could occur. Under high ambient temperature, the body may experience exhaustion, mental confusion, disorientation, loss of consciousness, heart attack, and in extreme cases death.

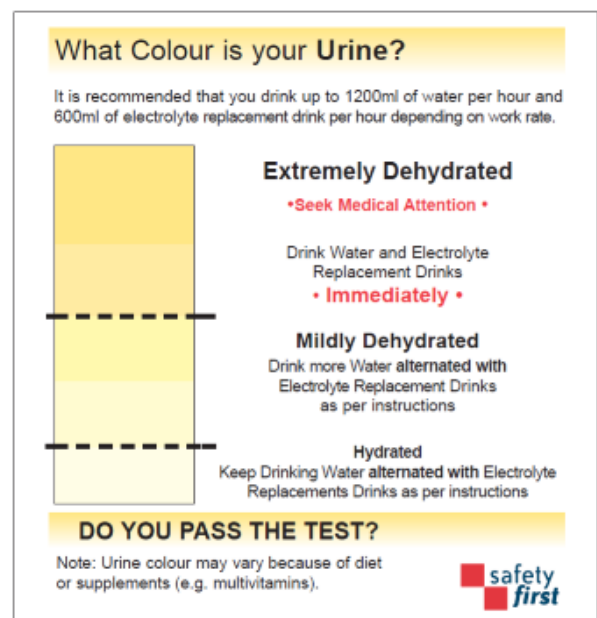
The risk of dehydration and heat-related illnesses is increased by:

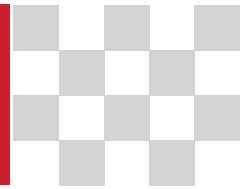
- being overweight and physically inactive
- drinking alcohol or diuretics such as caffeine
- eating food high in saturated fat
- some medications and medical conditions.

To reduce your risk of dehydration and heat illnesses, you should aim to drink at least two litres of water throughout the day, every day, while also maintaining a healthy diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables to ensure electrolyte levels are maintained.

In situations where you sweat a lot from physical activity and/or are exposed to heat, you'll need to drink more water and may also need an electrolyte replacement drink.

Use the 'What colour is your urine?' chart below, as a guide to how much you need to drink.





Aviation response in difficult terrain

Summary

In January 2022 Camperdown and Cobden groups faced two difficult and strenuous firefights in extremely challenging terrain, from which important lessons were identified. This case study focuses specifically on the aviation response. For an in-depth overview of this incident, including general lessons identified, read the full case study 'Firefighting in difficult terrain' on Members Online.

Incident overview

In the space of just over two weeks, the Camperdown and Cobden groups in District 6 experienced two challenging fires in what is referred to locally as the 'Stony Rises'. The first fire started on 9 January 2022 after a lightning strike two kilometres from Beals Road, Tesbury. The second fire occurred on Australia Day just 500 metres from the location of the first fire.

When members were notified of each fire, they immediately knew they would be faced with a number of challenges because of the local terrain. 'Stony' does not do justice to the challenges of this landscape – rolling hills scattered with stones and lava flows (called barriers) interspersed with trees and old stone fences made from volcanic rock.

The amount of rock and stone in the area made access incredibly challenging and the fences dividing the landscape and lack of tracks made moving around the fireground even more difficult. Members found themselves in a situation where they had to wait until the fire reached them and relied on aircraft to undertake suppression activities in the early days of this firefight.

What worked well

There were several factors in the aircraft response to this incident that worked well.

Air attack supervisor intelligence: The information provided by the air attack supervisors was a major benefit to ensure members at the control point situated quite a distance from the fire had strong situational awareness and were able to make effective decisions. Members are encouraged to always make use of the air attack supervisors and the information they can provide during an incident.

Early aircraft response: The early response of aircraft was vital to the outcome of the fire. Aircraft personnel provided good intelligence and could access areas that crews couldn't, which prevented the fire from spreading too far. Do not hesitate to make requests for aircraft early in an incident response to ensure it can be suppressed as quickly as possible. At times it may not be possible to fulfil every request but putting in early requests will improve the chance.



Aircraft tasking: Aircraft tasking during the second fire was effective as members and aircraft crews had a good understanding about what was possible and how to best work together. Aircraft crews could see where ground crews couldn't reach and so targeted those areas. Brigades are encouraged to work with aircraft as part of brigade training to ensure members are comfortable tasking aircraft and know how to make effective use of them in their response area.

Aircraft capability: It was vital during these fires that firefighters and the incident controllers understood the endurance capability and capacity of the various aircraft supporting the incident. Well-targeted retardant was essential in the terrain because foam would go underneath the stones. Members were aware of this and ensured appropriate aircraft were deployed.

Members also identified some challenges with the aircraft response, including with not being entirely familiar with certain aircraft and delays in the response of aircraft because of the approvals process. As early aircraft response is a vital factor in firefighting in difficult terrain, it is important for members to understand the approvals processes for aircraft support and consider this when deciding when to request support.



Bushfire mayday: Carlisle River

Summary

In January 2020 during a bushfire in western Victoria, the Gellibrand brigade tanker crew was caught in a dangerous situation that required activation of the crew protection system sprays and a mayday broadcast. Although this event significantly threatened firefighter safety, the firefighters used their training, escaped the danger and were not harmed.

Incident overview

At 1.22pm on Wednesday 15 January 2020, a bushfire was reported in Carlisle River, with a column of smoke visible. The Gellibrand tanker arrived at 2.23pm, after making its way to the fire from a previous callout. On board was a captain/crew leader, driver and one crew member. The tanker attended the control point and the crew leader met with the DEECA incident controller for a briefing along with other crew leaders.

Gellibrand tanker was tasked to move down the road and stop the fire from crossing Cricket Pitch Track. The crew believed it was too late to prevent the fire crossing the track, and visibility was poor because of heavy smoke in the area. Colac and Kennedys Creek tankers turned around to ensure they could leave easily because there were no turning points to the south of the track.

There were about 30 metres between the Gellibrand and Colac tankers. The crew on the Gellibrand tanker could see the Colac tanker's crew was on foot and using two 38mm hose lines to extinguish the vegetation. It was at this point that the Gellibrand tanker decided to turn around. It moved in front of the Colac tanker on the right-hand side of the road (facing north, the escape route). The crew on the Gellibrand tanker believed the Colac tanker would need water soon, so they set up to supply the Colac tanker with water when required.

A crew member from the Gellibrand tanker had moved from the deck area of the tanker to the ground and was using a 38mm hose to extinguish the fire. This deployment of the hose line was not a directive from the crew leader; both the crew leader and driver were not aware he had moved off the truck and was now holding a hose line.

The fire moved closer to Cricket Pitch Track and there was a high fuel load adjacent to the track on the east side. The Gellibrand tanker was parked near this high fuel load. The driver of the Gellibrand tanker noticed the fire was close to the road and tanker. Then a tree caught fire, affecting the tanker driver's side mirror and throwing embers into the open window of the rear offside door. The crew leader tried to get the crew member back onto the tanker as he saw the fire and the tree burning. The crew leader and driver were unaware of the crew member's location and whether he was safe.

It was at this stage a mayday call was made and aerial ID provided. The crew protection sprays were

activated to protect the crew and tanker. When the crew member was safely recovered, the Gellibrand tanker made its escape, returning to the control point. As a result of the mayday being called, the divisional commander called the Gellibrand tanker on the radio but didn't get a response. He was aware it was in a safe area when it reached the control point location. No firefighters were injured.

What worked well

Personal protective clothing and equipment: Full CFA bushfire PPC/E was worn and in good condition which contributed positively to the safety of firefighters.

