

SPRING 2009

BRIGADE



A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Breathing Apparatus feature

ALSO: NEW CEO, REGIONAL ROUNDUP, RECOVERY, SUPERCARS



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Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM



From the Chairman

Following several months of public hearings, the 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission has handed its interim recommendations to the State Government. In all there were 51 recommendations contained in the 360-page report.

I'm pleased to report that the Commission has largely concurred with the submission put to it by the State Government. We have learnt many lessons from 7 February and it is now time for us to take that learning and put it into new initiatives and programs that will make our communities safer.

We have a lot of work ahead of us but we have already made a substantial start. We are implementing significant organisational and policy changes that will better equip CFA to serve Victorians. Our internal debrief process identified 18 areas for improvement and we are well on the way to implementing the more than 50 recommendations contained in that report. Many of these items mirror the Commission's recommendations.

While the Royal Commission process will continue well into next year and CFA members will be required to appear, we must now turn our attention to the essential task of preparing our communities for the forthcoming fire season. The State Government has committed unprecedented resources this year to assist us to increase community bushfire preparedness, and all CFA members can play a role.

With this fire season shaping up to be potentially more extreme than last year, the steps we take in the next few months will be vital in launching a new era of bushfire awareness and preparedness across the state. We face an enormous challenge but I have no doubt the people of this great organisation are more than up to the task.

We'll be providing members with regular updates on the status of the many projects currently underway, and I'd encourage you all to keep an eye on *CFA Connect* for the latest news.

These are exciting times of change and growth for our organisation and I know the CFA family will emerge stronger from this period of review.

Finally, there have been some changes recently to the CFA Board. Frank Zeigler, Peter Jamvold and Peter Marke have retired from their positions. Sandie Jeffcoat, nominated by the Municipal Association of Victoria, and Tunde Meikle, nominated by Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, have joined us. On behalf of the Board, I thank our outgoing members for their contributions to CFA and welcome Tunde and Sandie in their new roles.

Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM
Chairman

Editor's note

Brigade magazine is changing. In fact, the whole way we tell our CFA stories has undergone something of a revolution in the past four months.

CFA Connect (www.cfaconnect.net.au), CFA's online 'News, Multimedia, Chat' site was launched in May. By the end of August, more than 320 stories had been published on the site, 26,000 people had visited and 1800 comments had been posted in the forums.

But they're just numbers. What's really important is that those stories have been published by the people living them. The people who, previously, had less opportunity to tell their tales of life in CFA.

Brigade magazine has been affected because, for the first time, every story printed in this edition has been run online first. In the past, you would have seen a handful of the same names cropping up in article bylines. Today, thanks to *Connect*, we have nearly 30 contributors ranging from Public Affairs staff to brigade volunteers to career firefighters.

The wheel has turned. Online social media has opened up the world in ways not even radio or television could do, as revolutionary as they were. Our challenge, as peddlers of this antiquated paper and ink stuff, is to embrace the social media and use it to our advantage. Right now, the best way we can do that is to take the stories you're writing online and put them into print.

Online, you can read more, stories are published faster, and you can pick and choose what takes your fancy. But for those of you who love the feel of 100% recycled paper in your hands, fear not, *Brigade's* not going anywhere. It's just changing.

Guy Sigley
Editor



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Cover: Sabre Centurion breathing apparatus mask
Photo by Keith Pakenham (see feature page 8)

Change of address

If you need to update your address details to receive *Brigade* magazine, please phone the FIRS RMS Project Officer on 1800 62 88 44.

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

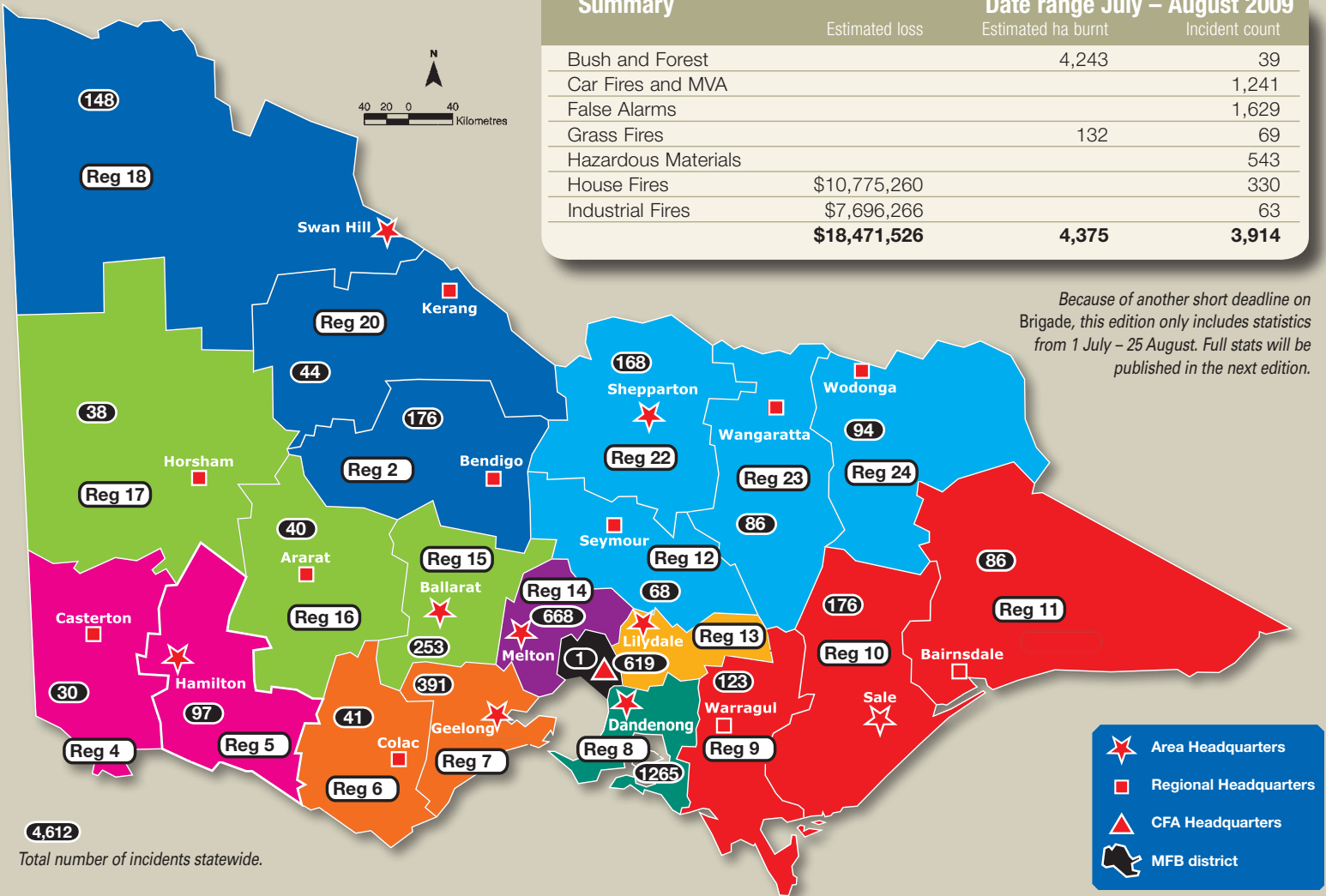
In this section of *Brigade*, we summarise CFA incidents and examine the total number of incidents for each region. All statistical information has been extracted from CFA's Fire and Incident Reporting System (FIRS).

Brigades are reminded to submit their fire/incident report details as soon as possible after their attendance at an incident. Brigades on strike teams also need to submit a report. FIRS Call Centre open 8am – 11pm, 7 days **1800 628 844**

Summary	Date range April – June 2009		
	Estimated loss	Estimated ha burnt	Incident count
Bush and Forest		9	11
Car Fires and MVA			604
False Alarms			829
Grass Fires		12	15
Hazardous Materials			254
House Fires	\$6,319,500		186
Industrial Fires	\$1,410,100		28
	\$7,729,600	21	1,927

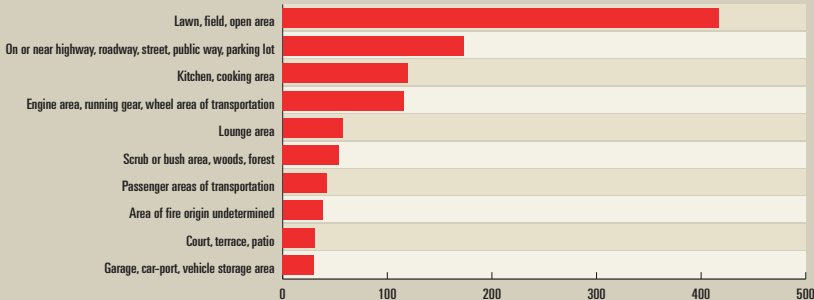
Summary	Date range July – August 2009		
	Estimated loss	Estimated ha burnt	Incident count
Bush and Forest		4,243	39
Car Fires and MVA			1,241
False Alarms			1,629
Grass Fires		132	69
Hazardous Materials			543
House Fires	\$10,775,260		330
Industrial Fires	\$7,696,266		63
	\$18,471,526	4,375	3,914

Because of another short deadline on Brigade, this edition only includes statistics from 1 July – 25 August. Full stats will be published in the next edition.



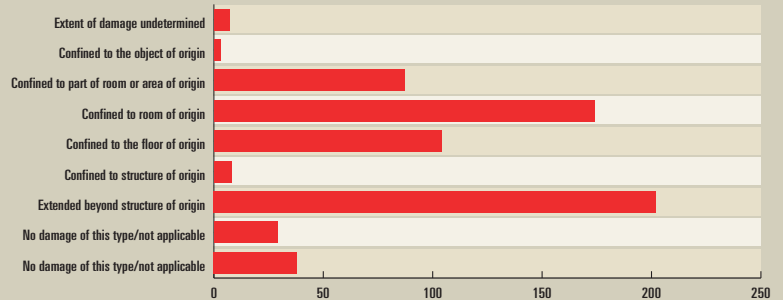
Top 10 fire starts

1 July – 25 August 2009



Extent of flame damage

1 July – 25 August 2009



Please note these stats only include incidents up to 25 August 2009.

Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

INTERIM REPORT



Victoria is set to enter a new era of bushfire planning and preparedness following the release of the Interim Report from the 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission.

The 360-page report, which was released on Monday 17 August, contains 51 recommendations that are designed to enhance the protection of human life in the face of bushfire.

The report supports the retention of the 'prepare, stay and defend or leave early' policy, but with renewed emphasis on leaving early, community information and warnings.

The Commission has recommended that the emphasis of CFA community education literature and advice be changed to more realistically acknowledge the risks of extremely dangerous bushfires. For those who choose to stay and defend, the Commission has suggested the risks should be spelt out more plainly, including the risk of death.

The report also says people should be encouraged to recognise that not all houses are defendable in all situations and contingencies need to be considered in case the plan to stay and defend fails.

It is recommended CFA should have the authority to give specific advice about the defendability of individual properties and whether residents should relocate rather than trying to stay to defend. The Commission has also suggested that aids for self-assessment of a home's defendability should also be improved and made more readily available.

The report says that for those who plan to leave, there should be more explicit advice on triggers that should be used to determine when to go and local areas of refuge should be included as a complement to the 'stay or go' policy.

The recommendations also include increased powers for the Chief Officer in the areas of warnings and information, suggest commercial operators be allowed to broadcast emergency information and fire ratings be extended beyond 'extreme'.

Forest fire and grass fire danger indices are also set to be more widely published, the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) used in conjunction with broadcast bushfire warnings that may impact on life, and a single agency portal created for bushfire information.

CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy welcomed the report and said the organisation was committed to implementing as many of the Commission's recommendations as possible before the start of the next fire season.

The State Government pledged to respond to the recommendations by the end of August.

The Commission has now started its second block of hearings, which will include building and planning issues as well as a detailed examination of the 12 main fires in which lives were lost or significant damage occurred. These include Kilmore East, Murrindindi, Churchill, Delburn, Bunyip, Narre Warren, Beechworth-Mudgegonga, Bendigo, Redesdale, Coleraine, Horsham and Pomborneit-Weerite fires.

The Commissioners are due to present their final report to the State Government by 31 July next year.

2009 BUSHFIRES ROYAL COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

RECOMMENDATION 4.1

The State ensure that bushfire warnings issued in Victoria:

- are founded on the principle of maximising the potential to save human lives;
- incorporate the use of the Common Alerting Protocol, as adapted for the Australian context.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2

The State ensure that the content of bushfire warnings issued in Victoria reflects the principles set out in the Commonwealth policy paper Emergency Warnings — Choosing Your Words (2008). In particular, all bushfire warnings issued in Victoria must use clear language, avoid euphemisms, and contain explicit language.

RECOMMENDATION 4.3

The State commission research into the development of a new fire severity scale that denotes the risk posed by dangerous and extremely dangerous bushfires (similar to the cyclone categories 1 to 5).

RECOMMENDATION 4.4

The State ensure bushfire warnings in Victoria are confined to two categories or stages:

- Bushfire Information and Bushfire Warning.

RECOMMENDATION 4.5

The State ensure that the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) be used in Victoria to precede each bushfire warning or group of warnings for bushfires that are dangerous or extremely dangerous.

RECOMMENDATION 4.6

The State invite commercial operators to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), similar to its MOU with the ABC, on the dissemination of bushfire warning messages.

RECOMMENDATION 4.7

The Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner and the CFA develop guidelines for the use of sirens in communities that decide to use a siren as part of their response to bushfires.

RECOMMENDATION 5.1

The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council and the Bureau of Meteorology collaborate with researchers to explore options for the fire danger indices and fire danger ratings including:

- an additional fire danger rating beyond 'Extreme';

RECOMMENDATION 5.2

The Bureau of Meteorology include the Forest Fire Danger Index and the Grass Fire Danger Index in its fire weather warnings and general weather forecasts.

RECOMMENDATIONS 5.3 AND 5.4

The State ensure that a single, multi-agency portal for bushfire information be established that uploads information simultaneously to both CFA and DSE websites and it allow Incident Control Centres to directly post information and warnings.

RECOMMENDATION 5.5

The State ensure the Victorian Bushfire Information Line is funded to enable it to provide greater surge capacity during extreme events.

RECOMMENDATION 6.1

The State amend the State Emergency Response Plan so that the word relocation is used in preference to the word evacuation.

RECOMMENDATION 6.2

The CFA amend its policy Advice to the Community Before and During Wildfire to enable trained CFA personnel to recommend to particular households, communities or locations that they plan to leave early, based on an assessment of defendability, the vulnerabilities of the people there, and the degree of ease with which people are able to leave the area in relative safety.

