

Brigade

summer 2013

Protecting lives
and property

cfa.vic.gov.au



▼ **FEATURE:** Looking after yourself and others



- 04 Incidents
- 10 Statewide news
- 10 Chief Executive Officer's column
- 12 Chief Officer's column
- 18 Community safety
- 20 Events
- 21 Learning from incidents
- 25 Health and safety
- 30 Brigade news
- 36 Regional directors' columns
- 40 Training
- 43 Through the ages
- 44 Memberlink

COVER PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF 25 AND OTHERS



11



32



34



18



42



Member support is a phone call away

When fires raged in New South Wales in October, CFA members gladly volunteered to go north and lend a hand. We can say that the fire season is well and truly under way but, with members paged at all hours of the day and night 12 months a year, 'fire season' is a misleading term. In July alone, brigades attended 191 house fires.

Being a CFA member can be tough, and the 2009 fires highlighted both the dangers and the aftershocks that sometimes go hand-in-hand with emergency response.

While emergency response is a round-the-clock, year-round commitment you have made to your communities, the free and confidential CFA Member Assistance Program is also available 24 hours a day.

The program has been upgraded to provide a more tailored service for members and their immediate families. Closer links with other CFA support services, such as peer and chaplaincy support and compensation programs, as well as short-term counselling support across Victoria, make it easier for members and their families to access the support they need.

This service now has a new phone number: 1300 795 711. This is a number for every CFA member to have on their fridge and saved in their phone. Comprehensive help and support is just a phone call away.

Presentations of the National Emergency Medal are now being made around the state to more than 4,500 CFA members. These medals acknowledge the extraordinary service to others by both front line firefighters and the tireless workers in incident management and behind-the-scenes support.

CFA's pride rests in the professionalism of our brigades and the skill and dedication of our members to the protection of lives and property. This is never so obvious as during a major emergency when members' commitment to both their local area and the wider community – be it in Victoria or interstate – is thrown into sharp relief.

The medal ceremonies have been attended by significant government representatives who give their thanks on behalf of a grateful Victoria.

Each event has been marked by that characteristic CFA mix of gravity and informality. Members in uniform step up to receive their medal in front of their family members and their brigade. It's a stirring moment for all those who gave so much time and effort and expertise to the firefight.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to former Operations Officer Peter Brereton who lost his life in a light plane crash while working in support of the New South Wales firefight. In almost 40 years with CFA, including a stint as the Officer in Charge of Shepparton Fire Station, Peter dedicated his considerable energy and enthusiasm to the brigades and members of Hume Region. He was much admired and appreciated and his untimely death is being keenly felt throughout CFA.

24-hour Member Assistance Program: 1300 795 711

Incident summary

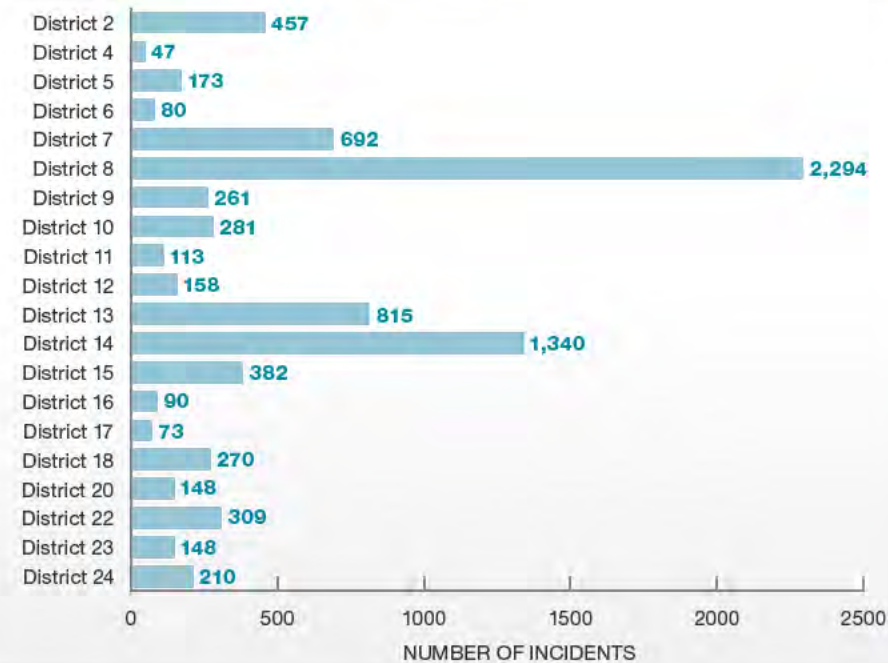
STATEWIDE INCIDENTS BY TYPE

1 July – 30 September 2013



STATEWIDE INCIDENTS BY DISTRICT

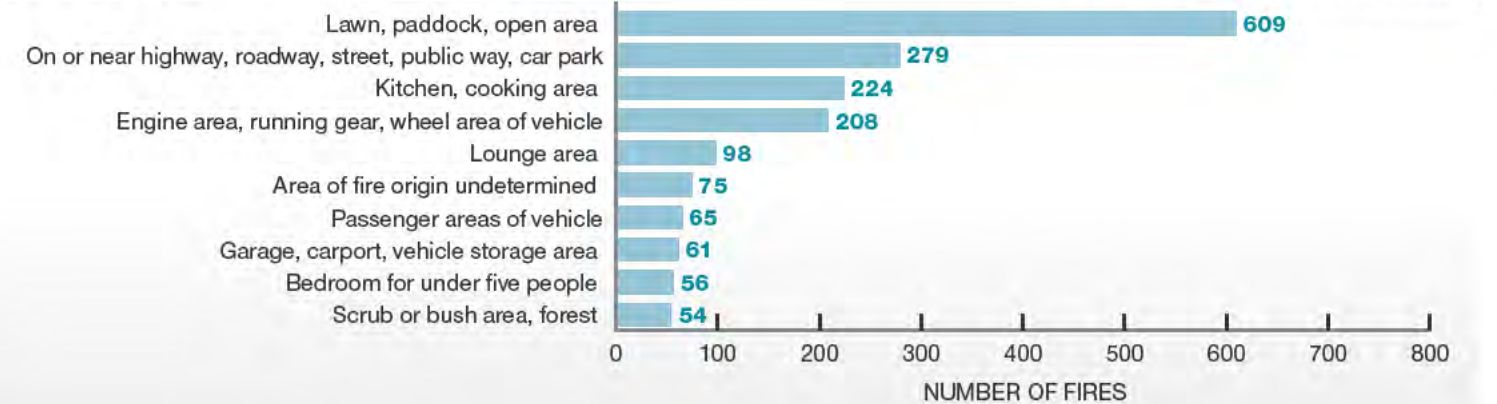
1 July – 30 September 2013



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

ORIGIN OF FIRE

1 July – 30 September 2013



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

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CFA:

news.cfa.vic.gov.au

[facebook.com/cfavic](https://www.facebook.com/cfavic)

twitter.com/cfa_updates



A HELPING HAND FOR NSW

Below left: Rakehoe team in NSW (left to right): Alex Stravakos (Mudgegonga brigade), Captain Paul Mansfield (Bright brigade), Billy Hinton (Bright), Trent Woodstock (Bright)

Below right: Strike team 2465 in NSW

PHOTOS: COURTESY STRIKE TEAM 2465

The day after bushfires struck at the heart of several towns in the New South Wales Blue Mountains, the first of two waves of Victorian firefighters headed north.

A total of 63 strike team vehicles were sent to New South Wales and remained for the duration of the deployment. As always, crews were grateful to the 10 district mechanical officers who kept the vehicles humming in tough conditions.

CFA members filled a range of roles including assisting at Rural Fire Service (RFS) headquarters, impact assessment, ground observation and on strike teams and incident management teams comprising safety advisers and operations, logistics, planning, situation, resources and mapping experts.

The 726-strong Victoria response comprised staff and volunteers from CFA, MFB, the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI), and Parks Victoria. This deployment builds on the proud history of emergency services personnel travelling interstate or overseas to help out in troubled (and exhausting) times.

As one RFS member said of strike teams, "They're not being invited to a picnic". Strike team members told of numerous expressions of thanks from the general public from being tooted and waved to at traffic lights, to being shouted cool drinks at numerous road stops or told, "Your blood's worth bottling!"

Yackandandah Captain Cameron McKern was a strike team leader in the first contingent. His wife Jennie was also deployed, though she travelled on a different truck.

"I don't like two members of the same family on the one truck and that's also the district preference," he said. "It might happen when we deploy locally but not on strike teams."

"We deployed to Springwood and Winmalee. Homes were lost on the Thursday and we were at work by the Saturday. We were on asset protection at the local hospital and spent a lot of time attacking fire that was creeping along in the forest, putting in control lines and reinforcing lines with back burning."

The Yackandandah members didn't feel they were on very foreign soil, working in terrain not unlike the hills of home in their four-wheel drives. "But we couldn't believe how dry it was," continued Cameron, "and how easily it burned."

"The weather was pretty benign and it was fantastic to work alongside RFS, CFS [South Australia's Country Fire Service] and crews from the ACT. It was a real national effort."

"We were certainly meaningfully deployed. We contributed our bit and felt we were helpful to the locals, but the threat continued after we left."

STORY LEITH HILLARD



Light fitting destroys flooring factory

INCIDENT: Structure fire
DISTRICT: 8
DATE: 19 September 2013
BRIGADES: Dandenong, Frankston, Scoresby, Patterson River, Bayswater, Keysborough, Hallam, Rowville, Skye, Carrum Downs, Edithvale, Hampton Park, Narre Warren, Mt Evelyn, Cranbourne, Springvale, Noble Park



A large fire in a factory in Dandenong South, which contained carpet, vinyl flooring, underlay, timber and adhesives, sent a plume of smoke over Dandenong, Dandenong South, Hallam and Hampton Park.

Senior Station Officer Rick Owen was the initial Incident Controller. "We didn't see the smoke for the first kilometre," said Rick, "but then VicFire started getting multiple calls and they told us that everyone was out of the building". More than 100 CFA and MFB firefighters worked for more than an hour and a half to bring the blaze under control and managed to protect neighbouring businesses. People working at the factory were leaving when the fire started at around 6pm and no-one was injured.

"The final tally of appliances on scene was 15 pumpers, two hose layers, two breathing apparatus vans, one MCV [mobile communications vehicle] and five aerials – two telebooms and three ladder platforms," continued Rick.

"It was a clear span building approximately 50 metres in width. We were looking at the intensity of the fire and the exposures. There was another factory on the eastern sector with even more fuel inside, so that was the first concern."

"We really needed the height and projection of the aerials. Initially we had the wind in our favour, so we got one aerial close. The operators and appliance were exposed when the wind turned so we re-positioned. It was a judgement call but that initial inundation stopped the spread of the fire from one building to another."

At the height of the fire attack, 21,000 litres of water a minute were put on the fire, with the nearby Frankston-Dandenong Road 450 millimetre main proving invaluable.

"It was an external, defensive firefight," said Rick. "About 20 minutes in, a Red Flag Warning was issued to indicate structural collapse as the concrete tilt slabs collapsed out."

Senior Station Officer Glenn Proebstl was the fire investigation team leader with support from Leading Firefighter Matthew Ivan and State Fire Investigation Coordinator Nicole Harvey.

"The Fire Investigation Unit first attended the day after the fire started for preliminary intelligence gathering," said Glenn. "We were able to use some heavy machinery – a 22.5-tonne and a 30-tonne excavator – provided by the insurance company to make the site safe and give us access to the area of origin."

"The fire burned through Friday, Saturday and Sunday and part of the work done by the weekend crew was to ensure the site would be safe for the carriage of the formal fire investigation on the Monday. Matt [Ivan] was there all day Saturday keeping the continuity of the scene while make-safe works were carried out."

"On Monday we were able to interview the employees who were in the factory when the fire started. They were able to give us detailed information about the circumstances of the fire."

Working closely with forensic scientists from the Victorian Forensics Science Centre at Macleod, the cause and origin of the fire was established early on Monday afternoon. The point of origin was carpet and underlay rolls stored in stillages next to the racking in the warehouse. It appears that an industrial light fitting above the stillages failed and showered hot material on the carpets and underlay, which then ignited.

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

STORY LEITH HILLARD



The flooring factory fire needed a multi-agency response

PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

safety

If you think it's unsafe, it probably is – find an alternative.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF FRANKSTON BRIGADE

TEENAGER RESCUED AT LIMA EAST

INCIDENT: Rescue
DISTRICT: 23
DATE: 12 September 2013
BRIGADES: Monbulk, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Yea, Oscar 1, Swanpool



PHOTO: GARY OWEN

A teenage girl taking part in a school adventure camp slipped into a crevice while rock climbing and became wedged, sparking a multi-agency rescue in Lima East. A call for help was made just after noon, and because the incident was classified as a cave rescue it came under Victoria Police control.

"What goes in must come out," said District 23 Operations Officer and Rostered Duty Officer Jamie McLean, but the incident presented access and communication difficulties.

"We had limited access to the girl and there were no local comms," continued Jamie. "Lima was a black hole – the site was off the grid. We had to proceed with a portable radio on the VicFire channel. I was regularly climbing up to a large rock on the top of the hill to give sit reps [situation reports] and liaising with Victoria Police inspectors. A satellite phone and trunking radio came out with the Wangaratta comms vehicle and that sorted our comms issues."

A media helicopter overhead presented further communications problems. "Crews need to use verbal communications for rope control inside the crevice," said Jamie. "The noise of the aircraft made it difficult to hear, so we ordered a no-fly zone and asked the police chopper to communicate that through aircraft radio."

"We had support from the Wodonga hazmat van which carries extra gear. I had called for rope technicians and high-angle rescue crews – we knew we'd need extra bodies for setting up ropes and hauling – and Monbulk brigade was there to support that effort.

"The patient was caught in a very tight wedge but there was no danger of collapse. Ambulance Victoria gave her pain relief and the crews lifted her up slowly and moved her along, then paramedics stabilised her."

Mine rescue specialists Oscar 1 made the long journey from their Bendigo base and helped bring the patient down from the hills to the ambulance at the picnic ground using a Stokes basket. Parks Victoria cleared trees and undergrowth as SES, Ambulance Victoria, police and CFA worked together to move the girl to the air ambulance which flew her to Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital.

"We had an on-site debrief after the event and there were no major issues – just a few little tweaks," said Jamie. "We have some different systems that don't always interlock, but all services work well together up here. Locals work well with locals and we're all on a first-name basis."

STORY LEITH HILLARD

Wind drives Doveton house fire



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

INCIDENT: Structure fire
DISTRICT: 8
DATE: 30 September 2013
BRIGADES: Hallam, Dandenong



Strong, gusty winds and beehives were a challenge for firefighters when tackling a house fire in Doveton.

Thick smoke caused problems with visibility and the rear yard of the single-storey brick house was hard to access because of flames and a large number of items stored on the property. Senior Station Officer Greg Chapman directed his crews to gain access via a neighbouring metal fence to work on the fire from the back.

Crews had to dodge bees that were disturbed from their hives during the firefight and this prevented access to one side of the structure. In addition, the water pressure was poor so additional hose lines were laid to an adjoining street.

There was the potential for an adjoining house to be severely impacted by fire, but crew members worked hard in breathing apparatus to prevent any damage.

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

STORY KEITH PAKENHAM

Guitars plucked from factory fire

INCIDENT: Structure fire
DISTRICT: 13
DATE: 27 August 2013
BRIGADES: Bayswater, Boronia, Dandenong, Scoresby, Ferntree Gully, The Basin, Rowville, Upper Ferntree Gully

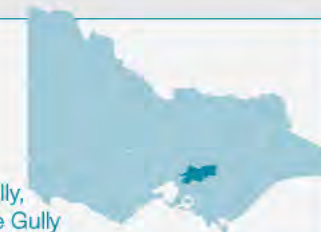


PHOTO: MARK KENNEDY

Quick work from crews contained a Cole Clark guitar factory fire to the rear of its three conjoined buildings.

"The factory is in the heavily-industrialised precinct of Bayswater," said Operations Officer Jason Lawrence. "The smoke was quickly visible so multiple calls came in. It was the middle of the day and about 20 to 30 workers were on site. They were all out and accounted for early on without any injuries.