Crew protection sprays: The crew protection sprays were activated correctly at the right time and they operated as designed, giving effective protection to the crew and vehicle.

Lessons identified

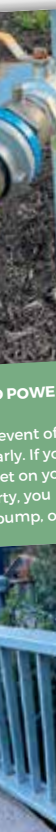
Command, control and communication: Effective command and control on the fireground relies on two-way communication to support operational decision-making. As crews assess that a fire situation is changing and becoming a greater risk to crew safety, this information should be communicated rapidly and clearly to command-and-control personnel.

Clarification of tasking: In this incident the crew didn't seek further information from the divisional commander or strike team leader after their initial briefing despite having concerns. Where tasking is not clear or there are safety concerns it's important to communicate with command-and-control personnel to clarify the task and to make any adjustments required, whether for safety or other operational reasons.

Application of a Dynamic Risk Assessment (DRA): The crew did not apply a DRA when tasked by the divisional commander when they arrived at the desired location. Implementing continuous DRA allows for the identification of risks and their mitigation. In this situation, continuous DRA may have helped the crew identify the risk of their task and position before the mayday emergency.

Conclusion

This incident had the potential to cause serious injuries or death to firefighters. However, the use of safety systems, tools and procedures prevented an adverse outcome. It is important that firefighters train and employ SMEACS-Q, good situational awareness, DRA, LACES, communication strategies and a safe approach to keep responders safe on a fireground where the potential exists for a rapid and uncontrollable change in conditions.



Wye River's dedicated water supply project

Going back almost 20 years, Wye River Fire Brigade identified that many of the new houses being built had CFA-dedicated water tanks that were unusable. The tanks were either too far away from tanker access, the pipes connecting the tank to the outlet were too small, or in some cases the tanks were empty.

The 2015 Christmas Day fire demonstrated the importance of a dedicated 10,000-litre supply for defending properties. In a small town with no mains water, it can take up to 20 minutes for a tanker to refill at the station.

But many people, including plumbers, aren't sure of the regulations and conditions that must be met when installing a CFA-dedicated water supply.

Wye River brigade's Community Safety Coordinator Ian 'Wellsy' Wells set about finding out all the regulations that had to be met with a new build. The 'Bushfire planning' section of the Victoria Planning Provisions outlines the requirements, as well as CFA's Guidelines for remote outlets on water tanks in the Bushfire Management Overlay – which is available on Members Online (members.cfa.vic.gov.au).

"It really is quite complex when you dig down into it," Wellsy said, "and in some cases it appears like it falls through the cracks in the whole building process."

For example, regulations stipulate that a CFA appliance must be able to access within four metres of an outlet. However, if the tank itself is more than four metres below the draughting point on the truck it can be difficult to both prime and maintain adequate flow rates.

"CFA's guidelines only allow for gravity feed tanks, which is just not possible in hilly terrain where half the houses are on the down slope and road easements don't allow for tanks to be at road level," Wellsy said.

Wye River brigade discovered that building surveyors are not required to check compliance on CFA-dedicated tanks. Council compliance officers have the power to enforce these conditions, but only do so if they have been notified. District 6 ACFO Craig Brittain took this compliance issue to Colac Otway Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee and it has now been

referred to Barwon South West Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee and Municipal Association of Victoria.

Wye River brigade has compiled a compliance audit sheet for each property so that it can inform the council of any issues. The audit sheet includes regulatory conditions and points from CFA's guidelines, and is divided into sections covering signage, the outlet and pipework, and the size and position of the tank.

New resident and CFA CEO Natalie MacDonald volunteered her house as a test case for the audit. Brigade members helped to determine the best location for the CFA tank and outlet. Following these discussions, Natalie decided to increase tank capacity to 15,000 litres. The house sprinkler system runs off a separate tank, allowing the brigade to have full use of the 15,000 litres. However, homeowners can always access a CFA tank if needed.

"We know residents often spend a lot of money installing a CFA-dedicated tank. We want to make sure they are safe for the brigade to access and are usable," Wellsy said.

Wye brigade has started mapping usable CFA-dedicated points on Google Maps for the township, as well as neighbouring Separation Creek, Kennett River and Grey River, which helps crews in pre-planning en route to a fire. The mapping also includes relevant information such as the presence of bunkers, solar panels and whether a house may contain asbestos.

With the help of CFA's Community Safety team, the brigade recently produced a flyer for residents (pictured) which highlights the importance of CFA-dedicated water tanks and what owners can do, including maintaining good signage, clearing vegetation from around the outlet and ensuring tanks remain full.

We have great support from our community. We know they want to do all they can to keep the township safe from fire. They just needed to know 'Wye?'

If you want more information contact wyeriverCFA@outlook.com

STORY ANDREW HACK,
WYE RIVER BRIGADE CAPTAIN

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR DEDICATED CFA WATER SUPPLY?

- Ensure the tank is full at all times
- Ensure signage remains visible
- Keep clear of vegetation
- Outlet remains accessible
- Test outlet valve operation regularly

IMPORTANT NOTE:
People who choose to defend their homes should prepare to do so without assistance from emergency services.

Changes in 2009 required all new CFA dedicated water tanks to be metal or concrete and for above ground fittings to be non corrosive metal. Houses constructed before this are not required to make any alterations.

NEED HELP?
If you have any questions or want advice contact the Wye River Fire Brigade
wyerivercfa@outlook.com
Date: September 2022

CFA DEDICATED WATER SUPPLY
- WYE RIVER CFA -

FIRE WATER TANK OUTLET



Ultra-heavy tanker rollout

The first of 29 new ultra-heavy tankers are being rolled out soon to a brigade in Ballarat and another near Swan Hill to help support firefighting efforts across Victoria.

The new 24-tonne ultra-heavy tankers can carry 10,000 litres of water, which is more than some of our water bombing aircraft. They will greatly boost our ability to fight fires in remote rural areas with open grasslands.

The tankers are being deployed predominately to brigades in the north-west, south-west and west of the state.

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said these new vehicles were a welcome addition to our firefighting fleet.

“There is potential for the ultra-heavy tankers to be used in an urban environment, but they are primarily designed for use in grass and general firefighting where there is limited access to reticulated water or large open water supplies,” Jason said.

“Earlier this year we saw how quickly and devastating grassfires can be due to the vegetation growth across Victoria. These new Ultra-heavy Tankers will help in those remote areas because of their increased capacity to carry water.”

The ultra-heavy tanker is a step up from the heavy tankers which carry 4,000 litres of water.

The new tankers have seating for three crew and include a bull bar-mounted remote-control monitor which can be operated from inside the cabin to distribute more than 450 litres of water per minute.

It also includes a 200-litre A-class foam tank to allow crews to work ahead of fire fronts and for blacking out.

The 29 ultra-heavy tankers will be rolled out to brigades the Warrnambool, Wangaratta, Ballarat, Geelong, Horsham, Swan Hill, Shepparton, Bairnsdale and Bendigo areas.

The Victorian Government funded \$12.835 million for the new vehicles.

Spring outlook points to warmer weather

Victorians can expect a drier and warmer spring, with a high chance of an early start to the fire season in the central, western and northern parts of the state.

Victoria’s drier than average conditions are expected to continue, following below average rainfall across much of the state during winter, according to the Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Spring.

Despite below average rainfall during winter, grass growth is expected to be higher than usual following three years of wet La Niña conditions.

A strong drying trend in far east and central Gippsland has resulted in a higher-than-normal potential for fires, including



communities close to bushland, and especially where vegetation was unburnt during the 2019-20 fire season.