RECOMMENDATION 6.3

The CFA and DSE amend operational policies to require the Incident Controller to assess whether relocation should occur and to recommend relocation when warranted.

RECOMMENDATION 7.1

The CFA revise the publications and programs by which it communicates with the community about preparing for bushfires and what to do in the event of a bushfire to:

- reinforce existing advice that community members should prepare, and decide, well before a fire occurs, whether to leave early or stay and defend their homes; and
- clearly convey the following principles:
 - the safest option is always to leave early rather than to stay and defend,
 - not all homes are defendable in all circumstances and householders are advised to undertake an individual assessment of defendability,
 - unless a property is defendable the advice is to leave early,

- the impact of topography, fire weather and fire intensity on defendability should be factored into household assessments,
- the risks of staying to defend include the risk of physical injury and death,
- contingencies are needed as the best-made plans may fail,
- even if a plan is to stay, preparations to enable leaving should also be made, including the preparation of a 'relocation' kit specifying the location of designated community fire refuges,
- there could be psychological impacts of staying to defend a property, it is inadvisable for children to be present during the defence of properties, practical steps are needed to protect the vulnerable. Families with young children, older people, and disabled people are advised to plan for early relocation, advice on triggers for when to leave to incorporate the need for flexibility, the dangers of leaving late and the undertaking that a warning may not be received, and advice in relation to the policy specifically targeted to urban communities on the urban/rural interface.

RECOMMENDATION 7.2

The CFA consider the means of providing individual advice to residents in bushfire prone areas, as to the defendability of their homes.

RECOMMENDATION 7.3

The CFA ensure its members are fully trained as to the changes to the advice to the community set out in Recommendation 7.1.

RECOMMENDATION 7.5

The State and its agencies implement an advertising and awareness campaign on the changes to policy and practices as set out in this report.

RECOMMENDATION 8.3

The CFA give priority where possible to provide resources to assist in the defence of designated community fire refuges and neighbourhood safer places.

RECOMMENDATION 8.5

The State promulgate criteria for the identification and operation of neighbourhood safer places, and involve councils and local communities in their development and implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 8.6

The State to have commenced progressively identifying, establishing and advertising designated community refuges and neighbourhood safer places.

RECOMMENDATION 9.2

The CFA and DSE agree procedures to ensure the most experienced, qualified and competent person is appointed as Incident Controller for each fire, irrespective of the fire's point of ignition.

RECOMMENDATION 9.3

The CFA and DSE ensure that where a level 3 Incident Controller or officer of equivalent ranking is satisfied that a bushfire warning is required, then such Incident Controller is authorised to release a warning where the designated Incident Controller is temporarily unavailable.

RECOMMENDATION 9.4

The State amend the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 to provide that the Chief Officer has responsibility to issue warnings and provide information to the community.

RECOMMENDATION 10.5

Victoria Police, in consultation with CFA and DSE, review the guidelines for the operation of roadblocks during bushfires. ■



Tapping strengths and

New CFA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mick Bourke is a community-minded executive who grew up in country Victoria where volunteerism was part and parcel of life. His business and leadership philosophies focus on teamwork, innovation and getting the best out of people. Brigade magazine's John Allin spent an afternoon with Mick in mid-August, shortly before he began in his new role.

Ask Mick Bourke what his greatest achievements have been as head of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria and you might as well pack up and go home. Achievements, you see (and this is Mick's line), don't happen because of a CEO. They happen because of people.

Terry Ahearn, director of business development at EPA Victoria and acting CEO, says Mick will be very much missed. "His achievements have been many and they are largely through his ability to build teams and encourage teamwork to gain best possible results. He taps people's strengths and builds confidence."

Mick subtly suggests that there is no mystery or secret to his style – just good old honesty, openness and common sense underpinned by experience, sound business principles and, importantly, respect for fellow workers.

Mick is a straight shooter and clearly a lover of country Victoria. He is eagerly looking forward to doing the CFA rounds and "meeting the troops on their turf". This isn't surprising given his roots – Mallee roots, you might say. Mick was born in Kerang and grew up in nearby Quambatook, a couple of dozen kilometres to the west along the C262.

Spending his formative years in the heart of the state's wheat belt taught him much about human values and volunteerism. His father, Des, was a farm machinery mechanic and fuel agent; his mother, Verna, ensured Mick and his siblings were clothed and fed. He owes much to his parents. Both worked hard. They taught their children well, he says reflectively.

"Volunteering was a natural thing in the country – CFA, progress association, local footy, church committee and so on," Mick says. "Like most of the blokes in the town my father

was a CFA member in his earlier years. There was a certain reverence around the fire siren. Everyone would close up shop and head off to the fire shed and we'd go out on the back of the truck."

Mick went through Kerang High school, played footy in the winter ("to enjoy it, not to be a star player") and worked on the farms helping his dad in the summer.

He enrolled at the Bendigo campus of La Trobe University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Business. Then it was off to Comalco and General Motors Holden, followed by 17 years with the water industry including as CEO of Coliban Water, and then Managing Director of City West Water. For the past seven years he has been Chairman and CEO of EPA Victoria where he has overseen the EPA's modernisation and global positioning as a leading environmental regulator, facilitator and protection agency.



building confidence

Understandably, and to be fair, Mick is reluctant to talk about CFA specifics because he is not there yet (this interview took place in mid-August). There is much to get his head across. But today, as he reflects on his time at EPA and mixes this with his work philosophies, you get a pretty good idea of how he approaches his particular missions.

“One of the keys for a chief executive is to enable people to create change – or at least participate in it,” Mick says. “If you can look at a process and say: ‘I can make this one-twentieth more efficient’ ... and you do that, then you’ve been innovative. You’ve made a change and as a result something is a little bit better.”

Mick is a fervent believer in understanding the particular business before saying where it should be, understanding the stakeholders’ needs, the clients’ needs and where other players see it heading.

“That’s important and it’s the respectful thing to do. I have seen cases where quick change needs to happen – but also where quick change can do more damage.”

Like every Victorian, Mick was enormously saddened by this year’s summer fires. He wonders aloud about climate change – a subject close to his heart – and how this may change the global approach to fighting fires.

“The two biggest challenges facing mankind and the planet are climate change and overconsumption of non-renewable resources,” Mick says.

BEYOND THE JOB

Certainly work consumes much of Mick’s life. But this does not stop him being close to his family – his wife Yvonne and daughters Jo, 24, Erin, 22 and sons Pat, 20, Lockie, 16 and Ned, 9. They’re all living in country Victoria except Ned who is at home in Williamstown. Mick cooks a good roast, has fun with creating soups and enjoys a barbecue ... and occasionally a big, chunky Central Victorian shiraz.

He has myriad community roles; among them: environmental monitor for the Bay Dredging Project, on the board of Sustainability Victoria and

a member of the Hobsons Bay Community Fund.

He is uneasy with the term social conscience but likes to contribute to community. Doing so, he says, means you can help to leave the world a slightly better place for the future generations.

Mick planned to finish up at EPA Victoria on the first Friday in September, spend the weekend with Yvonne in a cottage in the hinterland behind the Gold Coast and then head back refreshed and energised to start at CFA the following Monday.

“Life’s too short to drink bad wine and to waste time you could use for constructive things.”

He’s a Carlton supporter and knows his choice of team won’t please everyone at CFA but he’s not too worried. Footy’s a good leveller, he says, “a place where people can meet on common ground.”

Is he still a country boy at heart? The answer is quick and emphatic: “Yes. I am totally committed to country Victoria.”

Then he begins: “You can take the boy out of the country...” but thinks better of it. ■

Breathing Apparatus



A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

FEATURE BY ALISON APRHYS

Your pager goes off and your brigade is called to a factory fire, motor vehicle accident (MVA) or hazardous materials (Hazmat) incident. If you are Breathing Apparatus (BA) qualified, then it's likely you'll be one of the team closest to the action.

Thankfully, the days when the best an incident controller could do to safeguard their crew members was warn them to stay away from the smoke are long gone. Today, knowledge of the toxic elements in smoke that can present a risk of illness or injury mean that safety is paramount and BA is used where possible.

Atmospheres at fires can be devoid of oxygen or contain particles so hot they can burn throat and lung tissue, which can lead to injury or disease. Pulling on the BA is now a matter of course. ■

BA SAFETY

All BA sets include a Distress Signal Unit, which, when activated, produces a high pitched wail to indicate the operator requires urgent assistance due to injury, being trapped or their exit being inaccessible.

If the BA wearer becomes immobile for 20 seconds, a pre-alert ticking commences, which can be deactivated by them moving. However, if the operator remains motionless for a further eight seconds, then the unit goes into full alarm mode at 98 decibels, indicating help is required.

Safe Fire Ground Procedures also require BA operatives to always work in pairs inside a structure, and incidents using BA require a BA Control Officer (BACO).

BACOs liaise with incident controllers and oversee control boards (which resemble a small clipboard) containing slots so each operative's tag can be added to indicate who is currently active. The tags show critical data including the name of the BA operative, their brigade, cylinder pressure and times in and out. The times are used to calculate the exit, or whistle time, so operatives are not staying inside too long or run out of oxygen.

The BACO also ensures that operatives are counted in and out, signed off, and cylinders are changed over as required, recording relevant data and managing backup BA teams. ■

HOW BA WORKS

Essentially, the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA, commonly referred to as BA), provides breathable air to wearers who are operating in a potentially hostile environment. Self-contained means the wearer is not dependent on a remote supply via a long hose like those used with early deep-sea diving suits.

In the BA, air is stored under high pressure in a cylinder and is fed through a pressure reducing system to the face-mask where it is inhaled. Air breathed out is pushed out through the exhalation valve in the face-mask.

CFA's BA sets are positive-pressure (PP), which give superior respiratory protection in contaminated atmospheres. In a PP set, the air within the face-mask is pressurised slightly above atmospheric pressure and ensures that if there is any leak, the pressure in the face-mask will minimise the risk of the contaminated atmosphere entering the respiratory system.

PP sets are donned and removed with no air flow to eliminate air escaping from the mask before it is sealed against the face. PP activation begins automatically when the first breath is taken. When removing the mask, the airflow is stopped when the reset button, incorporated in the lung demand regulator, is depressed. ■



HISTORY

Often inspired by early deep-sea diving suits, BA equipment could be cumbersome to wear. Even back in the 1960s, some BA sets weighed 13.6 kg (30 pounds).

The Vajen-Bader Patent Smoke Protector of the 1890s and early 1900s sealed off the wearer's head from the environment and supplied breathable air from a compressed air cylinder on the back of the helmet.

Anyone who is interested in the history of BA should visit the Fire Services Museum of Victoria (FSMV). "The FSMV has a comprehensive collection of BA equipment spanning from the 1860s right up to the present," says curator Tony Paynter.

According to Mark Tarbett, CFA's Protective Equipment Department (PED) Manager, Asset Management Directorate, modern BA has been in use (albeit in limited distribution) since CFA's formation in 1945. Then, in 1972, 161 sets of Normalair BA were distributed, with Ararat receiving the first consignment. ■

BRIGADE

BA TODAY

Today, CFA has two main types of BA in service: Sabre Centurion and Drager PA94+. There are 1631 Sabre and 577 Drager sets across the state and two main types of compressed air cylinders; nine-litre steel and carbon composite. Carbon composite cylinders have a 15-year service life and there is no age-based service life for steel cylinders.

BA keeps Mark and his colleagues busy because it comprises approximately 65 per cent of all the work undertaken by the PED technicians. Mark points out that while members rely on the PED to service BA, it's critical that operatives take good care when wearing the equipment.

"BA sets are a piece of life support equipment and need to be treated with respect," he says. "Cylinders are vitally important but are a relatively small part of what we do here. The calibration of the BA sets such as checking gauges and airflows is also critical."

Barry Foss, Operations Manager, PED adds that "part of our job is to look to the future and new technology for BA, which will improve things like ergonomics." In the next 12 months, the Drager BG4 Long Duration (4 hour) Oxygen Breathing Apparatus will be introduced to replace the existing BG174 sets. ■

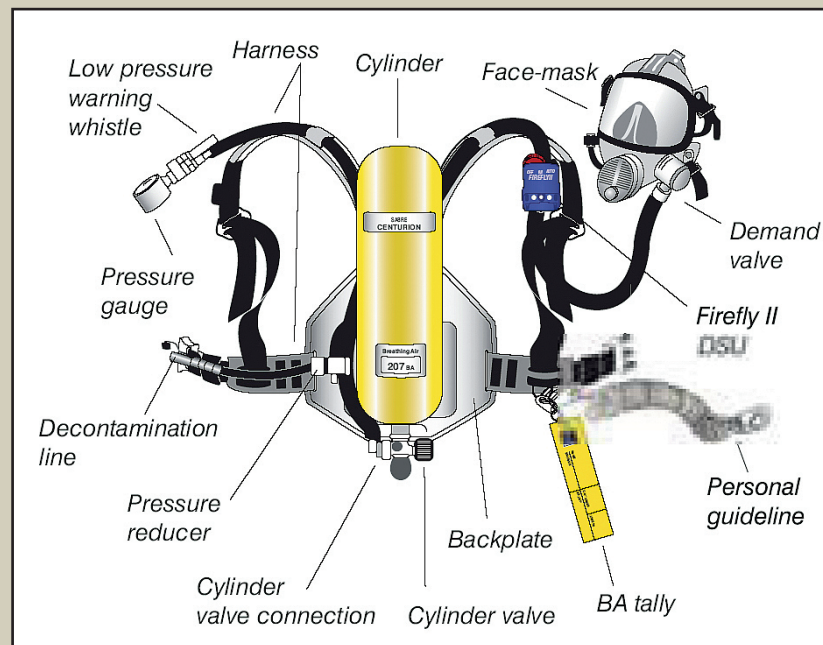
BA SETS CONSIST OF:

1. Cylinder
2. Low pressure warning device (whistle)
3. Backplate (carry frame) and harness
4. Pressure reduction valve, or valves
5. Demand regulator (lung demand valve)
6. Pressure gauge
7. Face-mask and head harness
8. Distress Signal Unit (DSU)
9. Personal guide line
10. BA tally

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Protective Equipment Department services all regions, including training facilities. It covers a diversity of equipment that ranges from:

1. Open (Compressed Air) and Closed (Oxygen) Circuit Breathing Apparatus
2. Atmospheric Monitoring Equipment
3. Airlines
4. Resuscitators
5. Fully Encapsulated Gas Suits
6. Chemical Splash Suits
7. Rescue Harnesses and Lines





CFA Training College Fiskville



CFA TRAINING COLLEGE - BANGHOLME



Located at Bangholme near Dandenong South, Bangholme Training Ground also provides training for other emergency response agencies, in particular: MFB, Victoria State Emergency Service, Ambulance Victoria and Victoria Police.