"Our first appliance was on scene within five minutes and was in time to do an internal attack and knock it down in the initial stage. There was a mezzanine level that complicated things a bit, but the Dandenong ladder platform got a water stream in through the roof."

About 50 firefighters were at the scene at the peak of the attack, with Ambulance Victoria also in attendance to monitor members who had used breathing apparatus.

The rear of the three buildings is the main assembly and finishing area where spraying, painting and stringing take place. Fire investigators attended and determined that the origin of the fire was in the spray booth.

"Crews managed to salvage a portion of the stock," said Jason, "but unfortunately there was extensive damage to the rear of the building containing expensive manufacturing equipment."

STORY LEITH HILLARD

Almond hull fire goes nuts

INCIDENT: Non-structure fire
DISTRICT: 18
DATE: 10 October 2013
BRIGADES: Merbein, Red Cliffs, Robinvale, Mildura, Nangiloc, Ouyen, Irymple, Boundary Bend, Wemen, Carwarp, Annuello



An almond hull fire, south-east of Mildura that started in mid-afternoon kept some Sunraysia Group brigades up most of the night. The four piles of almond hulls were up to 10 metres high by 50 metres long and around 100 metres from the processing plant.

Almond hulls are the outer covering of almonds, excluding the hard shell, and are used as stock feed.

"This was a case of spontaneous combustion," said Robinvale Captain Colin Egan. "We've been out to incidents there before, but this was by far the biggest. Usually, these piles only smoulder but yesterday we had a hot, westerly wind and the fire spread in a matter of minutes from one pile to another. The piles are very hard to extinguish because they retain so much heat. They burn even when they're wet."

"We tried to knock down the flame and prevent further spread, but it escaped the compound and burning embers caused about 300 truck tyres nearby to catch alight."

The conveyor system that moves the hulls to the piles felt the heat, but the business is well set up for the fire risk, with in-house firefighting capacity. They used their heavy earthmoving equipment to pull one pile apart and douse it, while CFA continued to work on the other piles.

"They had on-site water but we also set up a good relay system," said Operations Officer John Breaks. "The Robinvale pumper acted as a boost pump to the Robinvale big fill and Ouyen pumper and that was then distributed to the tankers. They surrounded the fire and then it was a static firefight."

"We called for three more tankers at 6.45pm to give the initial crews a break and Sunraysia Group sent out relief crews at 11pm."

SES provided lighting when night fell and Victoria Police offered excellent support, assessing whether road closures were necessary.

STORY LEITH HILLARD



PHOTO: COLIN EGAN

Man rescued from house fire

INCIDENT: Structure fire
DISTRICT: 14
DATE: 28 September 2013
BRIGADES: Werribee, Hoppers Crossing



Four CFA crews from Werribee and Hoppers Crossing were called to reports of a heater fire at a home in Werribee at around 7.30am. With the single-storey brick veneer house well alight when crews arrived, firefighters in breathing apparatus (BA) entered the house and found a man unconscious.

The two firefighters who rescued the man first met a year earlier as instructor and new recruit at Fiskville.

"I did six months at Fiskville last year working on two recruit courses," said Corio Leading Firefighter Sam Maiolo. "I was Chris Ryan's instructor there, but this was the first time I'd worked with him.

"I was the pump driver and BA crew leader for the call. I prepared a few lines of 38 while Chris put on BA and did an attack at the back of the property, which was the seat of the fire. I then put on BA and we heard that someone might still be inside.

"We took the TIC [thermal imaging camera] in the front door and by then half to three-quarters of the house was involved. Chris did a few bursts of fog and it began to flashover.

"We went into rescue mode and searched from left to right and, within about 30 seconds to a minute, Chris spotted someone on the floor. We took him out together and put him on the grass." The occupant was suffering from burns and smoke inhalation and was taken care of by the outside crew.

Chris and Sam, however, were unsure whether all occupants were accounted for and returned inside for a further search. Fortunately, the property was empty.

"We had a process and we followed it," said Sam. "To Chris's credit, he was faultless. He was calm, he was collected. He did all that was asked of him and more and it all fell into place. It was a proud moment for me to see that what I'd taught him at Fiskville has sunk in."

Incident Controller Steve Attard gives equal credit to Sam for the speedy rescue. "It was battle stations when we got there," said Steve. "People were running around and one man said he didn't know where his brother was.

"It was good to see Sam come back from being an instructor and see the fruits of his training. He and Chris worked very well together.

"Thanks also to Werribee pumper for their support and the volunteers from Hoppers."

Senior Station Officer Dave Abbey took over as incident controller from Steve after the rescue. He also expressed pride in Chris and the whole crew. "They carried out the rescue with professionalism and speed," said Dave. "The family was ecstatic."

STORY LEITH HILLARD

HEAD-ON CRASH IN DIAMOND CREEK

Shortly after 5am, Diamond Creek, Eltham and Plenty brigades were paged to a road accident with trapped drivers.

A light truck travelling east on Diamond Creek Road had collided with a utility travelling west, resulting in a head-on collision that left both drivers trapped and injured. Mobile intensive care ambulance (MICA) paramedics were at the scene within minutes and worked to stabilise and administer pain relief to both drivers.

Plenty Road Accident Rescue assessed the scene and quickly began work on the crushed vehicles. The utility driver was freed after around 35 minutes and was taken by ambulance to hospital.

After the utility had been winched away from the truck, crews had better access to the trapped truck driver. A short time later, the truck driver was freed and was also taken by ambulance to hospital.

At the on-scene debrief held after the incident, Plenty brigade Captain Adrian Marshman congratulated all those at the scene for working together in a step-by-step and cooperative manner.

"I challenge anyone here on scene this morning to identify who was from Diamond Creek and who was from Plenty," he said. "With the two brigades working seamlessly together, it was really a great example of team work. Well done everyone." He also reminded the crews that they could call on CFA peers for a chat or further support if they were affected by the incident.

In addition, Incident Controller Lieutenant Peter Clarkson from Diamond Creek brigade stressed the importance of knowing and using the skills of a crew. "It's important at a job like this to know who your crew is. Diamond Creek pumper was the first appliance on scene and knowing that I had an Ambulance Victoria paramedic and a mechanic whose specific skills were ideally suited to this incident was great," Peter said.

To see more images go to news.cfa.vic.gov.au/news/serious-mva-in-diamond-creek

STORY FIONA MACKEN

INCIDENT: Road accident
DISTRICT: 14
DATE: 23 August 2013
BRIGADES: Diamond Creek, Plenty, Eltham



PHOTO: FIONA MACKEN

MILK TANKER IN SERIOUS ROLL

INCIDENT: Road accident
DISTRICT: 9
DATE: 24 August 2013
BRIGADES: Trafalgar, Yarragon, Morwell, Warragul



PHOTO: TROY LONGSON

A semi-trailer loaded with milk rolled on to its side as it turned a corner near Trafalgar, Gippsland, while on its way to a processing factory.

"What made this incident tricky for our members was that the tanker was leaking both liquid natural gas, which can ignite, and milk which is considered a pollutant," said Duty Officer Ian Pattie.

Environment Protection Authority personnel attended and dammed the escaped milk before removing it. Also at the scene were Warragul SES, Victoria Police and Ambulance Victoria.

"The driver suffered a nasty gash to the head but was walking around after the incident," Ian said. "He was taken to hospital for observation and minor treatment."

Some of the milk in the semi-trailer was saved by Murray Goulburn by decanting it into other tankers. Around 350 litres of liquified natural gas and 600 litres of milk were contained and removed. The vehicle was lifted on to its wheels using heavy haulage and recovery bags, as CFA crews remained at the scene for several hours while the clean-up continued.

STORY CRAIG ROWSTON

Blaze at historic Kerang Hotel

INCIDENT: Structure fire
DISTRICT: 20
DATE: 7 September 2013
BRIGADES: Kerang, Cohuna, Koondrook, Bendigo, Sandhill Lake and District, Murrabit, Swan Hill, Barham (NSW)



Kerang brigade Captain Ramon Steel lives only about three blocks away from the Kerang Hotel in Wellington Street. He could see the smoke and flames as he backed out of his driveway early Saturday morning in response to the fire call.

"I ordered in more resources before I even got to the fire station," said Ramon. In fact, it only took two and half minutes after the initial fire call for the captain to request four pumpers and five tankers, plus an aerial vehicle from Bendigo. A pumper also responded from Barham, NSW, to assist with water supplies.

When crews arrived at the pub, they found the double-storey building well alight and spreading.

"It's a massive building built in 1928, with a big old verandah," continued Ramon. "It's the first building you see as you come into town with a bell tower façade.

"Residents had evacuated the motel by the time we arrived. We hit it hard and saved 50 per cent of the building. We got BA crews into the reception area and other crews went in through the beer garden. The Murrabit crew was on the roof of the single-storey part of the building and Cohuna and

Kerang fought inside to stop the fire spreading to the reception area and they were completely successful; that part of the structure was saved and so was the front bar."

At the height of the fire, more than 50 firefighters worked successfully to contain the fire to the one building, and brought it under control in around one and a half hours.

"We fought the hard fight but the bistro area, foyer and a little lounge area were destroyed. It's an extremely sad day for Kerang but, from a firefighting point of view, I'm extremely happy with the outcome. The façade is OK and the structural integrity is all OK. I wouldn't change a thing about our response," said Ramon.

A NSW firefighter pulled a calf muscle and was taken to hospital and released later the same day.

Fire investigators and Energy Safe Victoria determined that the fire was caused by an electrical fault that started downstairs and moved up the stairwell.

STORY KEITH PAKENHAM AND LEITH HILLARD



PHOTO: KEN JENKINS, NORTHERN TIMES

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

For a positive change we need to think differently

It was as early as the 1860s that concerned Victorians took up the banner and created their own informal volunteer brigades in the bush.

While CFA has proudly continued the history of delivering the safest and best possible outcomes for communities across Victoria through our brigades, it's clear that, as our environment continues to shift, change is necessary to sustain us as a community-based organisation.

The need to evolve into a more modern and sustainable organisation was the reason behind the proposed changes to our service delivery and support model, announced in July this year.

Through the fantastic suggestions we received during the consultation process, it was clear to see the passion that members have for CFA. I was incredibly pleased with the response and I would like to thank all those who contributed.

Following the close of consultation, we have reviewed the feedback, listening closely to what our members have to say about the model and how it could work in a practical sense. With a keen focus on making sure that CFA is as efficient, flexible and adaptable as possible, the executive leadership team is currently finalising our decisions.

We need to focus on the right things and make the right decisions for CFA, our members and for the communities we serve, now and into the future – and this is a motivating factor for the team. We will share the outcomes in due course.

This work, under the banner of Creating Our Future Together, is in line with our recently released 2013-2018 CFA Strategy, which outlines the long-term objectives to enable our future success.

This strategy signals a clear shift in how we approach our work, and requires innovation, working closely with others and being outcome focused.

This shift will mean we will need to:

- **THINK DIFFERENTLY** Our changing environment demands that we work in new ways. We need to really challenge ourselves to innovate how we approach our work and how we work with the community and other stakeholders. We also have a great chance to contribute what we know to positively influence the state's evolving emergency management sector.
- **BAND TOGETHER** We need to continue our strong focus on working closely with communities throughout Victoria. As the strategy outlines, now more than ever we must listen and learn, inform and educate, share and shape each other's priorities. We also need to encourage and embrace a spirit of collaboration not only within CFA, but with our communities and our other partners.
- **DRIVE REAL CHANGE** We need to focus on delivering strong outcomes and continue to strengthen the capacity and capability of members to deliver services in an efficient and effective manner. This is a key goal of the service delivery and support model proposal and something I am particularly passionate about.

While we are looking to make positive, lasting change at CFA, I want to reinforce that there will be no change to our commitment to members or communities – fire trucks will keep rolling out the doors and we'll keep responding to emergencies. We are just trying to ensure that we go about our core business in the best and most efficient way we can.

On a final note, as we move into our Fire Danger Period, I want to thank all our members for their service, and I urge you to stay safe.

MEMBERS SHARE THEIR VIDEO STORIES

The Australian Centre for the Moving Image at Federation Square in Melbourne recently offered CFA members the chance to learn how to tell a digital story. The result is 15 short films about the depth and complexity of the CFA experience.

Kenneth Hall and John Draffin collaborated on a film about their experiences of Ash Wednesday as Emerald, Monbulk and Macclesfield brigades battled fires in Cockatoo. With a family steeped in CFA, Daniel Lister looked at the impact of the 2009 fires, while Michael Cawthran shared his harrowing Black Saturday experience and life beyond. Ivan Lee recalled the culture of volunteering in the 1950s and 60s, while Jo Ussing of Nhill

brigade celebrated the integral role CFA plays in rural and remote communities. Chris Taylor told his story of how joining the juniors changed his outlook and shaped his future. Su Taylor's video gives a fireground health warning and Christine Henderson focused on all the vital jobs done by members who never climb on a fire truck. There are also videos by Peter Sharman, Jenna Kelley, Kimberley Kelly, David Renkin, Gaybrielle Burgess and Tony Brown.

All the films can be seen on YouTube by searching for CFA: Our Lives – Digital Storytelling Project.

STORY LEITH HILLARD

National Emergency Medal

More than four and a half thousand CFA members are being awarded a National Emergency Medal, with presentation ceremonies being held across all CFA regions between September 2013 and early 2014.

The National Emergency Medal recognises service to others during a nationally-significant emergency. The award being given to CFA members is to honour and recognise those who served during the 2009 Victorian fires in both front line firefighting and behind-the-scenes or support roles.

"Men and women united to confront the common threat of bushfire," said Chief Officer Euan Ferguson. "In conditions that were difficult and dangerous and extreme in every sense of the word, you did your best. In the face of nature's wrath, you stood fast. You gave your all."

Craig Ferguson, a volunteer with Bayswater brigade and also a staff member in CFA's Operational Training and Volunteerism team,

said that despite the large number of people involved the presentation he attended was intimate and heartfelt.

"The event was full of pride, camaraderie and the sense of family, which is CFA to the core," he said.

CFA has worked closely with the Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat in Canberra throughout the approval process.

Members should note that there is currently no closing date for National Emergency Medal nominations. Individuals who served during the 2009 fires who have not been included in the first schedule of awards are encouraged to contact their regional office for further information and qualifying criteria. Alternatively, questions can be directed to: cfa-awards@cfa.vic.gov.au

STORY SONIA MACLEAN



PHOTO: WARREN MITCHELSON



PHOTO: WARREN & JULIE PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO: WARREN & JULIE PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO: WARREN & JULIE PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO: WARREN MITCHELSON

CHIEF OFFICER

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

Season starts early for CFA members

I've had the privilege to award a number of National Emergency Medals to recognise service during the 2009 bushfires.

More than 4,500 CFA members are currently receiving medals through a number of ceremonies across the state. Their selfless service, devotion to duty, courage and leadership serve as an example that will inspire others for generations. The award recipients have earned the respect of grateful communities and epitomise the spirit of Australia and the spirit of CFA. To all of them I say, "Thank you – job well done!"

CFA's first resources were deployed to NSW on Thursday 17 October in response to a request for assistance from the NSW Rural Fire Service. Hundreds of Victorian firefighters from CFA, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Parks Victoria and MFB worked shoulder to shoulder on the front line to protect communities around Lithgow/Mt Victoria and the Blue Mountains areas at the height of the fire threat. I acknowledge everyone who supported our NSW colleagues on the front line and in support roles. I also extend my gratitude to families, employers and the self-employed, because without their support these deployments would not be possible.

At the time of writing, the total area burnt in NSW was more than 128,000 hectares, with a total fire perimeter reported as more than 1,600 kilometres. More than 200 homes have been destroyed. Although the current NSW threat is easing, it's fair to say that the extreme risk of bushfire across NSW will not change for some weeks.

The Victorian forecast indicates a serious risk of bushfire for our state during the summer. Preparations and briefings across Victoria are well progressed. The priority this summer will be on communities with extreme risk ratings and hitting new fires hard and fast.