There is also a high likelihood that bushfire season will start earlier compared to the past two years across much of central, western and northern Victoria. Remaining parts of the state are expected to see normal fire potential. However, hot, windy

conditions can still pose a fire risk.

The Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Spring is developed by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) and supported by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) along with state and territory fire and land managers.

Fish Creek ecological burn a success



Standing on the ridge at Merran Wilde's property just south of Fish Creek, the views of Wilsons Promontory are breathtaking. Looking after the land has been a passion of Merran's for decades, however she saw that regenerative fire was missing.

Equipped with advice from local ecologist Dr Mary Ellis, Merran began detailed consultation with CFA with the aim of conducting an ecological burn to regenerate long, unburnt and ageing flora on the property.

Ten years ago, Merran's property was nominated as part of a CFA-led pilot project called Fire-Scape, where private landholders learned about the impacts planned burning and fire ecology can have in protecting important assets from bushfire. Australian plants have been shaped by fire for millennia, a practice First Nations people have done for tens of thousands of years.

The planned ecological burn was nominated as part of the statewide Joint Fuel Management Program (JFMP). Establishing and maintaining strong relationships proved crucial for the burn's success. Merran and Dr Ellis collaborated with CFA's Vegetation Management team, brigade volunteers and the local council during multiple site assessments, sharing insights about the property, conditions and objectives.

In preparation for the burn, many key stakeholders collaborated to share insights and experiences, secure permits and determine the resources needed. This included the local CFA volunteer complex planned burn operations officer (PBOO), brigade volunteers, FFMVic, Vegetation Management and Community Safety teams.

In early September 2022, volunteers from 11 brigades in District 9 joined forces to coordinate the burn. Merran's relationships with her neighbours enabled CFA crews to access a dam and property boundaries for equipment setup. Due to the site's dampness, hoses were laid out to avoid the risk of vehicles getting bogged and damaging the tracks, eliminating the need for vehicular access.

On the day of the burn, a light easterly wind meant changes were required to the burn prescription so that CFA crews, led by Ruby Fire Brigade volunteer and qualified PBOO Darren Hardacre, could set up an ignition pattern. Being adaptable and making the most of local conditions ensured the fire would burn away from neighbouring homes immediately adjacent to the burn area.

The 26 volunteers who set aside work and other commitments to attend the burn gained invaluable training and strengthened their skills.

Despite decades of experience, Darren said he always leaves a burn with new lessons learned – from reading the conditions and fire behaviour, to understanding more about ecology and how vegetation responds to different kinds of fire. Darren believes the ability for volunteers to undertake prescribed burns is important on many levels.



"Learning how to use fire to care for the environment is a great skill to develop, and listening to and learning from others is key," Darren said.

A month on from the burn and there were already signs of ferns, grass trees and banksias regenerating. Merran showed off these early ecological changes at two Fire Ecology Engagement field days. The success of the burn ensures there will be opportunities to observe, listen and share lessons for years to come at this special place.

Merran's next goal is to burn another small, adjacent block of healthy vegetation to promote a mosaic of regeneration and age classes on her property.

"The ability to look after and have meaningful outcomes for our environment should never be taken for granted," Darren said. "We need to be stewards of the environment and lead by example."

"Training our volunteers in fire behaviour and successful outcomes provides essential lessons that help support and protect our communities."

STORY SAM STRONG AND YAZMIN CRAIG, SAFER TOGETHER PROGRAM

Improving data for aerial firefighters

A collaborative research project is improving the data used by aerial firefighters to locate nearby water sources.

During active bushfires, aerial firefighting units are dispatched by members of the National Aerial Firefighting Centre (NAFC). NAFC members use a variety of data sources to find suitable nearby water sources for firefighting helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. It is critical for effective decision-making that the most current and accurate data about the location of water is available as quickly as possible.

The Identifying Water Sources For Aerial Firefighting project is a collaboration between NAFC/AFAC, Natural Hazards Research Australia, Geoscience Australia (GA) and FrontierSI that is improving the reliability and clarity of information about water bodies by adding recently observed water and currency attributes to datasets used by firefighters.

CEO of Natural Hazards Research Australia Andrew Gissing highlighted the benefit of collaborative research when advancing Australia's bushfire planning technology.

"This project is a great example of ways we can work together to serve emergency management and the community through high-impact research," he said. "The project team from Natural Hazards Research Australia, NAFC, GA and FrontierSI has delivered new scientific knowledge that's actionable and useful in keeping our communities safe from bushfire."

The first phase of this project – now complete – focused on extending an earlier proof-of-concept project developed through the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC. A workshop in February 2023 gathered perspectives from several key emergency management agencies across Australia about the ways they

currently use waterbody datasets and how these datasets might be improved for bushfire pre-planning decisions. Users provided insights into new information and software requirements, operational suitability and additional waterbody attributes (such as waterbody features, dataset currency, surrounding environment and biosecurity risks) that would strengthen the relevance and accuracy of existing waterbody datasets.

Following this, the project team (managed by Anthony Gallacher at NAFC) delivered a method to augment GA's Digital Earth Australia satellite-based data products with the latest water availability information to meet NAFC's needs.

This significantly improves the accuracy of agencies' knowledge about nearby water and provides critical support to disaster management planning to facilitate rapid and effective bushfire response. In the past, data about nearby waterbodies might have been months or years old, but now this information is updated regularly and can be easily accessed.

The new system:

- identifies aircraft-accessible waterbodies
- contributes to aircraft selection and allocation based on access to water
- contributes to efficient use of aircraft
- provides information to air desks, air bases and air crews to help their situational awareness and decision-making.

Find out more about this project and read the final report (including recommendations) at naturalhazards.com.au/research/waterbodies-aerial-firefighting.

STORY: BETHANY PATCH, NATURAL HAZARDS RESEARCH AUSTRALIA



PHOTO: NATIONAL AERIAL FIREFIGHTING CENTRE



Faces of CFA

BRONWYN HASTINGS, HORSHAM FIRE BRIGADE, DISTRICT 17

What is your CFA role?

Treasurer and firefighter.

Why did you join?

I was a journalist in a small town, where I covered anything and everything from school sports days and Country Women's Association events, to fires and car accidents. As I was regularly at these incidents during business hours, Dimboola brigade volunteers encouraged me to join. I did, and was made brigade secretary as quickly as I trained to be a firefighter.

Before that, I was part of the Girl Guides movement. I joined as a Brownie at the age of seven, working my way through to become a leader as an adult. I led four different units over the years, for girls aged from five to 18. I think the beliefs and skills I gained from this time has transferred well into the principles of the CFA, and those of our brigade.

What incident has had the greatest impact on you?

There have been many, for varying reasons. The big jobs that make the television news, the cluster of significant jobs that contribute to an annual uneasy sense within a brigade, and the small jobs that just make someone's day better. They all matter, but I find it's the little jobs that keep you coming back.

One stand-out incident was a double-fatality involving two B-Double trucks between Dimboola and Nhill. It was just before sunrise on a Tuesday, the day I was road-tripping with family to pick up my wedding dress. Even though the day didn't turn out as I had envisioned the previous night, it was still a day that I'll never forget.

Now it's any incident that involves young drivers that inspires me to go home and tell my children, particularly the newly-Plated one, 'don't be a washaway'.

Who have been your mentors in CFA?

It's hard to nominate the special few, so I won't! There are the formal trainers and instructors who have had a huge influence

not only on my skills, but also my confidence to be able to achieve what I set out to do.

There are also the people who have been a huge support on a more personal level, and some I have formed years-long friendships with. I've benefited from the "it takes a village" approach, and hopefully given to it, too.