Business Manager John Bell is proud of the training the campus offers. “Our facilities range from a three-storey building nicknamed the ‘Temple of Doom’, which uses theatrical smoke to simulate structural fires, to a two-storey hostile BA environment fire attack building, to various confined spaces for Search & Rescue, which provide firefighters with the opportunity to obtain their BA competencies in a safe, realistic and controlled environment.”

WESTERN DISTRICT TRAINING GROUND - PENSHURST



According to Adam Young, PAD (Practice Area Drill) Supervisor at the Western District Training Ground (WDTG) at Peshurst in Victoria’s South West, 20 minutes south of Hamilton, BA training is rocketing in popularity as its benefits in an increasing range of emergency situations are more widely recognised throughout all emergency services.

“We encourage students at the ground to consider donning BA for all situations where there may be a possible atmospheric hazard,” Adam says.

WDTG instructs between 800 and 1000 CFA members and around 300 commercial participants a year.

NORTHERN DISTRICT TRAINING GROUND



The Northern District Training Ground (NDTG) is set on 30 hectares on the outskirts of Huntly, a small village 15 km north east of Bendigo.

BA – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Australian Standard 1715:2009 states that any type of respirator may impose some physiological and psychological stress on the user. There are a number of factors that may preclude the use of BA including:

- chronic lung conditions such as emphysema and asthma
- circulatory diseases such as heart disease and anaemia
- epileptic seizures
- psychological factors such as claustrophobia

There is a duty of care on members to declare any medical issues that may impact on their ability to perform operational duties. There is also a need to maintain an appropriate level of fitness in order to effectively wear BA. BA sets have adjustments that are designed to fit the majority of people.

AS 1715 also includes a number of factors that may compromise facial seals on respiratory protection. These include long hair, facial stubble, sideburns, beards, moustaches, make-up and creams applied to the face, and all forms of jewellery that may interfere with the seal.

TRAINING

How BA training is delivered to brigades depends on their location. Some regions offer BA along with Isolated Remote Structure or Search & Rescue, while others provide it as a stand-alone course.

CFA TRAINING COLLEGE - FISKVILLE



Located 90km west of Melbourne off the Western Freeway, CFA’s Training College Fiskville is the principal of CFA’s field training complexes.

BA Instructor Stuart Walker says: “Fiskville provides several different scenarios based on what people would find in the field, including multi-storey smoke logged buildings, single and double-storey smoke-logged buildings, gas and flammable liquid fires and simple car fires.”

According to Allan Ellis, Fiskville Operations Manager, “One of the best things our training offers is the buildings where we can create a hot fire training environment.”

Because the Bendigo district landscape contains many mine shafts and an active mining industry, NDTG offers tailored training exercises that include dealing with these challenges as well as everyday incidents. "BA training includes simulated specialised areas of different roofing constructions, confined space tunnels and shafts and a decline mine," says Frank Beukelman, NDTG Supervisor.

More than 100 BA operatives pass through NDTG annually and it also hosts commercial training. NDTG was an initiative of local brigades that approached the Region with a view to constructing a training complex in the area.

GIPPSLAND FIRE TRAINING COMPLEX



Gippsland Fire Training Complex (GFTC) is located at Fulham, 10km west of Sale.

Paul Fixter, Structural Instructor, explains that: "The BA training facilities include a structural hot house that can replicate not only the smoke and gases in a real structural fire, but also gives the BA wearers a place to experience working in a hot environment."

The other facility comprises a large two-storey Search and Rescue (S&R) building that can be configured to many different floor plans and offers training in a darkened and smoke-filled environment.

Paul adds that BA Training could not go ahead in Gippsland without the support of the Morwell Fire Brigade BA Van, which refills the cylinders after every course.

WANGARATTA TRAINING GROUND



Located five minutes south of Wangaratta, the Wangaratta Training Ground (WTG) was established in the early 1980s. It has 15 BA sets and 40 BA cylinders that are used across the North East Area.

"During 2008/2009 we used this gear for training more than 400 firefighters," says Richie Gardner, Manager, CFA Training Ground Wangaratta.

Also offering structural fire training for brigades and industry, Richie says that the WTG

staff "are able to simulate house fires, motor vehicle accidents, LPG vessels on fire, carport fires, service station fires, simulated fuel spills, pole top fires, Hazmat drills, and more."

WTG has BA trailers that brigades can use to run drills and they are also used in the Alpine areas for training exercises.

WIMMERA FIELD TRAINING GROUND



The Wimmera Field Training Ground (WFTG) is located at the University of Melbourne's Longerenong College Campus, 10km north of Horsham near the Grampians National Park.

According to Chris Rosewall, Training Ground Supervisor, the Wimmera incorporates 24,000 square kilometres of predominately agricultural land. "Significant risks in the Wimmera include fast running wildfires in grasslands, severe and labour intensive scrub and forest fires and inherent risks associated with transport, industry and health care facilities," he says.

He adds that the WFTG is used by brigades and Groups from neighbouring Regions 15, 16, 17, 18 and 20. While WFTG carries just nine BA sets on site, it offers an intensive training experience. ■

ANNUAL TRAINING STATISTICS

Year (calendar)**	Number of people signed off in PUA FIR207A Operate BA (Open Circuit)* ***
2000	1255
2001	1062
2002	732
2003	908
2004	704
2005	684
2006	506
2007	639
2008	580
2009 (as of 22 06 09)	91

* 2009 low numbers reflect a) brigades with BA equipment already having trained members and b) disruption to training due to Victorian Bushfires.

** In the past, CFA did not differentiate between a skills maintenance course and an acquisition course, so some early BA & BA/SR courses are actually refreshers.

*** In 2005 – 2006 we changed from AFC's to PSTP units. Course and data entry figures for this period will be impacted as we converted people's records over.





BRIGADE TRAINING

At CFA's Training Ground in Bangholme on a wintry Monday night, a crew of 14 from Tyabb Fire Brigade, led by Captain John Morris, is preparing for a BA refresher.

In between exercises in the hostile Fire Attack Building, John explains that the 30-strong brigade attends incidents like this year's fire at Bluescope's steel production plant that contained 500,000 litres of hydrochloric acid, as well as Hazmat, structure fires and motor vehicle accidents.

"The training and facilities here are fantastic," John says. He and his crew are full of praise for the PAD operators and instructors.

Over at Penshurst, Instructor Gerard Monro is taking a crew from Koroit through the BA exercises. Gerard says that BA training is designed to be realistic so that operatives can learn to deal with dangerous and often frightening situations. "Firefighter safety is paramount," he says.

While brigades like Tyabb are seasoned campaigners when it comes to BA, across in Region 7, Freshwater Creek is having its first group start training. "It's going to be great, because we'll be able to attend our own incidents requiring BA as well as providing back up to neighbouring brigades," says former Captain Dave Evans.

"Having its local brigade undertaking BA will be a great asset for the Freshwater Creek community," BA instructor Rod Stone says.

TRAINING INNOVATIONS - PANTECH TRAILER

The Pantech BA Trailer, a South West Area initiative, is fitted out with a crawl-space maze enclosed in wire mesh that loops around the interior walls. The maze provides multiple levels of obstacles that replicate an interior search and rescue environment and confined space training.

Instructors, who are always present during training, stand in the free space in the middle of the trailer. The wire mesh walls also comprise many sliding panels that allow the instructors an unrestricted view of those inside and to easily communicate with and assist with a quick exit from the maze.

Above and top: The South West Area BA Pantech Trailer

BA SUPPORT VEHICLES

CFA has six BA Support Vehicles based at Ballarat, Bayswater, Bendigo, Corio, Frankston and Traralgon. These vehicles provide support to brigades by being able to refill BA cylinders and allow the cleaning and recommissioning of BA sets.

Each vehicle carries:

- 26 BA cylinders
- 14 breathing apparatus
- four long-duration breathing apparatus
- Hazmat equipment like gas suits

There are also 11 BA trailers around the state that provide backup and can be used by brigades to run training in their own brigade areas.

TRAILERS

"We have a BA Trailer with eight BA Draeger sets and maintenance equipment like face

mask disinfectant and up to 10 extra cylinders as back up," says Gerard Munro, Instructor (Structural), South West Area. "It can be towed by a car or ute, is based at Peshurst and can be used without depleting any resource equipment off the trucks."

There are also six protective equipment (PE) units that are used to support incidents. PE Units carry additional BA, including specialised oxygen BA for long-duration incidents like ship board and mine rescue, and a compressor to refill used air cylinders. There are also splash suits and gas suits that are used in Hazmat incidents.

SUNBURY FIRE BRIGADE BA SUPPORT VEHICLE

Michael Hogan, 6th Lieutenant, Sunbury Fire Brigade says the brigade has a van that carries two complete BA sets, a Hazmat decontamination dam and shower, two splash

suits and various decontamination gear. The van also carries a range of maintenance equipment.

"We've attended factory fires in Region 15, various structure fires in Hoppers Crossing and neighbouring areas, and many Hazmat incidents," Michael says.

Since acquiring its support van in 2002, Sunbury Fire Brigade has used it at more than 150 incidents and often supports brigades in urban areas as well as in other regions.

Michael says that because the van is under 4.5 tonnes it can be driven by members who only hold a car licence. The van underwent a number of modifications like adding 16 cylinder racks on the nearside and offside of the vehicle.

"At any one time we carry 28 charged BA cylinders with the ability to carry up to 32," Michael says. ■

BA MAINTENANCE

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE

BA is required to be returned to CFA's Protective Equipment Department (PED) on an annual basis. Replacement sets are dispatched in advance to brigades to allow issued sets to be returned for annual service.

The maintenance conducted on BA at the PED includes preliminary inspection, dismantling, cleaning, assembly, diagnostic testing and a final quality inspection.

New red facemask and gauge covers will progressively replace the existing yellow covers. Brigades should ensure that their existing mask covers are returned with the sets.

HIGH PRESSURE LEAK TESTS

Before reporting failures of high pressure leak tests, the PED requests that a further test be conducted as follows.

- The cylinder valve should be turned on for at least two minutes prior to turning off to allow the system to stabilise.
- Check that the pressure does not drop more than 10 bar in one minute.

The PED has identified that cylinder valves are often over-tightened causing damage to valve seats. Cylinder valves will seal effectively without the need to over-tighten.

ASBESTOS INCIDENTS

Members should be fully aware of the Chief Officer's Standard Operating Procedure 10.3 relating to Asbestos Incidents.

All BA harnesses suspected of contamination should be thoroughly rinsed down with copious amounts of water at the incident site while maintaining a pressurised air system.

This procedure has been developed in consultation with CFA's Occupational Hygienist and industry specialists following extensive research.

CLEANING FACEMASKS

It is important that when operators are conducting after-use maintenance they follow the correct procedure for cleaning facemasks.

Ensure that the correct ratio of Biogard disinfectant is used and the masks are left immersed in the solution for 10 minutes. Do not allow masks to be left in the Biogard for excessive periods beyond 10 minutes and ensure that masks are thoroughly rinsed in clean fresh water and air dried. ■

Feature photos courtesy: Keith Pakenham, Gerard J Monro, Adam Young and the Fire Services Museum of Victoria



Bung Bong B & B burns

BY DANIEL CONNELL

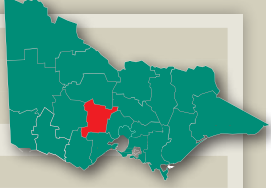
Incident name:

Bung Bong Structure Fire

Region: 15

Date: 4 June 2009

Brigades: Avoca, Bowenvale, Maryborough, Wareek



Fears for a guest staying at a Bung Bong Bed and Breakfast that was completely destroyed by fire in June were abated when it was discovered he had left earlier in the week.

Initially, there was concern the male guest was inside the holiday home during the fire. However, he had decided to shorten his stay due to illness, bringing a groundswell of relief to crews and police on scene.

The Bung Bong Hills Cottage, a popular lodging between Avoca and Maryborough on the Pyrenees Highway, was completely involved in fire when crews arrived on scene at around 2:00am.

The fire was brought under control around 2.45am, with four tankers attending from Avoca, Bowenvale, Maryborough and Wareek.

Region 15 Operations Officer Alfred Mason said the degree of heat meant crews had very little chance of saving the building.

“The intensity of the fire was so strong that the whole internal structure was destroyed and there was nothing left to hold the building up,” he said.

“By the time crews arrived on scene the roof of the building was nearly level with the floor. There was no chance of saving the building so crews focused on containing the flames from spreading across the property,” he said.

The two-bedroom self-contained cottage, set on a 50-acre property, was completely gutted. Two Fire Investigators from Region 16 analysed the scene for the majority of the day, however it was unlikely a cause would be determined due to the extent of the damage. Police were on scene, but arson was ruled out as a cause in the investigation. ■



Windy work at Doveton

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Hallam and Dandenong brigades responded to a call at the Doveton Secondary College in Doveton (Region 8) on Saturday 11 July around 8:25 pm. When crews arrived they located a fire at the rear of the school hall, which was being fanned by strong winds.

Fire Officer Doug Broom from Hallam Fire Brigade was the Incident Controller and he called for additional pumpers, an aerial appliance and a Breathing Apparatus (BA) support van. Crews worked around all sides of the building to prevent other exposures from being involved, including homes facing the building, as embers were blown through trees surrounding the area. Bayswater BA Van responded because Frankston BA Support was off the road for repairs.

Doveton Secondary College transferred its remaining students to the Dandenong Campus late last year and the school has not been in use since then. The hall, which was completely destroyed, was being used by other community groups on Sundays. ■

Springvale's gate crashers



BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Two cars collided in Springvale Road (Region 8) and ended up visiting the Springvale Fire Station on a Saturday afternoon in July.

Luckily the injuries were assessed as only minor following a check by paramedics who are also based at the station. Springvale Pumper was returning from a fire call just prior to the incident and was able to block a lane of the roadway until police arrived.

One car stopped on the station fore-court and the other ended up wedged into the front garden against a 'Change your smoke alarm battery' sign.

Fire Officer Mark Stephens said many collisions have occurred in the area. The fire station is opposite a small strip shopping centre and a petrol station and does not have intersection traffic lights out the front. ■

Working together in Torquay

BY DARREN APPS

Torquay Fire Brigade provided fire suppression and assistance at a single vehicle high speed accident on the Surf Coast Highway near Torquay (Region 6) on 6 June.

The driver of the vehicle was trapped for nearly an hour after colliding with a tree. Torquay SES used cutting gear to gain access and allow Ambulance Victoria crews to treat and stabilise the patient.

