

Brigade

spring 2014

Protecting lives
and property

cfa.vic.gov.au



▼ **FEATURE:** Welcome to our young blood



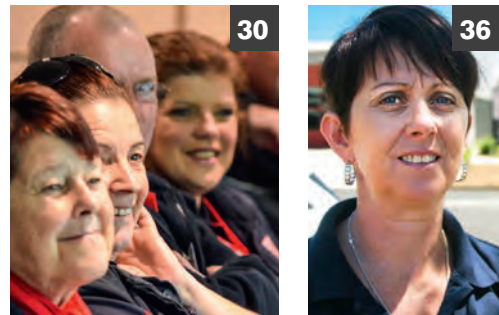
Includes Pre-Season Update

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COVER PHOTO: IRREWARRA BRIGADE JUNIORS HUB BY KEITH PAKENHAM



YOUNG BLOOD 24



30 36



40

What we expect from our leaders

CFA's Leadership Framework was launched at the July Leadership Conference. Both the framework and the conference shared a common purpose: to build and grow a culture and a legacy of leadership at CFA.

Our leaders are effective decision-makers who engage with and support our members, lead change and drive a culture of empowerment, collaboration, performance and accountability.

We need to use the foundations established by past and current CFA leaders to grow and develop the skills of our future leaders so they are effective, from incident front-lines to the head of the organisation.

The Leadership Framework lays out CFA's eight key expectations of our leaders.

Our leaders must **communicate effectively and drive collaboration** within CFA, the broader emergency management sector and, of course, within our communities. They are team focused and build strong relationships.

To lead within CFA, our members need to be **self-aware**: they must understand their own strengths, challenges and motivations. They must **base their leadership on values**, being honest and ethical and modelling CFA values at all times.

CFA leaders **build capability**. They support and develop teams and create opportunities for learning. They **engage and empower others** by being available and open, providing clear directions and respecting others.

CFA expects its leaders to **get the right things done**. They will take the initiative, set priorities, focus on outcomes and deliver results. Our leaders must be **adaptable and champion change**, providing strong and consistent direction through change which ultimately builds resilience.

Finally, CFA leaders are **accountable decision-makers**. They involve others, take responsibility and make fair and constructive decisions.

The success of the Leadership Framework depends on it being integrated into the way we work every day.

The framework incorporates a continuum: attract; recruit and select; develop; engage; succession; and transition. At every point on the continuum, there are opportunities to build our culture of leadership.

We will effectively recruit for leadership capability and potential. We will develop current and future leaders. Our leaders will 'walk the talk' within an organisation that recognises and rewards effective leadership. Future leaders will be identified and developed, and the extensive knowledge and experience of past and current leaders will be acknowledged and shared. Ultimately, CFA will build a legacy of leadership not just within our own organisation, but within the emergency management sector and our communities.

The Board and Executive have identified the following critical areas for specific attention in 2014-15:

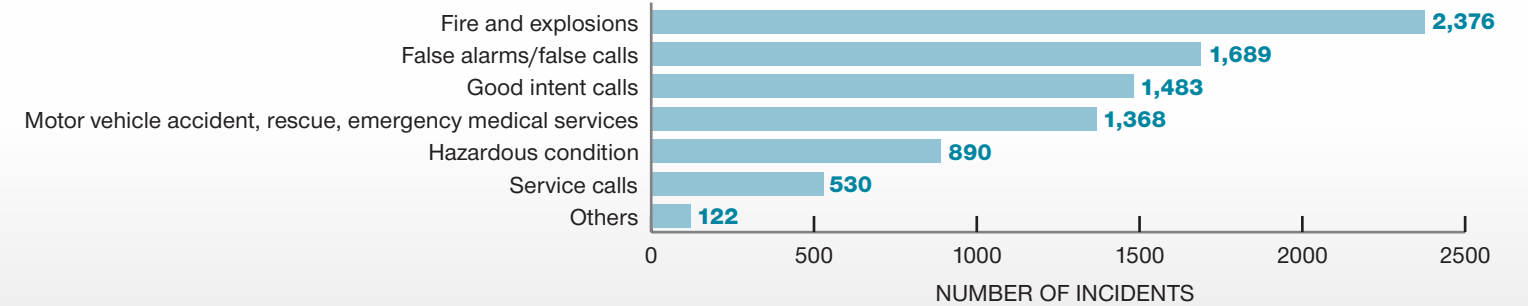
- more effective service delivery and improved business efficiency
- a strategic approach to community resilience
- a sector approach to risk management policy and practice
- a strategic approach to supporting and growing volunteerism
- to strengthen leadership, safety and productivity.

Effective leadership is one of the goals, but it's also central to the achievement of the other goals and our mission to protect lives and property.

Incident summary

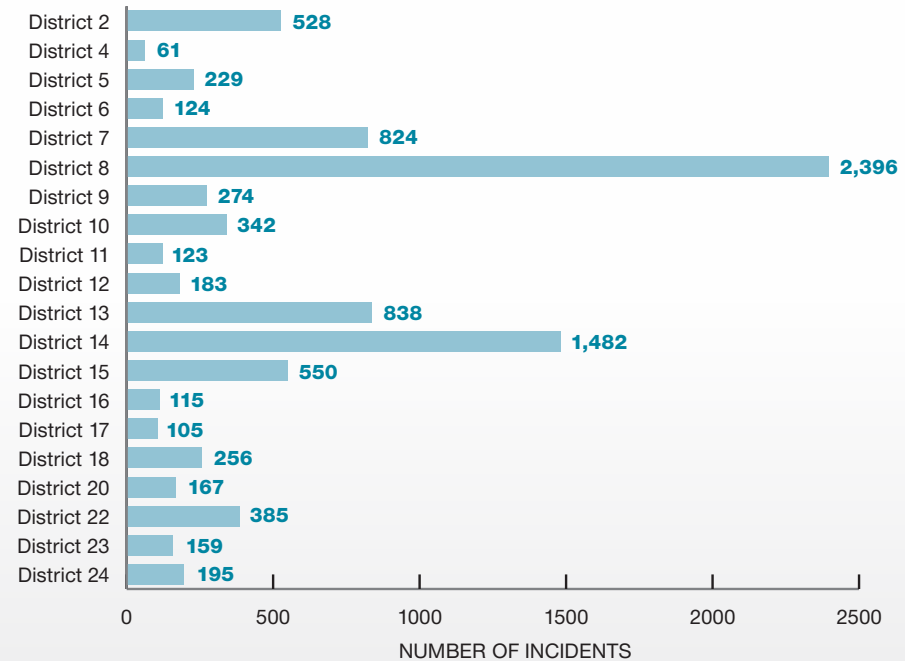
STATEWIDE INCIDENTS BY TYPE

1 April - 30 June 2014



STATEWIDE INCIDENTS BY DISTRICT

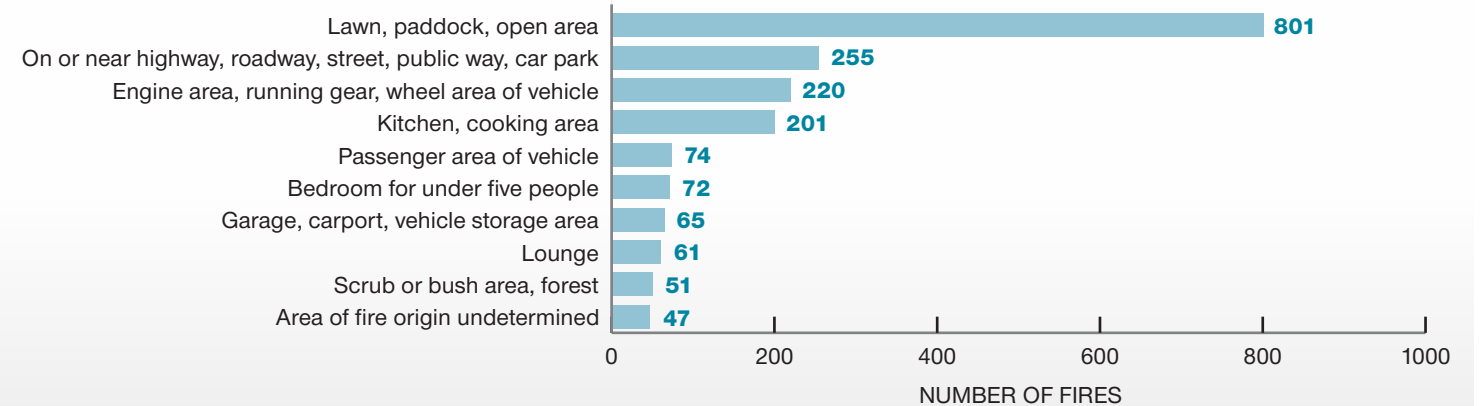
1 April - 30 June 2014



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

ORIGIN OF FIRE

1 April - 30 June 2014



You can update your address or email details, or cancel *Brigade* magazine, by clicking on the 'Update your details' icon on cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au or by calling 1800 628 844

If you have any queries about *Brigade* magazine, contact the editor: duncan.russell@cfa.vic.gov.au; 9262 8978
For any social media queries, contact: c.ford@cfa.vic.gov.au; 9262 8317



PHOTOS: KEITH PAKENHAM

Factories burn in Keysborough

CFA and MFB crews battled a blaze that engulfed two factories in an industrial area at Keysborough.

District 8 Operations Officer Paul Carrigg said crews attended the Cambria Road fire at about 3.40am after receiving several reports of black smoke in the area.

“The fire was very intense and when crews arrived they found two factories fully alight. One was a car wreckers and the other was a plastic recycling factory,” said Paul.

More than 80 firefighters responded to the fire, including crews from MFB and 14 CFA brigades.

“The fire spread quickly and was impinging on a cool store premises to the north and another factory on the eastern side,” continued Paul.

“The crews did a fantastic job containing the fire and stopping the flames from spreading to other surrounding factories.”

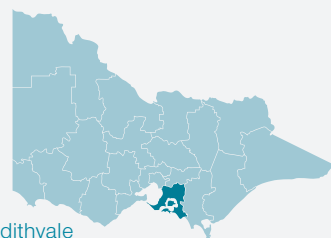
An advice message was issued to residents in the Keysborough and Dandenong areas to warn them about heavy smoke, and drivers were also warned about smoke around Eastlink.

The fire was under control at 7.15am.

To see more images and video go to news.cfa.vic.gov.au/keysborough-factories.

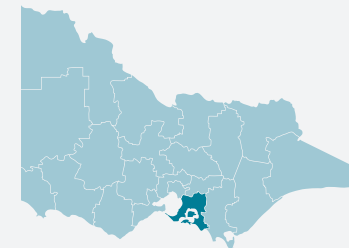
STORY: HOLLY LITTLE

INCIDENT: Structure fire
DISTRICT: 8
DATE: 23 May 2014
BRIGADES: Keysborough, Dandenong, Berwick, Cranbourne, Springvale, Casey, Narre Warren, Hallam, Patterson River, Frankston, Hampton Park, Rowville, Mt Eliza, Edithvale



Dog saved in Doveton house fire

INCIDENT: Structure fire
DISTRICT: 8
DATE: 15 June 2014
BRIGADES: Hallam, Dandenong



Crews from Hallam and Dandenong fire brigades responded to a house fire in Hawthorn Road, Doveton just before noon.

Initially, the Hallam crews carried out an external attack through the front bedroom window. When the Dandenong crew arrived, Hallam firefighters began an internal attack. During this attack, Dandenong Leading Firefighter Neil Poulton found a dog in a front room in the final breaths of life.

“The dog was still,” said Neil. He handed it to volunteer Dennis Vlug from Hallam brigade who warmed the dog with a blanket until he recovered.

“I administered oxygen with assistance from the ambos, gave it a little bit of water and eventually it sat up,” said Dennis. The owners then took the dog to a local vet for treatment.

A few weeks after this incident, Neil and Dennis received the Hero to Animals Award from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

“The compassion and heroism shown by firefighters of the Country Fire Authority are truly an inspiration,” said PETA Australia Director of Campaigns Jason Baker.

“The job is very rewarding and this award is just the cherry on top,” said Neil.

Firefighters directly involved in the firefight had their gear washed down and bagged as a precaution because of the likelihood that asbestos had been used on the outside of the house.

To see more images and video go to news.cfa.vic.gov.au/dog-rescue.

STORY: KEITH PAKENHAM



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

INCIDENT: Rescue
DISTRICT: 13
DATE: 20 June 2014
BRIGADES: Belgrave, Belgrave South, Monbulk, Boronia, Upwey



Woman trapped in bed

CFA crews rescued a woman after a large gum tree fell on her house in the middle of the night, trapping her in her bed just before 4am.



“The tree fell on to the house and through the bedroom, pinning the woman to her bed,” said CFA District 13 Operations Manager Mark Kennedy.

“Monbulk Rescue were first responders, and they did a great job of stabilising the tree so it wouldn’t move during the rescue process.

“The Monbulk Urban Search and Rescue team was also on scene to assist in case of structural collapse.

“The rescue process involved using hydraulic lifting gear to remove the tree from its base so the woman could be freed from the bed.”

Boronia brigade Senior Station Officer Kevin Randall said one of the tree’s branches

brushed the bed’s headboard, giving the woman a few cuts and abrasions on the way, then pinned her from the hips downwards.

“She was in considerable pain, but ambulance Victoria crews did a fantastic job of stabilising her and making her as comfortable as they could,” said Kevin.

Working together, CFA, SES and Ambulance Victoria freed the woman after two and a half hours.

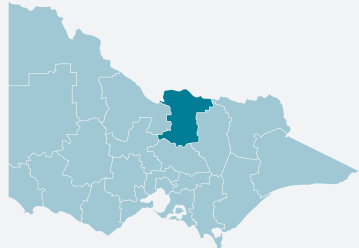
“There was extensive damage to the back half of the house,” continued Mark, “but luckily the woman escaped without serious injury.”

STORY: ANDREA MASON

PHOTO: HAMISH BLAIR

Historic railway station destroyed

INCIDENT: Structure fire
DISTRICT: 22
DATE: 4 June 2014
BRIGADES: Murchison, Shepparton, Nagambie, Arcadia, Moorilim, Wahring



A 130-year-old weatherboard railway station building at Murchison East in Victoria's north was destroyed by fire in early June. The historic building was scheduled for maintenance work because of concerns about its stability.

Crews on eight fire trucks attacked the fire and the incident controller was Brandan Reilly from Murchison brigade. "Unfortunately, the building was well alight when we arrived and we couldn't save it," he said.

"The fire was intense but crews did a fantastic job and managed to contain the blaze to the building," said Operations Officer John Leben. "While the building was no longer in use, the station is still operational so trains were temporarily stopped from travelling through the area during the firefight."

An ambulance was called to check one of the firefighters who had heat stress. Brandan discovered it was his father Tom. "The ambos gave him the all clear. He had a bit of dehydration, but he soon recovered and went straight back on to the job," said Brandan.