What have been the highlights of your time in CFA?

I have achieved things I never thought I would, including BA, my truck licence and other, varied qualifications. I have held an officer's role for the most part of my time in CFA, both Secretary and Treasurer separately, despite declaring that numbers and I would never be friends.

Qualifications aside, I love spending time with people and learning from others; not just different ways to do things, but the different experiences and perspectives that people bring. Also, the time shared socially with this cross-section of the wider community has given me so many great memories.

How do you motivate your brigade members?

Celebrating the small victories and encouraging everyone to find their place. There are so many roles and avenues to explore, there's something to suit almost everyone.

Failing that, cake.

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

Keep trying, it's all learning. And have a go; you never know what you might achieve.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I enjoy walking (with a healthy balance of true crime and comedy podcasts for company), drawing, photography, and ensuring my teenage children are properly educated in 90s movies with regular screenings of all the classics.



9,291
report downloads

1,500
users (volunteers
and staff)

Capability interface

Members across the state are using the Baseline Capability Profiling App (BCPA) to make informed, data-driven decisions areas about brigade issues such as training needs, succession planning and community engagement.

More than 1,107 members have completed training to use the BCPA since it was made available more broadly across CFA in April this year.

Designed by the capability team within CFA to support capability planning, the app's genius is its ability to bring together more than 60 million pieces of data from CFA's systems, as well as external sources like the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in an easy-to-use visual format.

Not only is data displayed visually, it is interactive, allowing members using the app to compare information specific to their brigade, district or region including turnout activity versus training skills and incident types versus time of callouts.

The data is particularly useful in helping identify training, vehicle and equipment needs as well as resource requirements and community prevention and preparedness priorities. Data is presented on a calendar-year basis and information appears in the app within 24 hours of any updates in CFA's systems.

Drouin West Fire Brigade in District 9 was involved in the original pilot of the BCPA. Its Brigade Management Team has been using the app for about two years to support decision-making and identify areas for improvement.

Brigade Training Coordinator Bruce Jewell said the key benefit of the BCPA was the ability to access data relevant to a conversation or idea.

"As a BMT, we often have a picture of what we think is going on, however with the app we can be certain," Bruce said.

"Often there's no big surprises but we have the data to help focus our decision-making and enable us to plan to fill any gaps in our capability.

"One of the biggest benefits is for planning training. As training coordinator, I can use the app to look at our operational skills and fire causation trend data and plan training around the common causes of fires in our response area.

"I have also used the BCPA to identify which brigades we are working and responding with the most and have planned joint training sessions with these brigades so we are used to working together before we meet at an incident."

The BMT also uses the app to see its turnout data including who is responding and when. Looking at this data in conjunction with local community information allows the brigade to see any gaps in capability and plan recruitment accordingly.

"Incident location and historical data also provide us with a picture of where we need to focus our fire prevention and community engagement activities," Bruce added.

"The BCPA is an evolving tool and there are some gaps in the data still, however seeing trends in areas such as community engagement is only going to improve as the data coming from CFA's Activity Reporting Tool (ART) grows."

In contrast, Dandenong Fire Brigade is a newer user of the app, having only been using the BCPA since it became available in April. However, 2nd Lieutenant and brigade Training Coordinator Daniel Woo is already seeing the benefits.

"The BCPA is a one-stop shop for data. As a BMT we find the way the data is presented makes it easy to visualise and understand certain issues," Daniel said.

"As training coordinator, I bring together our members' skill profiles, the types of calls we receive and incident trends in one consolidated environment and use this to prepare specific training plans to meet any skills gaps.

"I also use this data to determine who to put forward for training courses in line with their individual development pathway.

"Before using the BCPA, I needed to access a number of different programs to view this information."

Daniel said the BMT also used the app to improve the brigade's operational capability by analysing and comparing brigade vehicle activity, member availability and member turnout.

"The ability to access our response and membership data has definitely helped the BMT in terms of succession planning and setting goals for recruiting our next generation of volunteers," Daniel said.

"The risk and impact trends data will also be important for ensuring appropriate resource allocation and response preparedness."

Daniel said improvements to data integrity as use of the app grows and new reporting options will only improve its ability to support capability planning.

"We'd love to see appliance service history made available in the app to provide us with early indication of any potential issues with our vehicles that could impact our operational capability," Daniel said.

Access to the BCPA is available to members of Brigade Management Teams (including 1st to 4th lieutenants), Group Management Teams and District Planning Committees after they have completed prerequisite training on The Learning Hub.

Members who do not hold an eligible role, but who believe they have a requirement to access the app should speak to their ACFO or Commander for authorisation.

For more information and updates on the BCPA go to members.cfa.vic.gov.au/bcpa

STORY: SHAUNNAGH O'LOUGHLIN



Youth engagement at CFA

Each week thousands of young people get involved at CFA. Young members are an essential part of our organisation with many of our volunteers working hard to engage and include young people in a meaningful way.

Brigades continue to establish new junior programs with several junior brigades starting up across the state in the past six months: Eynesbury (North West Region), Inverleigh (South West), San Remo (South East), Nathalia and Mount Evelyn (North East), and more in the pipeline.

Junior Volunteer Development Program

The Junior Volunteer Development Program (JVDP), also known as Juniors or Junior Brigade, runs in around 170 brigades across Victoria and aims to introduce young people aged 11 to 15 years old to CFA by giving them the opportunity to develop skills that could lead to senior operational membership. However, the program also builds positive self-esteem and self-confidence, develops team-building and leadership skills, and the capacity of young people to consider risk and make reasoned decisions.

If your brigade is interested in starting a Junior Brigade, visit the 'Young people in CFA' page on Members Online (members.cfa.vic.gov.au) or email juniors@cfa.vic.gov.au.

Cadet Camp

A successful Cadet Camp took place in May 2023 with 50 16 and 17-year-old CFA members participating. Young members came from across the state to participate in a series of training drills at Central Highlands VEMTC, as well as various leadership and team building activities.

Feedback from our young members tells us that becoming a senior member can be daunting, and the Cadet Camp is one way CFA can give young people a positive experience.

"This weekend I built my confidence and remembered why I joined CFA," said one participant.

"The best part of the weekend was VEMTC for sure, having the ability to put out fires and experience fire-like behaviour, as well as meeting a diverse range of people," said another of the participants. "This has been the best weekend of my life."

If you or one of your young members is interested in participating in Cadet activities, email cadets@cfa.vic.gov.au.

HeartWood Centre

Across the state staff and volunteers have been doing training in youth engagement with the HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development. This training has led to 20 CFA facilitators who can deliver two locally-based workshops, 'Valuing Youth' and 'Young Adults as Volunteers', to brigades and districts interested in engaging more with young people. The facilitators help participants understand a spectrum of approaches to engage youths in the context of CFA.

If you are interested in signing up for a workshop look in the 'Child Safety' catalogue in The Learning Hub (learninghub.cfa.vic.gov.au) or email youthteam@cfa.vic.gov.au.

Young Adults Advisory Committee

The Young Adults Advisory Committee continues to play a role in helping the Chief Officer and CEO hear the voices of our young members. A recent review has seen a strengthening of purpose and format that should lead to greater engagement. A new expression of interest process to recruit district representatives is now live. You can find the details on the 'Advisory Committees' pages of Members Online or email YAAC@cfa.vic.gov.au.

STORY JEN CLEMENT

New fire season resources to prepare the community

CFA is once more distributing its summer campaign material to the community to help people prepare for the fire season. This year CFA has produced a set of new resources that complements the 'Can I or Can't I?' guide that explains the restrictions during the Fire Danger Period (FDP) and on Total Fire Ban (TFB) days.

