

SPRING 2010

BRIGADE



THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

CFA brings out the Bronto

ALSO: ROYAL COMMISSION UPDATE, TFB DISTRICT CHANGES, FIRS AND DANGEROUS GOODS FEATURES

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From the Chairman

Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM



On behalf of all CFA members we congratulate Craig Lapsely on his appointment as Victoria's new Fire Commissioner. Craig previously served CFA as both a volunteer and career firefighter, and was a Deputy Chief Officer with CFA before becoming director of Emergency Management for the Department of Health and Human Services.

He has a long and established relationship with our volunteers and staff over a 30-year career in CFA, and he is well aware of the issues and challenges Victoria faces as one of the most bushfire-prone regions in the world.

The newly created position of Fire Commissioner was of course one of the key recommendations of the Royal Commission.

The final report of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission in some respects marks the end of a chapter in the history of bushfires in Victoria. In other respects it signals the beginning of a new era in the way that we approach bushfires from this time on.

It was particularly pleasing to read that section of the report where the Commissioners have put on record their appreciation and support to all CFA members and the other emergency workers that did their utmost on 7 February 2009. The Commission noted that if not for their efforts the damage and loss would have been even greater.

Our focus is now to get on with continuing the work we began last year. We will be building upon that great work that you and your colleagues have achieved in that period. There is still a lot to be done before the next fire season to implement the recommendations of the 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission.

So it's on with the job and let's all work together to take CFA into a new era of fire and emergency service for the community of Victoria. ■

Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM
Chairman



GRAMPAINS RESCUE



DANGEROUS GOODS

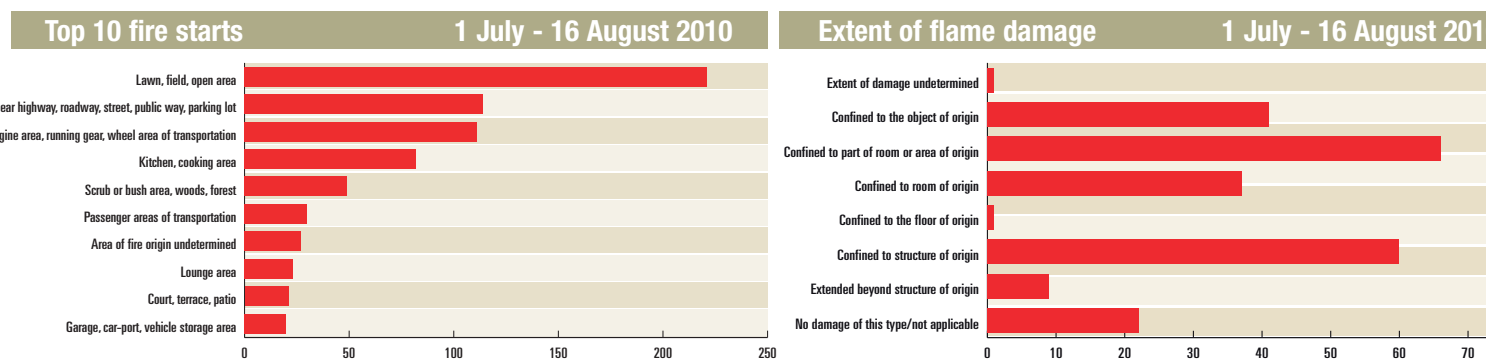


ARRO CHAMPIONSHIPS

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).

Summary	April - June 2010			1 July - 16 August 2010		
	Est. loss	Est. ha burnt	Incident count	Est. loss	Est. ha burnt	Incident count
Bush and Forest		23	14*	0	0	0
Car Fires and MVA			1,157			481
False Alarms			1,728			776
Grass Fires		123	34#	1	1	1
Hazardous Materials			632			250
House Fires	\$12,493,170		336	\$5,378,821		161
Industrial Fires	\$12,612,770		48	\$554,100		18
	\$25,105,940	146	3,949	\$5,932,921	1	1,687

*These figures only represent Forest and Bush fires and Scrub or Bush and Grass mixture fires larger than one hectare # larger than one hectare



Cover: CFA brigades are sitting higher than ever before with the introduction of the Bronto 42 metre ladder platform. Turn to page 16 to read more about the latest aerial appliances. Photo by Keith Pakenham

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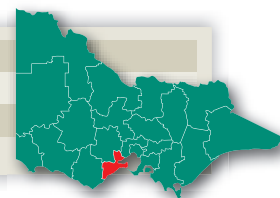


Photos by Mick McGuinness

Avalon air drama

BY LEITH HILLARD

Incident: Avalon rescue
District: 7
Date: 23 July 2010
Brigades: Geelong, Corio, Lara



The call went out around noon on 23 July for assistance at Avalon Airport. An air traffic controller in the control tower had begun to have a heart attack. Operations Officer Mick McGuinness was the Regional Duty Officer that day and takes up the story. “The Avalon Airport Fire and Rescue crew stationed at the airport stabilised the man before the ambulance arrived. Ambo officers were able to reach the patient in the tower via an internal winding staircase, but the access is very limited. “The airport is in the Lara brigade response area so they were in attendance and the Corio 20-metre Teleboom was initially activated.

The airport firies knew the capability of our platform and they liaised with Lara on scene to confirm that the Teleboom wasn't suitable – it doesn't have a cage on top to carry a stretcher. The Bronto had not yet been commissioned into service. So our platform was deemed more suitable.” Six members from Geelong City C platoon responded along with their Heavy Rescue Unit, complete with stretcher and the 30-metre hydraulic platform. “There was good driveway access,” Mick says, “so we could get right beside the tower. The gentleman was put on the stretcher which was lifted to handrail height onto the cage and secured. It was all done pretty quickly and he was taken to hospital. “We train with the ambos and the Avalon crew occasionally and that means we're all familiar with each other's capabilities.” ■ **For more info on the Brontos please see the feature story on page 16.**

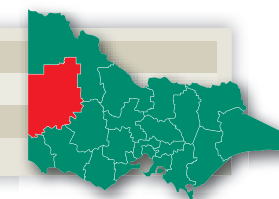


Photos by Jamie Chandler

Downhill ride for Grampians tourists

BY LEITH HILLARD

Incident: Grampians rescue
District: 17
Date: 4 August 2010
Brigades: Laharum, Halls Gap, Horsham



Jamie Chandler, Deputy Group Officer 2 of the Grampians group and Wonondah Captain, makes his living from truck and cargo recovery. He has seen all manner of chaos and disaster. When he was called out to an incident on Zumsteins Halls Gap Road/ Mt Victory Road marked ‘Car 200 metres down embankment’, he held out little hope for the passengers. “It's a narrow, winding road with a sheer drop off. Beautiful views,” he says. “It was amazing to get there and see the passenger climbing up.” Still trapped in the car, however, was the passenger's wife.

“The car wasn't secure. It could have slipped a further 80 metres at any time so that also meant the paramedics couldn't work safely. “The Laharum tanker was on the scene so it was a case of improvising. We grabbed every length of hose off the truck and tied the first one to a tree on the roadside edge. We used it to climb down and then tied the next hose to it and around a tree all the way down. “We hooked chains around the chassis rails and tied them back to trees. The tank hadn't ruptured but we did have a concern about it rupturing when we recovered the car later, because about 70 metres away was a creek that leads to the Horsham water supply. “I stood Halls Gap, Horsham and Brimpaen down as we needed to keep room on the road for a second ambulance and two SES trucks. We were all part of the grunt that assisted as the patient was winched up the hill. “About 40 members of various emergency services took part in the rescue, which lasted about four hours. It was a very difficult recovery process and everyone could walk away with their heads held high.” ■

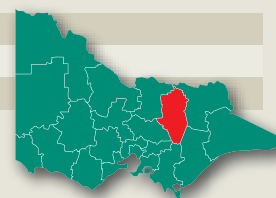


Photo by Rob Gardiner

Maindample loses "second home"

BY SOPHIE JACKSON

Incident: Maindample structure fire
District: 23
Date: 28 July 2010
Brigades: Lima South, Merton, Barjarg, Goughs Bay – Howes Creek, Booroolite and District, Mansfield, Bonnie Doon



Maindample brigade Captain Ian Cheeseman says there were many locals with a tear in their eye after the Bridge Inn Hotel burned down in the early hours of Wednesday 28 July.

"The pub was a second home – a meeting place for everybody," he says. "We used to do a lot of fundraising there, functions and rock and roll nights."

Local brigades were paged at 11:50pm the evening before.

"My place is about two kilometres away and as soon as I jumped in the car, I could see the glow," Ian says. "It's an old pub, built around 1860, and I knew it would be hard to save."

When firefighters arrived, the building was fully alight. It took 40 firefighters around an hour to bring the blaze under control.

Nine brigades responded to the incident including Maindample, Bonnie Doon, Mansfield, Barjarg, Goughs Bay – Howes Creek, Booroolite, Lima South and Merton.

Operations Officer Ashley Mills says firefighters did an excellent job once they arrived on scene.

"The building was so badly damaged that it was at risk from collapse. Firefighters used a defensive attack from the outside of the building and successfully managed to keep the blaze from spreading to nearby hotel rooms."

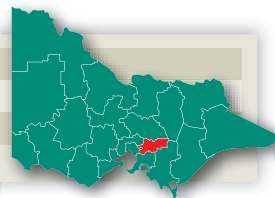
Ian says that crews also managed to stop the fire from spreading to the bottle shop.

"We had a good supply of water, with the creek nearby and the quick fill pump on scene," he says. ■

First on the scene

BY LIVIA DE SANCTIS

Incident: Emerald church fire
District: 13
Date: 8 August 2010
Brigades: Clemantis, Monbulk



In an uncanny twist, a fire that broke out on Sunday 8 August in the Emerald Uniting Church was quickly contained by CFA brigades gathered just next door for the official opening of Emerald's new fire station.

The assembled crowd was being addressed by Emerald Captain Paul Yandle when a beeping smoke alarm alerted it to the neighbouring fire.

Although the Emerald Fire Brigade had stood down from duty for an hour ahead of the station's official opening, CFA brigade members from Clemantis, Monbulk and Cockatoo were in the audience and heard the call.

Luckily, Clematis brigade had its tanker parked outside the church and brigade members were able to quickly turn out and extinguish the fire, which had broken out in the church's kitchen.

While the circumstances surrounding the fire's break out are not entirely clear, it has been attributed to a box of donated groceries sitting on an old electric stove top.

Although the stove had not been used in five years, it is thought that when a grocery box was placed on the stove top, a hot plate was accidentally switched on.

With the first call going out at 2.51pm and the fire under control by 2.59pm, there is little doubt the rapid response to this incident had an impact on how quickly it was contained and prevented further damage to the timber structure.

Crews used a thermal imaging camera to ensure all traces of fire were completely extinguished. ■

For more info on the opening of the Emerald Fire Station, please see page 38.



Photo by Blair Dellemijn

Chemical reaction sparks evacuation

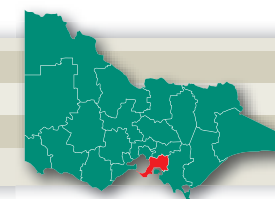
BY KEITH PAKENHAM

CFA crews contained a chemical leak at a hazardous materials (hazmat) incident in June at Dandenong South. Twenty-five people were evacuated from the site when the alarm was raised. Fire Officer Greg Christison of Dandenong brigade coordinated crews on scene, along with the Hazmat Detection Vehicle, Hallam Hazmat and Patterson River Mobile Communications Vehicle.

Crews were called to the incident when a chemical reaction occurred while transferring products. Firefighting crews used remote air-monitoring equipment to monitor the downstream effects of the leak and Dandenong South residents were advised to stay indoors and keep their windows and doors closed until the vapour dissipated. Firefighters in splash suits climbed to the top of the tanks and checked for any further leaks before capping off the tank.