Research has emerged that 80 per cent of houses lost in bushfires in Australia were within 150 metres of the hazard (forest, bushland). Evidence from the 2013 fires in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania indicated that most people on the perimeters of communities lived in houses that could not be defended, were blind to the risk and most had no plan. A workforce is gearing up to doorknock properties in extreme risk areas.

The newly updated *Fire Ready Kit* is out. This improved version will be an important resource for Fire Ready meetings and promoting preparedness.

The Fire Danger Period (FDP) started at the beginning of November in northern parts of the state. As we enter the FDP, I cannot stress enough the importance of safety on the fireground – the 18 Watch Out situations and LACES. These are both fundamental to our safety doctrine. A new lessons-learned section will be an ongoing feature in *Brigade* magazine (see page 21) and part of our commitment to continuous improvement. Reviews from last season highlight safety improvements in relation to downhill driving and falling trees, and this new section is important reading for all members.

On a final note, the first of the four new heavy hazmat vehicles was commissioned for operational use on 21 October, and is based in Shepparton. The others will progressively come online over the coming months. This represents a significant achievement in what has been a complex process. The new Shepparton heavy hazmat will provide state-of-the-art protection from chemical, biological and radiological incidents in and around country Victoria. Congratulations to everyone involved.



NEW HAZMAT TRUCK IN SERVICE

The new hazmat truck, one of which is based at Hallam brigade, is a far cry from the old removalist van it replaces. Based on a Mercedes-Benz Atego crew cab chassis, the hazmat vehicle is powered by a turbo-charged diesel engine with 210kW of power and 1,120Nm of torque.

The body is a single integral unit mounted to the chassis, and the bodywork has aluminium roller shutters on the side. The back is fitted with a hydraulically-operated rear tailgate loader. Inside the truck is a front office area, a central walkway with shelving and partitions on both sides and slide-out trays for storing hazmat equipment.

It also has reverse cycle air conditioning, an on-board generator, side pull-out awnings, a pneumatically-operated stem light at the front of the body and skylights in the roof for improved internal lighting. There are also large slide-out trays that can be accessed from the outside, for storing pneumatic tents and shelters, portable generators, and a wet and dry vacuum cleaner.

STORY DUNCAN RUSSELL



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM



Volunteer Support Program (VSP) staff have been on the ground since June talking to, and drawing on the experience of, our members across the state to scope a number of projects that will improve the support available to CFA volunteers and brigades.

VSP is a statewide initiative, developed in collaboration with Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria and launched by the State Government in October 2010 as part of the volunteer support package. There are three streams in the program: volunteer sustainability, volunteer development and volunteer support.

While there's still a lot of work to be done, this round-up shows some of the initiatives already being delivered.

CHIEF OFFICER'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PILOT A new leadership development program, run by Chief Officer Euan Ferguson, will be held over the next 12 months for 20 volunteers across the state. Over three weekends, the program aims to enhance and broaden members' understanding, capability and confidence as CFA leaders, enabling participants to inform future organisational directions as well as implement new leadership methods in their brigades.

ENGAGING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES To help brigades who are interested in better engaging multicultural communities, we've produced the *Engaging Multicultural Communities* booklet. It has a range of practical tips and strategies. This project has taken more than 12 months and we're grateful to Corio brigade's A shift and other members for their valuable contribution. You can request a hard copy from volsupportprogram@cfa.vic.gov.au or visit the Engaging Diverse Communities web pages on Brigades Online, which contain additional resources and strategies. Go to Brigades Online > Community > Community Development > Engaging Diverse Communities.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND RECOGNITION Several pilot projects are underway with six groups, 33 brigades, District 9 Youth Retention and the Dandenong Ranges Feeding Group. Specific support includes trialling innovative products for attracting new volunteers and recognising current members.

CFA LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE A very successful inaugural Leadership Community of Practice meeting was held in Bendigo in mid-September. Eighteen members from across the state had an opportunity to share information and experiences with the group and learn from each other. The aim of the Leadership Community of Practice is to help shape the direction of leadership development in CFA. Plans are underway for future meetings.

DIVERSITY NETWORK The Engaging Diverse Communities project team is looking for people interested in establishing a CFA diversity network. The network would give interested CFA members a deeper understanding of the issues facing diverse communities, practical skills and knowledge needed to engage with diverse communities and help create welcoming environments in brigades. So far, 58 brigades have expressed interest in joining up.

WELLBEING WEBSITE PAGE A web page on Brigades Online has been developed to help members easily find psychological health and safety information. The page has also been formatted for mobile phones and tablet devices. It's currently being tested and will be available to all members on Brigades Online.

Members of VSP continue to work closely with volunteers to ensure the delivery of sustainable support with permanent resources and tools in place by 2014 to help brigades do what they do best – protecting lives and property.

STORY THERESE MORRIS

Members of Dandenong brigade, Volunteer Support Program and Longwarry and District brigade auxiliary with some of the students at the AFL/CFA South East Region Multicultural footy day

PHOTO: THERESE MORRIS

VOLS ON HOLS – CAN YOU HELP?

When you're on holiday, would you be interested in responding to incidents with a local brigade?

There are many benefits: maintaining service delivery, being welcomed to the local community, supporting the local community, sharing ideas and gaining new skills and knowledge.

If you'd consider turning out to assist brigades in holiday 'hot spots' during peak periods, contact Rhonda Day (0417 109 800) or Lisa Cruickshank (0417 096 325).

Firefighters cancer assessment panel

The Victorian Government announced the formation of the Firefighters Assessment Panel in August to help manage and assess career and volunteer firefighter cancer-related claims.

The panel is managed by WorkSafe, with CFA's support, and comprises expert medical, technical and claims specialists to ensure prompt, compassionate and fair assessments for all firefighter cancer-related claims. A centralised Firefighter Advisory Service was also launched to deal with enquiries and offer advice about work-related cancer claims.

The health and safety of CFA members will always be our number one priority and we welcome any initiative that supports them. Past and present firefighters who contract cancer through firefighting are entitled to compensation, either through CFA (for volunteers) or WorkSafe Victoria (for career firefighters).

For information about making a claim, go to CFA Online. Career firefighters can also find information on WorkSafe's website – worksafe.vic.gov.au.

Career and volunteer firefighters can contact the joint CFA/WorkSafe toll-free Firefighter Advisory Service by calling 1800 060 729. Volunteer firefighters can also email firefighterinfo@cfa.vic.gov.au and career firefighters can email firefighterinfo@worksafe.vic.gov.au.

CFA has a range of welfare services to support members and their immediate family members who may need support in response to these difficult and potentially traumatic life events.

We are here to support you, as you support your community every day.

STORY JASON LEIGH



FIRE SAFETY EBOOK

The Bushfire CRC has produced a free ebook for parents about how to talk to children about bushfire safety. The ebook, *Making a bushfire plan? Involve your kids!* is based on the PhD research of Briony Towers from RMIT University. The ebook can be read on a computer or any tablet device. Download it from bushfirecrc.com.

Updated materials for your community

We've updated two publications that will help you to pass on fire safety information to your community.

The *Members Quick Reference Guide* recognises that all CFA members are highly respected in their community. This guide helps you create conversations with local residents, answer their questions and promote fire safety.

This year's guide includes grassfire key messages specifically for people living on the urban fringe, updated house fire statistics and updated images and descriptions of top resources. You can download the guide from cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au, or ask your district office for a printed copy.

The new *Fire Ready Kit* includes a section on 'What to do to stay informed', including where to find warnings and updates. There's a strong emphasis on the practicalities of planning, beginning with the basics of preparing before the fire season, through to planning what to do if fire is in the area and people can't leave.

Above all, this kit provides a step-by-step guide to leaving early with a blunt message about shared responsibility from Chief Officer Euan Ferguson. As Euan writes in the kit's foreword, "CFA – as always – will do everything we can to protect lives and property. But there is only so much we can do. There will never be enough firefighters, fire trucks and firefighting aircraft to have these resources at everyone's back door during a large bushfire. The responsibility for surviving the fire season is shared between emergency services and the community."

Highly detailed, the kit is not for every community member. But for those people engaged in bushfire planning who want up-to-date information, it's CFA's go-to document. The *Fire Ready Kit* is available in limited numbers from your district's community education coordinator.

A shorter handout covering the basics of ratings, warnings, planning, preparation and leaving early is currently in the works. This handout is designed for use at a wide range of events and targets a broad audience. We'll keep you posted on progress on news.cfa.vic.gov.au.



Fire Awareness Award winners



The 2013 Fire Awareness Awards have gone off with a bang, with the announcement of all award winners and grant recipients during a ceremony on 4 December.

The glitzy RACV City Club in Melbourne was abuzz with finalists from across the state, celebrating with senior members of Victoria's fire agencies and ministerial representatives in a night of recognition.

Almost 100 projects were reviewed by a team of more than 40 judges. Congratulations to all the winners and thank you for your tireless efforts in helping to reduce the effect of fires across our state.

More information (including a list of all finalists) can be found at fireawarenessawards.com.au

AGED AND DISABILITY MFB

Seniors Fire Safety Program

COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

Moorabool Shire Council, Blackwood Evacuation Exercise Working Group
Blackwood & Surrounds Evacuation Exercise and Emergency Services Expo (Blackwood brigade members pictured below)

and

Warrandyte Community Association
Be Ready Warrandyte – Living with Bushfire Risk project

EDUCATION

April Himmelreich (CFA volunteer)
The Captain Koala & Friends Show

FIRE SERVICES CFA

Volunteer Health and Wellbeing

INDUSTRY/SERVICE

Department of Human Services Fire Risk Management Unit
The Capital Management Guidelines – series 7 Fire Risk Management. Targeting Vulnerable Victorians

and

MFB
The Hoarding Notification System

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Warrandyte Community Association, Warrandyte Theatre Company
'Do you have a fire plan?' video

NEW AND EMERGING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

Department of Environment and Primary Industries, CFA, MFB and State Emergency Service
eMap

PRODUCT DESIGN

Bartco Traffic Equipment Pty Ltd
Electronic Fire Danger Rating Signs

RECOVERY

Firefoxes Australia
Firefoxes Australia – Women Rising Together from Black Saturday

YOUTH

Echo Youth and Family Services
Cardinia Hills Youth Fire Readiness Project

The RACV Insurance Award for Excellence is awarded to one project that stands out for making a particularly significant and innovative fire awareness in the community. The winner of this award is Warrandyte Community Association for its Be Ready Warrandyte – Living with Bushfire Risk project.

Two grants were also presented to developing projects. The recipients were:

SPECIAL INCENTIVE GRANT (\$2,000)

Firefoxes Australia
'Women leading change'

RACV INSURANCE FIRE INNOVATION GRANT (\$9,000)

St John Ambulance Australia (Vic)
Community First Program



PHOTO: MOORABOOL NEWS

Training boost for Sunraysia

Emergency services personnel in Victoria's north-west will have access to a state-of-the-art \$1.8 million training ground, following a ceremony to mark the announcement of the new facility at Mildura.

For the first time, the region's 5,000 volunteers in 76 brigades will be able to receive vital practical firefighter training close to home. Previously, volunteers had to travel to Horsham or Bendigo to receive practical training, with some having to travel up to 300 kilometres.

The need for efficient, timely and appropriate training was identified by the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission and the Jones Inquiry into CFA's arrangements with its volunteers.

Funded by the Victorian Government's Volunteer Support Program, the 18-hectare training ground near Mildura Airport will offer

local firefighters hot fire training, class-based learning and, eventually, a driver training course. Construction begins early next year.

Lex de Man, CFA's Executive Director of Operational Training and Volunteerism and Member of Parliament for Mildura Peter Crisp unveiled a plaque to mark the occasion.

"We ask a lot of our volunteers who dedicate a large part of their lives to training so they can effectively protect their local communities," Lex said. "The Sunraysia Field Training Campus will ensure our people can receive training from local people, close to home."

Loddon Mallee Regional Director Mike Wassing said local volunteers, including instructors, would be the key to the facility's success.

"There's a wealth of firefighting experience and knowledge in the north-west, which we can tap into even more effectively to train local volunteer firefighters," Mike said.

He said the facility was designed in consultation with volunteers and would also be available for use by other emergency services such as the State Emergency Service.

STORY GERARD SCHOLTEN



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SUNRAYSLIA DAILY

MAKING THE MOST OF DISPOSABLE BATTERIES

CFA is one of the largest consumers of single use, alkaline batteries in the Southern Hemisphere, and we can reduce our environmental impact by recycling them.

Recycling saves natural resources and reclaims metals, chemicals and other materials for reuse. Putting batteries in your rubbish bin means they end up in landfill where they can contaminate the environment by releasing toxic chemicals into soil and waterways.

Many CFA brigades and firefighters already recycle their used pager batteries at Aldi, Bunnings and Officeworks stores and at local waste transfer stations, and over the past 12 months CFA has run battery recycling pilots in Districts 13, 14 and 22. These pilots measured the effectiveness of providing on-station collection points for battery recycling. The results showed that CFA firefighters will dispose of used batteries in an environmentally-responsible way if a convenient collection service is available.

CFA is looking into establishing a whole-of-organisation battery recycling scheme. Until then, members are encouraged to recycle their used batteries wherever possible through programs already in place. To find out where you can recycle batteries, go to recyclingnearyou.com.au/batteries.

CFA members can also help reduce environmental impacts by using their pagers in an efficient way. Firefighters can extend battery life of the new EAS Alpha pagers by:

- only using AA batteries provided by CFA
- changing the battery when the low battery alert/indicator comes on (not before)
- selecting the 'time out' rather than 'continuous' vibrate setting
- checking the pager light is off when holstered. If the light is on, the pager remains active and is draining the battery. (If this is the case, return your holster to the district office for a replacement).

STORY DARLENE PENTLAND



PHOTO: MORGAN MITCHELL

RADIO DISPATCH PREPARES FOR TRANSITION

The Regional Radio Dispatch Service (RRDS) is on track to switch the first districts to the new digital radio network in early December.

District 12 will pilot the transition, followed by Districts 2 and 15. Other districts will follow progressively until May 2014.

In preparation, reflashing of radios with new software started in September. Thanks to the assistance of brigades and members, the reflash team has made great progress, and reflashing will continue through the first few months of 2014.

To help members prepare for transition, facilitators from the RRDS team are coaching nominated members from each district. They will then pass on the information to brigades through a combination of face-to-face, video and practical sessions, with support materials for members to keep. This information is particularly important for brigades transitioning to dispatch through VicFire for the first time, so that members learn correct radio procedures.

We plan to offer several sessions for each brigade so that members can choose the session that best suits them.



RRDS team members Derek Dawkins and Neville Walsh

PHOTO: ALEX JOHNSTON

The RRDS regional coordinators will contact brigades to schedule these sessions. Each district will determine its readiness for transition and only proceed when certain criteria have been met.

For more information about RRDS, email rds@cfa.vic.gov.au or visit the RRDS website: Brigades Online > Fire & Emergencies > Communications > Regional Radio Dispatch Service Project.

STORY ALEX JOHNSTON

Projects on show at first expo

You might not think they have a lot in common, but new hose deployment systems, helmet torch brackets, our new website, automated fire signs, mobile training props and community bushfire exercises all come under the umbrella of CFA projects.

These were just a few of the 50 projects that came together in mid-October for CFA's first ever Project Expo – an informal pilot event for CFA members and agency partners.

Despite some patchy weather, the expo attracted a steady stream of visitors who took the opportunity to view the new Scoresby brigade hose layer, mobile education unit, aerial pumper and other specialist vehicles, plus the new 1.2.4D light tanker. On display inside were technology, mapping, infrastructure, health, training, community engagement and IT developments – even a model house courtesy of the Barwon South West and Home Bushfire Advice Service teams.

The event, which attracted participation from headquarters-based initiatives as well as those based at Eastern Metropolitan, Southern Metropolitan and Gippsland regions, was also a great opportunity for project teams to get a better feel for what's going on outside their areas.

Executive Director Performance and Strategy David Spokes said that not many people are aware of just how many projects – and the sheer range of activities – were carried out by CFA.

"Projects are a really important part of the way we do business and, in particular, the way we bring about change," David said.

To see more images and videos go to: news.cfa.vic.gov.au/cfa-expo

STORY SONIA MACLEAN



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMLIN

Update contact details before summer

Chief Officer Euan Ferguson is asking members to update their contact details ahead of the fire season.