This new artwork is a collection of concise and engaging animations, brochures, posters and tiles with links for further information online. The new designs focus on a pair of identical twins and what they can and cannot do on FDP and TFB days. These twins portray a message that says, "Together we can keep safe from fires", but one is wearing a cap that says 'I Can' while the other says 'I Can't'.

When people see the twins, we want them to make the connection between these messages and the twins and realise they must follow the advice. The simplicity with which we express the 'can' and 'can't' to each twin is the idea's main strength.

We have now developed new rural and urban grassfire videos, partly because of the increase in the number of grassfires over the past few years. The purpose is to provide new social media content that illustrates a grassfire situation in a rural and urban setting and the risks each poses.

These assets will be promoted to the community throughout the fire season. The Department of Justice and Community Safety is also currently creating the Victorian Fire Season campaign in anticipation of the 2023-24 fire season.

As with previous years, this campaign will likely begin in November, with the objective to increase public awareness to leave early on Extreme or Catastrophic days.

All our assets will be available on the Community Engagement Content Portal and can be used by any brigade. You can access a wide range of campaign resources and materials such as:

- key summer campaign messages
- new 'Can I or Can't I?' resources including animations, posters, social media tiles and brochures
- new rural and urban grassfire videos
- a range of social media tiles covering topics such as haystacks, harvesting, burning off and FDPs
- animations covering topics such as warnings, what you should take with you, staying informed and pets and livestock
- social media videos about burning off, preparing, leaving early, campfires and vehicles in dry grass.

To access this information, visit the 'Campaign resources' section of the Community Engagement Content Portal cfa.vic.gov.au/cecontentportal (use your CFA email address to log in).

STORY NANCY THOMPSON



Modewarre station opening

Modewarre Fire Brigade volunteers have celebrated the official opening of their new fire station which will improve their ability to serve the local community.

The new \$2.08 million facility replaced the former station located only one kilometre away – a site the brigade had been operating from since 1985.

Brigade members were joined by the local community, Member for South Barwon Darren Cheeseman MP and CFA's DCO Garry Cook AFSM who was Acting Chief Officer at the time.

The new station features three motor-room bays, separate turnout rooms and change facilities for men and women, as well as a large multi-purpose room that can be used for meetings and training.

Other features include equipment storage areas and dedicated breathing apparatus cleaning facilities.

Modewarre Captain Michael Meesen said the new station will help the brigade better serve and protect the community.



“We’d outgrown the old station. It just wasn’t big enough for our growing membership,” Michael said.

“The larger station with the drive-through engine bay will be fantastic because we no longer need to reverse in. Also, the storage shed at the back of the building will be really handy.

“The old station down the road will now be repurposed as a Men’s and Women’s Shed by the local community network. It’s great knowing that after housing the brigade

for nearly 40 years, it will still be a valuable asset to the community.”

DCO Cook AFSM said the old fire station served the brigade and the community well for many years.

“This new station will be an asset to the growing Modewarre Fire Brigade, allowing our volunteers to continue doing what they do best – protect lives and property,” Garry said.

CFA & Brigades Donations Fund supporting brigades

The CFA & Brigades Donations Fund (the Trust) is a public charitable trust established for the purpose of receiving tax-deductible gifts and donations for the benefit of brigades.

All donations over \$2 received by brigades must be deposited into the Trust to comply with ATO Deductible Gift Recipients (DGR) requirements. Brigades can elect to have donations received by the Trust disbursed to the brigade or retained within the Trust fund to earn interest for the brigade. More information regarding the administration process can be found on Members Online.

Community members can choose to donate directly to the CFA & Brigades Donations Fund or to a specific brigade at cfa.vic.gov.au/donate. Donors will receive a tax-deductible receipt at the time of donation, reducing administration time for brigades.

If a community member nominates a specific brigade, 100 per cent of donated amounts are disbursed to the nominated brigade. If a donor doesn’t nominate a specific brigade, the trustees will apply those funds to projects that benefit volunteers more broadly.

Grants

The Trust can support brigades and groups who seek grants to fund the purchase of assets or relevant projects and initiatives. The Trust is a charity registered with The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. More information regarding grants and FAQs can be found on Members Online.

Community Benefit Program

Ritchies Community Benefit Program has been supporting CFA for 30 years donating more than \$3 million to brigades. Brigades can contact their local Ritchies store to get involved and benefit from the program.

Make a gift in your will

Leave a lasting legacy and include a gift in your will to a CFA brigade or the CFA & Brigades Donations Fund. Sample wording can be found at cfa.vic.gov.au/donate.

**DONATE TO THE
CFA AND BRIGADES
DONATIONS FUND**



All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

The CFA & Brigades Donation Fund has Deductible Gift Recipient status (DGR) Item 1 and is a Registered Charity with ACNC.





Swan Hill brigade embraces its changing community

When a group of Fijians arrived in the Swan Hill area in February 2022 to work in a local abattoir, they never imagined they would become CFA firefighters. But after a long recruitment process, six Fijians are now qualified firefighters and members of Swan Hill Fire Brigade and four more are members of the neighbouring Woorinen South brigade.

“It was a long, drawn-out process but after eight months we got them on our books and onto the General Firefighter course,” Swan Hill Captain Mick Howard said, “and by the end of June this year they qualified as firefighters.”

The group of men had to apply for Working with Children Checks and international police checks, and because English isn't their first language they were helped through the process by brigade members.

“We're really lucky they hung on during this time despite being frustrated. They stayed around and kept coming to the station on Tuesday nights. I'm really thankful for their effort,” Mick said.

“This group of men are always positive, always have a smile on their faces and are always happy to help when asked. They love taking selfies on the truck and they send the photos to their families in Fiji.

“All our firefighters get on really well with them and they fit into the brigade well.”

Despite being newly-qualified firefighters, they are already talking about doing further training such as the low structure and breathing apparatus courses.

Josateki Vunimasi, nicknamed Josh, was the first Fijian to join Swan Hill.

“Back at home I was applying to be a paid, full-time firefighter, but because of COVID-19 I couldn't do it,” Josh said.

“During the 2009 fires I saw on the TV all the animals and houses burning and so when I came to Australia I wanted to join a brigade. Back home, we like helping our communities.

“I told the other Fijians where I work that with our visa we can have only one paid job, and I suggested to them that in their spare time they could help the community by joining CFA. And they did.



“Captain Mick and the rest at Swan Hill made us feel comfortable; I love Mick.”

Josh has already helped support the community and wants to get more involved.

“I helped the brigade set up at a carnival and enjoyed helping children to squirt water from one of our hoses. Also, during the floods last year I helped VICES to fill sand bags.”

Mick believes that increasing the cultural diversity in the brigade is important.

“It makes sense with the increasing diversity in the Australian population that we increase diversity in brigades. And brigades need to be proactive to engage a wide range of people.”

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL

Unlocking the potential of volunteer leaders

In the aftermath of the devastating 2019-20 bushfires, CFA received an incredible public donation of \$9 million dollars to support the development of our volunteer leaders. Embracing this opportunity, CFA launched the Volunteer Leadership Development Program (VLD program), a groundbreaking initiative aimed at nurturing and empowering volunteer leaders.

Pathways to excellence

The VLD program offers three development pathways, catering to the diverse needs and aspirations of our volunteers. Volunteers can take part in one or more of these to develop their leadership potential.