Police blocked all surrounding roads from traffic and kept workers away from the site as Work Safe and the CFA's specialist teams (Scientific Officer and Dangerous Goods) assessed the site. ■

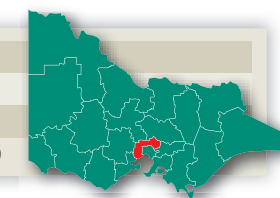
Incident: Dandenong hazmat
District: 8
Date: 24 June 2010
Brigades: Dandenong, Hallam, Patterson River



"Gaseous fumes" keep shoppers away

BY KRIS PERKOVIC

Incident: Gisborne hazmat
District: 14
Date: 23 June 2010
Brigades: Gisborne, Melton, Sunbury, Corio



Gisborne brigade crews evacuated the Coles Supermarket and adjacent shops in Robertson Street after several Coles staff were overcome by gaseous fumes.

CFA crews were quickly on scene just before 1pm after initial reports of a possible ammonia leak that had caused one Coles employee to collapse and several others to experience nausea and respiratory issues.

With the assistance of police, the area was soon cordoned off and workers evacuated. An ambulance was quickly on scene to treat affected employees, with six people transported to hospital for check-ups and 10 others treated at the scene.

CFA firefighters surveyed the store using gas detection devices, with the store eventually being assessed as safe later in the afternoon.

The store was then ventilated, and re-surveyed, and a refrigeration mechanic called in for maintenance.

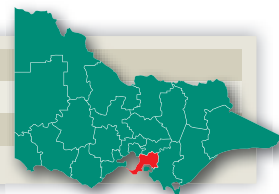
The entire incident was managed well, with a command point set-up near the scene and the Macedon Forward Operations Vehicle used for incident control and debrief purposes.

Apart from emergency services, other agencies present included WorkSafe and Environment Protection Authority. ■

Narrow escape

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Incident: Dandenong structure fire
District: 8
Date: 20 June 2010
Brigades: Dandenong, Hallam



Fire destroyed a double storey brick home in Dandenong in July.

Six vehicles from Dandenong and Hallam Brigades, including Dandenong Rescue, were called out to the property just after midnight on Sunday 20 July.

When Fire Officer Paul Caligari and his crews arrived on scene, the fire was well and truly alight and was showing through multiple openings. It took around 40 minutes to put a stop on the blaze, which completely destroyed the structure that was being used as a boarding home.

While fighting the fire, which is believed to have started in a downstairs front room of the building, crews were notified that four people were unaccounted for. The brick over weatherboard double-storey home with eight different accommodation quarters had narrow hallways and a steep staircase. Crews did a thorough search and found all occupants had managed to safely exit the building during the fire.

Police arranged for temporary accommodation for the tenants after the local building surveyor called for the building to be earmarked for demolition.

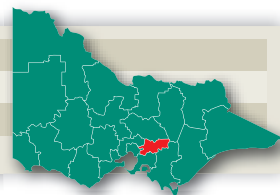
Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, and power and gas supply companies also attended the scene. ■



Restaurant saved in slippery conditions

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Incident: Wantirna structure fire
District: 13
Date: 16 August 2010
Brigades: Bayswater, Scoresby, Boronia



CFA firefighters responded to a fire at the Cosmopolitan Restaurant on Wantirna Road. Firefighters were called to the incident at around 10am on Monday 16 August, with reports of flames and smoke issuing from the roof.

Bayswater, Scoresby and Boronia brigades as well as MFB crews from Station 22 worked hard to bring the fire under control by 10:16am. Strong winds and icy rain made for slippery conditions as firefighters removed sections of the tin roof to gain access to the seat of the fire above the kitchen. Fire Officer Graeme Bertram was the Incident Controller and damage was mainly limited to the roof and an area of the kitchen. Council inspectors also attended. ■



A joint rescue

BY SOPHIE JACKSON

Members of the Portland Fire Brigade and the Coast Guard Portland Flotilla know each other well, but it wasn't until a recent boat fire that the two groups worked together on an incident.

Volunteers, from Coast Guard and CFA alike, were paged early on Monday 14 June after a fishing boat became alight.

Operations Officer Gary Harker said the boat caught fire when the owners started the engine.

"After it caught fire, the owners cut the rope it was moored with and it began to float out into the harbour. Unfortunately, the tide was heading out and the boat was heading out with it," he said.

The Coast Guard were called to attend and two CFA firefighters extinguished the fire from the vessel.

"We have a CFA radio and special pump on board the boat for incidents like this," said Flotilla Commander Cyril Cram.

The fire was extinguished in approximately twenty minutes and Coast Guard towed what was left of the vessel back to the boat ramp.

The successful joint response was a result of joint training and strong relationships. And the relationships between CFA and Coast Guard go beyond training or incidents, said Cyril.

"We often pop into the station and have a cuppa. We have a great time together."

Gary agreed. "The working relationship between the CFA brigade and Coast Guard brigade is excellent, as we train together and have games nights with SES, the ambulance service and police." ■

Incident: Portland boat fire
District: 4
Date: 14 June 2010
Brigades: Portland

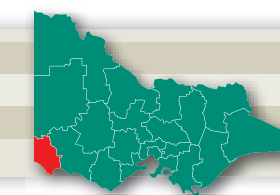


Photo courtesy of the Portland Observer



Photos courtesy of The Geelong Advertiser

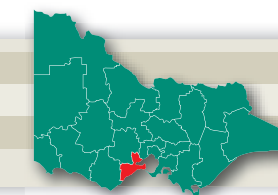
An explosive storm

BY LEITH HILLARD

Homes were evacuated after a mid-afternoon gas explosion in Norlane on 11 August.

Mark Collins was the Duty Officer on the day. "It was a multi-agency response with crews on scene for about three hours," he says. "That included SES coming in to tarp up the house with the storm front coming. It was larger than just a domestic incident - it became an uncontrolled gas leak."

Incident: Norlane gas explosion
District: 7
Date: 11 August 2010
Brigades: Corio, Geelong



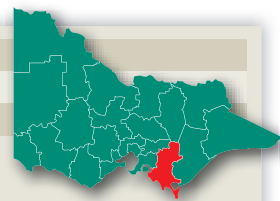
"The crews did a great job. The house was quite repairable. The fires on scene were a mixture of staff and volunteers who all worked in well together. From where we were sitting, it all seemed to work fairly smoothly."

Corio sent two appliances with the Geelong City pumper 2 and rescue unit in attendance, the latter for atmospheric monitoring. Geelong West stepped up to staff Corio to maintain coverage. ■

Henrietta's saved from above

BY DANNY BUTTLER

Incident: Leongatha structure fire
District: 9
Date: 25 May 2010
Brigades: Berry's Creek, Dandenong, Inverloch, Koonwarra, Korumburra, Leongatha, Meeniyan, Mirboo North, Nerrena, Ruby, Traralgon, Wonthaggi



Leongatha's Henrietta's Cafe was recently gutted in one of the most spectacular fires seen in South Gippsland for many years.

The cafe, which was also a homewares and furnishing shop, had a massive fuel load, offering little hope that the building could be saved. Henrietta's burned, but neighbouring properties were saved, thanks to luck, planning and a little help from above.

That help came in the form of an aerial appliance from Dandenong Fire Station.

The CFA 'cherry picker' allows firefighters to rise above the blaze and direct huge amounts of water towards the seat of the fire.

Veteran Leongatha brigade member Tristan Morton-Pedersen was Incident Controller on the night and was forced to make a quick decision upon arrival at the scene.

"It became obvious quite quickly that the seat of the fire was in Henrietta's and there was no way we could get access into that area, except for with the use of the aerial appliance," Tristan says.

The aerial appliance is not the fastest moving machine in the CFA

fleet, but still made it down the winding hills of the South Gippsland Highway in around 80 minutes.

Leongatha brigade Captain Andy Kay said the speed of its arrival and its performance on the fireground was a credit to the capabilities of the Dandenong crew and the organisation of the local brigades.

Assistance also came in the form of appliances from around South Gippsland. The nearest brigades responded within minutes, while pumpers from as far afield as Wonthaggi and Mirboo North were soon on the scene.

It was long-term planning that allowed the Leongatha Incident Controller to make the swift decision to call in the aerial appliance from Dandenong.

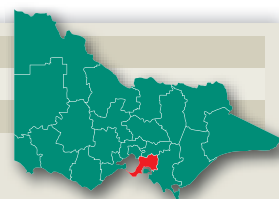
An intimate knowledge of the Henrietta's layout was a key element in their decisive actions on the night.

"Every substantial building in the town is subject to a pre-plan by the brigade. We consider what action would need to be taken in the event of a fire," Tristan says. ■

Berwick portables salvaged

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Incident: Berwick school fire
District: 8
Date: 21 June 2010
Brigades: Beaconsfield, Berwick, Dandenong, Frankston, Hallam, Narre Warren



CFA crews fought to save several burning school buildings on 21 June in Berwick. Six brigades were called out to Kambrya College just before 10:00pm.

The fire started in the portables – the science block – at the back of the school and took an hour to be brought under control. Of the six portables, four were completely destroyed, while firefighters managed to save the other two.

Both Hallam and Dandenong hazmat (hazardous materials) units attended because of concerns about chemicals in the portable classrooms. Crews required lighting setups throughout the night.

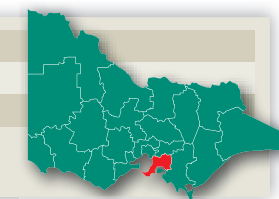
A stop was put on the fire after nearly two hours, around 11:30pm. Fire investigators and Victoria Police were examining the cause of the fire. ■



Plane makes a muddy landing

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Incident: Dandenong South plane crash
District: 8
Date: 14 June 2010
Brigades: Carrum Downs, Dandenong, Keysborough



CFA crews responded to the report of a plane crash in Dandenong South by several motorists on a Monday in June.

The initial call came in as the intersection of the Eastlink Freeway and Greens Road, in Dandenong South, near an industrial area.

Dandenong and Keysborough brigades responded and started searching southbound along the freeway landscape for a plane in trouble.

After further information suggested the plane was located at the

south end of a private air-strip in Carrum Downs, crews in fact found the plane around one kilometre south of Thompson Road, just east of the freeway.

The twin-engine aircraft had overshot the runway, taken out a small barbed wire fence and ended up in a muddy ditch among the grazing cows.

The only occupant, an elderly pilot, was unharmed and did not require any medical attention or rescue. Keysborough and Dandenong Rescue crews returned after trudging through muddy and cow pat ridden paddocks from the freeway reserve.

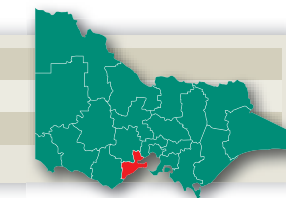
Carrum Downs Tanker and several Victoria Police cars managed to enter the property from Frankston-Dandenong Road and access the airstrip.

Following discussions with the pilot and an aircraft maintenance engineer on-scene, Ambulance Victoria and CFA crews left the scene with police still in attendance. ■

Ripple effects contained

BY DARREN APPS

Incident: Geelong shop fire
District: 7
Date: 2 June 2010
Brigades: Corio, Geelong



A fire in a tattoo parlour in the Geelong suburb of Rippleside gutted the building in the early hours of Wednesday 2 June.

A resident of Rippleside was woken to the sound of an explosion just after 3am. Venturing outside to investigate, the resident noticed a glow in the sky. Grabbing a fire extinguisher, he investigated further to find the tattoo parlour on the Princes Highway engulfed in flames.