Shepparton's hazmat van arrived later with a thermal imaging camera so hotspots could be found and extinguished.

The train station platform and tracks weren't damaged by the blaze, which took around an hour to bring under control.

When a passenger train was allowed to stop at the station later in the evening, CFA members escorted passengers to and from the train.

Shepparton Search and Rescue volunteers supported CFA crews by dropping off a lighting trailer. The following day, fire investigators found that the fire had been deliberately lit.

To see a video go to news.cfa.vic.gov.au/murchison-station.

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SHEPPARTON NEWS

Boy saves family from house fire



PHOTO: WARREN MITCHELSON

Five people escaped a house fire in South Morang in the early hours thanks to the actions of a 13-year-old boy.

Alex Mastrilli, his two siblings and another two occupants were asleep when the fire broke out in the Skyline Drive home at around 4.30am.

South Morang First Lieutenant Nathan Shell said Alex – who was the youngest occupant in the home – was alerted to the fire when a light in his room tripped.

"This woke the boy and he then smelt smoke and alerted everyone else in the house. They all managed to escape uninjured," Nathan said.

"The whole thing was pure luck," said Alex's mum Sonia. "Two minutes more in the house and I wouldn't have three children.

"When he heard the flames crackling, Alex first of all thought it was rain. He could have gone back to sleep, but didn't."

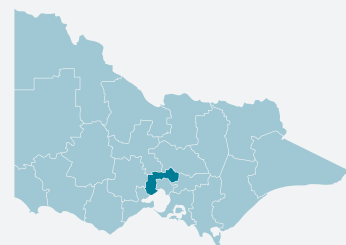
A few days after the fire, Acting Chief Officer Joe Buffone presented Alex with a Certificate of Recognition at South Morang Fire Station.

"He's not one to be in the spotlight, but a big smile came over his face when I told him that CFA was giving him a recognition award," said Sonia.

Six CFA trucks and support attended the fire, as well as five MFB vehicles. The fire started in a wood workshop. It took crews more than three hours to bring the fire under control with the blaze extending across all levels of the three-storey brick home.

STORY HOLLY LITTLE

INCIDENT: Structure fire
DISTRICT: 14
DATE: 13 July 2014
BRIGADES: South Morang, Doreen, Mernda, Sunbury, Epping



CEO

Mick Bourke www.cfa.vic.gov.au/ceoblog

SETTLEMENT IN KILMORE EAST TRIAL



Another chapter in the aftermath of the Black Saturday fires has come to a close with the conclusion of the Kilmore East civil trial, which began in March 2013.

The plaintiff, on behalf of an estimated 10,000 class members, will receive settlement on behalf of energy provider SPI Electricity, the Victorian Government and SPI's line maintenance contractor UAM. Settlement was reached on 15 July 2014 with no liability attributed to CFA members.

Our primary concern throughout this process has always been our people. We know this will come as a great relief to those affected and allow them to move on in their recovery from those horrific fires and the property loss, personal injury and emotional cost. The trial was long and arduous and ran for more than 200 sitting days and over 15 months in the Supreme Court.

It's very important to reiterate that the court hearing was not about CFA's suppression of the fire – that part of the case was dismissed before the hearing began, with the consent of all parties. The work our people did that day will never be forgotten.

We recognise that many of our people are still recovering from the consequences and effects of the 2009 bushfires.

I'd like to thank CFA members for stepping up to the challenge not only through the firefight, but through the difficult times following. Many of you contributed greatly to this court case: 14 CFA members gave evidence in court and many made statements and provided information to the legal team.

CFA witnesses provided evidence in relation to fireground and aircraft conditions, fire investigation, information about CFA systems and community education programs.

Now that the Kilmore East trial is finalised, the Murrindindi civil litigation trial will be conducted over the coming months. This case will require the involvement of our people and CFA will provide the same support provided throughout the Kilmore East case.

I encourage you to make the most of CFA's welfare services, which can be accessed by contacting your regional office or CFA's Organisational Wellbeing team on 9262 8409.

On another matter, CFA welcomes the start of operations at Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) – the overarching body for emergency management – which will coordinate emergency management policy and implement emergency management reform. Headed by Commissioner Craig Lapsley and Acting Chief Executive Neil Robertson, EMV is responsible for the overall response to major emergencies (before, during and after) and for coordinating the management of the consequences of emergencies.

The Commissioner is also responsible for planning, risk mitigation, relief and recovery, and culture change, to ensure the sector works effectively and together with the community.

This is a significant step forward for Victoria's emergency management reform. Since 2009, the emergency management sector has been working together to build the foundations for an emergency management system that is sustainable, effective and delivers the best possible value to the community.

On behalf of all in CFA, I would like to congratulate Neil Robertson and Craig Lapsley on their appointments and also wish their team all the very best as they commence their planned program of work. You can read more about the new office of Emergency Management Victoria on page 10 of this issue.

Crew Protection Program completed



After four years and 1,062 tankers, the Crew Protection Project retrofitted its last vehicle at the Deca workshop in Shepparton in late June.

The task has been a monumental one in almost every imaginable way. CFA engaged an extra 26 workshop staff, purpose-built the site set-up at Deca and outsourced a number of builds to Bell Environmental.

The task stretched many suppliers and everyone was pushed to meet very tight deliveries. What started out as 844 vehicles was expanded by 25 per cent to more than 1,000 and yet the project remained within budget.

At one point we had exhausted stocks of one-inch stainless steel pipe fittings Australia wide. In a couple of instances, people were coming to us and asking if we had any spare.

The Deca workshop was the last site to remain open as the project was brought to a close, with workshop sites progressively closing over the past 12 months.

It has been a huge team effort and one CFA is proud of.

STORY ANDREW WEBB

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

The 2014 Queen's Birthday Honours give national and formal recognition to Australians who have made a significant difference to their communities. Four current or former CFA members were honoured this year for their work in emergency services.

Former CFA Chief Officer Brian Potter was posthumously honoured with the award of Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia. Norman Bowen received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) and Phil Hawkey and Graham Simpson received the Australian Fire Services Medal (AFSM).

NORM BOWEN

Despite receiving one of the nation's highest honours, Norm Bowen isn't about to take any of the credit. "It might have my name on it but this belongs to a lot of other people at CFA too," he said.

The 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires proved to be a defining event for Norm, with him leading a strike team to Mount Macedon. "We were driving through blackened streets and all we could see was this massive red glow up ahead of us," he said. "It was one hell of an experience."

Following these fires, Norm realised the impact a traumatic incident could have on firefighters, and began pouring his efforts into supporting his colleagues to cope with stress after attending an incident. He helped develop a training peer support program for firefighters which started as a two-day course and is now a 12-month program.

Norm has previously been a group officer and he's currently the peer support coordinator for North West Region. Norm is featured in stories on pages 36 and 37.

BRIAN POTTER

The late Brian Potter received his award for significant service to the community through innovation in fire response techniques and incident management. Brian was CFA's chief officer between 1985 and 1991 and was instrumental in introducing the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) to Australia in the early 1980s. Following his retirement, Brian continued to serve CFA as a volunteer at Langwarrin.

Earlier this year he was presented with the National Medal and CFA Life Membership by Chief Officer Euan Ferguson (pictured). He was awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal for distinguished service in 1981.

Brian's son Mark said the honour was wonderful recognition of his father's service to emergency management in Victoria. "The entire Potter family is very proud of Dad's contribution to the emergency management sector through various programs," said Mark. "He was passionate about CFA and in particular the consideration of activities that supported firefighters both volunteer and career."

Brian passed away in February.

GRAHAM SIMPSON

Graham has dedicated more than 35 years to CFA and the community.

"I feel extremely honoured," he said. "It's great to be recognised especially when there are so many deserving people in CFA."

Graham's impressive career as a firefighter began when he moved to the small town of Cockatoo in 1978. "I wanted to join a community group and one day I happened to run into the local captain and he suggested I should sign up to Cockatoo brigade. I haven't looked back since."

He became brigade captain within five years and it wasn't long before he faced his biggest challenge. "I had only been captain for three months when the Ash Wednesday fires swept through the town," he said.

"We managed to save half the houses – we rallied the locals and we had groups of people going up and down the street putting out embers with garden hoses."

Over the years, Graham has maintained a strong commitment to the training of volunteer firefighters and has been involved in the leadership of the Cardinia (Pakenham) Fire Brigades Group.

PHIL HAWKEY

"You never stop learning, which is one of the things I enjoy most about CFA." And with 36 years of service to CFA and the community, it's clear Euroa's Phil Hawkey loves learning, having held many varied positions with CFA which he fondly describes as an "extended family".

Phil has been a firefighter, a group officer for 24 years, a fire investigator specialising in structure and wildfire, operations officer, and a trainer and an assessor. He's currently a vegetation management officer in North East Region, and an accredited Level 3 incident controller.

"It's very humbling to receive recognition, but we don't do what we do for recognition," Phil said.

"CFA has given me a lot of opportunities in terms of training and experience. With the roles I've had, I felt they gave me the opportunity to give back and pass on to others a bit of what CFA has given me over the years."

Phil is featured in a story on page 16.



NORM BOWEN

PHOTO: LETH HILLIARD



BRIAN POTTER

PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM



GRAHAM SIMPSON

PHOTO: LISA CAMERON



PHIL HAWKEY

PHOTO: JUDE ALEXANDER

CHIEF OFFICER

Euan Ferguson www.cfa.vic.gov.au/chiefblog

Think about your mental health

Thinking about the health and safety risks members face on the job, it's easy to focus on the physical risks – the potential for injury and illness. We don't always think about the impact it can have on our mental health. But many elements of the job can be confronting, with members often exposed to potentially traumatic and stressful incidents.

This can put members at risk of developing mental health issues, including stress, anxiety and depression, which can impact on the way they function day to day and their relationships with others. These conditions are common – one in five Australians experiences a mental health issue in their lifetime.

The important thing is to make sure members are supported to manage their mental health as they would their physical health, so a mental health issue doesn't develop into a serious illness.

I recently recorded two videos as part of a new Managing Mental Health video series aimed at raising awareness of mental health issues and how to maintain good mental health. In the videos, I talk about a three-step process for managing your mental health by:

1. understanding your mental health risks
2. recognising the warning signs that your mental health may be suffering
3. taking action to address the issue.

The videos are available online. CFA also has a range of support services to help members manage mental health risks and deal with issues early. Information is available on CFA Online under Mental Health or go to cfa.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth. There's more about managing your mental health on page 36 of this issue.

Recent rainfall has been close to average or above average. The Bureau of Meteorology is forecasting slightly drier conditions for the next three months and maximum and minimum daily temperatures are forecast to be warmer than average.

Recent weather and Southern Oscillation Index patterns suggest a weak trend to El Nino-like patterns, but the Bureau says there is no El Nino event yet. Its El Nino tracker indicates a 70 per cent chance of an El Nino developing in 2014. Although it's still early days, there's a possibility of an early onset of below average spring rainfall and warmer temperatures which may lead to an early start to the fire season. This makes it essential that pre-season briefings and preparations in advance of the fire season are progressing.

CFA has finalised the recruitment of five Assistant Chief Officers (ACOs) who will be responsible for operational capability and service delivery at a regional level. To read more about the ACOs, see page 14 of this issue. We offer our congratulations to each of the successful candidates. We expect the new ACOs to formally commence in September.



Communities underestimate bushfire risk

CFA has carried out post-season community surveys in bushfire-prone areas since 2009 to understand how people view the bushfire risk and how well prepared they feel.

Many people have a high general awareness of the bushfire risk, but a significant proportion of people underestimate the level of risk at their property.

Over the years we've done this research, there has been a consistent pattern of results. Although around 80 per cent of people believe it's likely that a bushfire could

occur in their area and around 70 per cent believe there's a large threat of a bushfire in their area, less than half the people rate the actual level of bushfire risk at their property as major or extreme. Why do so many people underestimate the actual level of risk?

People's risk perception is influenced by a range of social, environmental and situational factors. The concept of risk is highly subjective. Some people have an unrealistic belief that a bushfire won't affect them even though they know they live in an area where bushfires

can occur. Others who have done all the preparation they need to do for a bushfire often believe the risk is lower.

This is a timely reminder of the important role CFA members play in helping people in high-risk areas understand their local risk. It highlights the need to challenge people's existing thinking so that they take action.

STORY JOHN GILBERT

CHANGES TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



PHOTO: JOHN REES

Managing and coordinating response and recovery for all future major emergencies will be the responsibility of the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC) under new legislation that came into effect on 1 July.

Craig Lapsley, well known as the fire services commissioner, is the state's first EMC. He will have wide-ranging powers to bring together and provide overarching control of all the emergency services if he declares a major emergency.

Under the new arrangements, the commissioner declares the emergency and appoints a state response controller who will be one of the agency chiefs operating on a roster basis.

Speaking in Sale in late July at the first in a series of public information forums, Craig Lapsley explained that the biggest difference between his former fire services commissioner role and the new job is right there in the title.

"Previously it was about fire. Now it's about emergency management that's end to end. So it's about planning right through response into recovery ... which shows that we've got all the risks, all the hazards, all the agencies to make sure we're properly connected to get the best outcome for Victoria," he said.

Speaking about preparations for the coming fire season, Craig Lapsley said getting agencies to understand the role of Emergency Management Victoria and his role as commissioner was the first task ahead of preparations for the 2014 fire season.

"The issues of this summer will be 'let's get focused on heatwave', but also understand the potential of what fire can do this year. If you read the climate conditions, it could be a long, dry summer.

"By the same token, we've got to make sure in the next number of months ... our plans are right and we've got the recovery agencies integrated with the response agencies."

The role of Commissioner is supported by Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and Chief Executive Neil Robertson. EMV will develop the state's emergency services and their ability to work effectively together including development of policies and procedures to manage major incidents.

EMV will develop greater interoperability between the emergency and as a step towards that goal an Interim Strategic Action Plan has been developed which will help guide CFA's Corporate and Annual Plans. You can read our 2014-15 Annual Plan by visiting cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au and searching for CFA Plan 2014-15.

CAPTAINS' PERSPECTIVE

Craig Lapsley addressed a packed hall in Sale's Criterion Hotel which included Traralgon West brigade Captain Brian Soall, who commented on the continuing importance that local knowledge would have.

"It's nice to have that overarching control and guidance and have the one outlook. It's always going to come down to local knowledge. It's going to be up to local response agencies, relief agencies to do their job with him [Commissioner Lapsley] as the overarching guide. You'd be lost without your local knowledge," said Brian.

Callignee brigade Captain Ian Ewart agreed the task of coordination between agencies was sometimes difficult and the commissioner's involvement should help smooth the path.