- **Leadership Essentials:** This foundational pathway equips aspiring leaders with the fundamental skills and knowledge required to lead effectively. This pathway includes professional development such as mastering the art of feedback and having challenging conversations. It will be further developed to provide comprehensive training, covering various aspects of leadership, communication, decision-making and team management. Through this pathway, volunteers are empowered to take on leadership roles with confidence and competence.
- **Targeted Development:** This second pathway focuses on providing specialised mentoring programs designed to address specific leadership challenges and opportunities. One such program is the Captains Peer Mentoring Program where experienced captains serve as mentors to guide and support new or aspiring captains in their roles. Additionally, the Women in Leadership Mentoring Program encourages and supports women volunteers in their leadership journeys,

fostering greater gender diversity and inclusivity in CFA's leadership ranks.

- **Leading in Community:** The third pathway aims to develop leaders who can drive positive change, not only within CFA but also in the broader community. Programs such as the Regional Leadership Scholarship Program offer opportunities for volunteers to attend community-delivered training programs. By engaging with external leadership experts and diverse perspectives, volunteers gain fresh insights and innovative approaches to leadership.

Responding to volunteers' needs

One of the key aspects of the VLD program is the commitment to work with volunteers to develop it further. The best way to meet the needs of our volunteers is by partnering with them in shaping the program's future, and CFA is actively working with volunteers to develop a Volunteer Competency Leadership Framework. This framework will serve as the foundation for continuous enhancements and will lead to new programs tailored to meet the leadership requirements of our volunteers.

The VLD program is still in its early stages, but its impact is already being felt. The program will continue to evolve as the Volunteer Competency Leadership Framework is developed, ensuring it remains relevant and effective in meeting the changing needs of CFA volunteers. The \$9 million donation has been a catalyst for positive change, fostering a culture of leadership excellence and a stronger, more capable CFA.

STORY TRACEY RUSE



Left to right: 2023 scholarship recipient Gianna Verdini-Fensom (Harrietteville brigade) with Adrian Gutsche (the then District 24 ACFO) and Michelle Critchley (NER Volunteer Sustainability Team) at the launch of the Alpine Valleys Community Leadership program.

Restoring the Fiskville Pink Panther



The name Pink Panther usually invokes images of a cartoon character, but CFA fire truck enthusiasts know it's the nickname given to the distinctive pumper used at Fiskville training college.

The 1976 International ACCO Type 1 pumper was dubbed the Pink Panther because of its unique pinkish-orange coloured daylight-fluorescent paint. The two-part fluorescent paint system was developed by Wiedolux for use as safety-marking and warning colours for fire trucks, ambulances and public service vehicles to make them easily visible in dense traffic.

The pumper was the first of a new era of fire trucks for CFA, designed by firefighters for use against all types of fires in urban settings. Design features included a petrol V8 motor with automatic transmission, a dual cabin to carry five firefighters, improved storage in the form of integrated lockers and a boosted water pumping capacity of 3,400 litres per minute. This was a huge improvement on the front-mounted pumpers previously used.

The Pink Panther was initially stationed at CFA's Fiskville Training College and was later deployed to Dandenong, Bendigo and Mildura fire stations before being reallocated as the State Service Exchange Vehicle (state spare).

It retired from the CFA fleet in 1994 and went on to serve six months at the Puckapunyal Army Base near Seymour, followed by 20 years servicing the Tasmanian ports.

Once out of service, the truck was sold privately to Matt Taranto in 2016. Unfortunately, Matt was not able to restore the truck as originally planned and in May 2022, he made the difficult decision to sell the truck.

Brett and Tony Eastwood of Eastey Fire Trucks bought it and continued with the restoration plans, inviting Matt to be involved to ensure the history and his in-depth knowledge of the truck was retained.



Other restored vehicles in the Eastey Fire Trucks collection include a 1956 front-mounted Austin pumper and a 1948 Dennis F3 fire truck – the only one of its kind in the world.

To house their growing collection of fire trucks and fire brigade related paraphernalia, the team recently set up the Eastey Fire House Display on Mt Dandenong Road in Montrose.

"The location was chosen as a nod to the town where we grew up and the place where our passion began, Montrose Fire Brigade," Brett said.

Eddie Tichelaar of Montrose Fire Brigade is also a member of the Eastey Fire Trucks team and said the team regularly tours the state with the restored trucks.

"We take them along to truck and car shows, making sure to stop in and visit fire stations along the way," Eddie said.

"One of the highlights of the year was the Austin and the Type 1 taking pride of place and leading the Torchlight Procession at the State Firefighter Championships in Mooroopna earlier this year.

"Seeing the excitement on little kids' faces and hearing people share their stories makes all the hard work worthwhile."

For more information about Eastey Fire Trucks go to [facebook.com/easteyfiretrucks](https://www.facebook.com/easteyfiretrucks).

STORY NAOMI GALVIN



Noble Park brigade proud of its diversity

“Our community is one of Australia’s most diverse and we strive really hard to reflect the community in our brigade. Diversity is our success,” Noble Park Fire Brigade Captain Matt Pond said.

More than 15 languages are spoken by brigade members and this has benefitted the brigade on many occasions.

“Having brigade members who speak different languages has paid dividends in many ways,” Matt said. “For example, we ran a large-scale ‘safer homes smoke alarm installation’ strike team in our community and there were several residents who only spoke Cambodian (Khmer) or Vietnamese. At the time, we had seven brigade members supporting the event who were able to speak Khmer or Vietnamese, so we were able to chat to the residents about smoke alarms and residential fire safety while we installed new smoke alarms to make the homes safer.

“Thirty-one brigade members took part. It was an extremely successful event. The brigade inspected over 170 properties and where a home didn’t have them, or they were non-compliant, new 10-year lithium smoke alarms were supplied and installed free of charge including in recommended areas such as every bedroom.

“Also, at emergency calls we often need to talk to local residents in languages other than English,” Matt explained.

Matt has been a CFA member for 19 years and Noble Park captain for the past two-and-a-half years.

Talking to residents in their preferred language has also helped the brigade recruit more members.

“Through these community connections using languages other than English we’ve been able to recruit many people who don’t

speak English as a first language. These people thought they wouldn’t be able to join the brigade because their English wasn’t good enough.”

The brigade also wanted to recruit more women, and Matt did this by making sure the brigade had the right culture where everyone felt valued and welcome.

“We’ve worked really hard to build the right environment in the brigade. Everyone feels they have a role and it’s a safe place,” Matt said.

“In the past year, the brigade has had two recruit courses and we’ve had incredible success recruiting women. We recruited 16 women and nine men. And our women volunteers reach out to women they know, which also leads to new members.

“I’m proud of the brigade’s environment and its gender and ethnic diversity.”

Largely thanks to the demographic and Matt’s desire to rebuild the brigade with a younger base, Noble Park’s member age profile is quite different to many brigades.

“I’m in my mid-thirties and one of the oldest operational members,” Matt said.

The brigade has strong connections with its community and spends a lot of time reaching out to them.

“Every week we engage with our community. Our level of activity is much higher than the average brigade. We want to ensure our community members are as safe as possible,” he said.

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL

CFA volunteers reach the community through radio

During the 2009 fires, as the inferno approached the small town of Mount Beauty, the Incident Control Centre at Mount Beauty Fire Station needed to get crucial messages to the community. The ICC rang Bruce Vine, a member of Tawonga Fire Brigade and a Board member of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, at about 2am for help.

Bruce was asked to go to the local radio station to be a conduit between the ICC and the radio station to let people know what was happening. This was the first time Alpine Radio was used as an emergency broadcaster. Since then, it has become the emergency broadcaster for the Upper Kiewa and Upper Ovens valleys in north-east Victoria.