Crews from Corio and Geelong City responded and quickly brought the fire under control, managing to stop the fire spreading to the business next door. ■

Mick Bourke



From the CEO

CFA feedback on the Royal Commission Report

At the end of July, the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission handed down its final report. It was a landmark day for CFA. One we had prepared for, and one that we welcomed. The Commission made 67 recommendations and the Government announced in early August that it supported 59 in principle.

Premier Brumby made a commitment to act swiftly and decisively, with a short and targeted consultation period before the Government delivered its final response. In seeking feedback on all 67 recommendations, the Government was also provided with CFA's views. As an organisation, we conducted our own consultation and feedback sessions around the State, online and over the phone. We also had a significant presence at community consultation forum with over 800 people attending.

Brigade magazine will go to print before the Government's final response to the Commission's report is released, so that response and the impact it will have on CFA will be covered in subsequent publications and online at www.cfaconnect.net.au. For now, we will focus on the consultation.

During the consultation phase, we sought feedback on the key topics of:

- Bushfire Safety Policy
- Emergency and Incident Management
- Fireground Response and
- Organisational Structure.

We had to turn this around quickly but we heard a range of views and gathered valuable insights that Chairman Kerry Murphy forwarded to the Government on behalf of the organisation.

The following page discusses the consultation period, how feedback was gathered and where you can find more information including copies of the Commission's final report.

The Government, in keeping with the commitment to act swiftly and decisively, has announced the appointment of Mr Craig Lapsley to the role of Fire Services Commissioner; this role being a key Royal Commission recommendation.

Craig is well-known to CFA where he made a significant contribution over a 20-year period as he rose to the role of Deputy Chief Officer. In recent years, Craig has been the Director of Emergency Management at DHS. We wish him well in his role and look forward to working closely together.

I want to thank you for your valuable contribution to the consultation process. Your participation has allowed us to present a genuinely representative response to Government from our members. We will continue to keep you updated on the Government's response and the effects it will have on CFA and our operations over summer and beyond. ■

Mick Bourke
CEO

Steve Warrington



From the Acting Chief Officer

A collaborative approach

The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission came to a close on Saturday 31 July when the Commissioners presented their findings to the Victorian Governor. It has been a long process: 155 days of hearings, 434 witnesses, more than 20,000 pages of exhibits and two interim reports before the release of the final recommendations.

The Royal Commission journey has been a rollercoaster ride for many of us within CFA. We experienced public scrutiny like never before – both positive and negative.

The Royal Commission's recommendations have handed CFA a very special responsibility. We will be required to lead the implementation of many of the recommendations that are accepted by the Government to help protect Victorians from bushfire. The challenge has been laid at our feet and it's a challenge we embrace.

This is not to say that CFA will design and deliver projects in isolation. In fact, we recognise that most, if not all, of the recommendations can only be achieved through a collaborative approach in partnership with a range of agencies and organisations, even beyond those that we have traditionally dealt with in the past.

We recognised at the time of these devastating fires that this was a broader emergency event and not simply a fire event. It will take the broader community working together to implement the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission's recommendations.

Much cross-agency work has already begun with projects such as Boundary Alignment, Command and Control and the review of Level 3 ICCs. These have all been projects involving the broader emergency services community, not CFA alone. Key areas of change and improvement include bushfire preparedness and incident management.

While many challenges lie ahead, we have been presented with an opportunity to shape the future through our roles in CFA, working alongside our partners in other emergency services and government agencies. ■

Steve Warrington
Acting Chief Officer

CFA consultation about the VBRC final report

PROCESS

Following the handing down of the VBRC final report, CFA began a short and targeted consultation period, which included regional forums and the opportunity to provide individual feedback. Both proved very valuable in gaining an understanding of CFA members' response to the final report.

REGIONAL FORUMS

The regional forums were conducted across the State. They consisted of a presentation prepared by the 2009 Fires Task Force, followed by a 'conversation' style feedback process.

Each forum participant had the opportunity to have their opinions heard through group discussion and proforma feedback sheets.

INDIVIDUAL FEEDBACK

For those members who were unable to attend a regional forum but still wanted to have their say, CFA established a dedicated 1800 phone number and Royal Commission feedback email address. Forum participants were also encouraged to use these avenues to submit any further feedback on issues that were not covered in the regional sessions.

Members rang and emailed their opinions through, and this feedback was collated and fed into CFA's response to Government, along with the results of the regional forums. The individual feedback options were advertised through CFA's official news website CFA Connect – www.cfaconnect.net.au

SIX KEY AREAS

CFA initially called for feedback on the areas of Bushfire Safety Policy, Emergency and Incident Management, Fireground Response and Organisational Structure and the recommendations relating to each of these topics. These proved to be accurate categories and the most relevant for those voicing their opinions.

Additionally, two extra topics were added when the feedback was collated: Other Recommendations and General Comments, Advice and Concerns.



The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission handed down its final report on 31 July 2010

FEEDBACK TO GOVERNMENT

After the feedback was collated, CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy forwarded it to Government on behalf of the organisation.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Because *Brigade* magazine was printed before the Government's official response to the final report was released, we cannot include in this edition the details of how it will affect CFA.

However, once the Premier announces that response, and the actions flowing from it, CFA members will be further consulted about the ongoing development of action plans to see the accepted recommendations put into place.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND ACCESS TO THE REPORT

For further information about the report and to access an online copy, visit www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au

For further details on CFA's involvement in the consultation process, access to hard copies, and CEO Mick Bourke's statement on the day the report was released, visit www.cfaconnect.net.au ■

QUICK FACTS

- 155 days of hearings
- 434 witnesses including two expert panels and 100 lay witnesses (106 being CFA members)
- Over 990 exhibits and 20,000 pages of exhibits
- Two Interim Reports:
 - 17 August 2009, containing 51 recommendations.
 - 24 November 2009, reporting on building, with 7 recommendations

- Approximately 1,700 public submissions received

FINAL REPORT delivered to the Governor on 31 July 2010 containing:

- 67 Recommendations
- 4 Volumes
- 11 Topics

Excerpts taken from

The Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission report

Recognition of CFA members

This is from a statement released by the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission on Saturday 31 July 2010. See www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au for the full version.

FINAL REPORT RELEASED

The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission today handed its final report to the Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser AC.

The four-volume report is the culmination of an 18-month inquiry into the causes and circumstances of the fires that devastated parts of Victoria in January and February 2009.

The Commissioners, the Hon. Bernard Teague AO, Ms Susan Pascoe AM and Mr Ron McLeod AM, have made 67 recommendations.

"It has been an exhausting but tremendously rewarding experience," said the Commissioners.

"We began with the community consultations and continued through public submissions and personal testimony from 100 lay witnesses."

The Commissioners felt strongly that their work should contribute to individual and community healing. "We hope we have achieved that in a small but significant way," they said. "As much as possible those most directly impacted by the fires were given a voice and their stories and views were heard."

The Commissioners also expressed their gratitude to the many other witnesses, especially emergency services personnel, who gave evidence.

"For many in the emergency services it was often an uncomfortable and difficult experience to be questioned about their actions on the day. But their input was invaluable in helping us formulate our recommendations."

The Commissioners said the protection of human life and the safety of communities had guided every aspect of their work.

"Today, with the delivery of our final report, it is appropriate that we pause to remember the 173 people who died and those they left behind," they said. ■

The Commission acknowledges all those who placed their lives at risk to fight the fires that burned in Victoria in January–February 2009, and particularly on and after 7 February. Its gratitude extends to career firefighters from all the government agencies involved, volunteers, private units, industry brigades, police, and ambulance and other emergency services workers, as well as firefighters who came from interstate and overseas to help. Were it not for their efforts the damage and loss would have been even greater. The Commission particularly recognises the contribution of volunteers and their families. The strength of the CFA volunteer base was evident on 7 February; this includes its surge capacity, the local knowledge of its members and its rapid response. *(From the final report summary)*

The efforts of volunteers in dealing with the hundreds of fires in February 2009 and helping out in their local communities during the recovery process were outstanding. Victoria should be proud of the CFA's commitment to its community. The Commission pays tribute to those CFA volunteers who distinguished themselves in trying to deal with some of the most intense fires the state has experienced. Volunteers are a vital part of Victoria's firefighting response, and all Victorians owe them gratitude. *(From Volume 2, Chapter 3)*

Fire Services Commissioner announced

CFA has welcomed the appointment of Craig Lapsley as Fire Services Commissioner. CFA Chief Executive Officer Mick Bourke said Craig has a long association with fire and emergency services in Victoria. He has been both a volunteer and career firefighter, and was a Deputy Chief Officer with CFA before becoming Director of Emergency Management for Department of Human Services.

"Craig has a long and established relationship with our volunteers and staff, and he is well aware of the issues and challenges Victoria faces as one of the most bushfire-prone regions in the world.

"There is a lot to be done before the next fire season to implement the recommendations of the 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission, and we look forward to supporting and working with him to ensure Victorians are as fire-ready as possible."

Premier John Brumby said Craig's appointment followed a comprehensive head hunt of the most senior emergency management personnel in Victoria and across Australia for a person with the necessary experience and skills for the new role.

"We believe Mr Lapsley has the leadership skills and extensive experience in firefighting and emergency management to drive a new era of reform in our firefighting services," Mr Brumby said.

In line with the Royal Commission's recommendation, the new Fire Services Commissioner will be an independent statutory officer responsible to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the senior operational firefighter in Victoria. ■



Recently-appointed Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley

House fires spark heater warning

BY SOPHIE JACKSON

A spate of house fires over the last few months prompted warnings from fire agencies to be careful with heaters.

In June, a 13-year-old Hampton Park girl was lucky to escape with her life after a pillow fell off her bed and onto a radiant bar heater. She escaped with only minor burns to her foot after her father smelt the smoke, woke his daughter and got her out of the room.

Earlier that month, a Dingley Village house was completely destroyed on Thursday after an oil heater was accidentally knocked against the couch. A mother and her three children were home at the time but were forced to evacuate when she could not extinguish the fire.

CFA State Duty Officer Craig Brownlie said people needed to take extra care during winter's coldest weeks.

"We increasingly rely on our heaters during the winter months, but they are the second most common cause of house fires," he said.

"There are some simple ways you can reduce the risk and help to keep your family safe. Never leave a heater unattended while it is in use, always use a firescreen for open fires, and keep flammable materials such as clothes at least one metre away from heaters and fires."

For more information on home fire safety, visit www.homefiresafety.com.au ■



Lisa Sturzenegger



From the Director Community Safety

We're approaching the next fire season after a period of reflection and review, and I'm proud to say that Victoria's fire services will be working from the most deeply considered approach to bushfire planning available to date.

CFA and our partners across the state have worked through a period of intense consultation and engagement to plan for the next four years and develop the second Bushfire Preparedness Program (BFPP2).

While BFPP2 will be influenced by the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommendations and the state's response, it draws from a solid foundation created by the hard work of our people during the first Bushfire Preparedness Program (2009-10).

Many of the projects are closely aligned with the recommendations around Victoria's Bushfire Safety Policy, and will allow CFA and its service delivery partners to effectively measure the improvement in bushfire preparedness throughout Victorian communities.

There's a focus on engagement and more targeted information through projects such as Advice to Property Owners, Community Fireguard, and FireReady Victoria publications, which means we will be able to meet specific needs and assist with bushfire planning at a localised level.

As Director Community Safety and Chair of the Steering Committee for BFPP2, I believe it is vital to keep you up-to-date with this program and its achievements. The next edition of *Brigade* will cover BFPP2's progress and how the projects are tracking.

In the meantime, you can also keep an eye on CFA Connect – www.cfaconnect.net.au – for regular updates, leaving comments and asking questions. Feedback and questions can also be emailed to bfpp2@cfa.vic.gov.au

I'd like to thank you for your hard work during this time of preparation, and I look forward to working alongside you throughout the next chapter of CFA's history as we help Victorians prepare for bushfire.