"By [being] coordinated together [it] would be much better, and when you give a word back and you say you need whatever it is you need ... sometimes it took quite some time to make contact with the agency or DHS or whoever it might be," said Ian. "Whereas through this system, I should be able to ask for what I need and it will get to me quicker because they're already aware of what's going on and how we can work together."

INSPECTOR GENERAL APPOINTED

Tony Pearce, is Victoria's first Inspector General Emergency Management. The former Director General of Emergency Management Australia and Deputy Commissioner in the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner Victoria took up the post in August. His key duties will be to:

- develop and maintain a monitoring and assurance framework to assess the capability, capacity and performance of the emergency management sector
- undertake emergency management system-wide reviews based on an annual plan prepared with the emergency management sector, at the request of the Minister or in response to particular emergency events
- monitor and report on the implementation of the state's Strategic Action Plan evaluate statewide training and exercising arrangements in consultation with the sector
- provide assurance to the government, the emergency sector and the community on the ability of the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) to meet agreed levels of performance.

STORY JOHN REES

HITCHED ON A WHIM



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

Make a 'safe mistake'

A new joint home fire safety campaign by CFA and MFB launched at Federation Square in July. The campaign aims to raise awareness through an interactive website safemistakezone.com.au about the thousands of preventable home fires caused by small mistakes each year.

The Safe Mistake Zone campaign uses humour to draw attention to the unsafe mistakes we make in the home by contrasting them to light-hearted 'safe mistakes' that can be made via the campaign.

The campaign uses a range of elements including Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and the launch itself which included a range of safe mistakes such as getting a bad tattoo, getting married on a whim, having an awkward family photo taken and getting a bad hairdo.

The launch attracted a wide audience that was happy to make a few safe mistakes and then share them on social media.

The campaign received positive media coverage on Channel 9 News, ABC 774 and journalists who participated by sharing their bad hairdos.

We encourage everyone to visit the safemistakezone.com.au website and share our fire safety message using #safemistake. The campaign runs until mid-September.

STORY CHRISTINA FRANCIS

CFA celebrates NAIDOC Week

A Wurrundjeri elder, a South Morang firefighter and an indigenous artist helped CFA celebrate NAIDOC Week in early July with the unveiling of CFA's first indigenous art piece.

Emma Bamblett was commissioned to paint an image that represents our new Koori Inclusion Action Plan. The brief was to include a number of strands in the painting from the use of fire and fire in the landscape to caring for country, land management and community safety.

"I paint in layers," explained Emma, "and I like to make connections between the different parts of the canvas. I like my paintings to be easy to read so my symbols are not hard to interpret. I want people to be able to see the story.

"It's important to me that the community, not just Koories, looks at this painting and sees what a big job CFA does ... to see their commitment."

Events are held around Australia during NAIDOC (National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee) Week to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.



Artist Emma Bamblett and CEO Mick Bourke unveil the artwork

PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

The CFA event began with Wurrundjeri elder Georgina Nicholson making an emotional Welcome to Country, paying her respects to her ancestors and the elders past and present. She talked about her grandmother's and mother's stories, and how she and her siblings carry on their culture and respect for the land for future generations.

Firefighter Daryl Smith works for an Aboriginal counselling service and as a soldier for the Salvation Army. After the morning tea, Daryl reflected on his time volunteering.

"When I'm out in the bush, I kind of feel my ancestors. I get this strong feeling that they're actually saying to CFA, 'Thank you for looking after our land'," he said.

STORY ALYSSA ANDERTON

HELPING VOLUNTEERS FACE THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

“We are committed to ensuring that our volunteers remain at the core of the communities they serve and receive strong support to be the best they can be,” said Kate Harrap, Manager Volunteerism in Operational Training and Volunteerism (OT&V).

The Chief Officer’s Capability Statement says that, to continue to deliver our services, we must encourage, maintain and strengthen the capacity of volunteers. Our commitment is to ensure our volunteer-based emergency service is able to face the challenges ahead.

Depicted in the core of the Volunteerism Strategy diagram (to the right) are three strategic objectives – encourage and value the contribution of volunteers; maintain and enhance the role of volunteers in service delivery; and strengthen connections between volunteers and communities. Each objective has a set of draft actions which are relevant to our volunteers.

There will be many opportunities for members to provide input into the future direction and approach of the Volunteerism Strategy before it’s finalised. This is a significant piece of work for CFA and responds to recommendations from the Victorian Auditor General and the Hon. Judge Jones report *The Effect of Arrangements made by CFA on its Volunteers*. also contributes to Emergency Management Victoria’s broader Strategic Action Plan.

VOLUNTEERISM COORDINATORS – DISTRICT

OT&V welcomed new staff in July when a team of volunteerism coordinators based in every district began their roles. These staff members are part of the statewide volunteerism team, responsible for volunteer recruitment, development, retention, recognition and exit programs and services. Their focus is to coordinate and implement district volunteerism initiatives aligned to local and state priorities. They will work alongside district operations managers and volunteers as part of an embedded approach to support volunteerism.

Some of the work being done by the district volunteerism team includes:

- facilitating the use of statewide volunteerism tools and resources
- coordinating district volunteerism workshops
- coordinating district mentoring programs
- coordinating nominations for statewide events such as leadership development programs
- supporting and delivering district induction programs
- coordinating Juniors, secondary school and tertiary projects
- facilitating and coordinating stakeholder engagement such as industry/employer partnerships.

The statewide volunteerism team will support volunteerism by:

- developing and maintaining innovative volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition strategies
- developing and maintaining volunteerism programs, research and evaluation tools
- managing and coordinating the CFA Honours and Awards secretariat
- developing and maintaining strategic employer and industry partnerships



- supporting statewide new volunteer enquiries and membership ID
- supporting and enhancing the Emergency Memberlink program
- supporting statewide volunteer event management such as National Emergency Medal presentations, State Championships, annual memorial service and National Volunteer Week.

In addition to these volunteerism coordinators, CFA also recruited 31 new people to work on the Wellbeing Pilot and Brigade Sustainability Pilot (both featured in the winter issue of *Brigade* magazine), and four field-based officers have joined Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria.

NEW TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

Over the past 12 months, we’ve spoken with more than 3,000 members –individually, in focus groups, pilots or committees – to discover, design and enhance solutions that meet your needs, as part of the Volunteer Support Program. The new tools and resources are now ready for you to use. If you have any questions, contact a member of the volunteerism team in your district or email otv-volunteerism@cfa.vic.gov.au or phone 1800 232 636.

Welcome to CFA new member guide

This booklet, which is given to all new CFA members, has been revised and refreshed to focus on volunteers. New staff members will complete an online induction that’s currently being developed.

[Go to Brigades Online \(cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au\) > Brigade > Recruiting and retaining volunteers](#)

Attraction, recruitment and retention guides

We have new resources to help recruit new members, paving the way for improved recruitment and retention. These resources include information and advice that can help brigades effectively attract and retain volunteers. Available information includes how to partner with employers, how to run targeted recruitment campaigns, how to manage members’ expectations and how to recognise members’ efforts and retain their support.

[Go to Brigades Online > Brigade > Recruiting and retaining volunteers](#)

Customisable promotional material

In conjunction with the information guides, there are also templates for flyers, newsletters and advertisements to support recruitment and retention. The templates use CFA style and design but can be edited to suit local needs, such as adding specific local contact details and the particular job roles for which a brigade may be seeking new members.

[Go to Brigades Online > Docs, Forms, Manuals > Template Toolkit](#)

Promotional display products

Brigade recruitment activities will now be enhanced with access to a suite of products to help attract and recruit members at events. Districts have chosen products that best suit their type of local recruitment activities. Promotional banners, marquees and display units are some of the items now available to brigades. Contact your district office for access to the new products.

Volunteer resources catalogue

This catalogue has been moved to an online format and includes small CFA-branded promotional items, such as badges, balloons and pens, to help field-based staff and brigades with recruitment and recognition activities. Brigade administrative support officers, district volunteerism coordinators and the Brigade Sustainability team have access to the catalogue and can order goods on behalf of brigade members who are planning targeted activities. The catalogue also includes CFA-branded clothing for sale, which is accessible to all members.

[Go to Brigades Online > Brigade > Recruiting and retaining volunteers](#)

Brigade management team induction

A selection of two-hour face-to-face training sessions is now available to help brigades induct new members to brigade management teams. A facilitator guide and participant guide have been developed covering upfront communications, effective meetings and managing performance. Further topics will be developed as required. The district volunteerism coordinators are being trained to facilitate the sessions and will be available to train others to deliver the sessions.

[Go to Brigades Online > Brigade > Leadership HUB > BMT Induction](#)

Online brigade leadership HUB

This is a brigade’s one-stop-shop for tools, resources and information about leadership and development opportunities within CFA. Read about inspirational leaders such as Nelson Mandela, borrow a book from the leadership library, map yourself on the ‘leadership wheel’ or simply download checklists and articles that will help you to effectively manage people.

[Go to Brigades Online > Brigade > Leadership HUB](#)



Fire and Emergency Management Roles Pathways map

These interactive, online maps for volunteers highlight common roles and pathways within CFA.

The maps can be used to:

- understand the hierarchy and relationships between Fire and Emergency Management roles
- learn about the many operational and non-operational roles available to volunteers
- identify roles that suit the skills, interests, and experience of volunteers
- plan volunteer learning and development at CFA.

[Go to Brigades Online > Training > Skills Profiles > Volunteer roles and pathways](#)

Brigade Operational Skills Profile (BOSP) reports

The BOSP (volunteer) report has been updated to include more current information to make more informed decisions about training priorities at brigade, group, district and region level. Supplementary reports now include competency expiry dates and member turn-out history.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) tools

CFA has a new RPL process and tools to support the recognition of members’ experience, skills and knowledge. The new process gives the assessor the responsibility to help the member through the requirements of achieving competence through RPL. The process has been simplified with minimal paperwork for the member to complete and a straightforward, informative Member Information Kit to start the process.

A suite of RPL tools in high-use priority areas is currently being developed and members can expect to see specific information in each of these tools that will make it easier to collect evidence. Training staff and assessors are currently being briefed in using the new tools and process and all new tools will be promoted to members as they become available.

[Go to Brigades Online > Training > RPL](#)

STORY REBECCA TIDEY

ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICERS APPOINTED

CFA has finalised the recruitment of five Assistant Chief Officers (ACOs). These newly-created positions will play a critical role and represent a key milestone as CFA transitions from eight to five management regions.

The ACOs will be responsible for operational capability and service delivery at a regional level to support CFA's integrated model of service

delivery in an all-hazards environment. Each ACO will lead an integrated team of volunteers and staff in the region, across our 20 districts, our groups and brigades.

They will provide strategic leadership and guidance to operations managers and perform the vital function of informing business support units of service delivery work demands and operational support requirements. A key role of the ACO will be to maintain strong

relationships with our emergency service and emergency management partners, particularly with the formation of Emergency Management Victoria.

We offer our congratulations to each of the successful candidates. We expect the ACOs to formally commence in September.

Chief Officer Euan Ferguson

BOB BARRY, SOUTH WEST REGION

Bob is currently the regional director for Barwon South West and has also served as regional commander Barwon South West and as operations manager Region 7 from 1995 to 2010.

He has extensive experience and proven performance in emergency management at state, regional and district levels, providing strong and effective leadership to an integrated workforce. He has also demonstrated strategic management capability at both regional and state levels.

His experience with change management through the successful integration of two CFA regions will be advantageous in leading the transition to the new service delivery model.

We look forward to Bob continuing the good work in the South West.

GARRY COOK, NORTH EAST REGION

Garry is currently the regional manager of Ambulance Victoria in the Hume Region.

He has extensive leadership and management experience in the health and emergency services sectors with more than 11 years at CFA prior to 2007. During those years his roles ranged from managing the Integrated Municipal Fire Management Planning project to serving as both operations manager and acting area manager in Hume.

Garry has broad knowledge of strategic and business planning and has established strong emergency management relationships across the emergency services.

He has directed major change reform and has the ability to lead both the consolidation of regions and the implementation of the new service delivery model.

It's a pleasure to welcome Garry back to CFA.

MIKE WASSING, NORTH WEST REGION

Mike is currently the acting regional director of Loddon Mallee with more than 25 years' experience in fire and emergency management.

He has extensive experience leading the management and coordination of responses to major emergencies within an all-hazards environment.

Mike has served as the regional commander of Loddon Mallee; the acting deputy chief officer in the roles of state operations and

emergency management planning; the operations manager of the Command and Control Project; the deputy emergency services commissioner (policy and planning); and the assistant deputy commissioner (manager operational liaison and planning).

He has strong leadership and interpersonal skills and the ability to mentor and coach others through the transition to the new service delivery model.

We look forward to Mike continuing his good work and leading the consolidated North West Region.

TREVOR OWEN, SOUTH EAST REGION

Trevor is currently the operations manager of Southern Metropolitan Region. He has over 20 years' experience in fire and emergency management with proven performance in Fire and Emergency Management (F&EM) strategies and practices.

His previous roles have included acting regional commander/regional controller and operations manager at Southern Metropolitan Region and officer-in-charge – operations officer at Dandenong Fire Brigade.

Trevor has extensive experience with complex command and control and a proven track record as a leader of both volunteers and staff.

We welcome Trevor to the executive team at CFA and look forward to him leading the consolidated South East Region.

PETER O'KEEFE, WEST REGION

Peter is currently acting regional director Hume Region. He has more than 20 years' experience in CFA including acting deputy chief officer in the roles of state operations and emergency management planning, operations manager Hume and operations officer North East Area.

As Hume regional commander, Peter ensured CFA met its emergency management responsibilities.

He has led the management and coordination of response to major emergencies within an all-hazards environment. He has performed the roles of incident controller, regional controller (fire and flood), regional agency commander and state agency commander; and displayed sound leadership of brigades, groups and districts.

We welcome Peter to the executive team at CFA and look forward to him leading the West Region.

STORY LEITH HILLARD

District 14 senior vols development day

In mid-July, District 14 held a professional development day for senior volunteer leaders. This initiative is one of a number of programs offered in the district to provide leadership and management development for senior volunteers.

The professional development day and the new captains' induction workshop are both companion programs to the captains' and first lieutenants' Peer Mentor Program, which is now in its third year. Working collaboratively with the district operations team, and with the support of the regional leadership team, I developed these programs because of my special interest in this area.

The content for the day was informed by feedback and requests from the field, and covered three main topics. Martin Anderson, CFA Digital Media Manager, presented an informative session on 'managing social media in brigades', giving an overview of how social media can be used appropriately without crossing privacy boundaries in brigades and in the field. This presentation generated discussion about different situations participants have faced in their brigades around social media, and photography or filming on the fireground, and posting footage on YouTube.

Qualified Firefighter Alex Batty opened the session on practical approaches to multiculturalism or CALD (cultural and linguistic diversity) in CFA brigades. Alex is currently working on a doctorate in this area and is a wealth of knowledge. Participants appreciated his passion for this subject and his presentation was enhanced by member case studies presented by two District 14 volunteers.