"As Chief Officer, I'm keen to be able to email members directly regarding important issues, significant events and safety ahead of the fire season and throughout the year. It's important that critical messages reach our brigade leaders and members quickly," said Euan. Update your details on Brigades Online (cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au), by phoning the FIRS team on 1800 62 88 44 or by emailing rmsadmin@cfa.vic.gov.au.

Building community resilience to disasters

As the proverb goes, give a person a fish, and you feed them for a day; show them how to catch fish, and you feed them for a lifetime.

The Community Led Planning (CLP) pilot was introduced by CFA in early 2012 in response to significant changes in the emergency management sector and as part of its response to reviews looking at community awareness of disaster risk.

These reviews found that some of the systems used to educate communities about fire risk and prepare them for it could be improved. The existing approaches were not always well suited to local needs, were not well understood by those who would need them and critical information reached a very limited number of people. There was a call for greater collaboration between emergency service organisations and communities, with approaches based on community participation, resilience and a sense of shared responsibility.

In the past, several problems have hindered a fully informed approach to risk planning: community risk reduction plans are not locally driven and endorsed, which results in limited shared responsibility; communities underestimate the hazard; and agencies lack knowledge of local vulnerability.

CFA identified the need for a community-based partnership to achieve greater communication between the agency and communities and, in turn, among residents of the communities themselves. This approach involves building relationships to improve the skills of individuals in those communities.

Teaching and learning at a local level is an effective, long-term way to ensure shared responsibility between CFA and communities. Managed well, it lets CFA communicate important information about risk, safety and preparedness, while at the same time getting greater community engagement in both the problem of local risk and its solutions. CLP uses facilitating and guiding, rather than instruction, which better equips communities to confront challenges and develop their resilience to disaster.

The CLP pilot project was introduced to test the capacity of communities to develop their own risk reduction plans. The key findings of the pilot showed that, when supported, communities are in the best position to lead community engagement activities that result in the creation and implementation of a local action plan. Following the success of the pilot, the project was rolled out to 17 high fire risk communities (and adapted to include multi-hazards) to further test the notion that such an approach can:

- increase community action around preparedness for disaster
- increase social capital (knowledge, skills, understanding and willingness) to boost community participation
- identify local, community-specific strategies to reduce the risk of disaster
- increase risk awareness and an informed approach to risk planning.

CFA used a facilitated approach to support communities to develop and then lead their own risk plan development and associated activities. A facilitator was assigned to each participating community steering committee (consisting of around eight to 10 community members) to implement a five-stage process – see box, below. This allowed the plans of all the communities taking part to be developed using similar considerations, but each committee could tailor its approach.

THE FIVE-STAGE PROCESS

1. **Community profiling:** This is developed through data collection and discussion with the steering committee, and includes a broad risk profile, identification of vulnerable residents and a social 'map' of the community.
2. **Analysing the risk:** The steering committee considers relevant information to understand local risks and mitigation activities and plans from other agencies. The combination of agency-specific risk profiles and local knowledge of community issues creates an informed plan.
3. **Form of engagement and connecting with the community:** The steering committee uses a standard framework to plan their engagement activities in order to gather ideas and get feedback from the community.
4. **Creating the plan:** Following the engagement process, a plan is created based on the issues and ideas raised by the community.
5. **Implementing actions and reviewing the plan:** An action plan is developed detailing planned activities and who is responsible for each action item. It also includes a review schedule.



SO FAR SO GOOD

An independent evaluation of the project analysed the planning process to help CFA better understand participants' experiences and community-led approaches to risk. The main findings were:

- participants recognised the need to improve their community's understanding of risk
- the level of change in individual knowledge and skill varied considerably
- most felt their understanding of their community had improved
- stronger relationships proved to be the most important improvement
- changes in the community's capabilities were not yet evident because plans had only just been implemented
- communities pursued similar types of initiatives, delivered using local channels
- community engagement was central to the CLP process
- groups found CLP challenging and having good facilitation was important to success
- participants recognised the value of the project.

To implement the process more broadly, it was clear that it was important to select the right people to be involved, that there needs to be flexibility in how the CLP approach is applied, and the CLP process needs to be acknowledged as a long-term process. Overall, participants thought it was valuable and reported that initiatives they undertook wouldn't have been possible without having been part of the CLP process.

The communities involved in CLP benefited because participants:

- developed stronger relationships and networks across their communities
- felt more able to access the knowledge and resources of emergency management agencies
- became more aware of vulnerable members of the community
- felt supported by a stronger group of local residents with a good understanding of risk who can respond when needed.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS THINK

Feedback from participants showed that communities need ongoing support to roll out and establish CLP. As one community steering committee member noted, "It felt like our group had access to all the resources of knowledge and expertise and I found that reassuring."

Community steering committee members were enthusiastic about the greater sense of community engagement and relationship building the CLP process promoted and fostered. As one participant said, "Everyone on the community steering committee would feel that the most positive thing that has happened is not so much about the fire risk but the fact that you built up those community bonds." Another said, "You saw people who haven't been involved before in risk planning being included and very involved and enthused."

CLP recognises that these local relationships and bonds are central to building the community strength and cohesion that's key to implementing and following safety plans. Once established, these bonds also ensure that critical information is disseminated among locals ahead of high-risk times.

One participant described this need well when they said, "In this place, unlike a typical country town, there are a whole lot of people that don't talk to others in the community. How then do they all come together to respond to risk?" Delivering a one-size-fits-all plan to communities often fails to change behaviour because communities want to feel ownership of information and know that local residents can tailor it to suit their community. One participant summed this up. "The project is very feasible and I think in a way that's what we're working towards. The project let us really see the value of local knowledge. People just ignore a plan that's imposed on them."

What's clear is that CLP has the potential for strong cultural change in communities that's vital for future risk management. Two comments that illustrate this are, "We wouldn't be talking about these things and these issues without the project" and "It was a very positive experience, and if we can keep the momentum going it will be good for the town".

A more in-depth evaluation will be carried out to measure the outcomes of the plans when they've been more thoroughly reviewed and implemented in the communities.

With an emphasis on capacity building and increased community resilience, the CLP approach ticks boxes in line with emergency management sector reforms but, more importantly, empowers participants to exercise choice and take responsibility in preparing for disaster. This impact on individuals and their communities supports a bottom-up approach to capacity building and has the potential to enable broader change across Victoria.

If you want to develop your own community-led action plan, or want to find out more about CLP and the evaluation report, go to cfa.vic.gov.au or email k.enbom@cfa.vic.gov.au.

STORY KAREN ENBOM

Below left:
Networking at Lurg
PHOTO: DEB GARTLAND

Above:
Learning about fire safety
at Lal Lal
PHOTOS: RAELENE WILLIAMS





Cross-border inter-agency exercise

A cross-border inter-agency gathering in Corryong in early October took the form of a hypothetical.

The desktop scenario was an escaped campfire in a streamside reserve spreading to both sides of the Murray River, threatening farmhouses and small settlements, such as Khancoban, as it raced towards the Alpine National Park.

Twenty-three participants from CFA, Parks Victoria, Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI), Victoria Police, New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, Rural Fire Service (RFS) and the Forestry Corporation of NSW spoke about how they would respond to this scenario.

"We have a long and strong history in the Upper Murray," said District 24 Operations Manager Paul King. "Of course we all operate using AIIMS [Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System]. We all know what we do as individual agencies, so this was all about the coordination between us. How does each organisation operate and how do we bring the actions together?"

"The discussion threw up some issues and there'll be follow-up actions. We identified cross-border warnings as an issue. Fire agencies can operate on both sides of the border. The aspiration is to work towards one incident management team at one incident management centre but we're not there yet. There will be legal implications. Who has control? How far can we go in delivering a seamless service? We still have work to do in that space."

CFA and RFS have a memorandum of understanding with guidelines about communications plans, liaison, rules of engagement for aircraft, safety and welfare matters. The radios talk to each other and border brigade trucks carry adaptors for different fittings.

"People here are border-blind and District 24 Operations has a very close relationship with our buddies across the river," said Paul.

STORY LEITH HILLARD

Emergency Services Games

The 2014 Australasian Police and Emergency Services Games will be held in Melbourne from 19 to 24 April. To find out more about the friendly competition and inter-agency camaraderie, go to apandesgames.com.au.

GEELONG WORKSHOP FORGES LINKS WITH SES

Local CFA and SES volunteers in the Geelong area are making an important step forward in emergency services cooperation.

The group, all volunteers with CFA or SES, organised the first inter-agency training forum for the Geelong area to look at ways the organisations can align their training to enable brigades and units to work more effectively together at incidents. This is a timely reminder that the state's emergency services are moving to an all-hazards/all-agencies approach to managing emergencies.

This initiative was driven by five participants in a leadership scholarship program run by Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) – Brett Nagorcka (Belmont brigade), Chris Rogers (Highton), Susan Caithness (Lara), Brian Vagg (Modewarre) and Kylie Abraham (Corio SES). The forum received important recognition through the attendance of Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley and SES Deputy Operations Tim Wiebusch.

"The workshop was well attended by SES and CFA volunteer and career personnel from the Geelong district, which provided an opportunity to have wide discussions and focus on things that will assist both

agencies work closer together," said Craig Lapsley. "It was very encouraging to see the level of discussion and I am sure this will lead to new opportunities in the future."

Tim Wiebusch said it was terrific to see all the SES units from across Geelong represented. "I saw an increased understanding of each other's training and members getting on board with the opportunity for joint training. Best of all was seeing the local relationships that were strengthened, which can only result in a more unified response in the future," he said.

The forum is a precursor to CFA volunteers taking part in SES training sessions with units at Bellarine, Geelong, South Barwon, Torquay, Winchelsea, Bannockburn and Corio, and SES members joining in CFA training.

STORY STEFAN DELATOVIC



Leadership scholarship program participants: Brett Nagorcka, Brian Vagg, Chris Rogers, Kylie Abraham and Susan Caithness with Tim Wiebusch (far left), and Craig Lapsley (far right)

PHOTO: ASHLEY MAPPIN

Learning from incidents



CFA is committed to being a learning organisation. I would like to introduce Fire and

Emergency Management's section of *Brigade* magazine as one of the ways to support and communicate learning.

In the past, information and lessons identified from after action reviews (AARs), debriefs, operational analysis, case studies and other major reports have often taken some time to filter down to all CFA members. This has caused a delay in the delivery of sometimes vital lessons.

This new section will share knowledge gained from real experiences and focus on improving safety and CFA's performance as a volunteer and community-based fire and emergency service. Summaries of the lessons identified from reports completed by CFA and other emergency services will appear in this section, so the lessons come direct to you.

This section will be a regular feature, so please take the time to read the information, learn from our experiences, and discuss the issues with fellow brigade, group, district and region colleagues.

Euan Ferguson
Chief Officer

The post-season operations review

Each year, we carry out a debriefing process to identify and validate existing operational policy, processes and practices and find opportunities for improvement.

While still focusing on prevention, response and recovery issues, the 2012-13 *Post Season Operations Review* was the first real opportunity to review new initiatives introduced after the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. These included warnings and advice, evacuation, incident management team readiness, traffic management points, interoperability and back burning approval.

The review supported evidence that shows we've made significant improvements in how we manage bushfires. For example, timeliness, accessibility, and the quality and reliability of predictive services and products were recognised as having significantly improved at incident, regional and state levels. Also, understanding of the principles and process of embedding transfer of control continues to improve through briefings, exercises and practical application.

The review also pointed to areas that can be further improved, and the key issues were incorporated into pre-season briefings and exercises across the state, including:

- evacuation
- command and control (including transfer of control)
- warnings and advice
- safety (including hazardous trees and vehicle driving)
- traffic management
- initial attack.

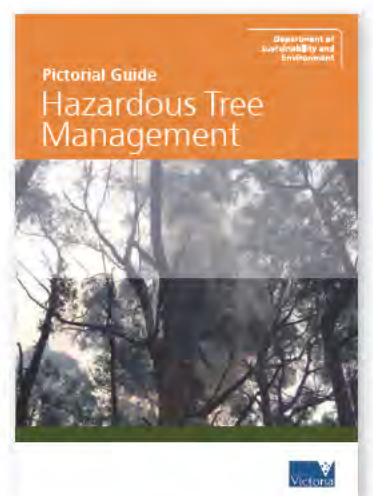
You can read the report at: [Brigades Online \(cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au\)](http://cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au) > Fire & Emergencies > Operations Performance Improvement > Operational Reviews > Debrief.

HAZARDOUS TREE INCIDENTS

Tragically, two Department of Sustainability and Environment (now the Department of Environment and Primary Industries) firefighters died last fire season when they were struck by a fire-affected tree during the Harrietville fire. There were two other incidents where CFA firefighters were injured by falling trees.

In the CFA incidents, the injured firefighters were wearing full bushfire personal protective equipment (PPE) and helmets. This significantly reduced the potential injuries to both firefighters. All firefighters involved in the incidents followed safety procedures and a Red Flag Warning was issued on one occasion regarding the weather and falling trees. The warning was issued again straight after the incident.

The *Victorian Fire Agency Bushfire Handbook Edition 3* outlines the procedures for issuing Red Flag Warnings and identifying hazardous trees. Also, look at the *Hazardous Trees* brochure and *Hazardous Tree Management*. All three are in the Incident Management Team Toolbox on Brigades Online.



VEHICLE DRIVING INCIDENTS

Last summer, there were several serious collisions and incidents involving CFA vehicles. The Motor Vehicle Collision Investigation team identifies the causes of incidents so that we learn from the investigations and prevent similar incidents. There were some common issues and lessons to be learned by all crew leaders and drivers, especially in the busier summer months. What we learned:

- District mechanical officers (DMOs) found that damage to CFA trucks tended to occur after the first two or three days of a prolonged fire. One of the causes of collisions was strike team drivers not being familiar with the vehicles. Brigades send drivers to the fire who are not normally front line firefighters and they may not be familiar with the trucks.
- Most drivers involved in collisions and incidents don't have formal driving competencies and/or experience in driving CFA firefighting vehicles.
- There will be a review of strike team convoy procedures in relation to the location of the strike team leader's vehicle and the distance between vehicles.
- Vehicles with only a driver on board but no crew have a greater risk of being involved in an incident.
- There is often a lack of situation awareness when fires are going.

DRIVING TIP: DOWNHILL DESCENT

The time to set up your downhill descent strategy is at the top of the hill – well before you've picked up so much speed that you're in trouble. You only have one set of brakes. If they get too hot, they may fade away and your vehicle will become a runaway train. Generally, you should travel downhill in the same gear used to travel up the hill. At the same time, drivers should use the exhaust brake to assist with the speed of the vehicle and only use the vehicle's service brakes sparingly as required.

Experience will teach you how many gears you need to drop down from top gear in order to descend a hill without constant use of the brakes. If you're new to steep descents, it's best to err on the safe side by going down a hill in a lower gear than you really need. You may be slow, but at least you'll be safe.

If you find yourself going downhill faster than the engine and transmission can hold you back, you should brake in short bursts. It's far better to brake hard for a shorter distance than to ride the brakes for a long time. Look out for warning signs indicating the length or gradient of the hill.

PHOTO: GLENN JENNINGS



Learning tool for observation collection

The *Post Season Operations Review* identified the need for volunteers to be involved in the Fire Danger Period review process. As a result, an online observation sharing centre is being developed that includes a comprehensive, centralised observation collection tool. This tool will let all CFA members capture, log, track and report on progress against issues raised throughout the season, instead of waiting until the end of the season for formal reviews.

A local referral process is included so issues can be resolved at the most appropriate level instead of being escalated. The system will also be used to monitor any trends in observations across the state, and these trends will be regularly reported to the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Joint Committee and CFA's executive management.

What is an observation? An observation must include the basic details of the observed issues, with sufficient detail to do further analysis. At a minimum, the observation must describe what happened and how it differed from what was expected.

Is everything a valid observation? Not everything we experience is a valid observation. It needs to be objective and not just a complaint about something or someone. It must be a problem with a system and not just a simple mistake made by someone, and it should be something you would allocate your own resources to fix.