Lisa Sturzenegger
Director Community Safety

FEATURE **The sky's the limit**

BRONTOS ON THE BEAT

BY ALISON APRHYS AND KEITH PAKENHAM

Two of the three CFA brigades allocated a new Bronto 42 metre ladder platform have received their state of the art units and the consensus is that the sky's the limit.

Geelong City and Dandenong brigades are the proud owners of the new platforms and a third unit will soon be on its way to the Latrobe Valley in Gippsland. The \$1.6 million vehicles are the latest aerial appliances to arrive from Varley Manufacturing. These new appliances will replace the old 30m Simon Hydraulic Platform (SHP).

Standing 42m above the new Geelong City Fire Station, Fire Officer Simon Scharf has a grin on his face as wide as the Barwon River.

"Nice view up here," Simon says.

Looking down at his CFA colleagues gathered on the rear apron by the new Bronto, he gives a wave before taking control of the rescue cage and making some manoeuvres.

At the controls of the Bronto is Fire Officer Mark "Sinko" Sinkinson. He and Simon are putting the new Bronto through its paces. Or rather, Sinko is putting Simon through his as he coaches his colleague on the finer points of the high tech controls of the CFA's latest platform. It looks a bit windy up there but Simon doesn't seem fazed; after all he's wearing a safety harness and the rescue cage has a capacity of carrying 400 kilograms. His colleague Sinko is seated in a Star Trek-like command chair with computerised controls situated on the rear deck of the 28.1 ton appliance.

"The Bronto has a visual display unit at the rear control panel which allows the operators to monitor and determine what projection capabilities are available when you set up," Sinko says.

Over in District 8, Dandenong's Officer in Charge Mark Kennedy was equally enthusiastic about their new platform.

"It's a fantastic appliance; it increases our capacity with its greater height and reach," he says. "Due to new technology, its ease of operation allows for a more rapid set-up and deployment in time-critical situations."

Constructed on the Scania P380 diesel powered cab chassis, the Bronto looks impressive and according to those using it, is a big improvement on the SHP. Members say they are keen to be able to use the gleaming new appliance and are therefore happy to put in the hard yards training.

The Bronto replaces the 22-year old 30 metre hydraulic platform which has performed an array of work over the last two decades. ■



COMPARISON TABLE

AERIAL SPECS	SHP 30	BRONTO 42
REACH	30 metres	42 metres
LENGTH	14.1 metres	11.2 metres
WIDTH	2.8 metres	2.5 metres
WEIGHT	22.5 tons	28.1 tons
TURNING CIRCLE	Kerb to kerb 22.1 metres	Kerb to kerb 21.6 metres

BRONTO SPECS

The Bronto is built on a Scania P380 body and chassis and is fitted with the following key items of equipment:

- A 42 metre telescopic ladder with computer assisted stabilizing and graphic user interface operations panel.
- A concealed aluminium slide-out access stair assembly on both sides of the vehicle, incorporating two-stage extendable sliding steps for variable height access.
- Fire suppression capabilities including 2 x 65 millimetre and 2 x 90 millimetre storz inlets plumbed through a telescopic boom waterway, dispersed through an electronically controlled monitor and two x 54mm storz outlets at the boom cage.
- The chassis fit-out is purpose built to include equipment lockers with provision for breathing apparatus, hydrants and delivery hoses, 240 volt generator, ladder, stretcher etc. All lockers are modular and are able to be removed with ease for either repair or replacement.

FEATURE

FIRS among equals



REPORTING IN

BY ALISON APRHYS

The creation and development of CFA's Fire and Incident Reporting System (FIRS) has been so successful that it has been adopted by many other Australian and international emergency services.

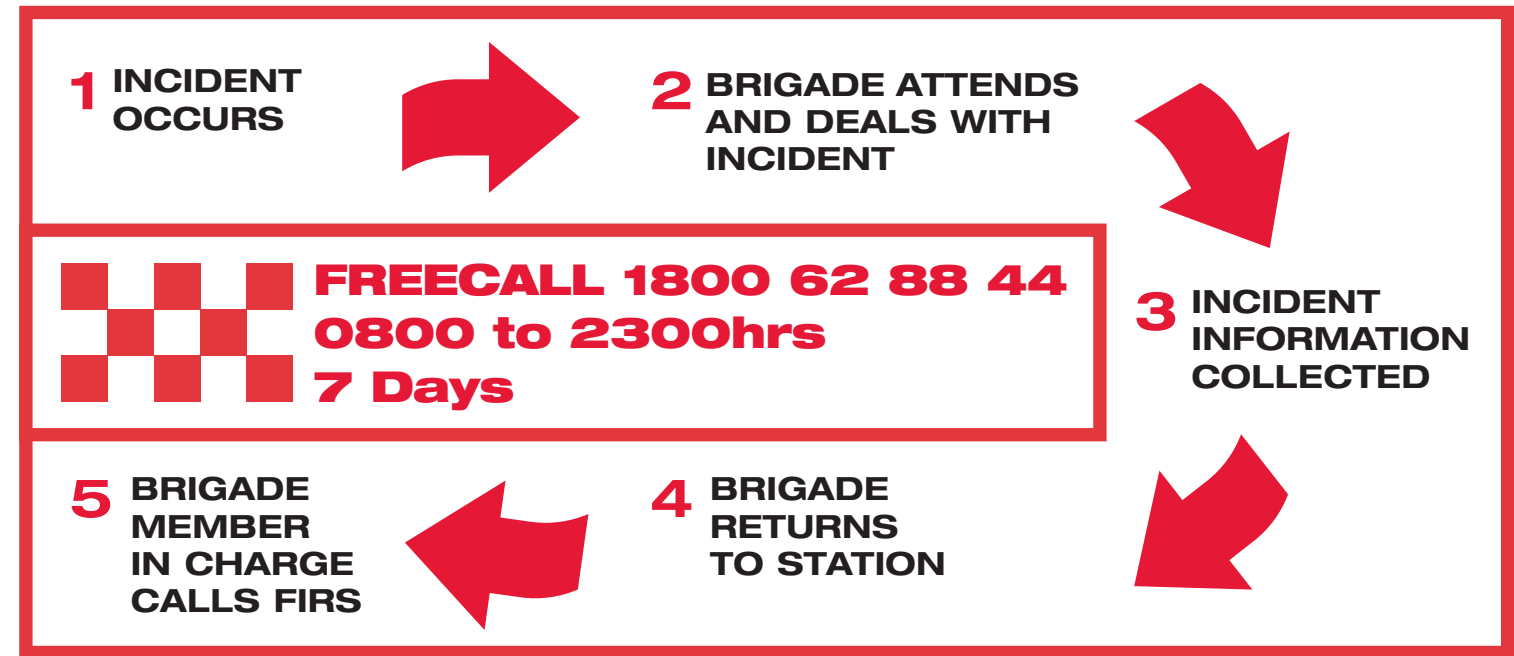
It is after 3am on a rainy winter Sunday. Your brigade has attended a structure fire and you are the one that is going to be filling out the report. As your mates disconnect the hoses, stow the hydrant, branches, breathing apparatus and other gear back in the trucks, you are getting all the details; from the street address and owner details, through to which member from your station was on which appliance, details about the damage sustained, as well as insurance information, what was undertaken and which other emergency services attended the incident. Despite being tired, cold and wet, you persevere because it is an important job and one that is recognised by the FIRS team as being critical to CFA operations.

Released in 1997, FIRS is a computer software program that allows entry of fire and incident reports directly into CFA's integrated computer network. It can provide data at a statewide, district or brigade level and is designed to minimise administration workloads by making paper reports obsolete.

Every brigade that attends an incident is required to complete and submit a FIRS report. FIRS is an 'after the event' report and for the majority of CFA brigades, the reports are phoned in to the FIRS Call Centre.

FIRS data is regularly used in decision-making throughout CFA. When CFA needs to know how many brigades attended an incident, how many hectares were burnt at a wildfire, the number and type of appliances used, how often Breathing Apparatus (BA) is required or the types of hazardous materials encountered at the scene, they turn to FIRS. Brigades can access some FIRS data through Brigades Online. There, they can see a summary of their incidents and whether the reports are complete or incomplete, they can see how well they are meeting their Service Delivery Standards (SDS) and members can also track their attendance at incidents.

Operations Officer Chris Cowley is the Manager, Fire and Incident Reporting System. Chris' role involves leading a team of 24 personnel



and managing two key databases; CFA's Resource Management System (RMS) and FIRS.

"The FIRS Call Centre is responsible for the collection of incident data from CFA brigades located throughout Country Victoria and Outer Metropolitan areas," he explains.

"As well as running many ad hoc reports as diverse as the mailing list for quarterly *Brigade* magazine or an analysis of brigade turnouts, we also have hundreds if not thousands of requests from outside CFA, including; insurance companies, loss adjustors, welfare agencies, homeowners and occupiers, Victoria Police's Arson Squad and other government departments," he says. "Because of where the data may end up, it is critical to ensure the quality and accuracy of data recorded."

CFA contributes annually to the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) national Australian Incident Reporting System (AIRS) database. The data provided is extracted directly from the FIRS database and consists of more than 453,900 FIRS reports which have been entered by brigades.

Members may be surprised to learn that it is a Victorian Government legislative requirement that FIRS reports are to be submitted by brigades within 48 hours and completed within 14 days.

Chris says that because of the importance for collecting and recording accurate data, ideally the most senior member of the brigade who attended the incident should be the person to submit and enter the report as it is they who should have the best knowledge of the incident.

FIRS DATA CAN ALSO BE USED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON:

- Occurrences, distribution and causes of incidents
- Allocation of resources to brigades
- Risk assessment and management
- Incident avoidance
- Development of fire safety public education programs

- Development of fire safety legislation and codes
- Performance monitoring
- The names of people attending incidents, so that records for each individual and brigade will be complete.

FIRS SNAPSHOT

- The FIRS crew comprises 24 people in a mixture of full-time, part-time and casual roles.
- FIRS is based at CFA headquarters in Burwood East.
- FIRS processes reports for the 35,000+ incidents CFA attends annually (67,000+ brigade turnouts).
- Each time a brigade gets called out to an incident, upon their return, they are required to submit a FIRS report detailing their attendance.
- Even brigades when away on strike teams still need to fill out a FIRS report.
- FIRS has been adopted by other leading emergency services in Australasia, including: Tasmanian Fire Service, West Australia's Fire and Emergency Services Authority, New South Wales Rural Fire Service, Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Victoria State Emergency Service, National Fire Authority of Fiji and the Papua New Guinea Fire Service.

HOW FIRS WORKS

Brigades are paged to incident, then on return to station are required to complete a FIRS incident report. They then call FIRS on 1800 62 88 44 between 8am and 11pm any day except Good Friday and Christmas Day.

The FIRS Call Centre receives incident information from brigades and enters the details into the FIRS database. ■

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Email firs@cfa.vic.gov.au

Firefighter Daniel Petrovic from Springvale Fire Brigade fills out a FIRS form on scene to ensure he captures the necessary data. Photo by Keith Pakenham

YOU'VE EARNED IT

A joint initiative of CFA and SES

Emergency Memberlink is a key recognition program that thanks members for their significant 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. In excess of 250 offers are now available, with new benefits being added regularly.

Details of the offers can be found in the Emergency Memberlink Guide which is sent out with all new Memberlink Cards and on the Memberlink website www.emergencymemberlink.com.au Be sure to visit the website regularly to keep up to date.

There are a number of 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. Members can download these vouchers from the Memberlink website or call the Memberlink Team.

For anyone without a Memberlink Card, you can call the Memberlink Team on **1800 820 037** or register online.