Alpine FM, as it's now known, has been used many times to broadcast emergency messages at all times of the day and night, including warnings about flood, fire and landslides. COVID-19 information was also transmitted during the pandemic.

After that first broadcast by Bruce, Alpine FM invited him to participate in a regular program hosted by fellow Tawonga brigade member Ian Smith. They currently have a weekly chat session at 3.15pm on Mondays where they talk about a wide range of topics including fire prevention, regulations, fire investigations and what local brigades are doing.

"The show is really all about community safety," Bruce commented. "Our messaging depends on the time of year; it has a seasonal flavour.

"There's always something happening at CFA and we make a point of telling listeners about the latest news – for example, when new fire trucks are being delivered.

"We talk about what the local brigades are doing and the variety of incidents they attend. Around here, we have hang-glider accidents and cars falling off cliffs, so Mount Beauty brigade has specialist high-angle and motor vehicle accident capability."

Bruce has been a fire investigator for about 20 years. He includes information from recent investigations on the radio because it's an opportunity to pass on crucial safety information. However, the specific details of incidents remain confidential.

"We may talk about a house fire caused by a particular appliance such as an air conditioner. By discussing the incident, we can tell people about the risks and turn it into a safety message," Bruce said.

Bruce has also used an incident involving a gas explosion to talk about gas safety, and in late autumn there was a grassfire in the area that needed five tankers.

"I mentioned the fire on air and warned people that grassfires can take hold even in colder weather."

In October 2022, a landslide between Mount Beauty and Falls Creek became a serious concern to locals. Access to Falls Creek from Mount Beauty was cut from October 2022 to April 2023.

"On the program, we discussed the ability of emergency services to access Falls Creek. Locals wanted to know what was happening. Emergency access around the landslide was created by dozers."

Bruce and Ian occasionally take calls from listeners who want more information about safety.

"We don't do it on a regular basis, but we welcome listeners who phone in and ask us questions about CFA and our work."

According to Bruce, the Tawonga and Mount Beauty areas have a "wonderful and supportive" community. "I can be standing in the queue at the supermarket

and someone will tap me on the shoulder and ask if we can give more information about a topic on the radio."

Bruce and Ian discussed the brigade's awards night on the program, which took place in May. Bruce believes that sharing this type of information, which highlights the dedication of brigade members, reinforces with the community just how important CFA brigades are. It's also an opportunity to spruik the brigade to get more members.

At the awards night, Bruce received his 50-year service medal and life membership. He also received an AFSM in 2012. Ian (who moved to Mount Beauty around the time of the 2003 fires) received his 20-year service medal. Ian joined Tawonga brigade after witnessing how well the brigade members protected their community.

Although the team don't know exactly how many people tune into the program, they are sure of one thing: "If there's a fire coming over the hill, I guarantee the whole town will be listening."

Alpine FM broadcasts 24 hours a day on 96.5FM in the Kiewa Valley and 92.9FM in the Ovens Valley. It can also be streamed by visiting alpinefm.org.au.

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL



Additional investment in our volunteers

Following our most recent mid-year budget review, we identified \$1.4 million from the 2022-23 financial year that we can invest in six service delivery initiatives.

- Each district will receive a breathing apparatus (BA) mask fitting set to ensure compliance with the Australian Standard for respiratory protection fitment.
- We will accelerate the replacement of the remaining positive pressure ventilation fans as part of the initiative that we began in 2021-22.
- We will order and distribute more than 2,000 operational tabards that are safer to use on the fireground and allow for greater interoperability with Fire Rescue Victoria. These tabards are also multipurpose, eliminating the need for multiple tabards.

- A BA fill station and compressor will be installed in District 9 to enhance operational efficiency and safety by eliminating the need to drive long distances to replenish compressed air breathing apparatus (CABA) cylinders.
- We will order an additional CFA workwear shirt for volunteer instructors and assessors.
- BA control officer (BACO) tabards will be supplied to all vehicles with a BACO board to ensure identification of the BA controller during BA operations.

We are pleased to be able to make these additional investments for our CFA members.

FitKidz Program encourages kids to be active

Less than a quarter of Australian children participate in the recommended amount of physical activity. The FitKidz Program, designed by CFA's Health Services team, is a free program that encourages brigade Juniors to think about their health.



The program is a fun and educational experience for Juniors, and includes physical activities, games, and health and fitness tests such as blood pressure and 'sit and reach'. The games and activities consist of word searches, quizzes, prizes and giveaways at the end.

The Juniors also receive advice to help prepare them for a healthy and active life into adulthood.

FitKidz is designed to help Juniors transition to senior brigade members, when they will then have the opportunity to participate in the longstanding CFA HealthWatch Program.

Children are recommended to do at least 60 minutes of 'huff and puff' physical activity every day. It's also important to minimise time spent sitting or lying down, especially in front of TV and computer screens, as this can lessen the benefits of being physically active.

The program was on display at the CFA/VFBV State Firefighter Championships in Mooroopna, where one Junior commented, "I really love the Fitkidz Program because the activities are fun and I like to compete against my brother in the 'sit and reach' and 'hand grip' tests".

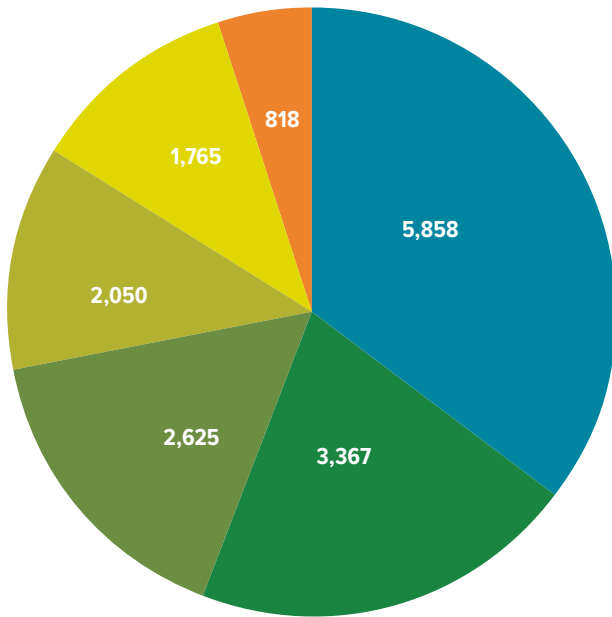
To arrange a booking for the program, brigades can either email healthwatch.cfa.vic.gov.au or phone 0408 980 210.



Incident statistics

1 January 2023 – 30 June 2023

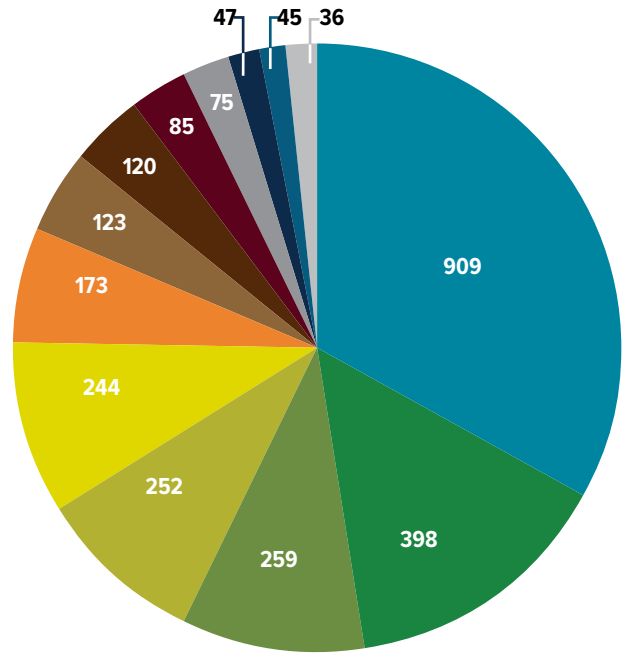
INCIDENTS BY TYPE



Service calls*	
Fire and explosions	
Motor vehicle accidents/rescue/EMS calls	
False alarms/false calls	
Good intent calls	
Hazardous condition	