Who gets the information? All observations will first be given to the operations manager of your district. They are also collected by the Fire and Emergency Management Performance Improvement team, so that all observations across the state can be combined.

What will be done with them? When required, your district operations manager will deal with issues that affect brigades, groups and the district. Observations that affect other agencies or, when combined, identify statewide trends, will be shared throughout CFA and our partner agencies, where appropriate.

safety

More heads are better than one, so discuss any safety concerns among the crew.

The learning process for your team

An after action review (AAR) is a post-shift or post-incident team discussion that includes both technical information and human factors. The AAR process was originally used as a confidential way to improve individual performance, and lessons identified were not shared outside the team. But this technique is now vital to identify recurring issues and, while confidentiality must be retained, the results can be used to validate existing actions and improve operational activities.

The AAR:

- is a means of collecting information to inform a changeover, when conducted before a shift finishes
- is the main way to incorporate the day's events into the learning cycle
- is a forum for discussing successes and failures and can be used to develop new strategies
- helps to establish a common team perception of the day's events
- provides practice for team communication and conflict resolution between team members
- is a place to establish, emphasise and reinforce group standards or norms.

Conducting an AAR is as simple as answering a series of questions:

- What was planned and what actually happened? These should be factual statements without judgement. The aim is to discover the events of the day through your crew members' eyes.
- Why did it happen? It's important to remember that the AAR focuses on the *what*, not the *who*.
- What went well and what can be improved and how?

The AAR should detail the actions of the team during the assignment or incident. Both good and unsatisfactory performances need to be analysed. If the team believes that the lessons or the event require greater review, it may request a more detailed review so the lessons are communicated more widely.

The Guide to Organisational Debriefing (currently being developed) includes instructions for leaders when facilitating an AAR. An AAR card is available from your district headquarters and you can also find it in the Post Incident section of the IMT Toolbox on Brigades Online (cfaonline.cfa.vic.gov.au).

Debriefing your crew: The After Action Review Process



WILDLAND FIRE LESSONS LEARNED CENTRE

The Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Centre (LLC) is a national resource centre for the US multi-agency wildland fire community. Using past and present lessons, it provides innovative strategies, processes and tools to help the wildland fire community work more safely and effectively.

The LLC's website (www.wildfirelessons.net) has incident reviews, case studies, lesson sharing, fact sheets and a quarterly publication of lessons learned and effective practices. The LLC also has its own YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/WildlandFireLLC) featuring educational fire-related videos.



Learning through case studies

A case study is an explanatory story based on a real-life incident that explains what happened and why it happened. The aim is for people to learn from the case study so they improve their decision-making in time-critical situations.

The Incident Management Team Training Project (IMTTP) is developing a guide to help you write case studies. For more information, contact Sam Sunderland on 9262 8947.

LESSONS FROM THE US – YARNELL HILL FIRE

On 30 June 2013, 19 Granite Mountain Inter-agency Hotshot Crew (IHC) firefighters tragically died during the Yarnell Hill fire in central Arizona, US. The Serious Accident Investigation Report (wildfirelessons.net/YarnellHill) was released in September and the information below comes from the executive summary of the report. A number of key lessons identified in this report can be directly applied to many types of CFA operations.

BACKGROUND

Late afternoon on 28 June, the Yarnell Hill fire started high on a ridge west of Yarnell, Arizona, when lightning ignited multiple fires. The fire was about 0.2 hectares in size. Responders saw minimal fire activity or spread potential, and they had safety concerns about putting firefighters on the hill overnight. Taking these and other factors into account, the incident commander prepared for full suppression on the following morning.

On 29 June, resources held the fire in check until around 4pm, when winds increased and the fire spotted outside containment lines. That evening, an incident management team (IMT) was ordered and additional resources for the next morning. The fire grew throughout the night to an estimated 120 to 200 hectares by morning.

Early on 30 June, members of the IMT arrived. For most of the day, the fire spread north-east, threatening structures in Model Creek and Peoples Valley. Just before 4pm, the wind shifted and the fire started pushing

aggressively to the south-east towards Yarnell. Fire resources shifted to resident evacuation and structure protection in town. Only the Granite Mountain IHC remained out on the ridge, on the south-west perimeter of the fire.

The fire's complexity increased in a very short time, challenging all firefighting resources to keep pace with the rapidly-expanding incident. As complexity dramatically increased, fire management went through multiple transitions (equivalent of Levels 1-3 incidents) in less than 20 hours.

Radio communications were challenging throughout the incident. Crews identified the problem, engaged in troubleshooting, and developed workarounds so they could communicate using their radios.

Personnel who communicated with the Granite Mountain IHC knew the crew was in the black at that time and assumed they would stay there. No-one realised that the crew left the black and headed south-east.

An outflow boundary (an outward flow of air from a thunderstorm) moved southward towards the fire area and the atmosphere became more erratic ahead of this boundary. Even before the outflow boundary arrived, the wind direction shifted to west-north-west and the fire responded with stronger movement towards the east-south-east.

The outflow boundary reached the northern portion of the fire at around 4.18pm. At 4.30pm, outflows reached the southern perimeter of the fire. Winds increased substantially and the fire turned south, overrunning the Granite Mountain IHC at about 4.40pm.

Nothing is known about the movements of the crew from 4.04pm to 4.37pm. There is much that cannot be known about the crew's decisions and actions just before their entrapment and fire shelter deployment at around 4.40pm.

It's known that the team left the black after 4.04pm and travelled through an unburned area towards a safety zone at Boulder Springs Ranch. The rapidly-advancing fire eliminated the crew's options of reaching the safety zone or returning to the canyon rim. They had less than two minutes to find a safer deployment site. They were deploying fire shelters when the fire overtook them. Temperatures exceeded 1,000°C and the deployment site was not survivable. The 19 crew members were found around 1.5km south-south-east of their last known location.

LESSONS IDENTIFIED

The following information, taken from the Serious Accident Investigation Report, has been selected to inspire CFA members to think about and discuss what we can learn from this event.

> Fire complexity

The Yarnell Hill fire incident management organisation had a dynamic organisational strategy, scaling up within 20 hours. In a rapidly-escalating fire environment, firefighters simultaneously tried to make sense of what the fire was doing and how the incident organisation was changing. CFA members use LACES (lookouts, awareness, communications, escape routes and safety zones) as a guide to help mitigate the risks that firefighters face during bushfire and planned burning operations.



PHOTO: JOY COLLIERA

> Communication

The benefit of radio communication is that when the system is working properly everyone can hear the same messages from multiple sources.

Firefighters commonly experience radio issues at fires, but they are used to adapting to problems and developing workarounds. There were problems at the Yarnell Hill fire because of 'dead spots' or areas where handheld radios couldn't reach repeaters to transmit messages to other ground resources. Although developing workarounds demonstrates initiative and creativity, it's worth considering the potential trade-offs.

LACES reinforces the need to ensure clear communication is occurring on the fireground.

Red Flag Warnings is another technique used by CFA members when there is, or predicted to be, a significant risk to safety due to changed circumstances.

> Weather conditions

The wind direction shift before the outflow boundary arrived may have led the Granite Mountain IHC to believe it was the strong wind shift that had been anticipated. On 30 June, the original forecast was updated twice during the afternoon, which shows how rapidly conditions were changing.

It's also possible that the firefighters discounted the latest update because too much time had passed. As an update becomes less current, firefighters might be tempted to base their fire behaviour estimates on their observations.

LACES also highlights the importance of awareness, which states that firefighters should be aware of the impact of changes in fire behaviour, including those resulting from variations in fuel, weather and topography.

For more information about learning from incidents, contact the Fire and Emergency Management Performance Improvement team on 9262 8499 or email performance-improvement@cfa.vic.gov.au.

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Tough experiences can throw our lives off balance. CFA welfare services are there to support you, your family members and your brigade colleagues – reach out.



PRIDE IN ASKING FOR HELP

Jenna Kelley has been a CFA member for almost 10 years. She is studying emergency management on two scholarships, is a rally car co-driver and worked with champion Possum Bourne ran a bar for New Zealanders in Antarctica and rides competitively on a horse called Billy Sparklepants. That's a lot of life experience, but nothing could have prepared her for Black Saturday.

"I was in the District 13 Emergency Coordination Centre that day," said Jenna. "By the late afternoon we were getting the overflow of Triple 0 calls from Marysville and Kinglake. It shouldn't have happened. We weren't trained for it."

"I was so scared of saying the wrong thing. I could hear screaming. I was telling people to not leave the car; get under a blanket; look for embers in the roof; look for spot fires when the fire front has passed. Some of those people didn't make it."

In the days following, Jenna moved to a logistics role. "We did a debrief after every shift," she continued, "and [Operations Manager] Dave Renkin did a post-season debrief. We were all feeling the reverberations of other people's trauma and Dave said, 'Don't hesitate to talk to someone'. I got the peer support number for Frank Roach – Uncle Frank."

"We really clicked. He knew that I wanted to pull those people through the phone and get them to a place of safety. Did I do the right thing? Did I do enough? I was allowed to say whatever I was feeling and he reassured me that those feelings of helplessness are completely normal."

In the months following, television news and newspapers, pictures of burnt-out cars or seeing other people upset would trigger vivid memories of that desperate day. For other members, the 2009 fires became the trigger to reach out and talk about their experiences of Ash Wednesday.

"It just felt safe to talk to Frank and share the emotions," said Jenna. "Peers are normal people and it's confidential. Peer support allows you to feel better about a situation without fear and enables you to pass it on."

"It got easier to talk about my experience over time and I began to talk to community members who went through it and they knew I understood."

Not quite Jenna Sparklepants, but almost.

STORY LEITH HILLARD



PHOTO: FRANK MASTER

Maintaining the camaraderie



After 32 years with Somerville brigade, which Owen Barber describes as like a family, walking away is not an option.

With his knees failing because of arthritis, Owen reckons he wouldn't be doing the right thing by his fellow firefighters by getting on a truck.

Owen is using his considerable operational knowledge in other ways,

taking on the communications officer role, and has qualified to become the first member in the state to deliver community safety sessions to adult groups on a voluntary basis, as a community liaison bushfire engagement presenter.

When asked why brigades should be keeping older members on board, he doesn't hesitate to reply that experience is everything when it comes to 'reading' fire – how it will spread, how bad it will get and how to organise the personnel to stop it.

"It doesn't matter how much training you've had, nothing prepares you for the conditions we face at all the different jobs we go to," he said. "That's where old heads come in."

Older members who want to continue to contribute even though they can't turn out to an incident get the benefit of keeping the kinds of connections and camaraderie that have been a central part of their lives.

Owen said that if he left the brigade it would be like moving out of home. "When you get to a fire, it's hard work – sometimes very hard – and you look after each other. But then you go and have fun together as well. There's nothing else quite like it."

STORY SONIA MACLEAN



Cockatoo members put families first

In September, Cockatoo brigade decided it was time to hold a planning day with members and their families, so they could prepare bushfire plans for the coming fire season.

The discussion focused on the differences between the planning done by a family member of a firefighter and the planning done by the public. It was important to write in their plans the triggers to leave early, and make sure that firefighters – who would most probably be on a fire truck – know where their family would head to if they were to leave the area. This was important so that firefighters could concentrate on what they were doing without worrying whether their families were safe.

"Firefighters sacrifice a lot for their communities, but we felt it was time that

the brigade put their families first. Writing a bushfire plan with the family's input was an important first step," said brigade Captain Stephen Cameron.

Information paged to firefighters before an event, knowledge of the weather, Total Fire Bans and other messaging, could all be used to the advantage of family members in their planning when it came to deciding the best time to leave.

Now, when a member of the public asks if Cockatoo brigade members have a plan, we can say yes, we've done one with our families. Have you done yours? The planning session was also a great way to bond, so that CFA members and their families could look out for one another in a major incident.

STORY LISA CAMERON

PHOTO: LISA CAMERON



PHOTO: ROB MCCOLL

Cancer survivor spreads the message

At 67 years of age, married with two children and seven grandchildren, Cross Roads member Dan Willis has been clear of prostate cancer for seven years and loves being an active 'pop'.

"We live on 20 acres with my daughter and her kids and Pop's always out cutting firewood or doing a pre-season clean up," said Dan.

During every activity, however, he has to factor in a major inconvenience left behind by his radical prostatectomy (the surgical removal of all or part of the prostate). "I have to take a lot more pit stops!

"In 2006, I had an inkling something wasn't right. I was up and down during the night and getting odd pains. My PSA [prostate-specific antigen] level was rising and I insisted on blood tests. I had a very large, aggressive prostate cancer and I was lucky to find a surgeon who would remove it. That was followed by radiation treatment."

Dan's experience of diagnosis, surgery and regular health monitoring has motivated him to set up a number of cancer support groups. Andrology Australia supports and promotes male reproductive health, and Dan has joined with them to present a broad range of health information to groups of men.

"My goal is to visit all brigades in District 16," he said. "I've most recently done a talk at Apex in Beaufort about high blood pressure, cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes and heart conditions. Having one of these conditions and an enlarged prostate can be a key indicator of prostate cancer. You should have seen some of the jaws drop when they realised there are links between obesity, drinking, smoking and some of these serious health conditions."

"I want to get awareness into brigades that men need to start looking after themselves. There is quality of life after prostate surgery. A visit to the doctor could save your life so have a health check every year."

STORY: LEITH HILLARD

Do-it-yourself for men's health

Across Victoria, there are CFA members who are also active in their local Men's Shed. And no wonder – both organisations are the ideal fit for know-how, can-do men.

In Newstead near Castlemaine, that connection is made of cement board and tin because the old fire station is now the Men's Shed.

John Alexander is a member of both organisations and also has the old Guildford Fire Station as his backyard shed. He's a tinkerer of the first order, while double member Alastair Jessop said, "I've never worked with timber so the guys at the Shed teach me".

The emphasis at the Men's Shed is not on high-level skills – although all their wooden toys are thoroughly tested by the kiddies at Newstead kinder – but low key companionship. Tea cups and coffee mugs are essential equipment; just as important as the thicknessers, electric planers, grinders and belt sanders that jostle for space.

"We open all day on a Tuesday," said Alastair, "and most of the morning we'll sit around and have a chat. It's a space that really opens up conversation. Men's welfare and fellowship are paramount. It's building up men if they're down. Some senior citizens who enjoy that shed environment come and we'll entertain them with a cuppa and a chat."

"The door's open that day so locals can come and buy or drop off all kinds of things. We got a 150-year-old redgum stump post to work on, for example."

Perhaps surprisingly, both men agree that the easy way women enjoy each other's company is a model for Men's Sheds. Women like being with other women; men like having space with other men. No further explanation needed.

While Newstead Men's Shed members are in their 50s to 80s, anyone who likes working in a team is welcome to join. If you can tell a dirty joke, that's a bonus.

"We have a swearing tin, but you don't have to be politically correct," said John. "You can hear the laughter when you're outside the shed."

"We're luckier than most because we're involved in the fire brigade as well. Sunday mornings down at the station, you keep up to date. You hear if someone's been a bit down or a bit sick. In CFA, you're doing something for the community that's pretty valuable but the Men's Shed has that side to it, too."

In nearby Maldon, the main volunteer force is spread across CFA, the Men's Shed and the Maldon Vintage Machinery Museum. There's a buzz around town in mid-spring as members prepare for a range of local agricultural shows and festivals in easy driving distance from Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne.

Maldon First Lieutenant Peter Thompson is committed to all three organisations and feels the benefits of a connected life.

"Whatever you can bring is really valuable," he said. "Your time and your effort are valuable. If you don't want to get on the fire truck, brigades need people to be on the radio or do admin."

"At the Men's Shed, everyone has a different ability and you're not expected to do more than you can. There's a good bond between the members. The support makes it feel like an extended family, like CFA."



"We might have men come to the Shed who've lost a wife or partner and they're retired. They've been isolated but you can see them come back to life and keep busy."

Maldon Men's Shed dwarfs the Newstead facility, which means more tools but – perhaps more importantly – room for both a kitchen table and pool table.

The Shed recently hosted a Beyond Blue depression information night for men and Peter believes it was the ideal location.

"Often men don't talk about health issues but they do talk at the Shed," he said. "It's a healthy environment where men connect."