SPIRIT OF TASMANIA

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For more information call 1800 017 471 and quote "EMP11 fare" or visit www.spiritoftasmania.com.au/memberlink

*Conditions apply. Fares are per person, twin share minimum. Surcharge for sole occupancy applies. Limited availability on selected night sailings. No amendment fee but cancellation fee applies. A \$5 booking fee per person each way applies to offline bookings.

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Terms and Conditions apply. This promotion is only available when purchases are made directly through AVG and not through any reseller or third party.

ROYAL MELBOURNE SHOW

18-28 September 2010
www.royalshow.com.au

The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria (RASV) would like to make a special offer to CFA & SES Members regarding the 2010 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.

The RASV would like to offer volunteers, their families and staff a **discounted price** of \$24 for adults, \$16 for concession, \$12 for children and \$60 for families (2 adults and 2 children) to attend the 2010 Royal Melbourne Show.

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

YOU CAN'T PUT A FOOT WRONG WITH...



HURRY, OFFER ENDS 30 SEPTEMBER 2010.

CALL 1800 649 406 VISIT hba.com.au/corporate

*New Bupa Australia members who join both hospital and extras cover through their corporate health plan before 30 September 2010. Direct debit or payroll deduction (if available) only. Offer excludes all overseas visitors covers. Not with other offers. Other waiting periods apply. Entry is open to new Bupa Australia members aged 18 years or over who join both hospital and extras cover through their corporate plan paying by direct debit or payroll deduction (if available) before 30 September 2010. Entry excludes all overseas visitors cover. Voucher valid for 12 months from the date of issue. The draw will take place at 12pm AEST on 13/10/2010. Authorised under permit numbers NSW LT/PS/10/06439, ACT TP 10/02992.1. For full terms and conditions visit hba.com.au/corporate. *Up to the annual limits of your cover. Bupa Australia Pty Ltd ABN 81 000 057 590. Trading as HBA and Mutual Community. 09196-07-10E.

Win a health retreat at The Golden Door. ^

When you join hospital and extras cover through your corporate health plan you'll receive one month free.* You'll also get up to 90% back on dental and most physiotherapy and chiropractic services at any Members First provider.† Plus, you could win 5 days of wonderful relaxation at The Golden Door. ^ This exclusive package for 2 includes spa treatments, wellness therapies and health education seminars to help you relax and revitalise.

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And because we recognise the value U bring to your local community, we're willing to give you something in return. Bendigo Bank has designed the Bendigo Emergency Services Package specifically to help you manage both your brigade's and your own financial needs. For all CFA & SES volunteers and employees, we're offering a great range of discounts and benefits including:

- Discounted home loan establishment fees
- Discounted personal loan establishment fees
- Great savings on insurance
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- First interview with a financial planner obligation free

And, the more banking U do with the Bendigo, the greater the benefits that will flow back to your local CFA brigade or SES unit.

For more information visit your Emergency Memberlink website, call into your nearest Bendigo Bank branch or phone 1300 366 666. www.bendigobank.com.au

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Harvey Norman COMMERCIAL PROJECT DIVISION

Harvey Norman Commercial Projects Division, Victoria, in association with the CFA and Vic SES Emergency Memberlink Program, is proud to offer members exclusive access to trade pricing on our vast range of products such as audio visual, white goods, kitchen appliances and home appliances. Usually available only to those within the construction industry, this pricing reflects significant savings when compared to retail prices.

To place an order call Harvey Norman Commercial Projects directly on (03) 8530 6300 and quote "Emergency Memberlink" or email victascommercial@au.harveynorman.com quoting "Emergency Memberlink" in the subject line.

Terms & Conditions: Product offers are exclusive to Harvey Norman Commercial Projects Division, Vic. Offers not available in Harvey Norman retail outlets. Prices on other electrical items can be quoted on request. Not available for furniture, bedding, flooring, computers and gaming products.

CHARTIS

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So keep your travel agent's commission and save with this great offer from Chartis travel insurance today!

Visit www.chartistravelinsurance.com.au/memberlink or speak to a Chartis Travel Insurance consultant on 1800 017 682 and quote "MEMBERLINK".

Disclaimer: *Savings are calculated on Flight Centre Travel Insurance plans, 10 December 2009; Options Trip Plan 1, 10 days, 2 adults (62 & 65 years) Worldwide (United States of America), cost \$520. Chartis travel insurance premium for Family Platinum, 10 days is \$222. Actual saving is 57.31%.

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 2010.



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10% Discount off RRP



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10% Discount off RRP



Trade Pricing

FEATURE

Dangerous Goods



Photos by Keith Pakenham

WORKING WITH DANGER BY ALISON APRHYS

While CFA members are well-known for fighting fires, the fact that they often attend incidents involving dangerous goods (also known as hazardous materials or hazmat) is a lesser known but also vital part of their emergency response role. Enter the CFA's statewide essential resource, the Dangerous Goods Unit (DGU) – Community Safety and its dedicated staff of Dangerous Goods Officer Matt Daniels and Project Officer David Williams.

“Our primary role is to support and protect the health and safety of our own firefighters,” Matt tells *Brigade*. He says incidents involving dangerous goods could involve a leaking petrol tank, gas cylinder or hazardous substance leak at a motor vehicle accident (MVA), drums and tins of paint at a structure fire, the lighting of illegal fireworks or containing a spill or leak of poisonous chemicals at factories, industrial sites or one of the many busy freeways or highways across the state.

David agrees that it is essential the DGU is involved in inspecting and providing reports and assistance at these businesses and sites, no matter how minor the situation may initially appear.

“Some of the most toxic chemicals are effective in minute quantities, which may pose unacceptable or high levels of risks to our people when they arrive at a scene,” he says.

When a CFA member attends an incident involving an unknown or hazardous material, personal safety is paramount. A hazardous materials incident may occur during manufacture, use, handling, transport or storage of hazardous materials.

“Our firefighters need to be reassured that when they generally arrive at an incident at a site involving dangerous goods that there is appropriate HAZCHEM and dangerous goods signage, emergency manifest, and information specifically for our use in the red ‘Emergency Information’ containers. There also needs to be appropriately installed and maintained fire protection for their use – this in a nutshell is the main focus and statutory responsibility of our role,” Matt adds.

They provide expert advice to industry, other authorities and CFA areas and regularly work and communicate with CFA Operations, MFB, WorkSafe, EnergySafe and the Environment Protection Authority.

As well as working with companies to ensure they meet the requirements of various sets of regulations, the DGU also liaises with other government departments that have functions related to dangerous goods and is actively involved in assisting industry comply with the Major Hazard Regulations, as well as working closely with WorkSafe, who administer and enforce those regulations. Annually, DGU performs approximately 200 site inspections and subsequent reports across Victoria.

However, the duo stresses that if a brigade has concerns or questions relating to appropriate response and control at a hazmat incident, they should contact the District Duty Officer to arrange further specialist advice.

If a brigade has concerns with dangerous goods sites within its brigade area, they should be directed through their catchment officer through to the DGU:

Phone: 9262 8444 or dangerousgoodsunit@cfa.vic.gov.au via email. ■

ABOUT THE DGU

Dangerous goods are a range of substances that may produce differing and strange reactions (particularly when mixed or stored inappropriately together) - they may be corrosive, flammable, explosive, spontaneously combustible, toxic, oxidising, radioactive, biological, cryogenic, water reactive or gases under pressure, liquefied or combinations of them.

The DGU inspects premises with dangerous goods to ensure that:

- Fire prevention and protection measures are suitable for the dangerous goods stored and handled.
- Signs (placarding) is present in accordance with legislation.
- The site has emergency management plans and procedures.



The Total Fire Ban boundaries that will come into effect before the start of the fire season

Total Fire Ban districts realigned BY MATTHEW FRASER

The 2010-11 fire season will see nine Total Fire Ban (TFB) districts introduced across Victoria.

The TFB districts are aligned to the Bureau of Meteorology's nine weather forecast districts and local government boundaries.

The changes have been made to improve advice and warnings for the community, ensuring TFB declarations can be more closely aligned to the weather that is likely to be experienced in each district.

Previously, Victoria had five TFB districts, and fire danger ratings were declared for nine weather districts. This year's changes ensure that fire danger ratings and TFB declarations will apply to the same geographic regions.

A TFB is declared by CFA's Chief Officer and is a legislative provision that restricts the use of fire in the open air. CFA declares TFBs on days when the danger of fire occurring is high and when fire would spread rapidly and be

difficult to control. They can be declared for a district or the entire state.

The introduction of the TFB districts follows extensive review and consultation between CFA, Bureau of Meteorology, Department of Sustainability and Environment, municipalities and other key stakeholders.

CFA will begin an education program to inform the community about the changes, and signage will be updated across the state. Pamphlets showing the boundaries and towns within the TFB districts will also be available from CFA regional offices, municipal offices, Information Victoria and RACV shops. The revised map of TFB districts can be found online at www.cfa.vic.gov.au

The TFB boundaries will come into effect before the start of the fire season. ■



Photos by Alison Aprhys and Blair Dellelijn

Kings of the road BY ALISON APRHYS

Members of the Werribee Fire Brigade Road Rescue crew were jubilant when it was announced they were the Australian Road Rescue Organisation (ARRO) 2010 Australasian Rescue Champions only a few days after taking out the state titles.

Not only did the team win the Australasian title, it also took out the awards for Best Medical Team and Best Team Leader. It was a magnificent effort that saw them pitched against 14 of the best road rescue teams from Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong.

CFA Acting Chief Officer Steve Warrington attended the awards and says the result is a wonderful reflection of the hard work put in by the team and that their colleagues were proud of their efforts.

"These guys should be proud of what they have achieved, just as CFA is proud of their hard work, initiative and dedication that has led them to being the top rescue team in Australasia," he says.

The Werribee team has represented CFA at a national level for the last nine years. Like their dedicated colleagues in CFA road rescue brigades all over the state, they have committed to thousands of hours of practice, all in the name of doing a better job when the pager goes off and it is on for real.

The crew comprises: Robby Mitchell – rescue team commander who won Best Leader, Michael Wells – rescue team medic (and Werribee Fire Brigade Captain) who came first in the medic category, Lino Zulian, Adrian Kendall, Phillip Menzies and Mark Mummery.

According to Rob, the guys put their heart and soul into preparing for the event.

"We really ramp up the training two months out and then again one month out," he says. Rob estimates that the team has around 15 intense training sessions.

He says he is very proud of the team, which has gone through thick and thin over the years.

"We have all stuck together and we work well together; we know each others strengths and weaknesses," Rob says.

"And we're still celebrating".

At the event which was held at the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds, Werribee's standing in ARRO was apparent by the crowds which would gather to watch them in the competition pit.

Rob encourages other brigades involved in road rescue to give it a go. "I'd go along and try it once, because the experience you get there is really advanced training, it's excellent."

The team is looking forward to defending its titles and competing in the 2011 Australasian Road Rescue Championships which will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand and concurrently with the 2011 world titles. ■

THE COMPETITION CONSISTED OF THREE EVENTS:

Entrapped: 30 Min Scenario. 1 Patient. 2 Points of entrapment.
 Controlled: 30 Min Scenario. 2 Patient (2 Medics).
 Immediate: 20 Min Scenario. 1 Patient.

THE BRIGADE RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING RESULTS:

Entrapped:	2nd
Controlled:	3rd
Immediate:	4th
Team Leader:	1st
Medic:	1st
Technical Team:	3rd
Overall:	1st



Toolleen Fire Brigade was formed after a cricket match in 1928

Toolleen starts from stumps

BY LEITH HILLARD

The formation of a fire brigade at Toolleen was first discussed following a local cricket match in 1928. Member Graham McRobert, whose father William became the inaugural captain, says the players apparently sat on tree logs. Graham took over the captaincy in 1965.