Air Ambulance also attended the scene. ■



Heat on at Hoppers shed fire

BY BLAIR DELLEMJN

Two people were injured and a number of cars destroyed in a fire at a large shed in Hoppers Crossing (Region 14) in late May. Hoppers Crossing and Point Cook brigades were paged to a reported truck shed fire and, on turnout, were informed by Vicfire that the shed contained a truck and many collectable cars.

Due to the amount of smoke showing, Officer in Charge Fire Officer Paul Hopkins from Hoppers Crossing immediately called for extra pumpers, which brought on Werribee Pumper 1. Werribee Pumper 2 also attended the fire.

On arrival, crews found a shed 20 by 30 metres well alight with many cars on fire inside.

The lengthy distance to the nearest fire hydrant meant a hoselay was required and an additional five tankers were requested due to a water shortage in the street.

The two casualties, who were injured before firefighters arrived, were transported to hospital by ambulance.

Crews from Hoppers Crossing, Point Cook, Werribee, and Truganina, as well as the BA Support from Sunbury brought the fire under control within 30 minutes.

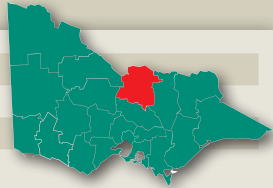
A major overhaul operation then took place because of the amount of cars and equipment being stored in the shed. A Fire Investigator was also called in. ■



Down below, something stirs

BY DANIEL CONNELL

Incident name: Echuca Hotel Fire
Region: 22
Date: 7 July 2009
Brigade: Echuca



The Bridge Hotel in Echuca was rocked and shocked in July after a minor explosion in its cellar.

CFA crews were called out to the hotel after maintenance work caused an accident that left a male worker with burns.

Echuca brigade Secretary Wayne Dwyer said that although there was little evidence of flames in the building, crews on scene had to approach with caution.

“A worker was completing maintenance on a fridge in the cellar of the building. A minor explosion took place which resulted in him suffering burns to the upper body and face,” he said.

“We entered the scene wearing Breathing Apparatus. Once we felt the premises was secure, we used a gas detector to determine whether the environment was safe enough to proceed without the equipment.”

Three CFA vehicles attended the hotel around 2:40pm. A Hazmat unit, along with a pumper and tanker from Echuca brigade were on scene for an hour.

The incident drew a large response from emergency services crews, including Victoria Police and WorkSafe Victoria.

“We were very careful to manoeuvre around the cellar – which was very small – to preserve the scene for investigators,” Wayne said.

The man was taken to hospital in a private vehicle before firefighters arrived on scene. ■



Echuca Pumper outside the Bridge Hotel. Photo: Matt Daniels

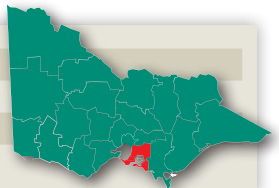


Firefighters treat the injured dog. Photo courtesy of Dandenong Fire Brigade

Every dog has its day

BY DANIEL CONNELL

Incident name: Dandenong North House Fire
Region: 8
Date: 3 July 2009
Brigades: Dandenong, Noble Park



A tiny terrier in Dandenong North was the subject of an unlikely rescue by brigades on scene at a house fire.

“When we arrived, the rear of the property was fully involved, and we started with an external firefight until we had enough units on scene. At that stage we were able to move into the house, into the kitchen, and commence a search. That’s when we found the dog,” Dandenong Fire Officer Stephen Keating said.

What followed is a remarkable story of survival – the terrier, suffering from smoke inhalation, was revived by CFA brigades on scene.

“We pulled the dog away from the house and found it wasn’t breathing. The little fella had been under a very heavy smoke layer. We used an ‘oxy-viva’, which allows us to ventilate the person, or in this case the dog, while avoiding mouth-to-mouth contact.”

The oxy-viva resuscitation device operates off an oxygen cylinder, using a respirator and a handheld oxygen mask.

After the dog was revived, it was given some much needed water by brigade members and sent to the South Eastern Animal Emergency Centre for treatment.

Three trucks attended the blaze, which damaged the vacated house extensively. It took around 15 minutes to bring the fire under control. After 40 minutes of tactical firefighting, the blaze was brought to a stop.

The house was being surveyed by the Fire Investigation Unit and police were investigating the circumstances surrounding the fire. ■

Touching down

When you're battling a wildfire, hearing the roar of a skycrane overhead is always welcome. What's perhaps less well known is the critical role of the Air Attack Supervisor (AAS).

The AAS coordinates the attack with the Operations Officer (OO) who manages the ground crews. Only when the AAS and OO are on-scene together can firebombing begin.

Captain of Werribee brigade for 33 years, AAS Darryl Wells has always had his eyes on the sky. One of the longest serving Air Attack Supervisors, Darryl commenced his airborne role in 1994. He retired this year after an amazing 48 years in CFA, with the last 15 spent as an AAS.

Darryl reckons that his interest in aircraft is in his blood. "My father, who was born in Ipswich in 1902, could remember being firebombed by Zeppelins during WW1 and I was born on 16 May 1943 which was the day of the Dambusters' Raid," he says. Although he did take flying lessons in between his career as an ambulance officer and time as a CFA volunteer, "I had to decide between getting married and buying a home or flying," Darryl recalls with a smile.

Nick Ryan, who manages the State Aircraft Unit, says AAS's have a hard job, often in very tough conditions. "It can be a very difficult job monitoring radios, making split-second decisions about priorities; it's quite a demanding role," he says. "People like Darryl who are knowledgeable, level-headed and cool in a crisis are invaluable. His involvement is more than just as an AAS because he can be a very calming influence. He's been a critical part of the team."

- AAS's are trained in all aspects of aerial and ground tactical fire management. They are usually experienced firefighters from state fire authorities.
- AAS's fly in support helicopters known as Firebirds so they can accurately assess the situation and plan an appropriate response to the blaze.
- AAS's coordinate firebombing aircraft, working with ground crews and pilots to ensure safe, efficient and effective use of firebombing aircraft at fires. ■



Darryl during fire season 97/98 with Firebird 10, a Bell Longranger.
Photo courtesy of Jo Gellatly



Tom with daughter Michaela. Photo: Keith Pakenham

Fire safety magic

Not many career firefighters have a rabbit in their letterbox. But for Cranbourne Fire Officer Tom Hoppner, it goes with the territory when you're also 'Tom the Magic Fireman'.

Tom admits he loves nothing more than making magic. For the last decade, he's been a popular performer at children's parties, kindergartens and primary schools where he reinforces fire safety and awareness messages to young children in an entertaining and engaging way.

Tom, now 38, recalls that his fascination with sleight of hand and performing began in 1995. "I was at the pub and someone taught me the vanishing \$5 note trick," he says. "For three years I practised various tricks. Around 1997-98, I met four other magicians and they helped me put together a fire safety magic show, which had not been done before," he says.

Tom explains that all his tricks are about teaching children fire safety lessons. "The whole show is magical as well as educational," he says. "One of the tricks involves a rabbit appearing out of a letter box, because that's the meeting place if your house catches fire." So when the children in the audience correctly tell him where to meet if their house is alight, 'Snowy the rabbit' pops up out of the letterbox, much to their delight.

Tom's thrilled that the kids seem to remember the safety messages. He says the positive feedback from parents and teachers, not to mention repeat bookings, indicates that they feel it's an effective and fun way of teaching the children about fire safety. "Presenting the fire safety message combined with magic leaves a lasting impression with children and adults alike," he says.

"At the end of the day I love doing magic and enforcing the important message of fire awareness and safety by teaching kids and seeing them learn something important," he says.

Tom the Magic Fireman can be contacted through www.beedazzled.com.au ■



Fire in the blood

There's fire in the blood of the Deckert family. For four generations, the Deckerts have been providing captains for Winiam Fire Brigade.

Winiam is located a few minutes' drive south of Nhill, 320 km from Melbourne. Craig's the family's fourth generation brigade Captain and says he was always keen to follow his parent's, grandfather's and great-grandfather's example of CFA service.

The Deckert family tradition began with Craig's great-grandfather Ted who was a founding member of the Winiam & District Fire Brigade in 1927. Ted was Captain from 1943-1949 and his son (and Craig's grandfather) Harold was Captain from 1953-1963. "Dad joined the brigade in 1955 and was Captain from 1972 – 1975, and then he was 3rd DGO [Deputy Group Officer] from 1975-1977. Now he's currently active with Nhill Brigade," Craig says. "And my brother Wayne's also a Winiam member."

The 37-year-old has been an active member since 1989 and is also 2nd DGO for the Lowan

Group. "We're a tin shed brigade," he says with a laugh. "But we have over 70 active members with a core group of around 30."

But it's not just the Deckert boys who have CFA blood. Craig's wife Christine was previously a member at Sunbury. His sister Jo is Deputy Coordinator Midlands-Wimmera in the Critical Incident Stress Management Peer Support Program and an active member of Nhill brigade. Their mum Bev was a trailblazer when she joined up in 1980 and was brigade communications officer from 1985-1991. Last but not least, Craig's sister-in-law Andrea is also active in Winiam.

Craig was severely burned a few years ago in a workplace accident while working as a motor mechanic. Hospitalised for some time, the cloud's silver lining showed up when he met a pretty nurse finishing her training who was also a CFA volunteer. They married and now Christine and Craig are a dedicated CFA family. In fact, they went through the Region 17 contact book when looking for inspiration on what to name their now 14 month baby son, Luke. ■

Slippers 'n all

After an amazing 41 years, Ken Evans retired from CFA in July this year. Ken joined Chelsea Fire Brigade in 1968. "We had friends in the fire brigade and I just decided to join up with my brother," Ken recalls. After a decade as a volunteer, he chose to turn his passion into his profession and become a career firefighter. Upon completing his Basic Firefighter training at Fiskville in 1978, Ken was then assigned to Doveton as a Day Firefighter.

A deep interest in the importance of firefighting communications saw Ken direct his considerable energy and commitment to the Mobile Communications Vehicle (MCV) project, where, as Project Manager, he encouraged its development and adoption by CFA. Considered an MCV guru, colleagues joke they wouldn't have been surprised if the MCV had vanished when Ken did. Along with travelling to the 2006 NSW fires, Ken said he will count being involved in the MCV project as a career highlight.

As well as his technical interests, fellow fires also valued his 'can-do' attitude and respect for his colleagues. Chris Loeschenkohl, Leading Firefighter at Boronia, who worked with Ken at Patterson River for 18 months, said that he will be greatly missed. "Ken is a really great officer and he's always willing to teach the younger generation," he said.

Patterson River Leading Firefighter James Wong agreed. "Ken was fun to work with and is very supportive of developing the people he works alongside; he's a good mentor."

And while Michael Jackson was known for wearing one glove and Bruce Springsteen his bandana, Ken was notorious on night shift for his footwear. "Once the sun is down he pulls on the navy blue slippers," James said.

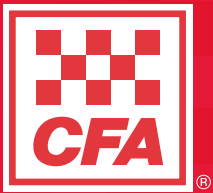
Sean Kerr, Fire Officer at Rosebud Fire



Ken with the Mobile Communications Vehicle at an incident in Dandenong in 2006. Photo: Keith Pakenham

Station, who worked with Ken for a few years, said that Ken was adamant that slippers were a badge of honour. "Ken used to say 'you have to earn your slippers!'"

Now Ken's life is no longer regulated by fire alarms, he is looking forward to taking it easy. "My plan for retirement is to enjoy my health and do some touring around the Australian countryside," he said. ■



ISSUE 1 OF 2
SEPTEMBER 2009

Pre-Season UPDATE



CFA CHIEF OFFICER'S MESSAGE

The 2008/09 fire season was a tragedy that will long be remembered. The events of 7 February have impacted on all of us, not only through our involvement in fighting fires, but in many cases directly through affected communities. The commitment and courage of all CFA members throughout this time is to be commended. I thank each of you for the role you played in supporting both your local community and other communities around the state. I would also like to thank the many other agencies involved, including those from interstate and overseas, for their support. I hope that you and your family have had a chance to recover and are ready for another summer.

CFA has been extremely busy since the 2009 fires, primarily with the Bushfires Royal Commission. However, we have also been conducting our normal internal operational debriefs and reviews. The outcomes of these activities will enable the organisation to move forward in a more strategic and effective manner.

CFA has been making significant improvements to current programs and implementing new ones as part of the 2009/10 Bushfire Preparedness Program. This will undoubtedly result in changes to how we manage fires and incidents in the upcoming season including:

- changes to command and control arrangements
- improvements to information gathering and analysis to improve information flow to the Incident Management Team and community

- a range of processes aimed at providing the community with timely information on fires and incidents.

This *Pre-Season Update* includes some key lessons from this year's operational debriefs and internal reviews, including:

- situational awareness
- the use of Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) and protective equipment
- radio discipline
- effective use of local knowledge.

It also highlights the key improvements that will result from the Bushfire Preparedness Program. More detail on the outcomes of these projects will be provided in a supplementary edition of the *Pre-Season Update* to be issued in October.

While there are so many things we did well as an organisation during the last fire season, there is much we can improve on.

The unprecedented weather conditions and fire behaviour have presented us with a glimpse of the future, and firefighting in these extreme weather conditions will become more common. As a result, it is important that you read and discuss this update with your fellow members to ensure you are prepared for the summer ahead.

Russell Rees
CFA Chief Officer



DSE ACTING CHIEF FIRE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

Like the CFA Chief Officer, I acknowledge how tough last fire season was, not only for firefighters but also for the communities that were affected. I want to thank all of you who worked on the fires for your professionalism, dedication to protecting the community and for the cooperation that existed at all levels.

There will be a lot of changes this year, resulting from both the Bushfire Royal Commission and our normal operational review processes. I ask for your patience as these changes are introduced leading into the fire season. We need to take the lessons from the February fires and use them to continue to improve our effectiveness in managing fires and protecting the community. We need to be particularly aware of the importance of time-critical information passed from each firefighter up through the chain of command and out to the community. We also need to maintain our focus on managing the incident.

In the midst of the preparations for what is likely to be another very active fire season, I urge you all to remain focussed on safety. I also encourage all of you to attend pre-season briefing sessions as these will be important in explaining the changes that will apply this season.

Peter Farrell
DSE Acting Chief Fire Officer

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Fireground situational awareness involves an awareness of fire behaviour, weather, terrain and the ability to think ahead. The potential for human error increases when situational awareness is not maintained. The erratic fire behaviour during the 2009 fires, where many crews became entrapped, reinforces the importance of Dynamic Risk Assessment and maintaining situational awareness.

Crew Leaders must remain vigilant at all times, including when things seem slow and tasks are routine, because this is when burnovers often occur. They must not become involved in the hands-on firefighting activities because a momentary distraction may lead to critical information or observations being missed.