"It's not just about looking after yourself but looking after your mates. In CFA, firefighting is the main thing but we need the good comradeship to support us through some dangerous situations. At the Men's Shed, working on projects can be just a sideline to men watching out for each other and enjoying the company."

STORY LEITH HILLARD

Top:
Andrew Chapman, Shane O'Byrne and Jimmy Chaplin from Maldon Men's Shed

Above:
Newstead Men's Shed members Alastair Jessop and John Alexander

PHOTOS: LEITH HILLARD

Support through all disasters

The District 10 peer support team is gearing up for another busy season and, after dealing with the Heyfield fires earlier in the year, they're well prepared.

"People in Gippsland are well versed in natural disaster and anxiety starts going up in August. When you have disasters as regularly as we do, every three years or so, it's on your radar. We've dealt with fires, droughts and floods since 2000," said Shirley Millard, treasurer of Coongulla brigade and District 10 chaplain.

The District 10 peer support team gives assistance all year round, through any disaster, family or volunteer issue. Peers are all CFA members.

Shirley has a social work background, specialising in support following potentially-traumatic events, and has been a CFA chaplain since 2007.

"I'm not a religious chaplain but a contract chaplain. My approach is to go to the brigade and help out, do what I can. I can't stay and save my house – it's part of my strategy for dealing with fire."

The group meets at Traralgon Fire Station every month to hear from guest speakers, debrief about past events and plan ahead.

"After each fire, the group meets to discuss how everyone's going and the next plan of action. Coongulla brigade hosted our last debrief after the Heyfield fires earlier in the year and that was really good," said Shirley.

"We worked throughout the first few weeks of the Heyfield fires and one of the most effective things we did was visit the brigades a little bit out from the local community, such as Briagolong, Cowra and Toongabbie, who've been affected previously and were under threat again. Luckily, the fire didn't go through there."

"We also registered people when they arrived and left the town, so everyone knew where they were going. We had a lot of information available so people were happy to register and get the latest news. We'll continue with that this season."

STORY JASON LEIGH

GAINING A BROADER VIEW



PHOTO: LUCAS GODDARD

Diamond Creek member Neville Goddard has been operational for almost 30 years – the ideal qualification for being the peer coordinator in District 14.

"There were consistent themes after the 2009 fires," said Neville. "Many people had a sense of hopelessness, helplessness and inadequacy in the face of the overwhelming force of those fires, and that's a very hollow feeling. Our expectation as CFA

firefighters is that we will protect lives and property. Fire brigades are groups of committed people doing what they can for the community and yet some people had to drive away from places like Marysville. That's a tough feeling to carry.

"People often started with the thought that 'we just weren't up to it'. Gradually, though, they've found out more about what happened and formed a broader view. They *did* save lives; they *did* make a difference. Often they come around to seeing there was no way they could have done more. 'We did what we could.' That doesn't sound like much but actually it's everything – what more can anyone do?"

Informal post-incident debriefs are now a regular feature of brigade life and another vital way for members to build a broader view.

"After a potentially-traumatising incident," continued Neville, "we often find members agreeing among themselves that, yes, we actually did a good job. We worked well together but the outcome was beyond our control. It's valuable for members of a crew to hear that from each other. An individual can ultimately say, 'I'm grateful for the training; grateful for my mates'. It can help our members find a place for that experience so it doesn't dominate their lives."

Neville has been heartened to find more brigades also checking up on each other in casual conversations, as they carry out general duties around the station. "It's not written down but I'd say it was now standard operating procedure in many brigades. It's inspiring to see this change in our culture."

STORY LEITH HILLARD



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SHIRLEY MILLARD

☑ Mental health checklist

These prevention and preparation principles will help CFA members manage the impacts on their psychological health.

- ☑ Minimise or eliminate exposure to potentially-traumatic events at all times.
- ☑ Regularly engage with your local peer coordinator so that you are aware of the support services provided by CFA.
- ☑ Brigade management teams need to regularly remind members about CFA's services that support psychological health.
- ☑ Advise new members about the range of incidents they could be exposed to.

- ☑ Arrange mentoring for inexperienced members to guide them through exposure to potentially traumatic events.
- ☑ Members can mentally prepare for new or challenging situations by having discussions in advance.

For more information, contact the Organisational Wellbeing team on 9262 8444, or email org.wellbeing@cfa.vic.gov.au. For counselling services, contact the Member Assistance Program on 1300 795 711 or the Chaplaincy Program on 1800 337 068. Peer Support can also be accessed by contacting your local peer coordinator.



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

THE DANGERS OF FATIGUE

Fatigue makes smart people dumb, fast people slow and safe people dangerous. It's a state of reduced performance that affects firefighters' physical and mental abilities and we all need to take it seriously.

Fatigue ranges along a spectrum from fully rested to highly fatigued. When rested, you work efficiently and focus well on a task. As people become more tired, they slow down and make simple mistakes, and when they become highly fatigued they can have microsleeps. These are short bursts of sleep that last between five and 20 seconds. Microsleeps are known to occur even when people are performing dangerous tasks, such as driving at high speed.

There are many factors which can lead to fatigue including:

- not getting enough sleep
- doing shift work
- excessive overtime
- working a second job
- long commutes
- stress and depression
- babies and toddlers at home
- work environment (strenuous, too hot, cold, vibration)
- dehydration.

Of these, the main cause of fatigue is not getting enough sleep. Although people need different amounts of sleep, it's a good idea to sleep for around seven or more hours every 24 hours. Generally, when sleep falls below about six hours a night, fatigue levels start to increase dangerously and will accumulate day after day.

If you become highly fatigued, you'll probably think you're OK and won't realise you need to take precautions. It's best to act on the early warning signs of fatigue rather than push through into a highly fatigued state.

You should watch out for the following signs and treat them seriously if you become aware of them in yourself or in your colleagues: excessive yawning, head nodding, rolling eyes, long blink times or double blinks, lapses in memory, difficulty completing simple tasks and easily distracted.

Be aware of high-risk times for fatigue:

- any time if you have built up a large sleep debt
- midnight to 6am
- long work periods without a break
- first night shift after a break
- the end of a long shift
- long periods without sleep (17 hours or greater).

safety

Share the load and use team lifting – you only have one back.

TIPS TO MANAGE FATIGUE

1. If you think you are highly fatigued, inform your team leader.
2. Keep your 'sleep tank' full. Aim to sleep about seven hours or more every 24 hours. Make it a priority to catch up on a sleep debt as soon as you can.
3. Nap with care. Napping can be an effective way to temporarily reduce the effects of fatigue. After a nap, it's common to feel groggy. This is called sleep inertia and can be as dangerous as fatigue. Sleep inertia can last for around five to 20 minutes. Shorter naps (about 20 minutes) tend to produce less sleep inertia than longer ones.
4. Keep yourself well hydrated.
5. Drinking coffee doesn't reduce your need for sleep – it just delays it. A strong coffee will make you more alert. It takes about 30 minutes for the effect to start and it can last several hours. But you need to use it wisely because if you drink it too close to a sleep, it can reduce sleep quality and make you more tired on the following shift.
6. If you are a shift worker, pay special attention to sleep. Get some sleep (for example two hours) during the day before your first night shift (2pm is a good time). Make sure your bedroom has total blackout, minimise noise, maximise comfort and have some wind-down time before going to bed.

A poster about fatigue should have been received by all brigades. If you haven't received one, contact your district headquarters. A pocket-sized guide will be distributed to strike team members.

NHILL CELEBRATES 125 YEARS

Two days after a spectacular torchlight procession around the arena at Nhill Show, Nhill brigade members continued to celebrate 125 years of serving the community with a free breakfast at their fire station.

From the early hours of the sunny morning, brigade volunteers were busy setting up the station and hard at work cooking bacon, eggs, sausages and toast for members of the community. The banner placed at the front of the station read, 'Nhill Urban Fire Brigade - We Strive to Save - Duty Always - 125th Anniversary 1888-2013'. By 8am, a slow trickle of folk started arriving and by 9am the station was buzzing with chatter and chewing.

Dave Donnell entertained some of the small children with a pretend ride on the beautiful old red fire engine on display and, with hard hats precariously perched on their little heads, the children squealed with delight.

At the station's fullest, well over 60 people enjoyed the breakfast and checked out the up-to-date Nhill fire trucks on display. At one point, there were no spare seats in the place and it was obvious the community was relishing the 125 years celebration.

Captain Joel Borgelt thanked the brigade's past and present members for their commitment. "They leave their families at any time of the night to help our community," he said. "It was great to see the community looking around the station, and



Captain Joel Borgelt accepting the 125-year appreciation plaque from Deputy Chief Officer Steve Warrington

PHOTO: IAN DAY

New trucks

Mid-October was a busy time for truck handovers. Maiden Gully brigade received three new firefighting vehicles - a light tanker, medium tanker and a brigade-funded Ford Ranger - and Fentons Creek, Daylesford, Boort and Yando brigades received new tankers.

I really enjoyed catching up with some past members who travelled a long way to celebrate with us."

Congratulations to all the members of Nhill brigade and thank you for your continued service to your community.

STORY BROOKE O'CONNOR

VOICES AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

Brigades are highly connected to a diverse range of local organisations and agencies. This was brilliantly demonstrated in early October at the annual Voices Around the Campfire event, where Broadford brigade members supported their local Aboriginal community.

Organised by a group of community volunteers, the event showcased local Aboriginal culture through craft workshops, storytelling and educational activities.

"These events are really important to us," said local Aboriginal elder Larry Walsh. "They celebrate our culture and show that there is real, authentic cooperation in our community.

"We also live on fire country, so we need to know how to look after ourselves and our community and this is why CFA is really important to us. My wife and daughter were both members of Broadford brigade and we still have strong connections with local members."

Brigade Captain Jamie Atkins believes events like this are one of the many ways the brigade supports the local Aboriginal community. "I'm happy to hear that CFA is developing the Koori Inclusion Action Plan," he said.

Brigade Community Education Officer Gaybrielle Burgess had a special surprise for the kids - after putting on red helmets and yellow jackets, Gaybrielle took their photo while they pretended to be firefighters on the truck.

"This is a great way to engage really young kids," said Gaybrielle. "Who knows, one day they might join a brigade."

To find out more about the Koori Inclusion Action Plan, contact Erin Bulmer (email e.bulmer@cfa.vic.gov.au or phone 9262 8603).

STORY DEBRA SALVAGNO



PHOTO: MARCUS SALVAGNO

Trek the Trak for Flying Doctors

A group of 10 firefighter friends recently completed their fourth annual outback adventure called Trek the Trak, where they travel the lesser-known outback tracks of Australia.

Warrnambool Senior Station Officer David Ferguson was on the trip to support the two-wheelers. "It's primarily about the guys on the motorbikes and this year there were six of them," David said. "This year we had a Mitsubishi Pajero and an Isuzu D-Max ute, two BMWs, two KTM's, one Yamaha and one Suzuki."

The trekkers spent the first night of the 12-day trip at Ned's Corner in the top corner of Victoria. They planned to explore Woomera but a crack in the chuck wagon treg hitch meant they had to travel on to Port Augusta instead to get it sorted. Next stop was Maralinga, where they arranged for a ranger escort - the only way to gain access to this British nuclear test site.

"From there we headed down to the Nullarbor roadhouse and the head of the Great Australian Bight. We came back east, along the coast from Ceduna and Streaky Bay to Port Augusta again and home," said David. 'Home' variously refers to Warrnambool, Bendigo, Mildura, Dandenong and Oxley Flats.

"One of the themes is 'off the beaten track' and we camp in swags for 80 per cent of the time," he continued. "The Coober Pedy Underground Motel is one exception worth making. We carry a barbecue in the chuck wagon and a few of us are designated to pre-cook meals.

"It's a great physical challenge. David Brock and Carl Stibilj started it because they were already into endurance rides and wanted to do them while they still could. You're a long time when you can't do these things."

The group travelled to Lake Eyre in 2011 when it was 70 per cent full and took a joy flight to really savour the experience. They visited the Burke and



Wills Dig Tree near Innamincka in South Australia when Coopers Creek was flooded. Last year, they travelled Googs Track north of Ceduna and west of Tarcoola.

Two years ago, one of the motorcyclists hit a kangaroo and had to be patched up at White Cliffs north-east of Broken Hill - truly the back of Bourke.

Of course, they carry an EPIRB (emergency position indicating radio beacon) but they know that any serious accident on a remote part of the trip would likely mean the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) saving the day.

Last year, the group arranged its first fundraiser for the RFDS. This year, it raised \$1,300 by showing the film of their trip to a sold-out crowd. If you would like to donate to the RFDS via the group's website, go to give.everydayhero.com/au/trek-the-trak.

You can read the group's blog and see photos of their adventures at trekthetrak.com/trek-blog.

STORY LEITH HILLARD

The Anne Beadell Highway which links Coober Pedy SA and Laverton WA

PHOTO: DAVID FERGUSON



PHOTO BLAKE ROSENBERG

Rushworth's new station opening

Amid considerable enthusiasm and the smell of a Lions Club barbecue, Rushworth's new fire station and Waranga Group Headquarters was officially opened in mid-October. The new station was accepted by Rushworth Captain Graeme Wall on behalf of the brigade and the local community.

Unlike the quaint Moora Road station that served the brigade for more than seven decades, the new building can house the brigade's key firefighting vehicles under one roof and is equipped with powerful communications and information technology facilities. Visitors were invited to inspect the new station/Waranga Group Headquarters operational complex, and were impressed by the scale and flexibility of the facility.

At the opening, the brigade also received a new tanker as part of the State Government's vehicle replacement program.

Attended by more than 300 locals and visitors, the station opening ceremony included CFA Board Member Ross Coyle presenting service certificates and medals to 14 current brigade members, and one former member received a life membership medal.

In addition, current members John Moylan and Captain Graeme Wall were awarded life membership of the brigade. Graeme was also granted life membership of CFA in recognition of his outstanding emergency services leadership.

STORY CASS ALEXANDER

TWO NEW HOMES

In the foothills of the Grampians ranges in early October, Linlithgow welcomed the official opening of its new fire station. This facility's location has better access to all directions than the old galvanised shed.

Also in October, CFA and SES celebrated the opening of the new shared premises in Wycheproof. Both agencies have a three-bay motor room, plus their own spaces for protective clothing, equipment storage and meeting rooms.

BRIGADES TOUR EAST GIPPSLAND

In mid-spring, CFA members and Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) staff toured areas of East Gippsland looking at water points, access and egress, and past, present and future fuel reduction burning sites.

Volunteers from Orbost, Marlo, Newmerella, Bemm, Cann Valley and Mallacoota brigades, together with CFA staff members from District 11 headquarters and staff from DEPI in Orbost and Cann River took part in this familiarisation exercise.

The idea was floated by Bemm Captain and Orbost Group Officer Russell Pardew. "We have some general knowledge of what's up there, but to actually drive the roads, see where the water points are and what the bush really looks like, gives you a real appreciation of what we're up against if it catches fire," Russell said.

The convoy of 10 four-wheel drives set off through farmland in the Combienbar Valley. At the top end of the valley they headed up Hensleigh Creek Road towards the Errinundra National Park. The vegetation changed dramatically over 1,000 metres in elevation – with spectacular views. At the top of the climb, the group turned north-east until they popped out of the bush on the Victorian/NSW border, then on to the Buldah Valley and ending near Genoa.

Everyone agreed that this type of tour was an excellent way to see what's out there. It was also a great opportunity to see the work DEPI staff are doing to reduce fuel, and what a collaborative approach can achieve.

CFA can talk to landowners and develop a plan that will allow the treatment of their land, usually in conjunction with an adjacent DEPI burn. It better uses our resources and gives our communities much better protection.

STORY CHRIS LEWIS



PHOTOS DALE HODGERS



PHOTO COURTESY OF LES GABBETT, WARRAWONGA CHRONICLE

NEW TANKER AND 715 YEARS OF SERVICE

Wilby brigade, in District 22, celebrated the official handover of a new 2.4C tanker and 715 years of service in mid-October.

Captain Craig Prescott was handed the keys to the new tanker by Member of Parliament for Murray Valley Tim McCurdy. The up-to-date four-wheel drive crew cab tanker includes burnover protection features, front bull bar mounted monitor with cabin joystick control and Quenchmaster Class A foam system.