A levy on local residents of one shilling per 100 acres raised funds for hand pumps and each fireman was required to keep a 44-gallon drum of water on hand.

The construction of Lake Eppalock meant the transportation of Wild Duck's original weatherboard fire station to Toolleen, together with their fire truck.

Rodger Kemp has captained the brigade for most of the last 29 years. "When I first joined the brigade we had 10 members under 30 and managed to get to the State Senior Championships. It is much harder to get members now with a reduced population. The area still supports several broad acre farmers but there is far less manual labour involved in these activities than there used to be. We've also had an influx of vineyards and lifestyle farmers and this has changed our risk profile," he says.

Bob Wilson is the recently-appointed captain and also manages a vineyard. "While I use locals to pick grapes, many vineyards use mainly seasonal pickers so the people are not around all the time.

"We're fortunate that vineyard owners have let us train on their properties. The brigade financed a trailer tanker through a letter drop to residents and donations from local wineries. You can't get a fire truck between rows of grapevines so we needed an alternative."

It is estimated that some 1,000 commercial vehicles a day pass through Toolleen on the Northern Highway which means the brigade attends many motor vehicle accidents. Graham said he remembered a truck starting 10 fires as it passed along the highway many years ago. ■

Tintaldra's tall timber

BY ALISON APRHYS

Answering a call from both sides of the Murray, the members of the remote Tintaldra Rural Fire Brigade stand tall despite a tiny membership. "We have an operational membership of between six to eight members," Kevin says.

These resourceful and committed members are part of a tiny community on the southern banks of the Murray River, which forms the state border some 434 kilometres north-east of Melbourne, 138 kilometres east of Albury and 22 kilometres north-east of Corryong. With only 20 people living in Tintaldra, one-third of the population belongs to the brigade and everyone is very supportive.

Current captain Kevin Whitehead is proud of his team. "If the call goes out, then all of us will respond straight away."

Kevin says that while they would love more members, the mostly male brigade is more than balanced by two committed female volunteers. One is the brigade secretary and his wife, Redel. Like many hard working country women, Redel keeps the paperwork under control and assists the brigade, group or region wherever needed. The brigade's only other female member is Betty Walton who runs the Tintaldra Store.

The brigade is part of the Corryong Group and in comparison to their country town colleagues who can do as many call-outs in a week as they do in a year, Tintaldra members usually get between six to eight call-outs annually.

"We have had 20 call-outs this year, it's our busiest ever," Kevin says. Along with his CFA duties, Kevin is also a senior VICSES volunteer.

According to Paul King, Operations Manager at Region 24, Tintaldra Fire Brigade is a prime example of a well-organised brigade. "The Tintaldra Fire Brigade and all the brigades in the Upper Murray need to be reasonably self-sufficient as they are pretty isolated," Paul says. ■



Tintaldra may be tiny in numbers, but certainly not in heart

Lake Boga full of spirit

BY LEITH HILLARD

It's amazing how uplifting a body of water can be for a community," says Michael Tempini, captain of Lake Boga brigade, of the 10,000 megalitre allocation to the lake.

It is a good news story in this town, 16 kilometres from Swan Hill. The optimism and sense of renewal spill over to the 25 members of the brigade who range from stone fruit famers such as Michael, to nurses, police officers, mechanics, engineers, builders and include North West Area General Manager Pat O'Brien.

"The lake had been dry for about two years and it was just a dust bowl," continues Michael. "We had to pay \$1200 for a megalitre of water. You walked around and no-one had a smile on their face.

"Our brigade was involved in the clean up before the inflow, clearing the bed and burning the 13 kilometre perimeter. We have a good relationship with the Department of Sustainability and Environment and Goulburn-Murray Water. They're more than willing to help. It's the way of country people doing business. You tell them where you're coming from.

"We had about 40 incidents last year. About 50 per cent of our calls are assists for Swan Hill and surrounding areas. The nine to five is a concern but we've never missed a job. We've got seven new members in the last two years and some of them were experienced members who moved from other brigades. Over 50 per cent of our members are in the 20 to 40 age group so that is a real turnaround.



Fire Equipment Maintenance Officer officer Don Witney and Lake Boga Captain Michael Tempini in Lake Boga brigade's new outdoor barbecue area

"We've always been a self-sufficient brigade. We made enough money from fire equipment maintenance (FEM) and cleaning up at the local races to put up our own shed. Members donated their labour and time and we made it happen."

The fortunes of Lake Boga have played a significant role in local history. A Royal Australian Air Force flying boat (Catalina) maintenance facility was on site during World War II along with an underground communications bunker. ■

Warmur hearted

BY LEITH HILLARD

Warmur brigade formed in the late 1940s with a trailer that was bought after a member drove around with a hat and took subscriptions. It got its first truck in the early 50s and first shed in the late 50s. Its appliances have moved on through Baby Quinns and Austins but the shed has stayed put for 60 years.

Founding families McLoughlan, Bennett, McCallum and Bolden are still represented in the brigade that today has 30 members, 17 of which are operational.

Mick McLoughlan has been captain for 12 years. "We have a bit of cross membership out here," he explains. "We've got a member who lives in Birchip and would jump on their truck. Birchip sends out a text message at the same time as the pager message so we all know what is going on. Our truck usually leaves the shed with only two on board but you'll have a crew by the time you get to where you're going.

"The Buloke West group does exercises together about once a year. We're put in different groups so we get to know each other and how each other works. At the end you get your wet clothes off and have a barbecue. We work pretty well together."



The Warmur brigade is still represented by four founding families

Warmur members formed a strike team on the Reedy Dam truck and attended the Remlaw fire on 7 February 2009. "We did work around the houses," recalls Rodney, "and lost one just as the fire was declared contained". Mick remembers a day so shocking "it burnt the hair off your chest as you walked across the yard. We had a fire at Watchem that weekend which ran into a firebreak. It was only the volume of trucks on a day like that which can put a fire out." ■



Broadwater's fire truck is a hit with the Challenge Camp kids. Captain Hugh McFarlane is on the truck (far right) wearing sunglasses. Local Andrew Duyvestyn holds the reins for one lucky camper. Image courtesy of www.challenge.org.au

Broad smiles at Broadwater BY ALISON APRHYS

Members of the Broadwater Rural Fire Brigade (BRFB), which is situated halfway between Port Fairy and Hamilton, put big smiles on the faces of the children attending the 2010 Hamilton Challenge Camp, held at Macarthur recently. Challenge is a not-for-profit organisation that provides support to children with cancer and the Hamilton Camp is held over four days in the Victorian countryside where younger kids to get to know other Challenge members their own age and forge long-term friendships. Not only was BRFB's big red truck a huge hit with the 30 kids that

attended – a mix of patients and their siblings – the volunteers and Challenge staff were also stoked to look over the appliance. BRFB captain Hugh McFarlane says it was great to be involved. "This is the second year we have participated at the camp," he says. This year, BRFB joined Ross Sanders, captain of the Macarthur Rural Fire Brigade and despite heavy rain, the 2010 visit was just as popular as the previous year. According to David Rogers, CEO of Challenge, everyone had a great time looking over the firetruck and it was one of the highlights of the camp. ■

Foster thanks local employers BY LEITH HILLARD

An emergency call-out often means CFA volunteers downing tools in their workplace and having to leave employers in the lurch. There is a double burden on self-employed volunteers who might pay others to do their job while they attend an incident. The Foster brigade recently expressed its appreciation over supper at the station. "We're lucky to have the strong support of businesses that let their workers leave at a moment's notice," says Captain David Jones. "Without them we couldn't do our job. They play a really important role in community safety and we wanted to say thanks." Retail shops, family businesses, the secondary school and self-employed brigade members received framed certificates of appreciation acknowledging "support and assistance in a time of need". Operations Manager David Sherry also acknowledged the sacrifices of each business in a separate letter. "Without [their] tolerance, understanding and support, CFA as an organisation would not be able to function as effectively as it does."

"Brigades were busy for a long time around Black Saturday," continues David, "and that meant the people at home doing the work and employers carrying the burden. It can mean a real pressure on business when you look at the financial implications." ■



Photo courtesy of Foster Mirror



The 1940s Chevrolet Blitz (as pictured in 2006) was the first firetruck to serve the Mt Martha community

Bringing back the Blitz BY LEITH HILLARD

Mt Martha Brigade has fond memories of its 1942 Chevrolet Blitz truck, converted from military issue and bought by founding brigade members. The dynamic members of the Mount Martha Blitz Fire Tanker Restoration Association have been lucky enough to get their hands on a 1945 Blitz previously owned by Everton brigade. It was converted into a rugged 4WD fire tanker in much the same way as Mt Martha brigade's Blitz. About 12 Mt Martha members get together once a month to work on the Blitz. "There's a lot of yakking going on. The cost and the time keep blowing out but we're enjoying the process," says Mount Martha brigade secretary Bruce Conboy. We've had a Blitz crane donated to us from Main Ridge brigade in case there's a part we can use. That's been very much appreciated. If any brigades have water tanks that used to be fitted on the old Austin tankers, Bruce would love to hear from them. "We're also searching for a set of the original wheels and seeking help to rebuild the front roll of the cabin which is badly rusted. Anyone with information about where we can source things like instruments or an old dashboard should let us know." ■

Keeping a check on brigades BY LEITH HILLARD

The Occupational Health and Safety team has clocked up thousands of kilometres over the past 18 months visiting some 200 brigades as part of the Healthwatch program. More than 3000 members have had their blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose checked, as well as height, weight and waist measurements taken at no cost to themselves or their brigade. "It's a screening rather than a full health check," says Peter Langridge, Health and Wellbeing Officer. "It's almost the same as what your GP would do. "On average, three people from a brigade session are advised to see their doctor for further assessment. Quite a few people have been referred for high sugar readings and are now being managed as Type 2 diabetics. It's been picked up early which means they're on top of the issue and back on duty. "One brigade has had five members reduce their cardiovascular risk between 27 per cent and 52 per cent. They're great results. "We have a team of people with one of us always available to talk about results, diet and lifestyle. Members enter their results into a risk assessment program and leave with a copy of their results." "Demand has been steadily building," continues Peter "The biggest turnout saw 48 members at one session. We saw 45 at Murrayville in early August. We're finding that brigades who have gone through the program want us to come back every year." ■



Structural PPC update BY LEONA LATCHAM

The Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) team has completed the measurement of the 300 busiest structural brigades for structural ensembles. The team says the order of brigade delivery is based on the number of non-wildfire call-outs, not the total number of brigade call-outs. Other important updates include: **DELIVERIES** ■ There have now been 9500 new structural ensembles issued to over 6200 firefighters. ■ Deliveries have already been made to over 280 brigades, training areas and associated regional headquarters.

It is expected that the roll-out of the project will be completed by the end of July 2011. **MORE INFORMATION** The PPC Project Office provides a full update regularly to Structural PPC Regional Coordinators, Brigades Online, www.cfaconnect.net.au and *The Fireman* newspaper. Prior to an initial ensemble being issued to each brigade, information packs, including a DVD, are sent to regional coordinators. For more information, contact the PPC Project Office on 1800 112 528 or structure.ppc@cfa.vic.gov.au via email. ■



Photos courtesy of the South Gippsland Sentinel Times

Lights! Camera! Fire!

BY LEITH HILLARD

The South Gippsland town of Meeniyah doubles as Rainbow's End in the ABC television series Bed of Roses. Meeniyah brigade has recently taken centre stage in the series with seven members involved in the filming.

Paddy Eldred had to hand over his captain's helmet to star Jay Laga'aia for the filming. "I was a lieutenant and the driver for the scenes," says Paddy. "We had a few members on board as well as Jay and the shoddy builder character. They blocked off the main street

for one scene and we had to fly through town with lights and sirens.