During the 2009 fires, high wind speeds and intense fire activity moved fires rapidly and caused spotting many kilometres ahead of the main fire. During these fires, planned escape routes were blocked before crews had time to leave. With little warning visibility was reduced to a few metres meaning the fire could not be seen and driving was too dangerous. A decision to leave an area of risk must be made early, or alternatively don't go there in the first place!

Dynamic Risk Assessment and Situational Awareness must be continually maintained by all crew members, shared with others and used to ensure firefighter safety. If you see something or hear information critical to firefighter safety – speak up!



"The outcomes of these activities will enable the organisation to move forward in a more strategic and effective manner." - CFA Chief Officer Russell Rees

SAFETY AND SURVIVAL

Safety must remain the number one priority at all times. While training, safety systems and equipment proved effective in keeping CFA members safe under the extreme conditions experienced during the 2009 fires, firefighters must not rely on safety equipment alone to protect them. The emphasis must be on avoiding situations where the use of these systems is necessary. Crews must:

- implement the principles of LACES to reduce the risk of turnover or entrapment –
 - have a Lookout to maintain an appreciation of fire behaviour
 - maintain situational Awareness and be aware of the impact of changes in fire behaviour
 - follow the Communications Plan, communicate with your crew and surrounding crews to discuss and address safety issues
 - plan and know your Escape routes and Safety zones (consider escape time and safety zone size requirements that will change as fire behaviour changes)
- have sufficient numbers for the tasks assigned – this will allow each role to be carried out effectively, including the role of the Crew Leader to allow a focus on the crew's safety and strategic thinking
- be aware of the speed and location of fires at all times – the last fire season has shown us the speed at which fires can travel catching crews off-guard. Spot fires associated with the main fire can quickly become new fires leaving crews trapped between two fires
- maintain sufficient reserve water levels to be able to implement burn over procedures. Reserve water levels may need to be greater in the future based on the considerably longer length of burn overs during the 2009 fire season
- maintain a supply of drinking water
- always wear seatbelts in the cabin and whenever you can in the ROPs.

To prepare for the upcoming fire season, all brigades should:

- complete a vehicle checklist to ensure all necessary equipment is included and in working order, including personal protection blankets that are easily accessible (five per appliance and two per vehicle)
- practise safety procedures, particularly wet entrapment drills in real time so that all members are familiar with their implementation.

PPC AND PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Wildfire PPC is designed to provide the required outer protective layer against hazards that include cuts, abrasions, and minor burns. It is not designed to provide protection against entrapment. If an individual or crew is in a position where there is a high reliance on PPC to provide protection over and above its intended design then it is likely that other safety systems have failed.

CFA still offers a choice between wildfire overalls and the two-piece wildfire ensemble. However, it was clear last season that there is a broad range of wildfire PPC currently in use across CFA. Many older types of overalls (pre 1997), in particular, do not incorporate current features designed to increase air circulation and collar protection, and should be replaced.

All PPC must be agency approved. Clothing and protective equipment should be regularly inspected, and members who believe that their PPC or protective equipment is outdated or not up to standard should bring this to their Captain's attention.

It is critical that while engaged in firefighting operations, all of the protective clothing and equipment provided is worn in a way that maximises protection.

This means:

- front of coats and overalls are secured
- collars are raised and secured
- sleeve cuffs are secured
- approved gloves are worn (not riggers gloves)
- approved P2 Dust Masks are worn (and regularly changed to maintain effectiveness)
- approved goggles are worn
- helmets and neck flaps are securely attached
- approved boots are worn.

Wearing of Structural PPC for wildfire fighting activities must be avoided. Further advice can be obtained from your regional headquarters.



IMPROVING INFORMATION FLOW FROM THE FIREGROUND

Crew Leaders, Strike Team Leaders and Sector Commanders must provide regular situation reports (sitreps) up the chain of command. Frequent sitreps are critical because they provide the IMT with accurate, up-to-date information on what is happening on the ground.

In addition to improving the regular planning and operational functions, sitreps are used to develop time-critical information releases to communities, as well as ensuring that Regional and State coordination roles are aware of the situation on the fireground. Sitreps also allow crews to report on safety and resource issues to ensure the fireground is as safe as it can be and the fire is being managed effectively.

RADIO DISCIPLINE

The introduction of VicFire across the state was seen as an opportunity to streamline unnecessary radio traffic. This has occurred in many regions. However, many still continue to 'talk the fire out' with unnecessary radio messages on command and control channels.

Over the past season a number of situations occurred where CFA crews under life-threatening situations were unable to transmit or receive messages on the CFA radio network. Debriefs indicated that these issues were generally related to congestion caused by poor radio discipline rather than technical difficulties, and contributed to crews moving off assigned channels. Unimportant messages were continually being transmitted and the increase in this type of radio transmission seemed to match the escalation and severity of the fires.

Radio operators must also acknowledge that less radio traffic is essential as additional resources are responded and arrive at larger fires and incidents. What you can get away with at a small incident can be life threatening during a larger developing incident. Radio discipline is something that needs to be applied at all times.

A number of examples also occurred where 'fireground' radio transmissions continued through VicFire long after a fire had started and large numbers of resources were working. In some cases VicFire was used for critical radio messages as the crews wanted to ensure the message was received and acknowledged. However, the use of VicFire only added to the workload at the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) and also meant that important messages were not heard by those using the correct fireground channels.

It is important to ensure that Comms Plans are established and implemented early, and radio discipline must be reinforced at all briefings. Brigades are urged to highlight radio discipline in pre-season training sessions to ensure that the established procedures are followed.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

HYDRATION

When firefighting, your body can lose more than one litre of fluid per hour. When undertaking physical activity in warm to hot weather, you should drink up to 1200ml of water per hour with a 600ml electrolyte replacement drink (Staminade Hydrate) per hour. The electrolyte replacement drink should not exceed 6% glucose, as high levels of glucose can increase the effects of dehydration.

As the new Structural PPC is rolled out, you should be particularly aware of the need to maintain hydration levels because you will be hotter in the new gear than previously. The most effective cooling method is pouring water over lower arms to allow cool blood to be transported back to the core of the body. Other useful techniques include placing a wet towel around the back of your neck or armpits.

HYGIENE - AVOIDING GASTRO ON THE FIREGROUND

Compared to previous years, last season had a reduced incidence of gastro at base camps due to improved hygiene practices. It is important that we continue to focus on hygiene practices because gastro diseases can be very contagious and can result in large numbers of people being quarantined and unable to work.

Many of these gastro diseases can be avoided by keeping good hygiene and being careful with food. To prevent infection, you should always wash your hands before eating, after using the toilet, and before handling any food or drink, even when stowing food and drink on a vehicle. Anti-bacterial gels can also be used where available.

Ensure any food on vehicles is being stored at the right temperature for the right period of time for that food.

HEALTH AND MEDICATIONS

There continues to be cases involving CFA members going on Strike Teams when they are not medically fit for the rigours of firefighting, which puts themselves, their crewmates, and the medical response teams in danger.

If you have any medical or physical conditions that may affect you during firefighting operations, consult your doctor before deployment. If you have a condition that is managed by medication, you should consult your doctor about the effects of the medication in firefighting environments and what affect the environment may have on your medication. You should also make your Strike Team Leader and Crew Leader aware of your condition and any medication you may require while on duty. If you do take medication to control symptoms of a condition, missing one dose may have little effect on your condition. However, if you are on a strike team for days and have left your medication at home, you may become ill and require treatment or hospitalisation.

Captains and Crew Leaders should make sure that any crew member who requires medication on a daily basis has packed a supply in their kit bag before leaving their home location.





LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Local knowledge is important if an IMT is going to be able to perform at its best. As large campaign fires become more common, resources from other regions, interstate and even overseas are being used.

Brigades, Groups and Regions need to plan for local officers, and/or appliances to be embedded within outside crews to provide added safety and allow efficient management of an incident. This would be a good topic for discussion at your next brigade or Group meeting.



BUSHFIRE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

In June 2009, the Government approved a number of initiatives known as the Bushfire Preparedness Program. The program focuses on areas of improvement that could be delivered prior to and during the 2009/10 fire season. Since then, considerable focus has been placed on the development and implementation of these projects across CFA and DSE.

Some of the key improvements to be aware of include:

- improving information flow from the fireground to Incident Management Teams and the community by enhancing the collection and analysis of operational information
- reviewing and enhancing current Information Unit objectives, systems, protocols, tools and training
- improving Level 3 ICCs with gaps in IT, communications and built infrastructure resolved
- developing guidelines for the community to consider in identifying Neighbourhood Safer Places
- a consistent approach to development, documentation and communication of Township Protection Plans
- providing the community with more timely and accurate information from emergency service organisations via a single source
- enhancing the delivery of the Community Fire Guard and Fire Ready Victoria programs
- developing a Household Online Self Assessment Tool that will enable residents to better assess the defensibility of their property and their household preparedness
- selecting and training a pool of resources to work regionally to provide advice to property owners in relation to mitigation of bushfire risk
- improving bushfire education programs for children, including Brigades In Schools
- developing effective services and resources to help tourists and the tourism industry be better informed, prepared and resilient in the event of bushfire
- developing a variety of new and improved publications to better serve the community's range of risk environments and vulnerabilities
- supporting CFA Areas and brigades regarding vegetation management such as prescribed burning, herbicide application and slashing to manage wildfire
- researching the use of sirens to alert the community of an emergency, and establishing a CFA policy
- improving the Victorian Bushfire Information Line, with new service level agreements to be in place between VBIL and Centrelink
- conducting further strategic fuel breaks, with the remaining 173km of additional 600km of strategic fuel breaks to be completed in areas including Melbourne's water catchments, the Otways and the Midlands
- upgrading iECC facilities including improved telephony and IT capacities
- increasing availability of interstate and international pre-formed Incident Management Teams
- improving access between ESTA and DSE systems such as Firemap, pagers and radios.

Information on the Bushfire Preparedness Program will be available through various means over the coming months, including a special edition of the *Pre-Season Update* to be distributed in October.

Doing CFA proud

Wandong Fire Brigade's Yorin Miller and John Kendrick were recently awarded the Pride of Australia Outstanding Bravery Award for their efforts on Saturday 7 February in rescuing a bulldozer driver. The bulldozer was later found completely destroyed by fire.

Wandong Captain Sandra O'Connor said they did a fantastic job. "I am exceptionally proud of those two guys; it just goes to show how dedicated they are and their commitment to training and knowledge of fire behaviour pulled them through," she said.

However, the duo was very modest about their accomplishment. "We were tasked with the job and went in there and did it," said Yorin, who has been a member of Wandong for around four years. He explained that they took the brigade slip-on and found the dozer driver sheltering under a blanket. "He was on the side of his dozer, he'd scratched a bit off a cleared area and was using a water based fire extinguisher and just wetting himself down."

His colleague John, who has been a CFA member for 21 years, said the dozer driver was very pleased to see them. "He was very happy when we came in there; we squashed him into the cabin then got the hose off the back, fed it in and out of the passenger side window and



John (left) and Yorin at the Pride of Australia Awards. Photo: Yvette Curlis

used the fog setting to give us some heat protection on the way back," he said.

But both men deny that what they did was in any way exceptional, compared to what their fellow CFA members were facing at the firefront that day. John firmly believes that every single person on Black Saturday, be they firefighters, emergency services personnel or even just kids getting into the family car when their parents told them they were evacuating, was a hero.

John and Yorin were among 10 Victorians presented with sterling silver medals in the fifth annual *Herald Sun / Sunday Herald Sun* Pride of Australia Awards. ■

Wonderful Whanregarwen

Whanregarwen may be a speck on the map, but the tiny fire brigade based a few minutes' drive south-west of Alexandra in Region 12 has a big heart.

In late June, Whanregarwen Fire Brigade received a formal thank you from Strike Team 702 for its generosity to visiting members on deployment from Region 7 and the NSW Rural Fire Service in February. The brigade, which has around 14 operational members, opened its station and its heart by offering the visitors free use of the facilities.

According to Strike Team 702 Leader Julian Beasley, Deputy Group Officer Coastal Group of Brigades, being able to give his crews a break in the shade – and get them a cup of tea – gave them a great boost.

While unable to attend the presentation, Julian sent a message which read: "I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the team and our NSW friends to wholeheartedly thank the members of the Whanregarwen Fire Brigade for their generosity in allowing us the use of their fire station during our deployment.

"Your friendship and trust is what gives the 'CFA Family' the strength that it has. Thank you again for looking after us in such trying circumstances."



Torquay Fire Brigade's Alison Aprhys presents Whanregarwen brigade members with a framed photo to thank the brigade for its support of Strike Team 702 in February 2009

Strike Team 702 member Alison Aprhys presented a framed photo showing the visitors relaxing in front of the station in between patrols to Acting Captain Ross Murray. Ross thanked Julian, Alison and Strike Team member Paul Oakley, who kindly donated the framing. "We look forward to hanging it in our new station," Ross said. ■

YOU'VE EARNED IT



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

Through Emergency Memberlink, members can receive discounts and benefits on a wide range of products and services. The availability of benefits in rural and regional areas has also improved considerably and we are continuing to work on adding additional benefits. In excess of 250 offers are waiting for you to take advantage of them.

Details of the offers can be found on the Emergency Memberlink website www.emergencymemberlink.com.au. Be sure to visit the website regularly to keep up to date.

There are several ways you can access your Memberlink benefits. These include:

- Show your card and save – discounts and benefits available upon presentation of your Memberlink Card at businesses throughout Victoria, and some nationally.
- Online Shopping – goods below RRP delivered state-wide.
- Purchase Cards – Safeway/Caltex and Coles Gift Cards available through your Memberlink team at 5% discount.
- Discount Vouchers – time limited, special offers updated regularly. Download these vouchers from the Memberlink website.

Emergency Memberlink has experienced a growth of 19% in membership since its enhancement in April 2008. CFA members with Memberlink cards now exceed 22,000. The Memberlink website is receiving an average of 300,000 hits per month with 3,700 unique members logging in.

Need a Card? Call 1800 820 037 or register online.



AVG offers Internet security solutions for the home as well as the business. The AVG Internet Security 8.5 premium protection suite is designed to let you work, play, surf and communicate online without compromising on security or PC performance.

Emergency Memberlink members have access to **15% discount** on the AVG range of Anti-Virus and Internet Security products.

Visit www.avg.com.au/landing/partners/ and enter your Voucher Code MemBen0912L in the Voucher Code box of the online shopping cart to receive your discount.

DISCOVERY HOLIDAY PARKS



Discovery Holiday Parks would like to show their appreciation to all CFA and SES members by offering one free night's accommodation, in a superior cabin, in any of their 38 Parks around Australia.