Truganina Captain Colleen Goodfellow spoke about the successful integration of a number of non-Anglo members into her brigade, while Epping brigade member Asim Siddiqui shared the challenges and rewards he has experienced during his first 12 months in CFA.

The final presentation for the day featured Evan Townsend and Michelle Taylor from CFA's Wellbeing Project, who provided information about how the project works, how it can be helpful to captains, and how it can be accessed. This was really useful, practical information for participants, particularly the discussion generated by a case study exercise.

In addition to captains and first lieutenants, the day was also attended by Regional Director Greg Esnouf, Operations Manager James Dullard, Training and Development Manager Natalie Kenely, Brigade Administrative Support Officer Kirsten Dudnik, operations officers and guests from Districts 2 and 7.

We received a lot of positive feedback and many participants indicated they would have loved to spend more time discussing the topics and asking questions of the subject matter experts.

"The opportunity to network with our peers, and support personnel within the district and regional office can never be understated," said Wattle Glen Captain Stephen Gaunt.

"It's so often that the issues that a captain may be facing, another can provide some words of support or guidance. This professional development day gave me some things to think about with regards to social media, interaction with the community and member management and psychological first aid."

Captain Brandon Delaney from Yarrambat brigade said the information about cultural diversity was particularly relevant to him. "Currently being in a brigade from the Outer Northern Metro area and having been the captain of a brigade in one of Melbourne's largest growth corridors, I could relate to and appreciate the presentation delivered by Alex Batty about cultural diversity," said Brandon.

"It was a great insight into challenges that brigades will encounter in an ever-growing multicultural volunteer organisation. The information delivered on mental health was priceless, as this is a very real and ever-growing issue that we as leaders in an emergency services organisation will encounter and need to actively address.

"These two topics were the highlight of the day for me. Thanks for the opportunity to attend and I would encourage an expanded version of this for future leaders."

STORY KRIS WILMS



PHOTO: ANGUS DUCKMANTON

Mickleham-Kilmore: From fire to recovery

Phil Hawkey and Graham Healy were both incident controllers during the February 2014 Mickleham-Kilmore fire. Of the five deputy incident controllers working alongside them, one had a focus on recovery with planning underway while the fire was running.

Once the fire was extinguished – but only 10 days after it had started – Graham became the project manager of the 20-strong recovery team with Phil also a member. Most people in the team were CFA staff and all of them were volunteers. The bulk of the team came from the Hume Region and members brought a range of skills from vegetation management and community safety to ground observation and mapping. Perhaps most important, however, was their ability to deal with people under stress.

The 22,880-hectare fire had a perimeter of 210 kilometres and impacted on 600 properties. One third of those suffered damage from fire suppression activities with 198 kilometres of control lines built.

Fence and control line rehabilitation policy states that the Victorian government will pay 100 per cent of the restoration costs of fences damaged on private land as a result of machinery used by fire agencies to control bushfires, or fire agency staff cutting through fences to allow access for firefighting. This includes damage to fences by machinery such as bulldozers entering the property or constructing control lines.

“Recovery is a new area for CFA,” said Phil, “and disturbing farmland is particularly fraught. It was a team effort to come up with best practice when we didn’t know what best practice was, but the aim was always clear: get the community back happily functioning again.”

The rehabilitation plan describes the area as “cleared agricultural grassland, with a mix of shrubby woodland and forest, remnant river red gums and both native and introduced vegetation planted as windbreaks. The area is low to moderately undulating with a deep gorge.”

But out of all that complexity comes a CFA success story.



FROM PLAN TO ACTION

Project Manager Graham Healy is not only a volunteer at Wodonga Fire Brigade but also runs a consulting business in emergency management. His focus was formalising the recovery process. This involved working with the three affected municipalities to locate sometimes-absent landholders, and ensuring the team had a solid agreement with every single one.

“The priority was to give each landholder back the same use of their land, whether that’s alpacas and equestrian areas, grazing land or lifestyle blocks,” said Graham. “Their priority was our priority.”

Members of the recovery team visited and mapped all the affected properties with the area divided into zones. They worked in pairs with up to eight on the ground at any one time, working on a three-days-on, three-days-off rotation.

Contractors were engaged and some of them were the very people who had driven the bulldozers and graders during the fire to construct the mineral earth breaks. Now they were back to literally cover their tracks.

Graham and Phil both know good work on the fireground when they see it and were united in their praise for the contractors.

“They were really thinking outside the square and experimented with different machinery,” said Phil. “They used a power harrow behind a tractor for the recovery works. It mixes the soil and grasses, stabilises the soil and leaves a smooth surface. They also trialled a multi-disc which had a similar effect.

“They learned a lot from working over their own control lines. Next time they’re called out during a fire, they might use a machine other than a bulldozer as a matter of course.

“There were particular environmental sensitivities with serrated tussock and other noxious weeds in the area, so they were painstaking about washing vehicles, machinery and footwear between properties.”

Team members worked closely with the catchment management authority to ensure erosion was minimised and water quality was not affected. This was a particular risk in Darraweit Guim where works ensured water would pass across the land without washing it away.

TEAMWORK GETS RESULTS

“We were blessed with gentle rain as the work got underway,” continued Phil.

“This was a satisfying aspect of the before-and-after view that Graham and I had. When we were incident controllers we would have loved rain to fall, but in the recovery phase you’re anxious about how destructive rain might be. It’s the age-old agricultural dilemma of wanting the right amount of rain to fall at the right time.

“The final outcome for us here was that water quality within the catchment wasn’t impacted after rainfall.”

The team provided grass seed at five properties including one where a bulldozer had cut into the side of a hill during control line construction. Trees were delivered for planting

at one property while some felled within 20 metres of a house during the firefight were removed.

The philosophy was that the customer is always right.

“We didn’t have one heated exchange with a landholder,” said Graham, “and no complaints. The people-to-people skills of our team members really shone through.

“We only needed to go back to three properties. If there was any dissatisfaction, we would always drop down on the side of the landholder. And in return, there was no apportioning of blame.”

It was an excellent team effort on a big job, so how long do you think the recovery work took? “From talking to the last blade of grass being planted, it took three weeks,” said Phil. “We were thrilled to bits to achieve what we achieved in that time frame.”

“We crossed a lot of boundaries,” is how Graham describes it. “Across three CFA regions, three CFA districts, three municipalities.

“We used a lot of people from different departments so thanks to each of them for freeing up their staff. Thanks to the volunteers for their work.”

STORY LEITH HILLARD



Far left: Vegetation removed from near a house while the fire was still active

Left: A mineral earth break created by a grader near a house to prevent further spread of the fire

Below: Typical mineral earth break put in by graders or dozers in the open grasslands after the passage of the fire

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED BY THE RECOVERY TEAM

Native grassland burning – where red meets green

CFA in partnership with Trust for Nature successfully burnt 340 hectares of native grasslands across three shires in CFA's District 20 during April and May.

These planned burning exercises demonstrate that we can reduce fire risk to local towns and economically-fragile agricultural communities and improve the ecology at the same time. They are also a great opportunity to strengthen our partnerships with other agencies and the wider community.

"These grassland areas have not had fire for a number of years and this was an excellent opportunity for brigade members to gain valuable training and practical experience in a controlled burning environment," said Terry Ouroumis from CFA's Fire Ecology Project.

"CFA wildfire instructors were also present to mentor and develop member skills as they finetuned burn lighting patterns and further enhanced their practical skills."

The areas were:

- 100 hectares of Glassons Grassland Reserve, 29km west of Echuca
- 140 hectares of the Kinypanial Grasslands, 33km north-west of Wedderburn



PHOTO: IAN STEVENSON

- around 100 hectares scheduled for completion near Korrak Korrak (Wanderers Plain) 25km west of Kerang.

These areas form part of the region's Natural Grasslands of the Murray Valley Plains. The species-rich grassland areas are listed under federal legislation to protect threatened and critically-endangered species, because there is less than one per cent of this vegetation type left in Victoria.

Under threat are the Golden Sun moth, the ground-dwelling plains-wanderer, falcons, harriers and other birds of prey, rare small snakes and lizards, and a number of native grasses and grassland peas.

Using fire to manage this environment promotes the growth and diversity of native species, while also discouraging the proliferation of invasive weeds and feral pests.

"It was a very good brigade activity for our rural brigades," said Jeroen Van Veen of CFA's Wedderburn Group which helped with the Kinypanial burn. "I can see an emerging new role for CFA in these types of eco-burns, because it adds a new dimension and is a good tool for managing sensitive sites."

Nathan Wong, Trust for Nature's coordinator of these grassland ecosystems, was grateful for CFA's advice and support.

"Without the support of both local and distant brigades, the ability of Trust for Nature to manage and protect these important private land conservation areas is greatly reduced. We hope to continue this positive partnership with CFA," he said.

STORY IAN STEVENSON AND TERRY OUROUMIS

Call for medal nominations

The Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) recognises distinguished service by members of Australia's fire services. CFA accepts nominations at any time and all nominations received will be held for consideration at the next available CFA Honours and Awards Review Committee meeting.

The sole criterion for awarding the AFSM is distinguished service. This includes service that's above and beyond what would be expected from normal service, whether short-term or prolonged. It could be a special achievement or success in the performance of duty in difficult or unusual circumstances,

or sustained high-level performance with recognisable benefits for CFA, the fire service in general or the community. Long service should not be used as a basis for making nominations. Examples of service that could form the basis of a nomination include:

- a distinguished record of fire service or particular service of conspicuous merit including, for example, the development of successful fire control techniques, exceptional service through training or community education, or outstanding service in fire prevention and protection
- outstanding success in organising fire service resources or in maintaining their organisation under special difficulties
- prolonged service when distinguished by very exceptional ability and merit.

Information about the criteria and nomination process is in the CFA Honours and Awards Manual which is available on Brigades Online (cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au) > Brigade > Service History & Awards > About the Awards.

If you need help writing an AFSM nomination email cfa-awards@cfa.vic.gov.au or phone: 1800 232 636.

The closing date for the next round of awards – Queen's Birthday Honours – is November. You can email nominations to cfa-awards@cfa.vic.gov.au or post them in an envelope marked 'confidential' to: CFA Awards Secretariat, PO Box 701, Mount Waverley, Vic 3149.

STORY BELINDA GILLESPIE



Reducing our carbon footprint

CFA's headquarters in East Burwood recently had an 'internal detox' to support our objective to minimise the impact of our activities on the environment. The building upgrade also aligns with building owner Kador Group's environmental strategies.

Around 18 months ago, the building had an unenviable non-accredited National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) rating of around 1.5 stars and there was much room to improve its environmental credentials. Work began in 2013 and included:

- the installation of automated external blinds to reduce solar heat gain inside the building
- the upgrade of all general office lights
- the fitting of motion sensors in less-used areas such as toilets and storerooms to reduce lighting costs
- fitting of water-efficient tapware and toilets
- improving the efficiency of heating, ventilation and air conditioning units.

Since building upgrades were completed late last year, we've made large savings in gas, electricity and water use. In January 2013, the monthly utility cost was around \$23,000, with around 165 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. By March 2014, this had fallen to \$15,000 and 102 tonnes of carbon dioxide in the month. These savings are even more remarkable when you take into account increases in utility charges during that time. If our building was NABERS-rated now, we would get a 4-star water and 2.5-star whole-building ratings.

In coming months, we'll continue to measure and reduce our use of energy and water at headquarters. We have

already found ways to help with this such as making sure the heaters and coolers are not on at the same time, and ensuring the air conditioner fan coil units are not operating 24/7. Additional upgrades, including a 20kW solar panel system installed on our metal deck roof, will also be considered.

Some fire stations are also reducing their energy use by installing solar panels. Boronia brigade recently took a step towards self-sustainability by installing a 17Kw solar power system – the largest solar panel array in CFA.

"The \$26,000 funding came from the local community. Not only will we power the station using solar, but we plan to use the array for training purposes as well, so it's a double win," said Operations Officer Jason Lawrence. Several other stations have installed solar panels. Renewable energy is used at Anglesea, Barwon Heads, Lockwood South, Gypsy Point, French Island and Corndale fire stations.

Any brigades thinking about solar power need to make sure they choose the best supplier and panel, select the right-sized array, ensure correct panel placement and installation, choose the right inverter and allow for ongoing maintenance.

To ensure power is fed back into the grid and all arrangements are correct, email John Grech, Manager Strategic Sourcing (j.grech@cfa.vic.gov.au) or phone 9262 8319.

STORY DARLENE PENTLAND AND JOHN REES

Above: Boronia brigade Firefighter Simon Caswell and Operations Officer Jason Lawrence show off the solar panels

PHOTO: JOHN REES



ROBOTS FOR HOT SPOTS

Lessons learned from the Fire Safe Kids program helped a team of students called Ctrl-Alt-Delete compete in Spain in the First Lego League competition.

I am a schools education officer and, with Evan Thomas (a firefighter from District 13 who delivers community education) we take Fire Safe Kids sessions.

Armed with fire safety and science facts, the 10 to 12-year-olds from Glendal and Berwick Lodge primary schools and one student from Mt View, researched and developed a successful Lego Mindstorm robot.

The students' focus was the recovery stage of a bushfire, where firefighters spend a lot of time identifying trees that are still burning. There are no outward signs, but these hot spots are potential fire hazards. This process can be dangerous for firefighters, so the team designed

autonomous swarm robots designed to travel over various terrain and with a thermal imager to detect hot spots.

CFA supported this project from the start and Evan and I were thrilled when the team won both the state championship and the national championship.

As the Australian champions, Team Ctrl-Alt-Delete went to Spain to compete against much older students. The team finished a creditable 42nd out of 96 teams from around the world.

"It is through the effort, inspiration and determination of people like you that will make us safer in future generations," said Chief Officer Euan Ferguson.

We wish the students involved the very best in all their future endeavours.

STORY EMMA PEARS

Above: Team Ctrl-Alt-Delete with CFA's Emma Pears and Evan Thomas

PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

Craigieburn training centre opens its doors



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMUN

CFA members and their family and friends had a look around the new Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre at Craigieburn, when it opened to the public in late June.

The \$109 million state-of-the-art training facility features props that simulate a range of real-life emergency scenarios, including a fire in a shop, service station and petrochemical facility, collapsed buildings, road accident and an emergency in a railway tunnel.

"The training props will represent typical Melbourne features such as a suburban neighbourhood, a tram stop in the CBD, a classic Melbourne shopping strip, the underground rail loop and the Burnley tunnel," said MFB CEO Jim Higgins.

Around 1,200 people watched live fire demonstrations, sat in fire trucks, took part in children's activities and picked up show bags full of interesting facts and information.