"It was supposed to be a hot and windy day but it was actually about five degrees with cold rain. The episode has a bushfire threatening their town and they had a big wind machine going like a hydrofoil. People were running around with towels drying trucks. It was a lot of fun."

It wasn't just the brigade members who got involved. The District 9 spare was used as the Rainbow's End tanker. ■

Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) recipients

BY ALISON APRHYS

Five CFA members were named as Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) recipients in June.

The AFSM recognises distinguished service by members of Australian fire services. It is awarded to paid and volunteer members by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the relevant ministers.

CFA CEO Mick Bourke said he was pleased that five of CFA's most distinguished members had been recognised for their ongoing commitment to their communities.

"These five members truly represent the heart and soul of CFA. Their records of service are outstanding and they are all very worthy recipients of the Australian Fire Service Medal."

The recipients included:

IAN WALTER - D17

Ian Walter, Secretary, Horsham Fire Brigade Group and member of the Dooen Rural Fire Brigade and Region 17 HQ has dedicated 53 years with CFA.

IAN BOARD - D7

A highly respected stalwart of the Lara Fire Brigade where he held the positions of Lieutenant and Captain, Ian has dedicated over 40 years to CFA and retired in 2009.

JOHN GERRAND - D10

John Gerrand is a 51-year veteran of the Stradbroke Fire Brigade.

ROD HOLLAND - D14

Rod Holland, Group Officer of the Whittlesea / Diamond Valley Group says it has been a privilege to be part of CFA and to lead the members in his group.

PETER RICE - D12

Peter Rice, Group Officer of the Alexandra Group has dedicated over 40 years to CFA. ■



Women in Firefighting Forum

BY ALISON APRHYS

It was standing room only at Etihad Stadium on 5 August but it was not the footy that captured the attention of the crowd. More than 70 women of all ages and backgrounds packed a conference room to capacity at a forum designed to encourage more females to consider a firefighting career.

The forum included presentations by CFA's Firefighter Recruitment Consultant Martin Penrose, Fire Officer Josey Sensi and firefighters Kelli Russell and Mandy Lake who spoke candidly about the challenges and benefits of a firefighting career.

A video highlighting the challenge requirements of the selection process was shown and Nicole Taylor of Corporate Health discussed fitness and focussed training required by applicants. Coordinator of the recruit course at Fiskville Scott Purdy, and Fire Officer Paul Elso also gave details of the conditions and benefits.

According to Acting Chief Officer Steve Warrington the event was a great success.

"This is an excellent opportunity for CFA to showcase the diversity of our recruit courses," he says.



L-R Firefighter Mandy Lake, Firefighter Kelli Russell, Acting CEO Steve Warrington and Fire Officer Josey Sensi at the Women in Firefighting Forum

Steve also praised Josey, Kelli and Mandy.

"I was proud of the female career firefighters who represented CFA so professionally at this forum," he says. "I hope that as a result we can increase the number of women in future recruit courses."

After the formal presentations, refreshments were served and Josey, Kelli and Amanda also chatted with attendees.

A general recruitment forum open to males and females will be held in October. The session is free but attendees are asked to register by calling Pam Mitchell on 9262 8841. ■

Women and Firefighting Conference: Resurgence – Becoming Stronger

BY ALI MARTIN

Twenty-six CFA female volunteers joined 100 women from all over Australia at a three-day Women and Firefighting conference. Held at The Sebel Heritage in the Yarra Valley, CFA was a platinum co-host sponsor of the conference with Women and Firefighting Australasia (WAFA).

CFA female volunteers who attended were locally nominated from regions. All were from different brigades across CFA, each successful in their own right within a broad range of roles including Captains, Lieutenants, Deputy Group Officers, firefighters, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria delegates, fund-raising and brigade administration through to coordinating programs such as a mentor program.

Julie Winzar, one of the Barwon South West HR Managers, delivered an informative presentation on the Women and Fire Mentoring program that generated enormous discussion among delegates. The aim of this program is to provide a support structure for women new to CFA and to in turn increase inclusion and develop brigade sustainability in the face of changing rural demographics.

Acting Chief Officer Steve Warrington attended the conference dinner and took the opportunity to meet and listen to the experiences and contribution by women to the sector.

This year's conference aimed to provide a variety of skills and knowledge that will assist delegates to better prepare for and recover



L-R Julie Winzar, HR Manager for South West, Susan Showler from Milltown and Hamilton Fire Brigade, and Jill Parker from Mortlake Fire Brigade

from a range of personal and professional challenges. Delegates shared stories of their own life challenges and how they have overcome these challenges and moved forward.

The Sebel Heritage Yarra Valley was chosen as the venue for the conference because of its proximity to one of the areas most severely impacted by the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires. ■



Playing a "small part" - Point Cook Fire Brigade members doing their bit at a working bee in Kinglake

Point Cook pitches in

BY KRIS PERKOVIC

The buzzing sounds of chainsaws were echoing through the Kinglake area late in July as volunteers from Point Cook Fire Brigade pitched in to help local families bring some normality back to their lives.

Eighteen members of Point Cook, including five new recruits, organised themselves into a working bee and got busy sawing through felled trees, chopping up firewood, mulching and generally helping people tidy up their gardens and properties.

Point Cook Third Lieutenant Dave Grimes said the brigade derived an enormous amount of satisfaction from being able to help out local people.

"It was just one Sunday but the guys were so pleased to have been able to play some small part," he said.

"What people perhaps may not realise is that there is still an immense amount of work to be undertaken before local people can return to some sense of normality."

Dave said members were broken into four groups and fanned out across the Kinglake/Pheasant Creek area, trying to get as much done as possible.

Pheasant Creek resident, Glen Devereux, was thankful for the efforts.

"We had 20 dead trees dropped after the bushfires and your people sawed and split these into firewood. I have spent some months with a damaged back, so your help was much appreciated," Mr Devereux said in correspondence to the brigade.

"These days the media seem to focus on people's selfishness and it is uplifting to know people like yourselves still exist," wrote Mr Devereux.

Dave said the day was facilitated by non-government organisation Global Care, in association with the Laverton/Point Cook Rotary.

Dave also wanted to acknowledge Peter Hill, of neighbouring Truganina Fire Brigade, for putting his hand up at the last minute to be the bus driver and for Peter's employer, Harlem Coach Tours, for providing the bus free of charge. Sanctuary Lakes Resort was also kind enough to provide a second bus, also free of charge. ■

Churchill reflects

BY LEITH HILLARD

Steve Barling has been the captain of Churchill brigade for 13 years and a CFA member for 24 years. He has worked up to Division Command level and is Chairman of the District 10 Regional Planning Committee, as well as the Morwell group officer. During the furious days of late January and early February 2009, he was a sector and divisional commander and a firefighter seven days a week.

"All we could do in the firefight was protect assets and ourselves. We had three trucks burnt over as a result of the wind change with mayday calls put in. The Minimum Skills training that we had been doing so regularly became second nature and crews did everything they were supposed to do. It was a very traumatic and difficult time until we reached their location and found everyone safe and well. It was a fantastic result and a huge relief.

"I'm absolutely proud of the brigade and the others who helped us. The response to the fire and recovery process should make everybody feel very proud.

"The biggest kick is when the local community acknowledges us. It helps us recognise how well we really did, knowing the things we did on the day saved a lot of people and property.



Churchill celebrates the arrival of its new support vehicle. Steve Barling stands near the passenger door

It's the reason we do it and it all came home to us in those weeks.

"I never felt that I questioned my involvement in CFA after the fires. We've had a pretty normal transition in that we haven't had a lot of people leave. Some will, of course, but many more are just as committed. I think a lot of us get a kick out of being in the CFA family.

"Communities are going to continue questioning CFA and that means questioning their local brigade members. We need to work hard at being able to respond to those enquiries." ■



Sarsfield welcomes its third brigade-owned vehicle

Sarsfield big fill

BY LEITH HILLARD

District 11 now has its first big fill unit thanks to the fundraising efforts and drive of Sarsfield brigade.

“It’s a Mazda BT50 4WD dual cab,” explains Sarsfield 1st Lieutenant and Bairnsdale mechanic Adam Bartlett, a driving force behind the purchase. “We offer support down to Bairnsdale, and the unit can be used for floods or pumping water out if a boat in the Gippsland lakes fishing fleet gets into strife.

“Region approached us about two years ago because they wanted a big fill attached to strike teams. We formed a small committee, did the research, purchased the vehicle and made it up from scratch. It came in a little under \$40,000.

“CFA supplied the hoses and nozzles as well as the lights, siren and CFA radio. The Bairnsdale District Mechanical Officer did a lot of work with the set-up on the back.

“We’d been working towards something along these lines for a few years in terms of our fundraising. We do a mail-out with an information update every year and get some good donations from that. We don’t ask for money; we just tell the community what we’re up to.”

The unit is the third brigade-owned vehicle for Sarsfield, which also funded its station extension last November.

District 11 Operations Manager Bryan Russell is very satisfied with the outcome. “Sarsfield came up with the concept themselves. It has been their initiative and it is going to benefit the brigade, the group and the district.” ■

Casterton gives back

BY LEITH HILLARD

Casterton brigade – celebrating 121 years of service – has received a purpose-built road rescue unit. The good news follows a recent community meeting’s unanimous vote to give the current vehicle to CFA as a capital donation. All brigade members attended in full uniform as a show of brigade strength.

The former unit was bought in 1990 with money raised over 12 months by the community.

“There were about 40 to 50 locals there” explains Peter White, Brigade Captain for 40 years. “We didn’t have the unit at the time of the meeting but Werribee brigade’s new unit was on display and we backed it up to our current one so everyone could see the old compared to the new. It’s state-of-the-art.”

The need for a dedicated road rescue unit was identified by the brigade in the late 1970s. The 1990 unit has been a great asset with extra equipment added over the years thanks to the generosity of the community.

The unit will remain the property of CFA with a commitment made to maintain it, equip it and replace it every 20 years. ■



Casterton brigade can't be missed with its purpose-built road rescue unit



John Eren MP and Lara Captain Fred Grove

Lara takes the keys

BY CINDY HARRISON-ROBERTS

On Sunday 8 August, Lara Fire Brigade officially received the keys to a 3.4C Tanker. Local State Parliament member John Eren MP was in attendance to congratulate the brigade and to handover the keys. In doing so, he mentioned how appreciative the Lara community was of its local brigade.

Barwon South West General Manager Paul Stacchino spoke to brigade members in attendance about the enhanced safety features these new innovative vehicles have, including dropdown curtains and spray protection all around. “They have all the bells and whistles to keep our volunteers as safe as possible,” he said.

Lara Fire Brigade Captain Fred Grove thanked John Eren MP and Paul Stacchino for attending, and spoke of the vehicles previously owned by the brigade. ■



Above: A selection of Teddewaddy Rural Fire Brigade (TRFB) members were on hand to receive the Charlton and District Community Bank Grant from bank manager Brett Schofield. Right: The TRFB Christmas card



Teddewaddy bears garden BY JENNY POLLARD

Recently the Teddewaddy Rural Fire Brigade (TRFB) received funding from the Charlton and District Community Bank Grants Program to enable the planting of a shelterbelt-cum-windbreak around their fire shed. Teddewaddy might be a cute name but for the small locality 10 kilometres northwest of Charlton situated on the Calder Highway, the TRFB is a force to be reckoned with. Operational for 83 years, TRFB only acquired a permanent fire shed in 2007 and it has proven to be a major catalyst which has united the community and provided a much needed boost during the adverse farming seasons.

“The fire shed has created a good social impact for our community.