Visit www.discoveryholidayparks.com.au for information on the parks.

Please call 1300 787 140 and quote promotional code CFAD03 to take up this offer.

Members do not need to book another night in order to receive the free night.

Please ensure bookings are made in advance to avoid disappointment.



Valid until 24 December 2009. Conditions may apply. Subject to availability at time of booking. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Once only offer.

MEMBERLINK PROVIDERS

Full listing and more information call **1800 820 037** or visit www.emergencymemberlink.com.au

**Conditions apply and offers are subject to change. Valid to 31 December 2009.*



10-25% Discount off RRP



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Emergency Memberlink and HBA have worked hard to offer you great healthplan that gives you more perks:

- ✓ Discounted Premiums - exclusive for you **4% discount** on the cover of your choice*
- ✓ One Month free for new members~
- ✓ No Gap Dental for kids - Only HBA covers the cost of your kids dental until they're 25, on over 250 dental services at Members First dentists'

These benefits plus more are available to all Emergency Memberlink members. To find out more, compare or join:

- call 1800 649 406
- visit your local HBA branch
- visit www.hba.com.au

*Not available on Active sports Saver or Ambo cover. ~New Bupa members only, your second month is free after your initial first month payment. Not with other offers. Direct Debit only. *Excludes orthodontics. At Members First dentists on benefits payable. Available on family hospital with General, Premier or Ultimate extras. Excludes hospital treatment. Waiting periods apply. Child dependants only. Normal fund rules apply.

ROYAL MELBOURNE SHOW

17-27 September
www.royalshow.com.au

The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria (RASV) would like to make a special offer to CFA Members regarding the 2009 Royal Melbourne Show.

The RASV, through the Show, is making a special gesture as they have done in past years, to recognise Victorian volunteers in those areas which have a strong and positive impact at the Show and/or in regional and rural areas, which are the RASV's main constituency. These organisations are Country Fire Authority, Victorian State Emergency Service, the Australian Red Cross and the Country Women's Association.

The RASV would like to offer the volunteers, their families and staff a discounted price of \$21 for adults, \$14 for concession, \$10 for children and \$50 for families (2 adults and 2 children) to attend the 2009 Royal Melbourne Show.

Simply show your Memberlink Card at the Show ticket box offices to obtain the discounted rates.

AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY PROVIDER

Australian Community Provider is a fully Australian owned, community centric phone company that provides an extensive range of flexible telecommunication solutions to individuals throughout the community. They offer tailored mobile, landline and Internet packages.

With cheaper phone calls and 5% of your call spend going to the charity or community organisation of your choice, there's never been a better time to switch phone companies.



To take advantage of these special offers visit www.acpc.com.au and click on the Emergency Memberlink logo or contact Australian Community Provider on 1300 368 400 and quote your Emergency Memberlink number.



Discount Cinema Tickets



5% off Gift Cards



Bonus Food Offers



Wholesale Pricing



10% Discount off RRP



Online Shopping



10% Discount off RRP



Trade Pricing



On the fence

BY ALISON APRHYS

Combined Torquay, Connewarre, Birregurra and Wye River fencing crew at Chum Creek with property owners Taz, Peggy and John (back left)

A combined CFA team from Torquay, Connewarre, Birregurra and Wye River travelled to Kilmore in August to participate in the BLAZE AID fencing project.

The dozen volunteers worked on building fences for a couple of properties in Chum Creek that were burnt out in the 2009 fires.

Coastal Group Officer Morris Grove said how pleased he was that the members, who ranged in age from 20 to 60-something, volunteered their time and energy and worked so well together. “I encourage all brigades, particularly new members to get involved; it’s an excellent way to get to know other volunteers and you really feel like you have achieved a good result,” he said.

Coastal Group Secretary Laurie Haslem agreed. “Working in this way helps you develop new skills and shows the community a different side to CFA.”

Founded after Black Saturday by Kevin Butler, a farmer from Kilmore East, BLAZE AID has organised over 3,000 volunteers from around the world who have contributed more than 400 kms and 7,500 days worth of fencing.

“The property owners we’re working alongside are enormously grateful for the assistance they receive, and are heartened that people from all over Australia and overseas are coming to help them,” Kevin says. ■

Anyone interested in volunteering individually or with their brigade can contact BLAZE AID or call 0418 530 471.

A band of merry volunteers

BY CHRIS LEWIS

CFA volunteers have again shown their generosity in providing those affected by the Churchill fire with much needed assistance in trying to get things back to normal as quickly as possible.

In mid to late February, Alan Stuart, his daughter Margaret, Kel Waites, Rex Jemmeson, Peter Burer and David Hine, all from the Mt Taylor brigade in Region 11, decided that they would like to help out. They made a few phone calls and found some people around the Callignee and Carrajung areas that had lost essential infrastructure. As farmers themselves, Alan and his trusty band, having been involved in the fires of 2003 and 2007, and the subsequent recovery program, knew exactly what was needed.

A local businessman came up with \$2500 for fencing materials, another local farm supplier provided materials ‘at the right price’, a local farmer who was burnt out himself in 2003 donated proceeds from the sale of his cattle, local stock agents held a ‘Dutch auction’ – the proceeds of which were also donated – and other farmers donated cattle for sale. The Lindenow Lions Club was entrusted with this money and helped out with a direct injection of cash for fencing materials.

Approximately \$30,000 was raised to help in the effort to reinstate much needed fencing in the fire ravaged areas. A lot of the materials rounded up have been ‘dropped’ at properties from Churchill to Yarram by the Lindenow Lions Club to some very grateful farmers.

Alan and his band of merry men and ladies headed off on their first sortie to a property near Callignee on the weekend of 13 and 14 March. Their mission was to clear the old, burnt fences and put up much needed boundary fences and some internal fences so farmers could be functional again and to keep the stock from wandering around the local area. The farmers Alan and his crew identified as needing support were not eligible for any of the public donation funds held by the Australian Red Cross.

Since that first weekend, 29 volunteers, in groups of about six at a time, have made the trek to Callignee to help out. Most are from Mt Taylor, and some are from Bumberrah, Paynesville and Hillside. They have missed few weekends and will continue going down for the foreseeable future until the job is done.

Talking to these quiet volunteers is a humbling experience when one considers the man and woman hours that have been contributed to helping people they didn’t even know but who are now friends. No names have been mentioned here except those who started the ball rolling because they say that is not what they are doing it for in the first place. Even those responsible for funding and materials want limited acknowledgement – just a photo to see where their money/materials have gone.

Well done folks, indeed well done! ■

Clonbinane's support from the south

BY TREVOR VIENET

On Saturday 27 June 2009, the small town of Bicheno on Tasmania's east coast presented the Clonbinane Rural Fire Brigade (Region 12) with a cheque for more than \$10,000. The Tasmanian visitors toured the fire-ravaged community of Clonbinane, 60 kilometres north of Melbourne, which suffered a high number of homes burnt, stock losses and fencing destroyed.

"Bicheno wanted to support a similar small sized town in Victoria hit by the Black Saturday event," Bicheno Fire Captain Adam Gluth said. "The whole town supported the fundraising by contributing goods to be auctioned." Raffles were also conducted to help raise a sum of just over \$10,000.

"A huge thanks to the people of Bicheno in upholding the Australian spirit of caring for each other," Clonbinane Captain Ross Hibbert said. "The small towns of Bicheno and Clonbinane will be forever connected by this tremendous act of generosity and support."

Adam Gluth, on behalf of the Bicheno community, presented the cheque to Ross at a CFA barbeque held at the Clonbinane Fire Station. Tasmania's Barry Schultz accompanied Adam for the trip across Bass Strait in the Fire Service command vehicle for the presentation. ■



(L to R) Barry Schultz and Bicheno Captain Adam Gluth present the \$10,000 cheque to Clonbinane Captain Ross Hibbert



(L to R) Minister Cameron, Callignee brigade Lieutenant Greg Flack, Premier Brumby and CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy with the 'thank you' plaque the Premier presented to the brigade. Photo: Keith Pakenham

Callignee's rebuild

BY HELEN GODDARD

Callignee brigade in Region 10 hosted the Premier in June at an event where he announced \$2.5m of funding to re-build the fire destroyed Callignee Fire Station and an enhanced community hub.

The Premier inspected plans for the new development and was joined by Police and Emergency Services Minister Bob Cameron, together with Community Development Minister Peter Batchelor.

The Premier also presented a 'thank you' plaque to Callignee Lieutenant Greg Flack and delivered another strong message to encourage volunteers to remain with their brigades and be positive about their efforts on Black Saturday.

Greg responded by thanking the Government for its generous support of fire affected areas and expressed his appreciation for Government Ministers visiting, and not forgetting, residents of their community. The challenge for the community will be to complete the construction in time for a 2010 Australia Day opening. ■

Mates in Marysville

BY PETER RICE

Since mid February, CFA members across four regions have been helping to keep the fire service operating at Marysville (Region 12). On Black Saturday, every member of the Marysville Brigade lost their homes when the town was almost completely destroyed. It is only now that some members are moving back to the town or nearby.

Until very recently, the Alexandra Fire Brigades Group, with CFA assistance, has provided temporary firefighters for the town. This has been a major project but also a very worthwhile one.

CFA members from Regions 12, 13, 22 and 23 have volunteered to spend two days relieving at Marysville attending incident and fire calls, maintaining the fire station and other equipment and providing a CFA presence in the devastated town.

Initially, the Army provided tent accommodation and meals for the firefighters until other arrangements were put in place during March.

Senior Sergeant Ralph Willingham of Victoria Police, who was also working out of the Marysville Fire Station, said he believed CFA's actions in providing this service were "absolutely essential" and had helped Marysville significantly in the recovery process. Many Marysville people have also thanked CFA for being there when it mattered. Adequate numbers of Marysville brigade members are now available to resume normal operations, albeit on a smaller scale.

Alexandra District Group Officer Peter Rice wishes to sincerely thank the 500 plus CFA members who have participated. Marysville Brigade Captain Glen Fiske also wishes to pass his appreciation to all concerned.

Group Officer Rice said: "It makes one proud to be part of an organisation that can help another brigade or Group when the chips are really down, which they have been in our area with the loss of so many lives and 620 houses destroyed across the Group. Well done and thanks to all." ■

Community Partnership: *More than a name*



Main – Casey Scorpions and Northern Bullants battle it out, Top right – Sam Dwyer accepts the Firefighters Award, Bottom right – Premier Brumby watches Russell's kicking action. Photos: Keith Pakenham

If your form guide is in front of you, mark the CFA and AFL Victoria partnership down as a win.

The partnership has grown at a rapid rate since it was kicked off in style at a spectacular Federation Square launch in June.

Victorian Premier John Brumby watched the CFA High Angle Rescue Team abseil from the roof of the Transport Hotel to hand deliver a football adorned with the CFA and VFL logos to AFL Victoria CEO Peter Schwab and CFA Chief Officer Russell Rees.

The most memorable highlight of the day was Russell and Premier Brumby contesting the footy. Yarrambat Junior Members and Auskick junior footballers were the only things separating the two from a severe case of white line fever!

“There are over 880 clubs across Victoria and when you put those with our 1200 fire brigades, you've got a huge impact on community spirit,” Russell said at the launch.

Those who tuned into ABC-TV to watch the first VFL match under the partnership were treated with a stunning visual; the sun providing viewers with a glowing football ground in Williamstown, the magnificent bay-side backdrop of Port Phillip contrasting brilliantly with two massive CFA signs and tankers behind the goals.

The match itself ended in a last-minute thriller between Williamstown and Casey Scorpions – the partnership could hardly have begun in a more exciting fashion.

CFA has had a presence at each VFL ABC-TV Match of the Round. This has given brigade members the opportunity to engage with the community,

allowed kids the chance to kick footballs with Captain Koala (sometimes at him!), and most importantly, provided CFA the opportunity to promote messages of fire preparedness and volunteer recruitment to those around the grounds and watching at home.

A special volunteer recognition game was also played in Morwell in August to bring together the community through sport and celebrate the importance of volunteers. This recognition game was a feature of the ongoing partnership. ■

For the latest updates and pics from the games visit www.cfaconnect.net.au

FIREFIIGHTERS AWARD WINNERS

- Round 11 Ben Davies (Williamstown) against Casey Scorpions (27/6)
- Round 12 Sam Dwyer (Port Melbourne) against Sandringham (04/07)
- Round 13 Clint Bartram (Casey Scorpions) against Frankston (11/07)
- Round 14 Kyle Matthews (Casey Scorpions) against Collingwood (18/07)
- Round 15 James Wall (Casey Scorpions) against Coburg Tigers (25/07)
- Round 16 Cruize Gartlett (North Ballarat) against Williamstown (01/08)
- Round 17 Myles Sewell (North Ballarat) against Casey Scorpions (08/08)
- Round 18 Stephen Browne (Northern Bullants) against Geelong (15/08)
- Round 19 Heath O'Farrell (Port Melbourne) against Sandringham (22/08)



The **ROAD** of the crowd

Main – CFA trucks cruise out of pit lane, Top right – Craig waves to the crowd, Bottom right – Craig and the 'Dandy Boys'. Photos: Keith Pakenham



One of the most enduring images of the volunteer tribute lap at Sandown during the Norton 360 Sandown Challenge V8 Supercars race was that of cheering crowds standing on their seats praising the efforts and dedication of CFA members.

Following a remarkable exhibition of firefighting and rescue demonstrations from Ford race driver Craig Lowndes at Springvale Fire station – which saw V8 sponsor Symantec donate 500 tickets to CFA – CFA members were invited to take part in a recognition lap prior to the race at Sandown on Sunday 2 August.

Craig had spent a day with Springvale and Dandenong crews in July, learning how to extinguish a fire, shoot a target with a high pressure fire hose, and completely dismantle a vehicle with road rescue cutting equipment. He even signed the Dandenong Hino truck for the 'Dandy Boys' – the ink wasn't permanent!

"Growing up in Hurstbridge I know only too well the great work CFA does in our community," Craig said.

"The whole world was made aware of CFA's efforts in February and I hope these 500 tickets to the Norton 360 Sandown Challenge go some small way to showing Symantec's gratitude for what CFA did."

There was nothing small about it. The V8 series moved to Melbourne in August and a convoy of 18 CFA trucks from across the state completed a lap of the track on race day; CFA members standing side-by-side with V8 drivers on the back of trucks.

There were some small hiccups along the way though! About half way around the Sandown racecourse people began to notice CFA caps spread across the raceway thanks to some untimely wind gusts. It took some frantic calls across V8 radios, and the pace-car dramatically swerving to pick up several CFA caps and the shattered remains of a new pair of Oakley sunglasses to restore order to the track!