"Wilby Fire Brigade was happy to receive this new tanker, making this the sixth fire truck it has now had in its 65 years of operation," said Craig. He then gave a brief history of the brigade.

Operations Officer Rob Van Dorsser and CFA Board member Ross Coyle presented service awards to brigade members. In total, 715 years of service were recognised including four members with 50 years of service.

STORY LYNDON HART

Scoresby's hose layer is a first for Australia

Scoresby brigade's new hose layer is the first CFA truck to use a large diameter 100mm hose.

With both urban and rural applications, the truck is designed to lay two one-kilometre lays that give it the capability to connect more remote water sources to fire scenes.

A key feature of the hose layer is an automated hose retrieval system made by Hytrans Systems in the Netherlands, which hasn't been used before by any fire services truck in Australia.

The benefits of the system are significant, including the capability to move 5,000 litres a minute with a reduction in friction loss and fewer pumps required.

Jim Read, Chair of the Scoresby Hose Layer Replacement Project, described the project as "setting the scene for the future."

"By incorporating the automated retrieval system, the hose layer will quickly pick up hose from the fireground and restow it in the hose beds ready for the next call," he said.

"This reduces work time for volunteers, freeing them up to return to employment or back to their families.

"Large diameter hose of 100mm is used across Europe, North America and Asia. We are bringing it to Australia."

STORY SONIA MACLEAN



PHOTO KETH PAKENHAM

OUT AND ABOUT WITH THE CHIEF

In early October, Chief Officer Euan Ferguson crammed in a full day of activities around Wangaratta in Hume region.

The day began chatting with staff at the region headquarters in Wangaratta, before heading out to the satellite station of Bowman-Murrungee brigade to meet brigade members. Hidden away in the well-maintained Nissen hut was the brigade-owned tanker 2 and a well-preserved 1906 horse-drawn water cart. Complete with the original leather beaters on the back, it highlights just how hard it was to fight fires in the early days.

After a quick visit to the main Bowman-Murrungee station, it was back to Wangaratta but not before a tribute to the fallen firefighters at the memorial for Tarrawingee brigade, where 10 people died in the December 1943 fires.

At the new Wangaratta Fire Station, invited parties gathered for the handover of tankers for Tarrawingee, Killawarra and Wangaratta. CFA Board member Michael Tudball welcomed official guests before the keys were presented for each vehicle.

It was then off to Benalla fire station for the handover of another two tankers for Goorambat and Benalla. Woods Point brigade also received a tanker but not on that day. An evening Group presentation and meal was next on the agenda before the Chief had time to slow down.

Just another relaxing day out of the office!

To see more images and video go to news.cfa.vic.gov.au/Chief-in-Hume

STORY KEITH PAKENHAM



Above:
At Bowman-Murrungee brigade's satellite station, home to a 1906 horse-drawn water cart



Left:
Chief Officer Euan Ferguson and Operations Manager John Bigham at Wangaratta headquarters

Below:
Euan and CFA Board member Michael Tudball with Benalla brigade members and their new tanker



PHOTOS: KEITH PAKENHAM

Michele Abbott, Truganina brigade District 14

faces of CFA



PHOTO: BLAIR DELLEMIN

Do you think people look to brigade members as role models when it comes to fire preparation?

With an increased number of families from multicultural backgrounds now living in our area, my main focus is to educate them to better understand the role that our members play in the community. When they know what we do, we hope they may begin to see us as role models and not just another service to be called upon when they need assistance.

I have endeavoured to increase our presence in the community to show that we are there to help and what role CFA plays, as well as to educate people in how to prepare themselves for an emergency. Having activities that involve children is a great way to get a discussion started with their parents.

What do you enjoy most about working with your community?

It's great being part of an organisation that really makes a difference in helping people understand how better to respond in an emergency. I enjoy meeting the many different people in our community and especially seeing the happy faces of children when they meet a firefighter and sit in the truck or squirt water from the hose!

What have you learned from working with your community?

Tolerance and understanding of the different beliefs in our multicultural community and the role that they see CFA plays in their lives. I've become very aware of how some families and children see a person in a uniform as possibly someone to be feared, especially in Fire Safe Kids sessions. Hopefully, this perception will change in time.

How do you prepare your own family and property?

Being members of CFA has certainly made us more aware around our home. We have a fire blanket in the kitchen, fire extinguishers in all cars and one in the house. Last fire season, fire threatened the fringe of our municipality and this has certainly reinforced our thinking about having a fire plan for the 2013-14 fire season.

What do you do when you're not working as a CFA volunteer?

I am an administration officer at Wyndham Cultural Centre in Werribee. When I get a chance to relax, I spend my time quilting and doing embroidery and I certainly enjoy a good book.

How long have you been with this brigade?

I joined Truganina brigade as a non-operational member in 2011.

Why did you join CFA?

After 15 years as a volunteer at a local community centre, I decided it was time for a change. My husband Graham was already a member of Truganina brigade and it just seemed like an opportunity to be able to do something together and still continue to work in the community.

What activities does your brigade do to help people prepare for fire?

Truganina has traditionally hosted an annual Fire Ready meeting which has mainly targeted residents from Mount Cottrell. Our area has undergone a significant change in the last few years, with a large number of houses being built on the urban fringe so we now focus on structure fires as well as bushfires.

We also take part in a number of community events each year, including the Australia Day family day at Tarneit Community Learning Centre, Wyndham Weerama Festival, Multicultural Cup, Fire Safe Kids presentations, shopping centre displays and other local events. Last year's CFA Sunday was very successful, with more than 200 visitors to the station.

HUME



Alan Davies

The Hume Region community education service delivery plan is developed using a risk-based approach. The primary focus is on communities identified by the Victorian Fire Risk Register (VRR) as having a Level 1 (Extreme) or Level 2 (Very High) risk. Hume Region has 52 Extreme fire-risk-rated localities and 101 Very High fire-risk localities.

Hume Region has a population of around 274,200 across 12 municipalities, and includes the main centres of Seymour, Shepparton, Wangaratta and Wodonga, as well as the urban fringes of metropolitan Melbourne.

Many locations have been identified as having multiple levels of risk. For example, in Bright the properties within 150 metres of the plantations and forest have been rated as Extreme, whereas the properties in the centre of town have been rated as a Medium risk. This allows for the appropriate treatments to be identified.

On Fire Danger Rating days of Extreme or Code Red, the key messages for people in Extreme fire-risk areas is to move to the centre of town where the risk is much lower. Narrowing down the number of properties at risk also allows us to work intensively with those most at risk.

The intended outcome of the risk-based regional service delivery program is to provide a service to individual community members which will enable them to determine their personal level of bushfire risk, their capacity to mitigate or manage that risk, and to encourage them to develop a personal protection plan based on a realistic evaluation of their risk and capacity.

Hume Region also has a large number of tourists and a transient population. To cater for these people, we provide information and awareness programs to caravan parks and accommodation houses in Extreme fire-risk localities. Individual sessions are delivered to these providers outlining their local risks, duty of care, planning for Code Red fire danger days, and passing on information about weather forecasts, warnings and advice, their triggers to act and encouraging them to plan.

Due to the high number of Extreme and Very High fire-risk localities, Hume Region has developed a three-year service delivery plan for its community education programs. A three-year plan ensures we provide communities with a series of community education and awareness-raising programs.

For example, in an Extreme locality we would offer a Fire Ready Victoria meeting in the first year, Home Bushfire Advice Service in the second, and look at starting a Community Fireguard group in the third. These programs are then supplemented by raising awareness through local shows and fetes and by conducting Fire Safe Kids sessions at schools.

We ask all our members to put health and safety first through the summer fire season and beyond. Look after yourselves and each other.

GRAMPIANS (ACTING)



Michael Boatman

As we move further into the fire season in the Grampians Region, I encourage every brigade to focus on safety as a priority when preparing for the months ahead.

We have seen devastating fires in New South Wales, and there is potential for a long and arduous fire season here in Victoria.

With that in mind, I encourage brigades to prepare and frequently practise the burnover drill so that, if the threat is imminent, the appropriate action by your crews will be swift and decisive. Along with this, you should also drill Red Flag Warnings and Mayday calls.

Crew welfare is just as important as safety and water plays a critical role. You need to ensure that there is sufficient drinking water on the truck, and keep an eye on your colleagues for any signs of heat stress, heat stroke or dehydration. Hygiene is another important aspect of operations to avoid illness. Welfare plans should include access to first aid, hand washing and toilet at filling points and staging areas.

I encourage brigades to get out their copy of the *Fire and Emergency Management Checklists* and the *Field Guide* as a starting point. Make sure all members are familiar with the procedures.

Division commanders and other senior leaders should be familiar with the *Victorian Fire Agency Bushfire Handbook*, which summarises the operational management structures and systems used by the Fire Services Commissioner, State Control Centre, CFA, Department of Environment and Primary Industries and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade for bushfire preparedness and response in Victoria.

This season, there will be automatic turnout of aircraft to reported incidents in parts of District 17. This comprises fixed-wing aircraft responding to fires south of the Little Desert, and helicopter response to fires in the north of District 17 through the harvest period.

All CFA radios will be reflashed with new channels by mid-2014. Radios in District 15 have already been completed, with radios in District 16 and District 17 to be completed by April.

Finally, I encourage all CFA members to assist their communities wherever they can by giving them advice on any matters about the Fire Danger Period, Fire Danger Ratings, Total Fire Ban days, burning-off restrictions and council local laws. Much of this information is in the recently updated *Members Quick Reference Guide*.

EASTERN METROPOLITAN



David Baker

It was a poignant period during September and October, as around 800 members of the Eastern Metropolitan Region were awarded their National Emergency Medal. The medal recognises service during the 2009 Victorian fires and acknowledges a generation of our members that served during one of the darkest periods for this state.

Members' families and friends were justifiably proud as they witnessed their loved ones receive formal recognition for sustained or significant service. It was pleasing to see most of our members able to attend with the teams they served with at the time, providing a unique opportunity to collectively reflect on their experiences.

Eastern Metropolitan Region was the first cab off the rank to give out these medals and there were four award ceremonies in the region. The planning and conduct of the ceremonies was quite involved and an excellent example of field and headquarters staff working in a seamless way to achieve a successful outcome for members. I particularly note the commitment of the team from Operational Training and Volunteerism, who delivered a benchmark round of ceremonies, and our administration support team who checked and double-checked names and attendees to ensure we didn't miss anyone out.

It's important to note that applications for the National Emergency Medal can still be made and the process can be found on Brigades Online. I encourage brigades that may be aware of members who could be entitled to the medal to ensure an application is made.

As we fast approach the business end of our pre-summer season preparedness in Eastern Metropolitan Region, we are starkly reminded of the potential risk to us this season as we spare a thought for our NSW colleagues battling significant fires. Already, they have suffered the loss of life and many homes, particularly in the rural/urban interface. At the time of writing, the Rural Fire Service faces the prospect of a campaign period of firefighting with fires still not contained.

As expected, firefighting of this nature requires an approach that disregards boundaries. Crews from District 13 were deployed with other CFA crews to assist NSW firefighters in their efforts. We know our crews did us proud.

Our regional commander and operations manager have begun detailed planning with their teams to ensure we are all fully prepared for fast-moving and intense fires, with a clear focus on primacy of life. We will need to be physically and mentally prepared for what may come our way this season and ensure we work together as a truly integrated regional team to provide the best possible service to our communities.

LODDON MALLEE (ACTING)



Mike Wassing

One of the commonly-overlooked facts about Loddon Mallee Region is the six months of the year that we have a declared Fire Danger Period.

Fuels dry off in late October in the north and the risk progressively moves south, with the end of summer more often than not some time in April. CFA members will often see this reflected on grassland curing maps or drought factors for forested areas, as it reflects increasing areas of dryness expanding from the north west of the state.

What is not so apparent is the associated consequence of this risk as it expands. During November and December, harvest of fully-cured cereal and other crops results in a loss potential in the Mallee area alone in excess of \$12 million, based on the average number of fires.

Remote rural townships can be quickly threatened by fast-moving fires in grasslands and from the large tracts of public land. Such fast-moving fire risk progresses southward through the region into early January and begins to include communities along the mid Murray River and central Victorian rural townships.

More heavily-populated areas in the south of the region then begin to be most at risk in January and February, during which holiday travellers and local tourism is at its peak. The bushfire risk remains until average temperatures drop and, hopefully – although over a decade of drought lingers in our memory – reasonable rainfall breaks the Fire Danger Period in April.

This year, we have already experienced two Severe – Extreme Fire Danger days in October as part of the lead-up to summer. The declared Fire Danger Period started in Mildura and Swan Hill areas on 4 November 2013 and we deployed almost 200 firefighters from across the region to support our NSW Rural Fire Service friends and their communities.

There have also been significant standard preparations that go into the lead-up to any Fire Danger Period – reviews and audits of facilities and procedures, five incident management team exercises, numerous local group exercises and briefings throughout the region, continued training for skills acquisition and maintenance, community education and engagement programs targeted in high-risk locations, multi-agency coordination of mitigation programs including fuel reduction burning. These are just a few of the actions to prepare us and the community each year.

Thank you to all our people who lead, undertake, and support these essential activities which make us the best we can be.

BARWON SOUTH WEST



Bob
Barry

Barwon South West (BSW) regional staff and volunteers have been busy doing preparedness and readiness activities across the region for the forthcoming fire season. The progress to date will see our region in a state of readiness as the grassland cures and forested areas dry before the Fire Danger Period is declared. Average rainfall and predicted warm summer temperatures will mean prolific growth in the grassland and fuel loads similar to last season.

Last season, we were challenged with a number of large fires including Kentbruck, the Victoria Valley Complex and Dereel and these incidents were exceptionally managed through sound preparedness arrangements. Conditions indicate that it's going to be another busy fire season for western Victoria, with a particular focus being placed on the Otway Ranges. An underlying dryness in the Otways forest could also see rapid drying and pose a risk of more intense fires. We're expecting a higher-than-average risk of grassfires this season, especially in the south west of the region where we anticipate there will be significant grass growth as the weather warms up.

Our people are prepared. Pre-season briefings have been conducted across the region with around 170 key incident management personnel who have been briefed on changes to command and control and associated arrangements. These briefings are also being delivered to our district, group and brigade personnel. A key component of these briefings included the opportunity for incident management team (IMT) functions to discuss their challenges and agree on their operating arrangements for the season.

District audits have now been completed and all BSW incident control centres are being audited in preparation for the season.

Groups and brigades are undertaking their preparedness training and exercises to ensure they are ready to meet the predicted challenges ahead.

Several multi-agency IMT exercises have been conducted and of note was the cross border exercise with South Australia's Country Fire Service. The exercise was designed to test procedures and protocols as well as enhance relationships between all agencies. Our region has also focused on emergency management arrangements at both incident and regional levels. Briefings and exercises are being conducted with all our emergency management partners and supporting agencies.

Our focus is on readiness and we are prepared to meet the challenges before this season. Thank you to all our Barwon South West volunteers and staff for their professional approach and, through our preparedness, the safety of our people will be paramount.

GIPPSLAND



Mark
Potter

This time of the year traditionally sees a significant increase in activity across the region, mainly due to the pre-season preparedness programs along with maintaining non-bushfire related skills. We also see an increase in other important activities, such as community education, fuel reduction burning, annual brigade social events and fire brigade competitions.

I am always impressed by our members' ability to take on new ways of operating while maintaining their existing skills. I encourage all members to participate in as many pre-season activities as possible. This will allow you to develop a greater understanding of the purpose and needs of all levels of incident management from the fireground through to the state level. Each level of this structure has a specific role and to undertake this role requires information. Those who have been involved in leadership development programs will understand the importance of providing information at least two levels above and two levels below. This will always allow those we report to and those who report to us to have a very clear picture of what is occurring relevant to their role. Without this information, our ability to effectively function may be compromised. History shows that those who have good situational awareness will be in a strong position to make informed decisions that are relevant and timely.

I also encourage all members to participate in the various other activities that are occurring at the moment – in particular, community education opportunities which may include community events, Fire Ready Victoria meetings and open days. These opportunities allow you to better understand your community, and to use this information to better inform and protect them during major emergencies.