A sausage sizzle was run by Craigieburn brigade, and firefighters put on some demonstrations. In one, CFA volunteers attacked a mock skip bin fire and, in another, CFA career firefighters with MFB staff had to rescue people inside a tunnel where a car and truck were on fire.

Hume Mayor Casey Nunn said the training centre was a fantastic addition to the City of Hume. "This is an impressive facility and it's a great opportunity for people to take their families or friends and see our firefighters in training," she said.

The training centre will benefit thousands of emergency personnel from MFB, CFA, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, Department of Environment and Primary Industries and SES.

STORY HOLLY LITTLE

CFA Open Day

CFA Sunday is now called CFA Open Day as a result of feedback from brigades. This year brigades don't have to have their open day during Fire Action Week (16 to 23 November), but can choose to have it on any day between September and December.

All participating brigades will receive some funding and will be able to order merchandise. Get your members on board and help us make CFA Open Day a great success.

Bannockburn goes into battle

For many years, Scotland was ruled by the English. Then on 24 June 1314, led by Robert the Bruce, the Scots defeated the English and gained their independence. This victory was won at the Battle of Bannockburn, after which our town is named.

At the end of June, Bannockburn and District Lions Club in conjunction with the local golf club ran a 700-year celebration day of this event. There was a reenactment of the battle plus demonstrations and exhibits that included people in period costumes and armour, battle-dressed horses, pipe bands, highland dancing, a medieval village, a Viking village, archery and jousting.

The setting among the trees and along the fairways at the local golf club was ideal.

As part of its community fire safety program, District 7's Bannockburn brigade manned displays and gave out literature and freebies for the young and not-so-young. Members assisted by Captain Koala engaged the visitors with information about the 'prepare, act and survive' message.

With the cooperation of the district training department and under the watchful eye of Instructor David Hume, brigade members conducted several impressive displays using the gas fire trailer and employed the five-person step-up procedure. Around 250 people watched each display and were impressed as our members stepped their way into the flames under the protection of a fog pattern.

STORY BARRY PLANNER



PHOTOS: JO CROCKETT



Get moving, get healthy

Almost 700 volunteer and staff members completed CFA's first Get Moving challenge earlier this year. This was designed to motivate members to incorporate more incidental exercise into their daily lives.

On average, participants who submitted initial and final assessments lost 3.4kg and 6.3cm in waist circumference during the 12-week trial program, which encouraged members to wear a pedometer and aim to take 10,000 steps a day.

Gregory Hill from Point Cook brigade said the competition had helped him shed 11.4kg and two belt sizes – not a bad thing after too many ice creams at the Hazelwood fire.

"With four young boys, we would walk everywhere we could. I think they were glad when the trial ended," he said.

"Every time my wife needed an ingredient for cooking, I would go off to the supermarket – walking. When the family was asleep late at night, I'd go for a walk.

"At the end, having entered the information each night, I did over 1,850,000 steps, averaging over 21,500 a day, and I wore out a pair of runners."

Val Kaeser from Bendigo brigade said walking each day had significantly reduced her weight and given her extra energy.

"I found it to be so invigorating. I now look forward to walking each day, even on cold frosty mornings," she said.

STORY NICOLE TAYLOR

NEW STATION FOR ELTHAM



DRAWINGS: COURTESY OF CLARKEHOPKINSCALARKE ARCHITECTS

Work is progressing well on the new Eltham Fire Station on Brougham Street and it should be completed in late March 2015.

It will have a four-bay motor room, a day room, six bedrooms, office space, and a large multi-purpose room with a kitchen next to it. Attached to the motor room is a workshop, breathing apparatus/compressor room, drying room and stand-down room. There's also a well-equipped gym. Outside are a training yard, car park and a ladder training platform above the motor room.

To reduce the need for artificial light, energy-efficient lighting with motion detectors will be installed, as well as high-level windows and skylights to provide natural lighting in corridors.

Two 30,000-litre rainwater tanks will be built under the building to collect stormwater which will be used for irrigation and for flushing toilets.

The station is being built in the Eltham Gateway area. This is recognised for its significance as the historic entrance to the Eltham township and for its landscape character and generally secluded buildings. In the 1800s, Eltham Gateway was the location of Eltham township and today it contains several historical buildings.

"Planning requirements meant the station had to fit in with its surroundings," said Project Manager Rod Kavanagh. "The station will be as

low as possible to minimise the view of it from the road.

"Because of the slope of the land, the multi-purpose room and kitchen are downstairs and the main station areas are above. This means the majority of the station is at a similar level to the street."

A lot of thought has also gone into the land surrounding the building.

We are retaining many trees and planting trees and shrubs that are indigenous to the area," said Rod. "We're also creating a wetlands section which people can walk through, and this will continue the wetlands theme in the Eltham area."

Incorporating indigenous plants in the landscape around the station will improve biodiversity and increase food sources and habitat for native wildlife.

Eltham brigade's Officer-in-Charge Steve Pitcher is delighted with the design and location of the new station.

"The current station has been redeveloped over the years, but it's just not big enough," said Steve.

"It has several limitations including no rear yard. This means our practical training has to be off-site as we don't have the space. Also, there are only three bedrooms and minimal car parking.



"A benefit of the new station is that we can take delivery of the latest medium tanker which doesn't fit in our current station. Also, we'll be able to provide better facilities for surrounding brigades in the Nillumbik Group."

The new station will also help CFA members keep fit.

"Our current gym is poor. The new one will be great for the health and wellbeing of the members; they can look after themselves," said Steve.

Eltham brigade has set up two time-lapse cameras on the site of the new station to provide a permanent record of the build from beginning to end. The plan is to show this unique movie when the station opens.

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL

Clare Murphy Kerang Fire Brigade District 20

faces of
CFA



PHOTO: PAM BROWN

On top of all that, I'm also a peer and a staging area manager. I used to go to campaigns as a firefighter on a strike team. Now I go as a peer but sometimes they fight over me! Someone wants me to go as a peer and someone else wants me to go as a staging area manager.

What was the first incident you attended?

It was a building fire in the middle of the night and I was very nervous. I was on the truck with my husband. He's so good with pumps and the truck so I've always looked to him for guidance. Now I'm a BA operator and so are my husband and two sons. Sometimes all four of us are on the truck together.

My boys have grown up so well. They've learned the value of being part of the community and now the youngest wants to be a career firefighter – it's his passion.

Which incident has had the greatest impact on you?

I was one of the first on-scene at the Kerang train crash seven years ago. I went out as a firefighter but I was really concerned about the other members. A few of them had to go into the carriages and help with bodies. I'd only been a peer for six months and at that stage peers were never on-scene. The media was everywhere and it was so much to take in.

I still feel the impact now. I have to drive over that crossing all the time and I think about it every time.

What do you do when you're not firefighting?

We've travelled as a family ever since the boys were little. We've seen a lot of Australia with our caravan.

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

Anything I don't have to cook! When we had the floods go through and worked all night, we would end up at our local bakery at 5am for their pies.

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

We talk. We debrief each other. If my husband has been on the pump and I've been on the hose, we have different perspectives. We've all learned to talk about things after an incident and keep an eye on each other.

INTERVIEW BY LEITH HILLARD

FEATURE

WELCOME TO THE YOUNG BLOOD

Young people aged 11 to 24 are proudly making their mark in CFA. From the running track to strike teams, they're wholeheartedly offering their time and their talents.

Beazley's Bridge on the run



PHOTO: LEITH HILLARD

It doesn't just take young people to make a thriving Juniors. At Beazley's Bridge, the engine is Barry Wiseman who says he's been running the Juniors "forever". Actually it's been 28 years with co-leader Kevin Haynes involved for more than half that time.

At their first championship they were disqualified in the first four of five events.

"There were four Juniors and we didn't know how to train them," said Barry. "It's been trial and error."

Beazley's Bridge brigade Captain Tom Small and all lieutenants except one have been through Juniors, as have the previous three captains.

There's nothing fancy drawing them in – the training area is just a track, there's a dam and a tree for the ladder – but all Tom remembers is "the fun we had. We were mucking around and squirting each other. But I went to my first fire before Minimum Skills and we found we had training that others didn't have."

Many of the current 21 Juniors come from the Stuart Mill, St Arnaud, Gooroc and Slaty Creek brigade areas. They train for the state demonstrations from January to April, with Beazley's running up to four teams two to three nights a week.

"Barry asked me to join," said Hannah Grahame who's almost 16 and moved to the area recently from the city.

"It's something different and fun. We meet new friends at the champs and really don't care if we win or lose. I'm looking forward to Minimum Skills. It looks harder but when the summer comes I'll be more handy to help. It's helping Australia build strength. I'm actually proud that I joined."

Barry is proud of them all, including the four 16-year-olds who recently moved up the ranks.

"We try like hell at the champs but we don't take it seriously," he said. "Still, the skills translate really well into fireground practice. I like being at a fire with people who've done demos. They know where everything is on the truck: suction, couplings ... it just gets done. We have a lot of trust in each other.

"You give them self-belief. They think they can't do something and you say, 'Of course you can'. It gives me and Kevin a lot of satisfaction.

"We take the Juniors in the truck to get water and teach them how to access the pipeline. Once the champs are over, we take ski boats out on Lake Wooroonook and drag the kids around on doughnuts. The more fun you have the better. Once you organise a social event, you've got them hooked.

"Kids have enough structure in their lives. They already have good connections with adults. They're already working. We have kids here driving huge tractors on their farms. They don't need more discipline.

"Juniors is a community thing as much as a brigade thing. There's no generation gap. The kids are great to get along with. We all bag each other. I'm selfish: I'm doing it for myself as much as anybody."



PHOTOS: KEITH PAKENHAM

Irrewarra Juniors hub

A chilly winter's night doesn't slow down the 20 keen Juniors at Irrewarra Fire Station. They fire up the patio heater as they practise and time their drills. The youngest to get in the swing are six-year-old pre-Juniors.

They're all members of a Juniors hub running since 2007, with young people from numerous brigades in the Beeac and Corangamite groups converging on Irrewarra – sometimes straight off the school bus – to meet up with the hub's trainers and 10 Junior leaders.

"They only take a break between October and Christmas when parents are too busy with the harvest to drive their children around," explained long-time trainer Dot McGee. She and husband John have only recently handed on the job to David Osborne after 33 years in the brigade.

"It's a fantastic thing to be involved in as a retired couple," continued Dot who described Juniors as "the CFA spirit.

"We've run some very competitive teams and we've never had a down-and-out season. It's the know-how to start the pump and draught water.

Some of ours who've stepped up to seniors have as much fireground knowledge as a person in their 40s. They can take incidents in their stride. I feel very proud when I get the good feedback from their captains."

In the Juniors for one year, Michael Benallack is 14 years old and definitely envisages climbing the ladder to the senior ranks.



Above: Dot and John McGee.

"You learn CFA and leadership skills and get fit," he said of Juniors. "Dot and David really push us to strive for our most and our group has done reasonably well in the comps. We do fun things like going to Adventure Park and I've got the support of my whole family to keep coming along."

Young people in CFA

Young people in CFA are those aged 11 to 24 years of age. The 7,500 who've signed up may not seem like a large proportion of total membership, but the operational ones often have impressive turnout records.

Of the 2,000 Juniors, there are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls but the number of girls falls away in the 16 and 17 year age bracket.

"Volunteering has a lifecycle," explained Sherri McKerley who's been the manager of Youth Programs for 15 years. "People engage at different stages of life. When children reach 16, their priorities are education, employment and socialising, as they should be. More girls turn away but our aim is to re-engage them later on.

"Also, young people don't drive so for a 16-year-old to turn out to a fire call takes a high commitment from a parent."

On the other hand, some young people step up to greater commitment with 171 18 to 24-year-olds holding officer positions.

"We need to get better at engaging young people outside the CFA family so they understand that it isn't just about firefighting: they could join a brigade to work on its website or help with community safety."

It's reasonable for young people to wonder what volunteering will do for them. Students should be aware that CFA is a registered training organisation which gives young people the opportunity to earn nationally-accredited qualifications to make them more employable.

As for the Juniors, it's not merely a recruitment tool. "It should be fun learning about the fire service as part of an offline social group," said Sherri. "Some join just for the sport and friendships and we have no argument with that."

STORIES LEITH HILLARD

From Junior to leader

Christopher Brockwell was an enthusiastic Junior at Wallan from age 11. Now aged 19, he's giving other Juniors a hand up into the brigade. He's been a Junior leader for a year and also gives presentations about his brigade in local schools.

"I've got a passion for training and development," said Chris, "and making sure the Juniors have the opportunities."

"I've met so many people through CFA and gone on interstate trips. I've done courses from breathing apparatus to hazmat awareness. I've been on strike teams and I'm going for my truck licence. The opportunities are endless."

But Chris also gives a lot back as an operational member of a brigade in an urban growth corridor that turns out about 230 times a year. He's also a member of the brigade management team, manages the equipment and personal protective equipment, and was nominated by fellow members to be the brigade delegate to the district VFBV council.

"The other side that young members should be aware of is that CFA gives you life experience and that's very useful on your resume," continued Chris. "We could use that more as a recruitment tool."

In fact, the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) invited Chris to be one of the young volunteers in a video advertising just that: volunteering in the emergency services gives you access to training courses and is impressive on the resume of a young person in a competitive job market.



PHOTO: HAYDEN MCNEMMIN

Certainly the Juniors at Wallan are inspired with 30 currently involved. Their summer focus is firmly on the championships with the rest of the year dedicated to map reading, learning the radios and basic firefighting skills.

Young and on a mission

A 21-year-old volunteer firefighter from Langwarrin is on a mission to encourage more young people to join CFA ranks. Allie Guegan says the experience can be life changing.

"The feeling you get when you're able to help someone or even possibly save their life – it's difficult to put into words," she said.

Allie, who juggles a law degree with her volunteering, was 18 years old when she decided to follow in her father's footsteps. "I would see my dad go off to jobs and quiz him about what he did and I decided I wanted to help too."

During her time with the brigade, Allie has been to the Hazelwood mine fire, gone out on strike teams and attended local house fires.

"Even when we go to simple jobs, it's nice to know that people really appreciate what we do."

With the encouragement of Captain Sean Curtin, Allie attended a youth forum earlier this year where she was invited to share her ideas with 14 other young volunteers. The group's ideas were so impressive, they've been invited to pitch them to some of Australia's most senior emergency services representatives at a conference in September hosted by the International Association for Volunteer Effort.

"Our initial job was to come up with ways to better engage young people with emergency service volunteering," she explained. "To think our ideas could potentially influence various agencies across Australia is pretty incredible."

Allie has big ideas for CFA too – she wants to create a Youth Council within the organisation.

"It would be a place for all young CFA members to come together to discuss ideas and support each other."