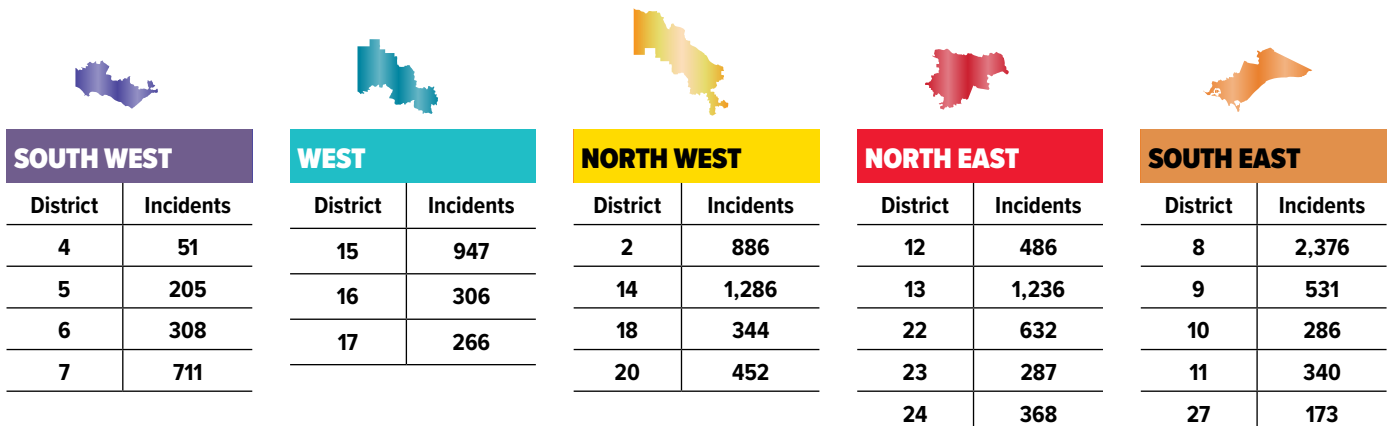
* Includes 4,562 callouts supporting FRV and 7 supporting other agencies

ORIGIN OF FIRE



Paddock/open area/lawn	
Road/car park	
Engine area/running gear/vehicle wheel	
Scrub/bush area	
Undetermined	
Kitchen/cooking area	
Rubbish area/rubbish bin	
Part of vehicle	
Crops	
Garage/carport	
Chimney/flue	
Balcony/porch/verandah	
Bedroom	

INCIDENTS BY DISTRICT



Belgrave Fire Brigade





6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13

- 1 Current Belgrave Fire Station, 2023
- 2 Last permanent staff officers, 1994
- 3 Brigade members with 1935 Dodge, 1944
- 4 An over-crowded Austin Series 2 tanker heading to the fires, 1962
- 5 Type 1 pumper negotiating snow on Mount Dandenong, late 1980s
- 6 The brigade's mural celebrating 100 years of service
- 7 Belgrave brigade vehicles, 1971
- 8 Belgrave brigade's community santa run
- 9 Brigade training on the tanker
- 10 Old Belgrave station and crew, 1927
- 11 Belgrave station and trucks, 2014
- 12 Belgrave station watch room when staffed
- 13 Collecting for Royal Children's Hospital, 1961

COMPILED BY KEITH PAKENHAM AFMSM

Emergency Memberlink

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

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

Details of the offers and full terms and conditions are at emergencymemberlink.com.au.

To join Memberlink phone 1800 820 037 or register online at emergencymemberlink.com.au. You can also access your Memberlink card on the website.

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



- Free membership to **ubookdirect's** worldwide Travel Club.
- **Westfund Health Insurance** has a 5% discount and two-month waiting periods waived on Extras cover.
- \$300 excess reduction when you have your car repaired at **Sheen Panel Service**.
- Up to 10% off year-round, plus additional savings during promotional periods on **Dell Technologies** computers, monitors, printers and accessories.
- \$50.00 off the already discounted price of a **Driver Dynamics** defensive driving course.
- The **Bridgestone Business Associates Program** has 15% off Bridgestone's website price of tyres.
- Discounts throughout the year at **Specsavers Optometrists**.
- **Sixt Australia** offers up to 20% off the best rate of the day on passenger and commercial vehicles.
- Discount of up to 30% on standard room only and bed & breakfast rates at **Radisson on Flagstaff Gardens Melbourne**.
- Up to 15% off the best daily car rental rate with **Europcar**.
- Save 3% to 7% on pre-purchased **Gift Cards** including Woolworths, WISH, Coles, Myer, Kmart, Target, Rebel Sport, JB Hi-Fi, Supercheap Auto, BCF and The Good Guys.
- Special hotel accommodation rates throughout Australia and internationally with **Hotel Planner**.
- **Experience Oz** has at least 10% off attractions, zoos and aquariums, theme parks and extreme activities.
- Discounts on home entertainment, audio, televisions, mobile phones, IT hardware, fitness trackers and whitegoods through the **JB Hi-Fi Corporate Benefits Program**.
- Commercial pricing on a great range of household appliances and electronics through **The Good Guys Commercial Division**.
- 25% off revitalise Bath House bathing & Moonlit bathing during off-peak periods (Mon-Fri outside of public and school holidays) at **Peninsula Hot Springs**.
- **mycar Tyre & Auto** has 10% off servicing, mechanical repairs and TCP tyres.
- 20% off flowers from **Petals Network**.
- Discounted cinema tickets, attraction tickets and e-gift cards through the **Memberlink Box Office**.
- 15% off prescription glasses and prescription sunglasses at **OPSM**.
- **RSEA Safety** offers members 15% off full-priced items.
- Special offers on **Elgas** LPG bottled gas.
- Travel with **Spirit of Tasmania** and save 5% on adult Spirit and Flexi passenger fares.
- **Nissan Fleet** pricing on a range of new Nissan vehicles.
- 5% to 10% off the best unrestricted rate of the day at **Accor Hotels**.
- Two months free for pets aged 6 to 52 weeks, one month free for pets aged at least one year, plus 6% off annual premiums through **PetsOnMe Insurance**.
- Plants, trees and garden products at wholesale prices at **Plantmark**.
- Hire a **Britz** campervan and receive 10% off daily hire rates.
- **Searoad Ferries** has 10% discount on ferry travel between Sorrento and Queenscliff.
- **Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park** has 20% off day admission tickets.
- Exclusive pricing on whitegoods, kitchen appliances, audio visual, computers and mobile phones, home appliances and furniture through **Harvey Norman Groups & Associations Division**. Contact your Emergency Memberlink Team for a quote.
- Corporate leisure rates and reduced insurance excess on car hire with **Avis**.
- Preferential government accommodation rates at **Choice Hotels Asia-Pac** across Australia.
- 30% discount on **pierre cardin** handbags, wallets, luggage and travel accessories.
- Up to 20% discount on the public web price of **Lenovo** computers, monitors and accessories.
- 10% off Australian car rentals with **Budget**.
- Up to 50% discount on selected Mantra, Breakfree and Peppers accommodation through the **Departure Lounge**.



Brigade

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

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100010934

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