Finally, I had the absolute pleasure of being involved in the presentation of National Emergency Medals to 119 volunteers and staff from across Gippsland. These presentations were made by local Member of Parliament Russell Northe, supported by Chief Officer Euan Ferguson and Board member Michael Freshwater. This event was organised by the Operational Training and Volunteerism team with support from the Gippsland Region. I am certain that those who were there would agree it was an emotional and joyful occasion where we recognised the contribution of CFA members during the 2009 bushfires. There will be further presentation opportunities in the future and I encourage those members who feel they are eligible for the National Emergency Medal to speak to either their captain or district office.

Twitter: @gipps_potzii

NORTHERN AND WESTERN METROPOLITAN



Greg
Esnouf

As we head into our fire season, we have had a wake-up call from our neighbours to the north who, as I write, are still going through a tough time with some troubling fires. I would like to thank all staff and volunteers from the region who willingly provided support, often at short notice. This includes those who travelled north, those who volunteered and made themselves available but in the end were not needed, and those who put in long hours back here organising and supporting those who went to NSW.

I'm interested in some of the media reporting of the fires and also some ongoing trends from research about community preparedness. Recent research by the Bushfire CRC, reported in *The Age*, found 29 per cent of people facing extreme bushfire conditions would wait and see before deciding to leave or stay. Earlier research has shown that the number of people who expect a warning before they trigger their fire plan is increasing. Worryingly, these trends are reflected in media reports where I have heard people saying, "We have our bags packed and are waiting for the knock on the door before we evacuate" and "We are ready to leave as soon as the spot fires start landing around our home". Media reports often talk about people fleeing at the last minute, as if it's a heroic action rather than a risky decision.

While the situation may be slightly different in Victoria, I'm sure we have similar issues to confront. Clearly, despite all our efforts nationally to try to change the way people think about 'Prepare, Act, Survive', we still have a long way to go.

Even though we talk in the sector about mutual obligation or shared responsibility, I'm not sure these messages are resonating with the public. For many people, it seems there's an increased reliance on receiving a warning and getting advice about the time they should leave. Perhaps our slogan should be a bit harder hitting, like the drink driving ads that have been so successful. Perhaps something like, "We are doing our best – what about you?"

We are well into our own preparation for the summer, with pre-season briefings and exercises in full swing.

Please take time to look after yourself and your family through the summer, take some time off when you can and keep safe. Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN



Peter
Schmidt

Over recent months, many of us in Southern Metro Region have had the honour and pleasure to witness 975 of our members receive National Emergency Medals in recognition of their selfless commitment to support our February 2009 campaign efforts.

I was exceptionally proud to recognise the large number of our people who, in many cases, made significant self-sacrifices to help others in dire need. Congratulations once again to all recipients and I look forward to recognising others who will receive medals at other events.

By the time this edition of *Brigade* magazine is distributed, and if past years' weather patterns are any indication, we will be entering another busy summer fire period. In saying this, it is timely that we take time out to consider the most important aspects that we mustn't lose sight of when we are in summer fire mode.

Statistics tell us that the level of commitment given by our people sacrifice exceptional levels of personal time to support our communities and other communities when in need. The level of preparedness of our team, ready to travel far and wide to support other communities, fellow CFA brigades and other emergency services, is a credit to you all.

First and foremost, your personal safety is number one. Please ensure you are prepared both physically and mentally for the challenges Mother Nature may throw at us, and that all training and skills maintenance have been ticked off the list – do not leave things to chance.

Although our mission is to protect lives and property, the most important life is yours.

Please take time out whenever possible to spend valuable time with your families, and respect and maintain your all-important relationship with your employer because, by supporting you, they are keeping our wheels turning. To those running their own business, I ask that you ensure you balance your commitment to CFA so things remain secure on that front.

I take this opportunity on behalf of the management team in Southern Metro Region to wish you and your families a very merry and safe Christmas, together with a prosperous and healthy new year. We all hope the fire season isn't too challenging for us or our communities.

Please stay safe. And while you're looking out for others, remember to look after yourself, too.



PHOTO: KEITH PAKENHAM

Chief Officer feels the heat

Recently Chief Officer Euan Ferguson, his deputy chief officers and the state duty officers went back to the basics of practical area drill (PAD) exercises at Fiskville.

The first part of the day involved going through the locker storage and operation of the new aerial pumper, Type 3 and 4 pumpers and a look over the new heavy tanker.

Euan said, "Skills maintenance is a really important thing for all of us in CFA," recommending that members make sure their knowledge is up to date.

Each drill was supervised by Fiskville PAD operators and crews were responsible for rolling hose and packing up before being sent on to the next job. Crews worked on various industrial flammable liquid fires and also a structure fire where people were missing.

Size-ups, SPADRA (Safe Personal Approach, Dynamic Risk Assessment) and RECEO (Rescue, Exposure, Containment, Extinguish, Overhaul) were used throughout the day.

All the crews thoroughly enjoyed the break from their normal, hectic schedule to revisit some of the most basic work performed by our firefighters. "We've worked as a team, got to know a bit about each other's skills and, more importantly, we're more familiar with the appliances on the front line," said Euan at the end of a hard day.

I think a few of them would have slept well that night.

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

STORY KEITH PAKENHAM

A DAY AT THE RACES

CFA crews converged on Cranbourne Racecourse in late August for the Casey Group exercise. The focus was on urban-based scenarios in a realistic environment and water management techniques.

The drills were a search and rescue from inside the multi-storey grandstand function rooms and rooftop, a hazmat incident and a pump relay from a dam.

In the search and rescue exercise, the Dandenong ladder platform was used to retrieve people from the rooftop and the judge's box on top of the grandstand. The rescue was challenging because of limited accessibility. Retrieving victims from the highest point involved good teamwork and many safety issues had to be considered in planning the rescue.

For the hazmat incident, crews in breathing apparatus and splash suits had to find victims of a chemical spill in the stable works area. This drill involved the Hallam brigade hazmat unit. As well as the search and rescue, crews were asked to identify the substance and manage the hazard appropriately. Operators were decontaminated after leaving the complex.

The pump relay from a dam at the front of the racecourse used Scoresby brigade's hose layer vehicle and Clyde brigade's big fill pump. Various relay methods were used to transfer and supply water around 650 metres to the Dandenong ladder platform, using different-sized pumpers and tankers and more than 25 30-metre lengths of 90mm hose.

This exercise highlighted the value of being able to move large volumes of water over a long distance with minimal vehicles, and was food for thought on alternative methods that could be used in some situations that traditionally commit many vehicles for a long period of time.

Thank you to Cranbourne Turf Club for providing the facility and helping to organise the event. By collaborating with local organisations, we can enhance our skills and improve our capability to serve the community.

STORY TONY RILEY

PHOTO: MEGAN ANGEL



Captain Wood thinks big picture

Captain Vivienne Wood is a big picture thinker and a grassroots leader. When she isn't working and training with Paynesville brigade, she's out training the rest of the Gippsland region.

Vivienne joined CFA 18 years ago knowing her truck licence would come in handy and, according to Gippsland Manager of Training and Development Shaun Riley, she hasn't stopped learning since.

"Vivienne is incredibly proactive when it comes to training. Her and her husband Gary often come along to Mallacoota and Omeo to help deliver low structure Minimum Skills training, breathing apparatus search and rescue and skills maintenance exercises for structure fire and bushfire," said Shaun.

"What's impressive about Viv is that she's focused on the larger community – not just the one she lives in, but CFA as a whole. She's heavily involved in training both locally and regionally and regularly gives up whole weekends to help educate her 'extended family'."

Although brigade captain responsibilities take up a lot of time, Vivienne sees training as a crucial part of the role.

"As a captain, I need to stay abreast of training and always be refreshing my skills and sharing knowledge so I keep relevant. Every time I share information I learn twice as much back in return – which is really good trading figures in anyone's books," said Vivienne.



"There's nothing better than training to get you out with the brigade. Working alongside each other gives us an opportunity to understand each other and, at the end of the day, it's about being a team. That's what training is all about – if we're not a team we're screwed."

"It's about allowing others to reach their full potential and you have to have a training plan to make yourself redundant."

STORY JASON LEIGH

As well as training CFA members in Gippsland, Vivienne holds education days in schools

PHOTO: COURTESY OF EAGLE POINT PRIMARY SCHOOL

GOLDEN SQUARE PASSES ON SKILLS

Members of Golden Square brigade recently gave a rural brigade in District 2 some training in structural firefighting. As well as passing on firefighting skills, this training gave Golden Square brigade members the opportunity to practise leadership, mentoring and practical instruction techniques.

Under the guidance of brigade First Lieutenant Tim McNeilly, who's also a volunteer structural trainer and compartment fire behaviour training (CFBT) instructor, the brigade trains every week. Because of Golden Square's approach to structural training, Talbot brigade asked Golden Square to give its members some training support.

Talbot brigade doesn't have breathing apparatus (BA) so doesn't carry out offensive firefighting. However, many supporting brigades do, so it was important for Talbot to be trained to know what they need to do to prepare the scene for incoming BA crews.

After some theory sessions about structure fire progression, fire behaviour, signs of impending extreme fire behaviour and defensive strategies, Talbot members were given practical training in hose deployment and setting up entry lengths for BA crews, and hose stream application techniques to maximise the use of water droplets to cool down internal environments from a defensive position.

Talbot brigade members also did a number of response drills, where they had to deploy attack lines and secure water into vehicles through boosting and closed circuit relays between tankers in the township. Some of these drills included neighbouring brigade Carisbrook which played the role of supporting pumper with BA crews.

This training was invaluable and Talbot members are keen to further develop their skills.

STORY TIM McNEILLY



PHOTO: MATT ATKINS

Chaos in the creek

Devon Meadows brigade held a special training scenario at a main intersection in Cannons Creek in early September.

Event coordinator Joseph Burr from Devon Meadows brigade said it took him around three months to organise the night. The training was based on a scenario of a multiple motor vehicle accident with people trapped and one fatality.

Due to the nature of the scenario, Victoria Police and St John Ambulance also took part. In all, there were nine emergency vehicles and 40 people at the scene. The police gathered information and assisted with traffic control. CFA members learned about how agencies control this type of incident and the correct way to position emergency vehicles at a road accident.

Langwarrin Rescue demonstrated and used their rescue equipment to cut people from the cars. Two members from Langwarrin brigade were being accredited on the night, so it provided the ideal conditions.

The night ended with crews going back to the station for a debrief. Thanks to Joseph Burr for setting up this training which let CFA work with other agencies in a controlled environment.

STORY TROY LONGSON



PHOTO: TROY LONGSON

DISTRICT 22 BRIGADES PREPARE

In late September, District 22 brigades started to warm up for the fire season at a group exercise. More than 80 CFA members in 18 vehicles, a strike team from Southern Border Region in NSW and the field operational vehicle from Wunghnu, took part in four scenarios - wildfire suppression, gas cylinder fire, motor vehicle accident and water draughting. The exercise also included setting up a staging area and a level two incident control centre.

Also at the exercise were Ambulance Victoria, Nathalia Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), CFA instructors from Wangaratta training ground, and a crew and tanker from Oxley Flats brigade (District 23).

The wildfire suppression exercise was designed to make members aware of dangerous trees, working around machinery, working in conjunction with aircraft and developing situational awareness on the fireground.

Under the watchful eye of the two instructors from Wangaratta, our members learned the correct procedure for dealing with venting gas cylinders. Two cylinders were set alight and the brigade members had to use the four-person fog attack to spray the cylinders to cool them, then move in closer, one step at a time, adjusting the spray nozzle to engulf the flame.



PHOTO: ANNIE ANDERSON

Wunghnu Auto Wreckers supplied three cars to demonstrate rescue and fire suppression in car accidents. CERT members and Ambulance Victoria demonstrated casualty evacuation. The exercise also demonstrated air bag activation (which can be a hazard to rescuers) and how to position emergency vehicles.

The final scenario involved draughting water from the creek and demonstrating the pumping volume of new tankers belonging to Strathmerton, Yarroweyah and Wunghnu brigades.

This was an extremely worthwhile exercise that will strengthen future cooperation between all services.

STORY ANNIE ANDERSON

safety

Always assess the risk, and the potential for hidden risks, before undertaking an activity.

Through the ages - Warrandyte



COMPILED BY: KEITH PAKENHAM

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

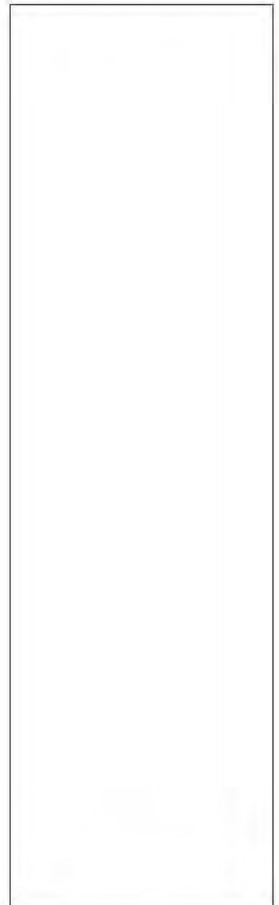
To get a Memberlink card, phone 1800 820 037 or register online at emergencymemberlink.com.au.

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

- **Searoad Ferries** are offering 10 per cent off ferry travel between Sorrento and Queenscliff on presentation of your Emergency Memberlink card. Valid for the card holder and up to four family members per booking. Valid for car and foot passenger travel. Terms and conditions apply.
- Members receive 10 per cent discount at **The Athlete's Foot** stores in Victoria on presentation of your Emergency Memberlink card at time of purchase. Not available with any other offer.
- **Choice Hotels Australasia** has over 270 hotels to choose from across Australasia. Preferential Government accommodation rates for Emergency Memberlink members.
- 10 per cent off treatments at **Victorian Endota Spas** and 10 per cent off endota products bought online (excludes gift vouchers and dermalogica skincare). Terms and conditions apply.
- 5 per cent discount on pre-purchased **Gift Cards** including WISH, Coles, Ray's Outdoors, Supercheap Auto, BCF and Rebel Sport.
- 10 per cent off the local retail price on an Ultra Manufacturer's Handbook Service, Ultra Minor Service and Ultra Major Service. Identify yourself as a Memberlink member to **UltraTune** at time of booking.
- Free medium drink (soft drink, orange juice or standard espresso pronto) with any purchase over \$3 at any **McDonald's** restaurants in Victoria. Terms and conditions apply.
- Wines at up to 70 per cent off, free delivery for 12 or more bottles and a further \$5 off per dozen for Memberlink members through **Wine Box Warehouse**.
- Memberlink cardholders get a 20 per cent discount off the regular entry price on presentation of your Memberlink card at **The Enchanted Maze Garden** at Arthurs Seat.
- **Thrifty** is offering Memberlink members exclusive rental rates and a reduced liability fee on all cars, trucks, buses and 4WDs throughout Australia.
- **Flight Centre** is offering \$50 off your next international booking at any Flight Centre Victorian store.
- Save time and money with fleet-type discounts on brand new model vehicles through the **Australasian Vehicle Buying Service**.
- 10 per cent off accommodation at **Wyndham Hotels and Resorts** around Australia. Visit your Memberlink website for list of participating resorts.
- 10 per cent off **Greyhound** Australia's express services. Use promo code MEMBERLINK11 when booking.
- Save money on pre-purchased movie tickets, QLD theme park and attraction tickets through the **Memberlink Box Office**.
- **Powerbuy I.T.** gives members with exclusive offers on popular IT brands such as Dell, Sony, HP, Lenovo and more. Terms and conditions apply.

If undeliverable
please return to:
Printelligence
11 O'Hara Street
Blackburn
Victoria 3130



PRINT
POST
100010934

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

Brigade magazine is published by
CFA Communities and Communication

Telephone: 9262 8300
Facsimile: 9262 8576

PO Box 701 Mt Waverley Vic 3149

Executive Director Communities and Communication: Mark Sullivan
Manager Corporate Communications: Christina Bucci

Articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of CFA.
The Editor reserves the right to refuse or edit articles.

Printed on paper from sustainably-managed forests.