STORIES LEITH HILLARD AND HOLLY LITTLE



PHOTO: WARREN MITCHELSON

BATTERIES AND BEYOND

After noticing the number of outdated smoke alarms around Wangaratta, Leading Firefighter Rob Skase has taken the initiative to help residents not only change smoke alarm batteries but also replace old alarms.

Smoke alarms more than 10 years old carry a high risk of one or more of the components failing.

Rob, a full-time career firefighter with Wangaratta brigade, said that in the past 12 months CFA members from 16 brigades had installed more than 50 smoke alarms and changed up to 300 batteries.

"You wouldn't expect your TV or other electronic equipment to last for that many years, and smoke alarms are no different. The difficulty is that this is not a task that everyone can take care of themselves, which is why we are stepping in to help," said Rob.

After deciding there was a real need to expand the brigade's long-running smoke alarm battery program, Rob approached Bendigo Bank for a grant to buy alarms as well as batteries. A \$2,500 donation allowed 400 to be purchased.

Batteries and alarms were then allocated to various brigades who reached out to the community in different ways. Many approached residents with a friendly knock on the door.

"Usually the people we go out to are elderly, but often they are younger people with a disability and lack support from family and friends," said Rob.

The program is also about opening lines of communication with the community to discuss their home fire escape plan.

"Brigade members can sit down and talk to people about how they would get out and what they would do in that scenario," said Rob. He is now talking with the local council to secure the kind of ongoing funding arrangement that will make the program sustainable.

STORY SONIA MACLEAN



PHOTO: PHIL LEACH



PHOTO: COURTESY OF OVENS AND MURRAY ADVERTISER

HANDY GADGET FOR BEECHWORTH

A new thermal imaging camera will make it easier for Beechworth brigade members to find people in smoke-filled houses, increasing safety not only for occupants but also for firefighters.

Third Lieutenant Tracy McVea said that the camera would also help to find the ignition point of the fire. "This camera will reduce the time it takes for firefighters to find and suppress a fire, which could mean less damage to the building and contents," Tracy said.

"It will also be of great use during bushfires as it will assist in pinpointing hot spots, enabling firefighters on the ground to put them out and preventing reignition."

"Members of the brigade have been doing special training to operate the camera and, with plenty of practice, it could become one of our most valuable tools in the fire truck."

Other uses for the camera, which films constantly while activated, include outdoor search and rescue and to support fire investigators looking for the cause of a fire.

Tracy said that brigades in the surrounding area would now be able to call on Beechworth brigade during incidents where the thermal imaging camera would be useful.

Beechworth Fire Brigade received the thermal imaging camera in May after successfully applying for a Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program government grant.

STORY SONIA MACLEAN

PAKENHAM INTEGRATES

Pakenham in District 8 is one of the fastest growing areas in Victoria. This urban interface suburb is expanding at a rapid rate and the local fire station answers just over 500 calls a year.

The decision to integrate career firefighters with local volunteers was a natural step forward and one that was welcomed at the end of June as the first shift of Firefighter Kevin Ruys, Firefighter Chris Payne and Senior Station Officer David Ellams began their duties.

Pakenham brigade Officer-in-Charge Jim Dore explained that the 15 career firefighters who now operate from the Princes Highway station will work with all 16 brigades in Cardinia Group.

"We estimate the career staff will attend up to 650 incidents a year, because they are working so far out with all the brigades," said Jim.

"They'll be travelling and supporting those local brigades, participating in training and working in the communities. It's a really important advance and one the community here has been looking forward to."

Pakenham brigade Lieutenant Phil Craig said the area is quite diverse with huge growth in residential properties and a significant expansion of industrial buildings.

"And we're not far from major grassland areas and scrub. It will be good to be able to work with career staff," said Phil.

The six-year-old station at Pakenham has been recently upgraded and extended. It's unique because it's the only integrated CFA station to be collocated with SES and a police station.

"SES and VicPol are really pleased to be getting new full-time neighbours. We work very closely with them and this is a great example of modern interoperability between emergency services," said Jim.

STORY JOHN REES



PHOTO: PHIL CRAIG

Poolaijelo's first female captain

Poolaijelo brigade welcomed its first female captain at the end of June when Mary Frost took the reins from her husband Ken who's been in the top job for more than eight years.

Mary was the second lieutenant for a few years. She said a lot of the senior members of her brigade had already had a go at being captain so it was time for some fresh blood.

"We need someone who can go on the truck and make quick decisions – and I thought I could do it," Mary said,

She said that traditionally during the fire season men are off working, usually out of the district, and the women are left at home on the farms, so they need to be able to fight the fires if necessary.

"We need to have more women on the front-line fighting the fires, or being radio operators in the

truck. It's important that the young men coming up now bring their wives with them."

Mary's small rural town faces a significant fire risk each year as fire season rolls around.

"I'd rather be at the fireground than sitting around at home wondering what's going on. I don't mind being the token female on the truck," she said.

Mary hopes she can be a role model for women who are thinking about joining CFA.

"I know in my own brigade we have quite a few female members who saw me going out on the truck and it helped break down some of those barriers and stereotypes. They thought 'Mary's doing it, so I can too.'"

STORY ANDREA MASON



PHOTO: KEN FROST

New initiative to keep fireys cool



PHOTO: DAVID BOX

CFA firefighters in the state's north-east will have access to cold drinking water while fighting fires, thanks to three local businesses that chipped in to buy a mobile cool room for local brigades.

Firefighters are given bottled water at incidents as standard practice, but having cool water on hand will be welcome relief in sweltering conditions.

The cool room is a refrigerated unit designed to be mounted on a trailer and is capable of transporting a large volume of drinking water.

Bogong Group Officer Ron Leary said the unit would be of tremendous value to District 24.

"It's very important that we look after all firefighters' wellbeing and it goes without saying that regular hydration on the fireground is paramount," he said.

District 24 Operations Manager Paul King said the resource could be dispatched quickly from its base in Wodonga.

"Many fires escalate quickly and it's not uncommon to have 100 or more firefighters at a bush or grassfire in a short space of time. The supply of cold drinking water to this number of personnel brings with it a number of logistical challenges," Paul said.

"This unit will be an invaluable resource on the fireground and CFA is incredibly grateful to the companies that have stepped in to assist with its purchase."

The unit was bought by air conditioning supplier Seeley International, Chep Pallets and Quest Apartments.

STORY HOLLY LITTLE

INGLEWOOD FIRE BRIGADE TURNS 150

The members of Inglewood Fire Brigade spent a weekend in mid-May celebrating their 150th anniversary.

Service awards were presented to members at a brigade dinner with Captain Brian Rodwell and Graeme Lyndon surprised and delighted to be awarded CFA life membership.

On Sunday the members opened the fire station for the community and displayed two vintage fire trucks which travelled from Melbourne's Fire Services Museum.

The brigade has been operating from its current fire station for 148 years – is this a CFA record? The first truck to sit inside was a Phoenix fire engine weighing three tons, which had to be manhandled due to a lack of horses. Since then the brigade has had a Merriweather, a Chevrolet and a Dodge.

So, how do today's much larger fire trucks fit in a 148-year-old station?

"It's a tight squeeze," said Captain Brian Rodwell, who's been in the leadership role for more than 15 years. "We've got a tanker, pumper tanker and a four-wheel-drive field command vehicle.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY MELANIE PATTERSON

"I really enjoy all fire brigade business and we've got a good crew. Thanks to all our volunteers who give up their time and thanks to our families for supporting us."

Inglewood was a town thriving on the success of a gold rush in the 1860s, with 14 hotels, 38 breweries, two bowling alleys, two billiard saloons, two dentists, four drapers, six doctors, five boot makers, six gold merchants, six

solicitors, five blacksmiths, six chemists, four schools and five churches.

In December 1863, a fire burnt down much of Inglewood with the brigade's official history describing it as an "inferno of calico and weatherboard". Inglewood Fire Brigade was formed the following year.

STORY LEITH HILLARD



FOUR HUNDRED GATHER FOR STATE FORUM



At the beginning of August, 400 CFA volunteers, staff and guests gathered in Preston for the fourth annual CFA Community Engagement and Fire Awareness State Forum. This event unites brigade leaders from across the state to build networks and share their local fire safety initiatives.

Starting out in 2011 as a bunch of like-minded volunteers getting together for a chat, the State Forum has grown significantly over the past four years to become one of the key events on the CFA calendar. In 2011, 70 brigades were represented. This year delegates came from 185 brigades. The bar chart, right, shows how quickly this event is growing.

The highly-entertaining Trida brigade Captain Peter King was the MC for the event, which is organised by the Member Engagement Volunteer Reference Group and, for the first time, included support from corporate partner A&L Windows – see advert, right. This year's theme was working together to prepare our communities. It reflects the need for traditional operational and community-safety-minded members to support one another to demonstrate that both fire prevention and suppression activities are core CFA business.

Robert Harris of Bellbrae brigade attended for the first time and was blown away by the positive energy being generated. "Not only were the networking opportunities fantastic, but guest speakers were thought-provoking," he said. "The breakout sessions allow you to pick and choose based on your interest and what you want to know more about."

For Rosalie Dows, who was representing District 24 HQ brigade, the main benefit was connecting with members from across the state who are sharing similar experiences. "I think all who attended would have returned to their homes realising they were part of a much bigger team of focused and enthusiastic people," she said.

The online and digital arm of the State Forum was taken to a new level this year with CFA's Digital Media members teaming up with Daniel Eshuis from Warragul brigade to give comprehensive social media coverage throughout the event. This was combined with a trial of a State Forum App, as well as online video streaming of sessions across the weekend. Video can be viewed at <http://new.livestream.com/cfavic/cfaforum2014>.

Keynote speaker Peter Kenyon, the director of Bank of IDEAS, was one of the highlights on the first day, giving a passionate

address titled 'Building fire smart communities from the inside out'. His talk included his 10 keys to greater community participation and engagement.

Introductions from CEO Mick Bourke and Emergency Management Victoria Commissioner Craig Lapsley were followed by Jim McLennan from La Trobe University, who shared his confronting research about what the community will actually do during a bushfire. He found that only 3 per cent of fire-affected people had a written bushfire survival plan. He implored fire agencies to find ways to get families talking about what they would do if a fire threatened. CFA band the Red Austins then pushed the tables back to provide the Saturday night entertainment.

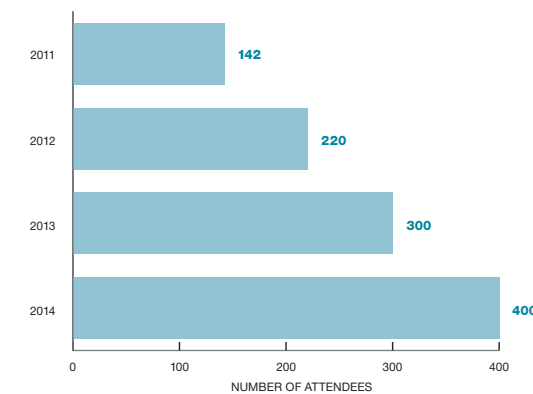
On the second day, Chief Officer Euan Ferguson teamed up with Executive Manager of Community Capability Terry Hayes for a popular Q&A session. Those present could ask questions, make comments and even send live SMS messages. The only wish from delegates was for this session to have gone for much longer.

Former Lifeline and Beyondblue CEO Dawn O'Neil then rounded off the event with her story about change in people's work and personal life. Breakout sessions included brigade-led presentations by Emerald, Gellibrand, Tawonga, Chiltern and Corio. For the first time, there was a breakout room dedicated to learning from other agencies, which included the popular Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Its presentation about how Queensland uses volunteer community educators was standing room only, and followed sessions led by the New South Wales Rural Fire Service, SES, MFB, Ambulance Victoria and St John Ambulance.

For a copy of any of the presentation slides or for more information, email memberengagement@cfa.vic.gov.au.

STORY JAMIE DEVENISH

HOW THE FORUM HAS GROWN



Left: MC for the event was Trida brigade Captain Peter King

Below: Tracy McVea from Beechworth brigade and Will Vale from Chiltern brigade

PHOTOS: DIANE LAWSON



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CLOVERLEA CONFINED SPACE RESCUE SUMMARY

Cloverlea is a locality of West Gippsland in District 9 and most land in this area is used for dairy and cattle farming. On 27 November 2013, a number of farmers and emergency personnel lost consciousness as a result of a strong smell coming from a plastic tank containing corn starch syrup slurry. We first described this incident in the autumn 2014 issue of *Brigade* magazine. The pungent smell being emitted from the tank was the fermentation of the corn syrup. This produced such large quantities of carbon dioxide that it displaced the oxygen inside the tank, causing the workers who entered to quickly lose consciousness.

Not understanding the dangers of entering confined spaces without training, testing the atmosphere, using the correct equipment and having an emergency plan appear to have caught these workers out on this occasion.

This is not the first time a number of workers have attempted to assist someone in these circumstances and been overcome themselves. Unfortunately, the outcome has not always been as favourable as it was at Cloverlea. The quick response and selfless act of the police officers resulted in a positive outcome for all those involved.

INCIDENT OVERVIEW

At approximately 12.30pm, a farmer looking after the farm while his father was away decided to empty the contents of a plastic tank containing corn starch syrup slurry. The temperature that day was 35°C and the farmer had noticed a pungent smell coming from the mixture in the tank, normally holding feed for stock. He decided it was no longer suitable to be used as feed and planned to move the product to a manure pond to be diluted and eventually pumped on to paddocks as liquid fertiliser.

While attempting to pump the material out of the tank, he dropped an elbow joint into the tank. He climbed down a ladder through the top entry hatch to retrieve the elbow joint, but shortly became unconscious. Two other workers saw him enter the tank. When he didn't return, they entered the tank to help him, but they were also overcome by carbon dioxide and fell unconscious. A fourth worker then entered the tank and suffered the same outcome.

The farmer's wife then rang triple zero while two other workers cut a hole in the side of the plastic tank with an angle grinder. Emergency services including Victoria Police, CFA, Ambulance Victoria (AV) and SES were immediately sent to the scene. Two police officers were the first to arrive. One officer looked through the hole that had been cut in the side of the tank, and could see one of the men moving.



The two officers quickly did a risk assessment and decided one should enter the tank while being held by their belt by the other officer. One officer took a deep breath and entered the tank and remove the workers one by one until all four had been removed and laid on the ground. Shortly after this, the officer collapsed and began vomiting and had difficulty speaking and seeing.

By this time, other police and emergency services had arrived. When newly-arrived police officers saw the condition of their two colleagues, they drove them in police cars to the local hospital about 10 minutes away. At the hospital, some emergency department (ED) staff were mildly affected and the ED was closed until the hospital received details about the substance from people at the scene.

While paramedics treated six people, an emergency management team (EMT) consisting of police, ambulance, and CFA was established. Its first task was to determine the contents of the tank and its potential effects on people. The fire services duty scientific officer, was contacted and provided advice about the substance. At the scene, fire crews completed atmospheric monitoring.