Nevertheless, the day was a great success. Not too often will you find V8 Supercars race drivers content to do 40km/hr. In this case, though, they were happy to slow down and hand out the applause. ■

MEANWHILE, TRACKSIDE

CFA's Smoke House is attracting kids as Captain Koala hands out stickers and the Fire Equipment Maintenance team from Dandenong provides advice to a local about fire extinguishers in cars. A small crowd gathers to watch Dandenong Rescue cut up a car as two kids climb out of the smoke house.

Like clockwork, the vehicles line up in the pits as drivers climb onto the back. The crowd and crew look on in anticipation as the safety car heads onto the track

The lap is over too soon. "We had Rick Kelly on our truck. What a great bloke. We got him to sign all our caps," Ian Barnett from Bacchus Marsh yells with a smile as he walks towards the gate, ready to enjoy the rest of his day. ■



Win News films as Cr Kevin Erwin, Northern Grampians Shire Mayor, CFA volunteer and Board member is briefed by the media liaison officer.
Photo: Luke Dam, Total Hazard Solutions

Mind the Gap

BY SOPHIE JACKSON

The room is buzzing. Green, blue and non-uniform personnel are setting up the Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC), answering phones and donning tabards, preparing to respond to a bushfire that will threaten the communities they live and work in. Northern Grampians Shire Mayor Cr Kevin Erwin has arrived and is demanding answers.

It's the first week of August and about 12 degrees outside. And, of course, there is no bushfire. The 22 participants, who represent 12 different agencies, are taking part in an emergency coordination centre (ECC) management program in Halls Gap.

Part of the program requires participants to set up, successfully run, conclude and review the operation of a MECC. The exercise has a strong multi-agency focus and uses local content to deliver the scenario. In this case the exercise is based on the Deep Lead and Grampians fires of 2005/06.

One of the key objectives is to train participants in the coordination of organisational, human and equipment resources between agencies for the response and recovery from an emergency.

Deb Parkin, CFA Strategic Planning Analyst, has been heavily involved in the project. "This training has two main benefits; it has a local focus and it's multi-agency," she said. "So participants are building relationships and networks with the people they'll be working with. Because the exercise incorporates local content it's realistic and relevant."

Cr Kevin Erwin, acting Mayor for the exercise, is a CFA Board member, has been a volunteer for the past 37 years and is currently Group Officer of the Stawell Group. "It's really essential that everyone keeps training to hone their skills and build contacts within the area," he said.

Deb has been working with the Australian Emergency Management Institute, part of the Attorney General's Office, and the training also considers the recently published MECC Practice Note by the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner.

"We always hope that we don't have to respond to large emergencies in our community," Victoria Police's David Todd said. "However, if we do, the multi-agency relationships and skills that we've built during this course will be a valuable asset to everyone." ■

Member survey results online now

Thank you to all those members from across the state who responded to CFA's 2008 Member Survey.

The survey was conducted in August 2008 and members' responses were collated and assessed independent of CFA during the following months of September and October. The key findings and recommendations were then presented to the Board in December, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria in late May and the CFA General Managers Forum during June.

During that time, CFA has faced the worst fire season on record in Victoria and, subsequently, is involved in the Royal Commission into those fires. Currently, the organisation is focused on responding to the findings handed down in the Commission's Interim Report.

The initial plan was to provide you with feedback earlier, however circumstances have affected this plan. Members were advised in the spring edition of Brigade that the 2008/09 fire season had delayed the publication of the results. They are now available.

The overall results of the 2008 CFA Member Survey were positive with eight of the nine themes (Satisfaction, Opinions, Fairness, Expectations, Concerns, Change, Equity and Diversity and Training) measuring above the midpoint. The Satisfaction theme received the highest overall rating by both volunteers and employees.

Report findings also highlighted areas for further review and investigation.

For more details and an overview of the process, survey findings and the action to address those areas identified in the survey that in your view need improvement visit www.cfconnect.net.au ■

Pako's pics from the past

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

A petrol tanker collided with several cars and rolled over before erupting in flames.

This all happened back in 1962 at the intersection of Princes Highway and Heatherton Road in Noble Park (the new Eastlink Freeway now cuts through this location). The petrol tanker overturned and burst into flames on the busy intersection (although I'm sure it's a lot busier now!).

Compared to today, not a great deal of safety gear was available to members, they simply worked with who and what they had.

If you have some old pics and a story to go with it, why not post them up on CFA Connect as well? ■



Hanging Ten

BY TROY THORNTON

After many months of planning, the inaugural Victorian Fire Fighters Surf Club social surfing event was held at Point Leo on the Mornington Peninsula in late July.

It was a fantastic day out with spectators enjoying relatively good weather conditions and the surfers enjoying smallish off-shore waves until a southerly squall abruptly, and prematurely, ended the event.

RESULTS:

WINNER – Lachlan Ross

2ND PLACE – Paul Summons

3RD PLACE – Andrew Judd

ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD – Neil Schlipalius

All received gift vouchers from Peninsula Surf Centre.

VICTORIAN FIRE FIGHTERS SURF CLUB

The club consists of like-minded people getting together and having fun surfing, and generally promoting health and fitness.

Anybody can join the club, and all levels of surfing experience are catered for including absolute first-time beginners.

Surfing events are conducted using a handicap scoring system so that anybody can win regardless of ability. Club members contact each other via SMS or email to arrange weekly local surf trips.

The club is affiliated with the CFASRA (CFA Sports and Recreation Association), which has provided funding to assist with holding surfing events. Current sponsors of the club include Peninsula Surf Centre at Mornington.

The club plans to hold four social surfing events per year (one event in each season of the year).

If you are interested in joining the Victorian Fire Fighters Surf Club please contact surfing@cfa.vic.gov.au and leave your contact details. ■



Cardinia Shire Mayor Bill Pearson and Cardinia Foundation Executive Di Padgett give Cardinia CFA Group Officer Phillip Craig the keys to the shire's newest command vehicle.
Photo: Luke Plummer, courtesy of Pakenham Gazette

Cardinia says thanks

BY ALISON APRHYS

Earlier this year the Cardinia Foundation and Cardinia Shire put on a 'Thank You Furies Day' to acknowledge the magnificent efforts of CFA and VICSES members and their families during the 2009 Victorian Bushfires.

According to Cardinia Foundation Executive Di Padgett, the support of the Cardinia Shire community to the day was wonderful.

Cardinia Shire Mayor Bill Pearson said that Cardinia Shire is home to 18 brigades that involve more than 600 volunteers and that they had done a magnificent job in trying conditions. "They are all marvellous and our community is really proud of them." There were also 700 medals struck, which will gradually be handed out to all CFA members in the shire.

A highlight of the day was the presentation of the funds to purchase a new command vehicle for the shire's fire brigades. The Cardinia Shire and Cardinia Foundation joined together with sponsors that included the Facey Group, Pakenham Racing Club and Bendigo Community Bank to raise funds to purchase a new Nissan Pathfinder.

Cardinia CFA Group Officer Phillip Craig said the state-of-the-art vehicle is fantastic. It is fully detailed and equipped with GPS, two radios, lights and sirens, and robust tyres and axles for off-road driving.

"To top off the day we had a couple of significant presentations and Bendigo Bank also donated a large sum to Kooweerup Fire Brigade," Phil said. "Under Bill's stewardship council has been very supportive. We are also humbled to have such a group of people in the community and a wonderful lady in Di Padgett. She is one out of the box."

Di said that the Thank You Furies Day also incorporated a memorial service that involved all the churches in the Shire, as well as an awards presentation to all the CFA brigades and VICSES units. "After the formal part, we then had a family day with a sausage sizzle, jumping castle, animal nursery and snake handler with more than 1000 CFA members and their families – we wanted to thank the families of CFA members too," she explained. ■



The Victorian Fire Fighters Surf Club at Point Leo. Photo: James Wong

Reads like teen spirit

BY ALISON APRHYS

The launch of the new *Teenagers in Emergencies* booklet was recently celebrated by 158 Year 9 students who participated in a range of emergency activities at Maffra Secondary College.

Written by four students – Amy Foster, Tim Liddell, Jess Bedgood and Sam Montague – as their Alpine School Community Learning Project, 3000 copies of the booklet have been published to great acclaim from the local community and emergency services.

“We talked about the project and decided we needed to find out how the local teenagers had been affected by emergencies and whether they had been involved in them or not,” Tim explained. The students surveyed the local community about their involvement in floods and fires and what they’d like to learn about dealing with such situations.

“The launch day was about teenagers learning how to do the right thing in a fire or flood situation,” Amy said. “We had lots of volunteers, like our parents, teachers, VICSES, DSE, and CFA who helped make it a success.”

The teenagers enjoyed 10 different activities, including entering the inflatable Smoke House, starting a fire pump, sand bagging, rake hoeing and making a survival kit for both fire and flood.

Darren Chester, Federal Member for Gippsland, launched the booklet and said he was delighted with the initiative.



Tim, Sam, Jess and Amy with Darren Chester, Federal Member for Gippsland, who launched the TIE booklet. Photo courtesy of Kay Hawkins

“I would like to congratulate the students involved for their research and the high quality of the finished product. The Maffra and district community should be very proud of the students and the different community organisations which have assisted in putting this information together.”

Teacher David ‘Monty’ Montague, who is also a volunteer member of both CFA and VICSES, said how proud he was of the students’ achievement.

The booklet is available for local students and has been posted on CFA, DSE and VICSES websites.

Hamilton juniors get catty!

BY PETER WALL

The Hamilton Junior Fire Brigade recently created a film for the 10MMM Youth Film Festival. The film, named *Kitty Rescue*, is a mockumentary following the junior brigade’s response to a cat up a tree.

The Hamilton Junior Members spent a large amount of time on the film with around 30 hours of work put in to it. Junior members carried out all aspects of the film including writing, filming and editing.

The film was shown at a red carpet event on the big screen in Hamilton in front of 100 people giving great exposure to the Hamilton Junior Fire Brigade across the Community.

You can watch the film and leave your feedback on CFA Connect.

www.cfaconnect.net.au



Wonthaggi's star arrival

BY MATT GAGE

Wonthaggi Fire Brigade has every reason to be showing off its new Hazmat vehicle. After years of fundraising the brigade now owns a state of the art Hazmat vehicle fully equipped with all the modern cons.

With major contributions from the Bass Coast Shire and a \$50,000 donation from the Paul Newman Foundation, Wonthaggi's new star arrival will play a major part in most of the brigade's turnouts.

Brigade Officer Damian O'Connor was handed the keys by the Bass Coast Shire Mayor at a thank you day held by the council to reflect on the recent bush fires earlier this year.

Members of the community had the opportunity to check it out and see what the money went to. And the end result – fantastic!

Thornton goes lightweight

BY LYN CLIFFORD

Thornton Fire Brigade recently received a new Ultra Light Tanker to complement its existing CFA Heavy Tanker.

The new appliance has been largely funded by a State Government grant through the Community Safety Emergency Support Program, under which the brigade funded one-third of the cab-chassis and the Government, the other two-thirds.

The purchase of the specially strengthened cab-chassis was only possible due to the generosity of the local community and service clubs. Additionally, a large business in the district and a few clubs from further afield have also contributed to the project.

The Ultra Light Tanker carries 550 litres of water (an improvement of 150 litres over the slip-on units) with a diesel-powered pump. It can also operate from reticulated water supplies in townships.

"It gives us the ability to operate in tight areas, on steep country where access is limited, and to get in quickly. This is a real step forward for the brigade in being able to better protect the community," Captain Phil Cox said.



Thornton's Graham Clifford (left) and Captain Phil Cox with the new Ultra Light Tanker



Minister Cameron with Stradbroke brigade members, the tanker and thank you plaque.
Photo: Keith Pakenham

Strengthening Stradbroke

BY HELEN GODDARD

Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Bob Cameron, handed over the keys for a new tanker at Stradbroke as part of Community Cabinet on Tuesday 16 June.

The tanker, made by Varley Engineering, is built on a Hino dual cab 4WD chassis and has all the safety features we would expect of a new vehicle. It cost around \$300,000 and was very gratefully received by Stradbroke brigade.

Volunteers from Stradbroke made a significant contribution to the February 2009 fires and this was acknowledged by the Minister in presenting a 'thank you' plaque to Captain John Mowat, representing the brigade.

CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy and General Manager Gippsland Malcolm McKenzie were on hand for the presentation. Malcolm acknowledged the support and assistance of the Government in building and strengthening communities.

Also present was the Secretary of the Department of Justice, Penny Armytage. Penny was pleased to be able to meet Stradbroke brigade members and was able to inspect first-hand the features of the new vehicle.

Hino recognises CFA's hard work

Director Asset Management Mark Connell accepted the keys to a 300 Series Trade Ace donated by Hino Australia to assist with State Logistics. Mark said the new 300 Series will be used to support incident response activities. It features a steel tray with ladder racks, easy start – take off assist, dual SRS airbags and ABS Brakes with Electronic Brakeforce Distribution.



Hino Australia national sales manager, Enzo Magistro (right) presents CFA Director Asset Management, Mark Connell, with the keys to a new Hino 300 Series. Photo: Keith Pakenham

Wallan's welcome additions

BY KRIS PERKOVIC

The new \$1.3 million Wallan Fire Station was opened in June by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron.

The new station is a welcome and much needed addition to the Wallan community, a small but rapidly growing township on Melbourne's outer northern fringes.

The station is located next to the new Wallan Police Station, forming part of an emergency services precinct. The new station has four engine bays, offices and a large multipurpose room that is already being used by local community groups.

Minister Cameron also handed over a new Ultra Light Tanker, funded through the Community Safety Emergency Support Program, at the opening.

The tanker is built on a Nissan Patrol body with water tank capacity of 550 litres and uses a Class A foam system, which makes it suitable for minor structure fire attack.





Joy at Gorae West

BY MATHEW DEANS

On Sunday 28 June 2008, Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services, Danielle Green officially opened the new fire station at Gorae West to the joy of members from the local and surrounding communities.

Gorae West members are thankful for their new station, which has greatly improved the access to their firefighting appliances, relieving them from the need to squeeze between the vehicles to gain access.

The new fire station also provides an excellent venue to have brigade meetings and training. It will be a great asset to the Gorae West and surrounding communities well into the future.



Cavendish goes first class

BY MATHEW DEANS

Also on Sunday 28 June 2008, Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services, Danielle Green officially opened the new fire station at Cavendish.

More than 60 brigade members together with their families and the Cavendish community celebrated the \$380,000 fire station opening. The new station replaces the 50-year-old station that was described by Brigade Captain Gary Hearn as, "tired and old fashioned".

The small community north of Hamilton was delighted to receive such a great facility and Gary described the new station as "first class".

State of the art at Toora

BY MATT GAGE

May 2009 saw the official opening of the new Toora Fire Station. CFA Board member David Gibbs joined Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron to declare the building officially open.

Because it was constructed on the same site as the old station, Toora brigade had been working out of the local police station for the previous 12 months. Captain Rany Argento was only too happy to share stories of various turn outs and the challenge to service the community from the back yard of the local police station.

Well worth the wait with all the 'modern cons', Toora Fire Brigade is now the talk of the town, and rightly so. It's well worth the stop if you drive to Toora. The members will be only too happy to show you around. A proud achievement for Toora and CFA.



Traralgon opens its doors

BY TERRY GOODWIN

Sunday 31 May 2009 saw the official opening of the Traralgon Fire Station by CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy. It was exactly 40 years to the day that the previous station on Breed Street was itself opened. Situated on the old Latrobe Regional Hospital site on the Princes Highway, the new station now provides the brigade with very modern facilities.

The opening was attended by a large crowd of dignitaries, CFA Members and general public. The day started with a march from the old station in Breed Street, led by some old vehicles including Traralgon's horse-drawn pump, which was seen in action during the afternoon. Following the opening, officials and guests were given a guided tour of the station.



Photo: Keith Pakenham

Weering/Eurack hopes to pull a crowd

BY JANETTE MARTIN

The new Weering/Eurack Fire Station was opened in late June. It has plenty of room to hold meetings and functions, a double engine bay, workshop area, PPE racks and space for a kitchenette. And, most welcome, a private bathroom with a toilet and sink.

The opening took place on a glorious sunny day, with the Colac brass band looking and sounding fabulous. Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services, Danielle Green, Member for Yan Yean, kindly came all the way out to our district to officially declare the new station open.

Our member base is in need of some more young blood. We hope our new modern facilities will help attract the young people that are needed to ensure our brigade can continue to service and protect the community as it has done so well for 60 proud years.

We would like to thank the efforts of the Colac CFA Management Team for making all this happen, and for their constant support.

Warragul hosts Warrington

BY GLEN TARRANT

Warragul Fire Brigade held its annual presentation dinner at the fire station in Gladstone street, Warragul on Saturday 11 July. Acting Chief Officer Steve Warrington attended the dinner and said: "The volunteer spirit and ethos has allowed for a proud and valued tradition to continue within Warragul. It is a pleasure to help celebrate the achievement of the Warragul Fire Brigade tonight with brigade members and families.

"For your efforts during the extreme conditions leading into, during and post February 7, volunteer members here at Warragul and the brigades within the district can hold their heads high with pride. I am proud to be here tonight to celebrate your achievements".

Warragul Fire Brigade Captain Paul Tandberg said: "The Warragul Fire Brigade has prided itself in the committed service to the community, 'Always Ready' to help and I find it an honour to be leading this fine community-minded brigade."

Steve presented CFA Long Service Awards and National Medal Awards during the dinner to Warragul Fire Brigade Members. The night ended with the presentations of the internal brigade awards for 2008-2009.



Region 10 Operations Officer Allan Rankin presents Dargo Captain Brian Madigan with the brigade's 50-year certificate

Dargo's day on the green

BY MARILYN ROWE

Dargo Rural Fire Brigade celebrated more than 50 years of service to the local community earlier this year with a barbecue lunch open to all members of the community and CFA personnel.

Region 10 Operations Officer Allan Rankin presented the brigade with a 50-year certificate, as well as medals and certificates to members.



(L to R) Craig Lapsley, David Meyer, Ken Schurmann, Hartley Nagorcka, Leon Prest, Captain Stuart Graham and Operations Manager Mick Harris

A great night at Tarrington

BY MICK HARRIS

An awards presentation night was held at the Tarrington Hall on Saturday 13 June 2009.

Many awards were presented to members for long service ranging from 10 years to 50 years.

A great night was enjoyed by those present with former Deputy Chief Officer Craig Lapsley attending as a guest speaker. Craig gave all present an insight into his role in emergency preparedness and response within the Department of Human Services.



Lindsay receiving a plaque from Outer Metro Norwest General Manager Gill Metz

A lifetime of service

BY KRIS PERKOVIC

After 45 years of service, long-serving Whittlesea-Diamond Valley member Lindsay Williamson attended his final meeting as the CFA delegate to the Whittlesea Municipal Fire Prevention Committee (MFPC) in June, a role he has fulfilled with distinction since 1964.

Outer Metro Norwest General Manager Gill Metz praised Lindsay's contribution to the MFPC, and to CFA, over an extended period of service.

"Lindsay was a tremendously respected member of the MFPC and spoke with passion about the importance of community safety. His presence on the committee will be missed," Gill said.

Lindsay, 79, first joined Epping brigade in 1945 as a 15-year-old and has been a member for 64 years including 25 years as Captain of South Morang, 19 years at Epping and Mernda brigades and eight years as Deputy Group Officer with the Whittlesea/Diamond Valley Group. He remains a member with Mernda.

Lindsay praised the work of the Municipal Fire Prevention Committee, said he would miss their friendship and wished them well in their future work.

AFSMs to worthy three

Three CFA members were awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) as part of this year's Queen's Birthday Honours.

David Gibbs (Somers brigade), Jim Read (Scoresby brigade) and Bruce Pickett (Geelong West brigade) all received the award.

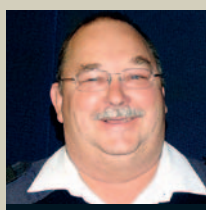
The AFSM is awarded for service seen to demonstrate a high degree of resource and devotion to duty in a particular situation, or in the exemplary discharge of special duties above and beyond normal work. For details on David's, Jim's and Bruce's citations, visit www.cfaconnect.net.au



David Gibbs



Jim Read



Bruce Pickett

Barnawartha honoured

BY GEOFFREY BARTER

Barnawartha Rural Fire Brigade had the honour of three members receiving a National Medal and another receiving a bar to add to the medal previously awarded in July.

Given the significance of the achievements it was great to have Acting Chief Officer Steve Warrington along with the Region 24 Operations Manager Paul King and his wife Helen in attendance.

Forty-seven people attended what was a great evening topped off by the wonderful meals done at the Barnawartha Hotel. See CFA Connect for a list of award winners. www.cfaconnect.net.au



David Grylls presents Pam with the award

Award goes full circle in South Gippsland

BY MATT GAGE

South Gippsland Group held its annual dinner at Hedley earlier this year. The dinner is part of the annual Peter Ryan Memorial Award, named in honour of an outstanding member of the Hedley Brigade who was lost at sea seven years ago. Peter's wife Pam began the award, which is now in its seventh year, and is presented to CFA members within the South Gippsland Group for outstanding service.

Little did Pam know, this year's Peter Ryan Memorial Award would go to her, an active member within the Hedley brigade and secretary of the South Gippsland Group. Pam has contributed so much to the community, it was time her efforts were known.

In other service awards, Region 9 Operations Manager Dave Sherry had his work cut out with 81 due. It was great to see a total of more than 1000 years of service recognised.

A great night was enjoyed by all with special thanks to BASO Dave Walters for his efforts to arrange such a big event.

Region 11 restoring the past

BY GAVIN HOPE

Region 11 members are restoring a 1974 International D1610 2WD Tanker. I first discovered the vehicle while conducting the annual Section 29 Inspection at South East Fibre Exports (SEFE) pulp mill at Eden NSW.

SEFE Forestry Industry Brigade (FIB) Captain Dean Goodyer was showing me over their newly acquired tanker when he mentioned they had decommissioned their old ex-CFA tanker. "It's up in that garage over there," he said. He lifted the roller door and to my amazement there was a 1610 in virtually mint condition. I fired her up and turned on the twin reds. It took me straight back to my early days as a vol in Geelong. It still had the original CFA log book in the glove box with entries from CFA brigades Teddywaddy, Watchem and Murrabit all in Region 20.

Dean could see the glint in my eye! After some negotiation between Dean, SEFE management and me, SEFE very kindly agreed to donate her back to CFA for restoration and historical purposes.

We picked her up early in June and drove her from Eden to Bairnsdale in an afternoon. There were some weird noises coming from the rear end and heaps of back-firing but we somehow made it. Since then we have had great support from the DMOs and local businesses. We meet most Saturday mornings at the workshops to work on the tanker.

The cab chassis is in great condition for its age but there is a lot of rust in the tray. So it was decided to remove everything and start with a new tray. To this point we have stripped her back to cab chassis ready for sand blasting and repainting. The 600-gallon tank and tray will also be sand blasted ready for reconstruction and painting.

The aim is to get her back to as close to original 1974 standard as possible. I have a brass bell but need the electric striker mechanism. Old photos would also be appreciated. I have been able to scrounge most of the other items of equipment that we need from fire sheds in Region 11. And yes, I asked the Captains first!

Gavin is a Region 11 Operations Officer.



Just arrived at R11 HQ Bairnsdale after the hand over and long drive from SEFE FIB Eden, NSW, 6 June 2009



Original pump with non original hose reels, class A foam system and lockers



Tray and tank removed for sand blasting

Environmental success

BY HELEN BULL

The winners of the inaugural CFA Environmental Sustainability Awards were announced in June. The awards recognise the achievements of CFA members in building environmental sustainability into our business.

2009 winners:

Road and Rail Fire Management Project

For building environmentally-sustainable practices into fire management planning and works.

CFA HQ Green Team

For achieving silver Waste Wise certification for CFA HQ.

2009 Championships Committees

For demonstrating their commitment to the environment.

Former CEO Neil Bibby

For leadership in embedding sustainability in CFA

For full details of the awards, visit www.cfaconnect.net.au

Kitting out Kinglake

BY JOHN COLLINS

I was a member of a four-person Peer Support Team that was sent from the South Australian Fire Service earlier this year to help look after the members of Region 13 Headquarters, Toolangi, Kinglake West and, especially, Kinglake.

The involvement of our two peer groups seemed very positive with a genuine acceptance that we South Aussies (or Mexicans as they called us) had made the effort to come and help. The difference those four days seemed to make, especially to the guys and girls of Kinglake was quite amazing.

During our visits to Kinglake there were enquiries on several occasions asking whether we could give them our t-shirts. Of course we couldn't because we needed to wear them while on duty!

These people's experiences really moved us and meeting the Kinglake brigade was life changing. So before leaving we made a promise to try to get them some South Australian Fire Service t-shirts.

We needed 40 to fulfil our promise to Kinglake, and the funding to make the garments came from our Professional Firefighter Charity Foundation. The good news is we secured t-shirts for everyone!

Training put to use in Kyneton

BY GREG MCINTYRE

A Kyneton CFA member on his way home from work was able to apply basic First Aid skills learned as a firefighter to aid a young car accident victim in May.

The four-year-old boy was unconscious with head injuries after being struck by a car in Kyneton.

The CFA member was passing by at the time of the incident and initiated first aid procedures. He was able to assist in maintaining an open airway while waiting for the arrival of the ambulance service.

The child was taken by Air Ambulance to the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne where his condition was described the next morning as stable.

The CFA member, who prefers to remain unnamed, said that he was glad to be able to help this unfortunate child in a small way. "It was a scary situation, but a relief to have the necessary training to know the simple actions that could help preserve life until specialised medical help could get to the scene," he said.



Paying it forward in Region 7

BY DAVID GRAHAM

On Tuesday 9 June 2009 CFA firefighter Mike Garoni (Narre Warren North Fire Brigade) handed the keys to his Toyota Corolla to another CFA member from Region 7 and his wife.

Mike, having been very lucky in winning a brand new Toyota RAV4 a week earlier in a raffle, decided he wanted to gift his existing car to someone in need. He didn't need to search far!

Mike was aware that a fellow CFA member was having a rough trot after breaking a leg back in March. As a result, the member and his wife had lost the family sedan as income dried up and the bills mounted.

Mike and his wife Kim decided that their stroke of good luck should be paid forward and someone else should get a bit of luck. So they handed the keys over to a very happy David and Rachael Graham (Lovely Banks Fire Brigade).

It just goes to show that CFA members really do look out for each other.

Hamilton's koala rescue

BY PETER WALL

Hamilton Fire Brigade responded to a reported koala stuck in a tree in June.

The koala was up a tree on the Busy Ballarat Road. A request from wildlife rescuers for a big ladder resulted in the Hamilton Fire Brigade responding two trucks. The brigade assisted wildlife rescuers to safely capture the animal and move it to a safe location.



Home safe in Region 10

BY TERRY GOODWIN

Saturday 30 May saw numerous CFA members searching for a missing three-year-old child in Pine Plantations and bush, west of Gormandale in Region 10.

Members from Sale, Maffra, Morwell and Traralgon responded to a request for Thermal Imaging Cameras to help in the search for the missing child.

Brigade members from Willung South and Gormandale had already been out earlier in the night. The search continued until 6.00am Sunday morning without success.

Relief crews had been organised from Yarram and Traralgon Group, along with members from VICSES and Police Search & Rescue to resume the search at 7.00am Sunday morning.

Word came through to members early in the morning that the child had walked out of the bush, and was safe.

Correction

The winter edition featured a story on page 22 entitled 'Records tumble at Swan Hill'. The photo of Premier Brumby and others incorrectly identified VFBV State Vice President (Rural) Peter Downes as CFA Board Member David Gibbs. We apologise for the error. Ed.



Visit www.cfaconnect.net.au for more details on the stories published in this edition of *Brigade*

The Pages

BULLA

A PHOTOGRAPHIC DIARY OF A CFA FIRE STATION



Compiled by Keith Pakenham



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GREAT OCEAN ROAD FIRE EXPO

Sunday 11 October 2009 - Lavers Hill College, Lavers Hill

In light of Black Saturday the awareness of bushfire preparation and safety has escalated throughout regional Victoria. As such a free information and exhibition event is being held in the west Victoria region for members of the public to attend and to gather important information in regards to fire prevention, preparedness, safety and fighting.

Kevin Tolhurst Senior Lecturer, Fire Ecology and Management – The University of Melbourne and David Packham OAM – honorary senior research fellow at Monash University's school of geography and environmental science will be speaking on the day as well as representatives from the DSE and the Colac Otway Shire.

Exhibitors will be there on the day demonstrating and selling products. It's an event everyone should attend.

**A few booths are still available for anyone wishing to promote relevant products and services.
Booth size: 3m x 4m at a cost of \$100 for one or \$160 for two.**

Should you have any further questions or wish to obtain an exhibition space please contact Mark Cauchi on 03 5235 9314 or email cauchi2@bluemaxx.com.au.

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