The farmer's wife and a CFA volunteer also gave important information about the syrup material from their local knowledge of the farm. Another critical focus of the EMT was the safety of emergency responders and the decision was made to remove clothing and extensively wash down the affected workers.

The hole in the tank was sealed later to limit further release of the material and associated stench. Attention then turned to transporting three critically-injured workers by Air Ambulance helicopters to major Melbourne hospitals. The other workers were taken to a local hospital.

LESSONS IDENTIFIED

The following contributed to the positive outcome:

- The initial dispatch of a multi-agency response that recognised the seriousness and potential complexity of the incident. This included specialist confined space rescue personnel.
- Risk assessments were carried out by police officers before entering the tank to rescue the workers.
- The early escalation of additional emergency services resources.
- The teamwork of all emergency services dealing with a multi-casualty incident.
- Establishing the EMT early and the subsequent information sharing and collaborative decision-making.
- Seeking advice from a scientific specialist about the effects of the substance
- The use of local knowledge – the farmer's wife and a CFA volunteer knew about the substance and its use.
- Crews carried out hot debriefs following the incident to capture immediate lessons and to prepare for a multi-agency debrief.

The following lessons have been identified as areas for improvement:

- Farms and farming enterprises expose emergency responders to a wide range of hazards. Although there are regulations concerning dangerous goods and other practices, the small quantities of herbicides, pesticides, fertilisers and fuels in addition to machinery and confined spaces present issues often overlooked and not anticipated by farm workers. These workplaces can present challenges for emergency services, and understanding and anticipating these risks is vital.
- Appointment of a single incident controller. While considered to have a limited effect on the overall outcome of the incident, and compensated for by the effectiveness of the EMT, establishing a single incident controller is critical to effective control at any incident.

- Scene management. Sealing the tank opening to limit further exposure to the injured workers and emergency services personnel was a good idea. However, the injured people were laid on the ground and given treatment in close proximity to the fermenting corn syrup.
- Complete removal of the substance from workers. Although the workers had their clothes removed and washed to some extent, complete removal of all the material was not achieved in each case. This affected an air ambulance crew when a worker was inside the helicopter. Complete decontamination is essential, though in this case it's recognised there were challenges in doing this while maintaining the airway of an unconscious person.

CONCLUSION

This incident was a team effort across four emergency services involving at least 14 police officers, 17 paramedics, 13 CFA volunteers and staff, six SES volunteers and six air ambulance flight crew. The good work from all those involved resulted in all the patients surviving with no long-term health effects.

After reading this case study, consider what actions you would take if confronted with a similar incident and think about the following questions:

- How would you undertake a risk assessment?
- What procedures exist relating to CFA hazardous or other chemical incident response?
- What risks exist in your response area?
- Now that you're aware of the incident, would you do anything differently if your brigade responded to a similar incident?
- How do you develop relationships with other emergency services in your area?
- Do you understand the capability and capacity of other emergency services in your area?
- How do you tap into local knowledge?

Post Season Operations Review

Chief Officer Euan Ferguson announced in July 2014 that the 2013-14 Post Season Operations Review had been finalised.

The State Review Team is a collaboration between the Fire Services Commissioner, CFA, DEPI, MFB, Victoria Police and SES. The team completed the review of the last fire season through a range of debriefing and observation collection activities designed to capture observations from people operating at every level. In addition, more than 1,200 individual observations from agency personnel were collected.

The 2013-14 *Post Season Operations Review* report captures key lessons that need to be implemented before the next fire season. To read the report, go to cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au > **Fire & Emergencies > Performance Improvement > Operational Reviews & Evaluations > Debrief.**

The themes identified by the review will be incorporated into pre-season briefings for 2014-15, emergency management exercise programs, the new edition of the *Victorian Bushfire Handbook* and the Pre-Season Update 2014-15 in this issue of *Brigade* magazine.

Key elements of the 2014-15 pre-season briefing will be on improved performance in evacuation, traffic management points, transfer of control and resourcing. Victoria Police is leading a multi-agency review of evacuation arrangements following Victoria's first Recommendation to Evacuate. The review outcomes will also influence policy in aviation services, warnings and information, predictive services and information sharing.

The Chief Commissioner of Police has indicated that one of his Deputy Commissioners will review the feedback in relation to traffic management points and implement changes to procedure and policy (if necessary) before the next fire season.



Learning from staff rides

Staff rides are a powerful learning tool where participants revisit the location of an incident. A staff ride is not about laying blame or singling out individual decisions. It brings together evidence, personal accounts, photos and audio so that participants are in a similar position to those at the original incident and can learn from their experience.

LINTON STAFF RIDE

SUMMARY

At about 1pm on Wednesday 2 December 1998, a fire started on private property and burnt into state forest north of Linton, a small town about 30km south-west of Ballarat. At about 8.40pm, conditions changed rapidly from seemingly benign to an intense, fast-moving fire. Two tankers were burnt over and the lives of five volunteer firefighters from Geelong West were lost, which had a devastating and significant impact on CFA members.

The importance of sharing the experiences of those involved in the incident and the lessons that could be learned, led to a project team being established in December 2013. DEPI's Lisa Frye and CFA's Claire Johnson and Jamie Mackenzie developed the Linton Staff Ride. These three were chosen because of their specialist skills in psychology, human factors, leadership, and wildfire instruction.

LESSONS LEARNED DEVELOPING A STAFF RIDE

The Linton Staff Ride project team learned a lot from the experience. These lessons are given below to help anyone who's involved in developing a staff ride.

GENERAL

- Ground rules were established early, setting the expectations of the facilitation group and the participants in the pilot.
- Training design was developed to allow for flexible implementation in the future (for example, low-cost options, weekdays and weekends).
- The story of the Linton fire presents a number of different sub-stories that would be valuable learning opportunities. The project team analysed four possible storylines and used this information to identify a preferred option for development. The option that was chosen offers important training opportunities. In addition, those involved in this part of the original incident were keen to share their story, were supportive of the concept and comfortable with the approach.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- The project team understood the sensitivities relevant to the incident and respected the privacy of those involved.
- Stakeholder groups (families of the deceased, ground crews, IMT members, region and district CFA members and other agencies) were approached differently depending on their specific needs.
- The first thing that the project team developed was a frequently-asked-questions document explaining the concept and the context of the project.



- The project team didn't expect people directly involved in the 1998 Linton bushfire to attend, facilitate, or be involved. However, the team ensured stakeholders were aware of the project and the approach being taken.
- All stakeholder engagement activities were recorded.
- When the team couldn't connect with stakeholders, local contacts and regional representatives were used to communicate on its behalf.
- The project team quickly and comprehensively addressed every concern that was raised.

GOVERNANCE

- At the state level, all the relevant stakeholders were kept informed.
- The project team reported to the Incident Management Training Team project manager regularly and provided updates immediately about any points of interest or concern.
- In response to concerns and issues at the regional level, a regional reference group was established. This was critical to the success of the staff ride because the small group of people was chosen by Barwon South West and Grampians regions to represent regions and both CFA and DEPI. The group was a point of contact for agencies and regions for clear communication on the development of the staff ride.

FACILITATION TEAM

- A joint agency facilitation team comprising people from the two regions was set up to ensure sustainability of the program in the future.
- This team was trained over three sessions with a facilitation coach.
- The team was made up of lead facilitators, who led the syndicate groups during the pilot, and peer-review facilitators, who provided support and feedback to the lead facilitator. All received the same development opportunities at the induction and facilitator training. This model supported the future development of the facilitator pool and allowed for a range of levels of facilitation skills.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

- Experts in psychological safety and member welfare were engaged early and kept fully briefed.
- Welfare department managers in each agency endorsed the training design and approach.
- Psychological safety elements were built into the design and materials so the concepts were not daunting or intimidating.
- The project team emphasised that it was a training event about a critical incident, not a critical incident in itself. Nevertheless, support was available for any reactions about this or other critical incidents that participants had experienced in their past.
- The design of the staff ride evened out the level of emotion across the two days by following an emotional element with a break or a more analytical discussion.

EVALUATION

- It was important to have an independent evaluation team.
- Online surveys were used but, in hindsight, a paper and pencil option was also required.
- Collect and analyse as much data as possible. Feedback was used from the facilitator team that completed a full walk-through, as well as from participants in the pilot.
- In the final report, a balance in the use of statistics and use of qualitative feedback was used. Both have their place, but statistics can be too general and qualitative comments can skew the perception of the final product.
- The evaluation report will be used as a tool for supporting the need for future staff rides.

MORE TO COME

The Linton Staff Ride was held on 28-29 May 2014 and was attended by a wide range of volunteers and staff from CFA, DEPI and MFB. Participants walked along the dozer line on the eastern flank of the fire, discussing the conditions that faced those operational members 15 years ago. Due to its success, a regional steering committee that reports to Emergency Management Victoria will be established to coordinate future staff rides. Look out for further information about the next Linton Staff Ride on news.cfa.vic.gov.au.



Yarnell Hill case study

On 30 June 2013, 19 firefighters died in Yarnell Hill fire in the central Arizona after deploying fire shelters. They were members of the Granite Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew, hosted by the Prescott Fire Department. A variety of information and training materials relating to this incident are now available for brigade training or self-study.

A case study presentation is available on cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au > Fire & Emergencies > Performance Improvement > Operational Reviews & Evaluations > Case Studies.

Additional information, videos and reports about this fire can also be found by searching for Yarnell Hill on wildfirelessons.net.

YARNELL HILL FIRE CASE STUDY

A LEARNING AND DISCUSSION TOOL FOR FIREFIGHTERS

DEVELOPED BY BRAD MAYHEW — FIRELINE FACTORS CONSULTING
RELEASED 9 JUNE 2014

MANAGE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

One in five Australians will experience a mental health issue in their lifetime, affecting their ability to function day to day and their relationships with others.

CFA members are regularly confronted with stressful and potentially traumatic situations, putting them at risk of developing a mental health issue – most commonly, anxiety, depression or stress. Just as we manage risks to our physical health, there are ways you can stay on top of your mental health to be better able to get the most out of your personal life and also help your community.

A mental health issue is a genuine health concern that can be treated. Like any other health issue, if it's not dealt with early, it could turn into a more serious illness.

CFA has a range of support services available to help members manage their mental health and deal with difficulties when they arise – see details on the opposite page.

One support service that has stood the test of time is the Peer Support Program. Here, we look at how peers have supported members in different ways.

A PEER'S TOP TIPS

Norm Bowen was instrumental in establishing the Peer Support Program following the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires. Since then, he's provided emotional, psychological and practical support to brigades and individual members over many decades.

Here are his top five tips for managing your mental health:

- 1. Listen to what your body is telling you**
- 2. Listen to what your family is telling you**
- 3. If you feel like you're not coping, delegate your role**
- 4. Make sure you get help when you need it**
- 5. Make time for yourself**

a friend's wife who was battling breast cancer. Feeling distressed, he'd driven off on his own. Out of the blue, Peer Coordinator Norm Bowen rang.

To this day, John doesn't know how Norm knew to call at that moment. After yarning for a few minutes, John remembers Norm saying to him, "We're not doing too well, are we, Webby?"

It gave John enough of an opening to share his worries. He said talking to Norm is "just like ringing a mate".

John believes that one of the great benefits of the Peer Support Program is its accessibility.

"To go and seek professional help – we're so far removed from that stuff here in the north-west," he said. "The information and support that we can get right here through the peers is so accessible."



PHOTO: CORAL WEBSTER

IT'S JUST LIKE RINGING A MATE

John Webster remembers a brigade meeting in the local pub not long after he became captain of Hopetoun West brigade nine years ago. Someone from the local peer team came along to talk to members.

John said people were a bit skeptical at first but, since then, the local peers have been a big support to the brigade, most notably when he put members in contact with peer support after a couple of incidents.

"As recently as January this year, there were fires 10 kilometres from home and some of the boys experienced things they hadn't experienced before in terms of the way the fire behaved," John said.

"Following the fires, the brigade had a barbecue with family members and one of the peers, Maxine Sleep, came along. I said to her that it wasn't worth getting up to address the gathering as the shutters would come down. She agreed.

"Instead, Maxine got around to everyone during the course of the evening, particularly spending time with the wives and partners.

"People were prepared to talk then. There was one guy in particular that we were keeping an eye on because he seemed to be having a hard time. Maxine had a good talk to his wife."

John sees his role as a sort of father figure in the brigade. "You've got to be. When you go to an incident, you do follow up, do a ring around and see how blokes are travelling."

But in 2006, while he was keeping an eye on his team members, he didn't realise someone was keeping an eye on him. He was going through a hard time – his crops were failing and he was worried about



PHOTO: LEITH HILLARD

HELP IS A PHONE CALL AWAY

For Ouyen brigade member Noela Barker, CFA is "all in the family". Her father was captain, her two sons are firefighters and she's the secretary/treasurer.

But being a CFA insider has also introduced Noela to the darker side of emergency response.

"My sons see some very upsetting things at incidents and are sometimes in dangerous situations," she explained. "Last year I was concerned about the repercussions of a traumatic incident for everyone on the truck.

I was really proud of my boys and all the volunteers but I was angry with CFA for exposing them."

Noela was introduced to CFA's peer support program. In January 2014 alone, CFA peers in the Loddon Mallee Region were called out 142 times, so there's an established need.

"The service that was right for me was talking to someone over the phone," she continued. "I've been able to access the support just by sitting at home. The person I talked to was brilliant. It was friendly. You're not judged. I give myself a hard time but talking took the pressure off me and I got reassurance that my feelings were normal.

"You worry as a parent but I have faith that my sons are well-trained firefighters and they're sensible. The brigade mixes youth and experience in the make-up of truck crews and you've got older members really supportive of the newbies."

The peer support experience was an overwhelmingly positive one for Noela and brought her brigade membership back into balance.

"I want husbands, dads, wives and mums to know that support is just a phone call away, day or night."

DON AND WENDY DRIVE DOWN STRESS

Peer support is more than just chatting to someone after an incident, as Bendigo couple Don and Wendy Hogg found out.

Don is a Mandurang brigade member. Although he's no longer active for fire duty, he's part of the Eppalock Group.

While on holiday, Don and Wendy were told their son had been in a serious accident. It took a couple of days before they could get back to Melbourne, where their son was critically ill in hospital. In the weeks and months after the accident, their anxiety over their son was compounded by the stress of driving to and from Melbourne to visit him.

The group officer suggested they contact Peer Coordinator Norm Bowen. As well as being someone to talk to, Norm made sure they received the practical support they needed.

He arranged for another peer Alec Wood, an ex-truckie, to drive them to the hospital for visits until their son was out of rehabilitation, which removed a major source of stress for the couple.

"Talking to Alec was just like talking to a friend and it meant we could cope with the drive," said Wendy. "He was someone we could talk things out with and we knew what was said in the car was in confidence.

"It's important that brigades and members are aware of what support is available through the CFA Peer Support Program. People need to be encouraged to get help.

"The peer support people have had the kinds of experiences that volunteers are going through now. If you have an issue, you can discuss it with them to find out how their services can be of use to you."

STORIES MARY FALL AND LEITH HILLARD

Three steps to manage your mental health

When it comes to managing your mental health, remember to follow these three steps.

1 UNDERSTAND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH RISKS

It's important to be aware of those situations or interactions that make you feel stressed or anxious so you can put in place strategies to manage the risks to your mental health.

2 RECOGNISE THE WARNING SIGNS

You might notice changes in your behaviour. These may be signs that your mental health is suffering. Make sure you address them before they impact on your wellbeing, your work, your brigade responsibilities or your relationships. Behaviour changes to look out for include:

- Trouble sleeping or restless, disturbed sleep
- Feeling irritable, nervous, worried, sad or overwhelmed
- Struggling to concentrate or being forgetful
- Lack of energy or feeling fatigued
- Headaches, muscle tension or other unexplained aches and pains
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Increased alcohol consumption or gambling

3 TAKE ACTION TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

One-on-one confidential support

Peer Support Program (trained members offering support and guidance): cfa.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth
Member Assistance Program (24-hour counselling): 1300 795 711
Chaplaincy Program (24-hour pastoral care): 1800 337 068

Brigade support

Wellbeing Pilot Program (experienced field officers working with brigades on mental health and relationship issues): 9262 8409 or wellbeing.intake@cfa.vic.gov.au

Managing Mental Health – Tips from Brigades guide book (available on cfa.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth) Ideas in relation to recruiting and inducting new members, supporting members before, during and after an incident, supporting a member who's experienced a potentially traumatic event, and looking after yourself.

Resources

HeadsUP online tool (information and advice about managing mental health and relationship issues): cfa.vic.gov.au/headsup
Mental health videos: <http://bit.ly/cfaMH>

TRAINING STRATEGY SURVEY RESULTS

Since the release last year of the Fire and Emergency Management training strategy, Operational Training and Volunteerism (OT&V) has been working on a range of initiatives. One of these is a baseline for measuring CFA's progress against the training strategy.

The training strategy survey results are important for understanding CFA's performance against the Training Strategy. The survey was open to members for three months and it was completed by 1,044 people across all districts and roles.

"This is a tremendous response and reflects the importance that training has for many of CFA's members," said Executive Director of OT&V Lex de Man. "We're taking your responses seriously and your feedback informs the delivery of priority initiatives."

The training strategy survey covered topics such as how training is planned, member access to training and the quality of the training delivered. We will now prioritise those areas with a member dissatisfaction rating of 30 per cent or higher.

Key themes from the responses include:

- general agreement that training plans should respond to service delivery needs and that an opportunity exists to better understand local brigade requirements
- general confidence in the quality of CFA's training program and that training prepares members for their roles
- good feedback regarding the need for more emphasis on practical training, in addition to theory, as well as more emphasis on leadership skills, brigade management and conflict resolution

- overall, members believe access to training is improving but more training is wanted
- a desire for access to online and video content
- members are satisfied with training materials, but want some material to be updated.

Over the coming 12 months, OT&V will work towards a number of initiatives, such as delivering the recruit and bushfire skills training programs for new recruits; the release of the improved brigade operational skills profiles report for better identifying brigade training needs; implementation of the driver training program; introducing new processes for recognising prior learning; and the release of the online Fire and Emergency Management Role Pathways map.

The impact of implementing these initiatives may not be immediate, but the longer-term trend should mean we start to achieve the goals outlined in the training strategy.

To look at the survey results, search for Training Strategy on cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au.

We look forward to your support next year when we see how we're tracking against this year's survey results.

STORY JAMES STITZ



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

NEW TRAINING GROUND AT MILDURA



North-west Victoria now has its own training ground. The 18-hectare Sunraysia Field Training Campus is on Nineteenth Street in Mildura, just south of Mildura airport.

Phase 1, the construction of the road network, services infrastructure, fencing, four large practical area drills (PADs) and temporary facilities are now complete, and training will officially start in October 2014.

The Jones report, *Inquiry into the Effect of Arrangements made by the CFA on its Volunteers*, recommended improved accessibility to training facilities for volunteers. The Sunraysia Campus means members can carry out combined and hot fire training without having to travel hundreds of kilometres.

The campus will be used by the 76 brigades in Mildura and Swan Hill areas, as well as other emergency services from Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

The location and site requirement involved input from the Loddon Mallee Region Steering Committee and the Sunraysia campus Users Group. These groups include local volunteers, representatives from Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, Loddon Mallee regional staff, Operational Training and Volunteerism staff, Land and Building Services staff, career firefighters, Department of Environment and Primary Industries and, most importantly, volunteers from the area. Other agencies, such as Victoria Police, SES and Rural Fire Service (NSW) have also been contacted for input.

The building work employs local businesses and more than \$1.5 million has already been spent in the local economy.

STORY LEONA LATCHAM

PHOTO: DARYL RADFORD

BRIGADES GO BACK TO SCHOOL

Six District 13 brigades recently had a fantastic opportunity to do some realistic training thanks to Emerald Primary School. The school is being completely rebuilt and when CFA members heard the administration building was due for demolition, they asked whether it could be used for training.

Brigade members from Kalorama, Warburton, Monbulk, Clematis, Yellingbo and Bayswater met at the school at the end of June for some useful breathing apparatus (BA) training, together with search and rescue experience using thermal imaging cameras.

Three smoke machines were used to fill the building and Emerald brigade Juniors pretended to be the victims.

Emerald Captain Paul Yandle said that, despite the wet and cold conditions, the brigade members who attended were enthusiastic and they got a lot out of the realistic situations presented.

"We also had Bayswater BA Support to refill cylinders (56 cylinders in total were used) and Yellingbo Rehab unit which, apart from joining in the training, supplied much appreciated tea and coffee," said Paul.

Emerald brigade member Tanya Jogan said searching in very dense smoke was surprisingly difficult. "It was too easy to become disoriented



PHOTOS: NICK WALDRON

in unfamiliar surrounds. Using BA for the first time was very exciting and, given the opportunity, I will definitely have another go," she said. "In a real-life situation, by using BA and a thermal imaging camera, one day it could be me saving someone else's life."

Ricky Coniglione, also from Emerald, said following proper search and rescue procedure with other firefighters was a real eye opener to the challenges of a smoke-filled environment. "Going into the smoke-filled rooms was at first a bit daunting but then it became a fun experience," he said.

STORY NICK WALDRON

Prop training goes the distance

Above and far right:

Training at Mallacoota brigade with the small industry prop

PHOTOS: LYN HARWOOD

Below:

A prop being manufactured

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BULLEX AUSTRALIA

In 2012, Chief Officer Euan Ferguson visited Mallacoota and asked what was needed. I told him that, from my captain's vantage point, we needed a new station, a replacement truck – preferably a pumper tanker – and a training prop. West Sale Training Ground, where we do hot fire training, is a ten-hour round trip.

In April, members from Mallacoota and our New South Wales Rural Fire Service (RFS) neighbours attended a lesson on safely operating the recently-arrived small industry prop before training for three hours solid. The siting of the prop enabled members to train day and night. Some of our seasoned veterans attended training – just to have a look – only to leave two hours later with a smile that couldn't be wiped from their faces.

The events the props can cover are only limited by your imagination. What starts as an electrical motor fire can soon become a hazmat exercise if members don't have situational awareness. Members, especially new recruits, can learn the importance of size up, flexibility and priority. This reinforced dynamic risk assessment with realistic training in a safe environment approached in a SAFE manner: slow down, step back; assess the risks; formulate a plan; evaluate that plan then move forward and resolve the event.

I've noticed a new discipline in brigade members that I put down to hot fire training. We're lucky to have members with good skills learned from inner CFA areas and one from New Zealand. They drilled us in disciplined fire attack to the point where those training responded instantly and with purpose to the objectives.

I've had nothing but high praise from the members. The prop gave us the chance to link in with RFS and learn how they attack similar situations in a defensive manner. Their instructors said, "We want to take it home! This is an excellent, safe training facility. For our



new recruits, it's an opportunity they wouldn't otherwise get." As for those recruits, they were all smiles and said "awesome" many times.

The prop was an invaluable asset to this remote brigade's training and skills maintenance. We're all looking forward to the next delivery of a hot fire training prop and hope that day isn't too far away.

THE FUTURE FOR PROPS

CFA currently has three training props deployed in group areas more than an hour from a training ground. The domestic residence, small industry and car props have already travelled to relatively remote areas such as Corryong, Edenhope, Casterton and Merbein for month-long stays.

Groups choose the sites which have so far ranged from showgrounds and football ovals to airports and saleyards. The site must be flat with eight-metre clearance around the prop and access for fire trucks.

Each prop is fired up by two 45 kilogram cylinders of LPG. To give some indication of use, the prop at Mallacoota used 12 cylinders during the month's training.

"Brigades love them and train over multiple nights," said Mobile Infrastructure Prop Coordinator Terry Prentice. "We can't keep up with the demand so we're buying seven more to be deployed by early 2015. We're also planning an electrical safety prop with solar panels, switchboards and transformers."

If you'd like a mobile training prop in your group area, an expression-of-interest form is available at cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au > Training > Resources > Mobile Training Props or call 1800 035 211.

STORY STUART JOHNSTON



Fire investigation training



PHOTO: NICOLE HARVEY

To prepare for the practical part of CFA's Structural and Vehicle Fire Investigation Course in mid June, firefighters first carried out room burns at Fiskville Training College.

The burns were done in the purpose-built fire investigation rooms by District 13 Captains' Forum members and one of our recruit firefighters' squads. The burns gave the two groups the opportunity to see structural fire behaviour from ignition to extinguishment, and they also gained a greater understanding of what they needed to do to preserve a fire scene.

Each tilt slab room was fitted with plastered walls, carpet, windows, fittings and fixtures. The rooms were also fully furnished with a variety of furniture and appliances.

As part of their assessment, participants in the fire investigation course investigated the origin and cause of the fire using techniques and principles learned at sessions during March and April. After the investigation, participants prepared a report and presented it to the class.

To ensure that the scenes were as realistic as possible, the teams talked to witnesses during the course of their investigation, including the incident controller and the first firefighter at the scene, police officers, the owner or occupier of the property and neighbours.

This course is highly regarded because of the practical element. Doing the practical component in conjunction with the theory-based subjects ensures the participants gain the knowledge and skills needed to carry out fire investigation and determine the origin and causes of fires.

STORY NICOLE HARVEY

Heavy rescue training

Nar Nar Goon and Dandenong brigades joined forces to carry out rescue training at Bangholme campus in early July.

The two scenarios involved vehicles that had collided with a train – something that's all too common in these brigades' areas.

The participants had no idea what to expect when they arrived so that the training was as realistic as possible. Several people were trapped in each vehicle and, with help from Bangholme staff, we were able to fill all the roles required from understanding train drivers to paramedics who wanted the most inaccessible patient to be removed first.

"It was a great night to practise, refine our skills and, strengthen what we do," said Nar Nar Goon Captain Geoff Bramley.

You could tell people were working hard. The night had a level of urgency about it and I think at one point I looked over and everyone had a sweat up.

There was a great working relationship between the two brigades and the night was a huge success. The next joint training session is being planned.

STORY JUSTIN SEDDON, NAR NAR GOON BRIGADE



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

Through the ages – Macedon



Emergency Memberlink



YOUR EMERGENCY MEMBERLINK PROGRAM IS A WAY FOR US TO RECOGNISE YOUR COMMITMENT AND CONTRIBUTION TO EMERGENCY SERVICES AND VICTORIAN COMMUNITIES.

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

- accommodation
- home and garden
- attractions
- retail
- dining
- technology
- financial services
- travel
- health and beauty
- wine

Details of the offers are in the Emergency Memberlink Guide, which is posted with all new Memberlink cards, and they are also on the emergencymemberlink.com.au website.



Contact Memberlink

To get a Memberlink card, phone 1800 820 037 or register online at emergencymemberlink.com.au.

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

Popular offers

- **JB Hi-Fi Family and Friends Program** - a great Member deal - just for you! Exclusive special discounted pricing and unique offers on a large range of consumer electronics, appliances, whitegoods and telecommunications products.
- **Powerbuy I.T.** offer exclusive deals on popular IT brands like Dell, Lenovo, HP, Sony and much much more.
- **Thrifty** offers exclusive rental rates and a reduced liability fee on all cars, trucks, buses & 4WDs throughout Australia.
- 10% off best available accommodation rates with **Best Western Hotels Australasia**.
- Members receive discounted passenger fares when sailing on **Spirit of Tasmania**. Visit your Emergency Memberlink website for current offer.
- Buy all your plants and garden products at true wholesale prices from **Plantmark**, Australia's largest wholesale nursery.
- FREE Medium Drink (Soft drink, Orange Juice or Standard Espresso Pronto) with any purchase over \$3.00* at any **McDonalds** restaurants in Victoria. *Terms & conditions apply.
- **Hush Puppies** offer a great range of dressy shoes for work, a classic flat, sleek boots or casual shoes to wear on the go. Members receive a 30% discount on online purchases.
- Save 40% on travel insurance with **AIG** and protect you and your family on your next trip.
- Members receive 5% discount on all products from the **One Stop Horse Shop** online store.
- **Goodyear Airport Parking** offers members a 20% discount on parking at Tullamarine Airport when booked online.
- **Searoad Ferries** offer 10% off ferry travel between Sorrento & Queenscliff on presentation of your Emergency Memberlink card. Terms & conditions apply.
- 5% discount on pre-purchased **Gift Cards** including Woolworths WISH, Coles, Ray's Outdoors, Supercheap Auto, BCF and Rebel Sport.
- **Bupa** is offering members 6 weeks free cover when you take out both hospital and extras cover through the Emergency Memberlink health plan. Terms & conditions apply.
- **Flight Centre** is offering members \$50 off your next international booking.
- Save \$\$\$ on pre-purchased movie tickets, theme park and attraction tickets through the **Memberlink Box Office**.
- **Departure Lounge** offer up to 50% discount on accommodation at Peppers, Mantra and BreakFree properties throughout Australia and New Zealand.
- **De Bortoli Yarra Valley Estate** is pleased to offer members 15% off wine purchases from the cellar door and a complimentary glass of wine for you and up to 7 guests when dining in the restaurant.
- Give someone a gift or experience they have always wanted. 6% off **RedBalloon** online purchases.
- Members receive up to 40% discount off normal retail pricing from **Euro Appliances** on a range of products including ovens, cooktops, rangehoods, dishwashers and more.
- \$5 off per new tyre, \$5 off per new battery & \$40 front wheel alignment with purchase of two new tyres at **Tyrepower's** Victorian stores.

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