People have brought different skills forward to help develop the shed into a social hub,” TRFB Captain Stuart Giles says. He explains that the new garden is designed around the use of fire retardant materials and plants with low flammability. Andrew Gregory of North Central Farm Trees (St Arnaud) liaised with the TRFB and is passionate about seeing people use plants which are active fire retardants. After having experienced the Cockatoo bushfires, Andrew was keen to offer the brigade advice about plants which not only suited Teddewaddy’s red clay soil, but which could also cope with the extremities of the Wimmera climate. ■

D17 on target BY TINA GUST

Last month 131 shooters participated in the annual CFA District 17 shoot which raised over \$3000 for the Alfred Hospital Burns Unit. Held at the picturesque Natimuk Field and Game Range, shooters of all ages, skills levels and backgrounds came along to enjoy a day out and help a good cause. Prizes were offered up to fifth place in each class. All prizes had been sought from donations from brigades and groups as well as from Rural Finance, which was the major sponsor. Raffle prizes were also drawn at the end of the day’s activities.

Participants included many CFA volunteers, CFA staff and Victoria Police and Department of Primary Industries members, who all put their hats in the ring for the prizes. As the day went on the weather deteriorated with the last few squads getting a drenching, but according to those who attended, it was all part of the fun. ■



A District 17 shooting event last month raised over \$3000 for the Alfred Hospital Burns Unit



Pictured is Everton Captain Craig Allen with his mother Francis

Ever-ready Everton

BY LEITH HILLARD

Everton brigade, below Beechworth, has a long and proud history, but it took them May this year to hand out service medals for the very first time: 30 in all. Max Allen was captain for 26 years, following in the footsteps of his father Jack, also captain for 26 years, and being followed by his son, current Captain Craig Allen. “We had five trucks at one stage and four of them were brigade owned. The Wangaratta group called our brigade The Everton Group!” Craig says. ■



Photos by Keith Pakenham

CFA and Victoria Police join forces BY MATT IVAN

CFA High Angle Rescue Technicians and Victoria Police Search and Rescue members came together in June to participate in a joint agency technical rescue exercise at CFA Fiskville’s training college near Ballan. CFA provided High Angle Rescue Technicians from across the state, comprising members from Districts 2, 7, 8 and 15. The purpose of the day was for CFA and Victoria Police members to observe and become familiar with each others operational response capabilities in a vertical environment. The day began with an in-depth look at the equipment and rescue systems used by each service. This familiarisation session enabled members from both organisations to look at and understand how each of the rescue systems operate in a controlled training environment. As the day continued, both groups constructed their rope rescue systems and conducted a practical demonstration for each to observe.

The combined training event was well received by both organisations, which was very obvious by the high level of interaction and positive feedback from all involved. It is anticipated that larger, more complex training events will occur in the future and will ultimately see both organisations working closer in a technical rescue response environment more often. CFA Rope Rescue teams may be called upon at any time to combat or assist in the rescue of civilians trapped in a vertical environment, either from a cliff or the side of a building, such as window cleaners. The teams can provide assistance to brigades in a steep or high angle environment and have been utilised successfully at many incidents in the past such as motor vehicle accidents, confined space access, trench rescue and more publicly to provide chairlift access at Arthurs Seat on the Mornington Peninsula. ■

Scenarios put D14 on alert BY KRIS PERKOVIC

Emergency services personnel and representatives from state agencies and other statutory authorities met at District 14 headquarters in Melton in July to conduct an emergency management desktop exercise ahead of the 2010-11 fire season. The four-hour session was an opportunity for personnel across the Northern and Western Metropolitan region to test scenarios and command and control arrangements involving multiple agencies. Agencies involved in the exercise included Victoria Police, CFA, MFB, DSE, SES, Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Melbourne Water. Two scenarios were presented, including a fire just to the south of Yan Yean Reservoir on Melbourne’s outer northern fringe; and a grass fire at Wildwood, a small hamlet a few kilometres to the north of Melbourne Airport. A facilitator for the exercise provided maps of each incident, starting with each fire’s point of origin, progressing to maps of the actual fires, and then predictive maps. Representatives were asked how each of their agencies would respond at different points of the fire spread and what emergency control arrangements they would be initiating or planning to initiate. The exercise convenor, District 14 Operations Manager John Deering, said the session was crucial to understanding the command and control arrangements.



District 14 headquarters in Melton hosted emergency services personnel and representatives at a training exercise in July

“Ideally, we need all agencies to be working as closely as possible and the purpose of the exercise was to define the emergency command and control arrangements, and for agencies to have an understanding of their responsibilities in the event of a large fire. “The tabletop exercise generated lots of discussion and was led by Graham Healy, who provided the scenario and a series of probing questions to generate discussion amongst the group. As is sometimes normal with this type of event, there were more questions than answers, but there was certainly a terrific exchange of views,” he said. “The exercise was highly valued by the participants, and with expected changes to the State Emergency Response plan (SERP), it was proposed that a similar exercise be conducted in early November.” ■



Bendigo Bank Mobile Relationship Manager Jon Champion with Rheola Fire Brigade Captain Phil Vernon

Rheola rain boost

BY LYN GALE

Rheola Rural Fire Brigade has received much-needed roof and spouting repairs thanks to a donation from the Inglewood and District Community Bank.

The brigade was grateful to receive a donation of a rain water tank but was in desperate need of the repairs to catch the rain when it came.

Bendigo Bank Mobile Relationship Manager Jon Champion said the bank remains supportive of community organisations such as the Rheola Rural Fire Brigade.

“We are pleased to have been able to support the Rheola Rural Fire Brigade, and look forward to the brigade continuing to provide this essential community service for many years to come,” he said. ■

Casey welcomes water tanks

BY MARNIE UMBERS

Fighting fires in the City of Casey has been made easier with the presentation of \$7,063.10 by CFA Warneet-Blind Bight Fire Brigade Captain Hans DeKraker on behalf of the Fire Access Roads Subsidy Scheme (FARSS) and the Natural Disaster Resilience Grant Scheme.

The particular project funded was for the installation of two 22,700 litre static water tanks on the road reserve near Rutherford Parade and Warneet Road, Warneet.

“These schemes create an environment for even better response times for the fire brigade and therefore a greater level of community safety,” says Hans. FARSS is provided by the Department of Justice and the Natural Disaster Resilience Grant Scheme is provided by the Federal Government and grants are allocated on project priority as assessed by CFA. ■



Warneet-Blind Bight Fire Brigade Captain Hans DeKraker presents the cheque to City of Casey Mayor, Cr Lorraine Wreford

Surf's up for Torquay

BY ALISON APRHYS

Torquay Fire Brigade (TFB) members are stoked by the generosity of the Surfcoast Longboarders (SL) who presented Tim Day, 4th Lt, with a generous donation at their annual Winter Classic surfing event, the Winter Classic last month.

At Fairhaven Beach, John Lane, president and Emma Wilson, treasurer of the SL presented Tim with a cheque for \$3,700 to go towards purchasing the TFB a much needed replacement for Tanker 3. The firefighters drove down in their old tanker, which hopefully will soon be replaced thanks to the surfers. The appliance attracted a lot of attention with the younger surfers, with kids lining up to be photographed in front of it with their surfboards.

According to Tim, who chairs the TFB fundraising committee, it is a magnificent effort that is much appreciated.

“As volunteers, we are extremely grateful to get assistance from organisations such as the Surfcoast Longboarders,” he says.

John, who was shivering in his wetsuit as he waited to be called for the next heat, was all smiles as he explained that SL Winter Classic 2010 which was held over the weekend of 31 July and 1 August saw 80 surfers participate and that all funds raised via raffles, auctions and a mighty tempting BBQ went towards helping the TFB. ■



MFB firefighter Lorne Tiernan with John Monagle (left) and Peter Sweatten (right)



Tarwin Lower's John Classon accepts a cheque from the Tour de Tarwin organising committee

Tarwin Lower gets a boost

BY LEITH HILLARD

District 9's Tarwin Lower Brigade recently accepted a \$13,000 cheque raised by the Tour de Tarwin on Easter Saturday. More than \$32,000 has been donated to the brigade over the past four years through the annual cycle, walk or run from Venus Bay to Tarwin Lower. This money has gone towards the purchase of a new appliance.

At the request of the Tour de Tarwin committee, a percentage of this money is then given by the brigade to the Community Emergency Response Team for their input into this event.

“Without this money from the Tour de Tarwin organising committee and their volunteers,” says Tarwin Lower Captain John Classon, “we wouldn't have been able to get this light tanker.

“We've got a large brigade area – not so much population, mostly farming land – so this is a real boost for the community. We've been on strike teams to all the major fires and had 41 turnouts locally in the past year,” he says. ■



Danielle Green, Doreen Captain Chris Maries and D14 Operations Manager John Deering

Doreen delivers

BY KRIS PERKOVIC

It is not often that a fire brigade receives a shiny new firefighting vehicle, so it is not surprising that the local member of State Parliament wanted to make the official presentation.

It is also not common that the local MP happens to be the Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services – who lives just down the road from the local fire station and just happens to be a trained firefighter as well.

Danielle Green, the Member for Yan Yean and Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services was on hand in July to formally present the Doreen Fire Brigade with the latest in firefighting appliances, a new 3.4C truck.

Both Danielle and District 14 Operations Manager John Deering congratulated the brigade for developing their skills to meet the growing risks in the Doreen area, for meeting the demands of a rapidly growing community, and for providing a high level of support to brigades in surrounding areas.

Doreen Captain Chris Maries said the new tanker was a timely addition and praised its many safety features.

“The crew protection spray system, along with the extensive rollover protection, are great features that will help to keep our members safe, while the four wheel drive capability will allow the brigade to better respond to fires in the Yan Yean Reservoir catchment and the Plenty Gorge, which will help keep the local community safe.

“It will also provide excellent support to neighbouring brigades and will be available to respond across the entire state whenever necessary,” he said. ■

Nagambie celebrates 100 years

BY ALISON APRHYS

Nagambie brigade formed in early 1910 with a fire hand cart. It got its first fire station in the main street in 1922, and in 1942 a lend lease Ford attended fires alongside the fire hand cart. This history was shared with current brigade members at a dinner in June to celebrate 100 years of local fire service. ■





Dandenong to the rescue BY KEITH PAKENHAM

Dandenong Rescue members Andrew Booth and Neil Poulton had the opportunity to showcase their skills at the iRescue 2010 Symposium in July.

Andrew, a leading firefighter and Neil, a qualified firefighter, addressed the 200-strong crowd at the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds about a motor vehicle accident (MVA) they attended with the Berwick Fire Brigade in February.

Their MVA involved a car and a semi-trailer on the Princes Highway. Following a collision with the rear of a cement mixer, an eastbound semi-trailer collided with a small wagon travelling in the opposite

direction. Crews worked for 90 minutes to release the female driver of the wagon who received only minor injuries.

Andrew and Neil, who were asked to replicate the incident and profile the job over two sessions, presented a detailed slideshow and hosted a workshop in which a prime mover and a car were set-up to re-enact the scene. The various stages of the rescue were repeated using airbags, cribbing and winching to show some of the complexities involved.

The crew was presented with an award from Australian Road Rescue Organisation at the end of the sessions. ■



Emerald's new action station

BY KARINA WALTON

Emerald Fire Brigade has a new fire station. The station, which was officially opened on Sunday 8 August, was welcomed with a full brigade march from the old fire station to the new station. The brigade members were then inspected by Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Bob Cameron.

Not even a fire breaking out in the kitchen of the Uniting Church next door could hamper proceedings. Brigade members were quick to respond with only minor damage caused as a result.

Proceedings continued shortly after, with awards being presented to brigade members and members of the community. ■



Correction

The winter edition featured a story on page 29 entitled 'Jewel in Geelong's crown'. The photo of Premier John Brumby and others incorrectly identified CFA Board Deputy Chairman Claire Higgins as Parliamentary Secretary Danielle Green. We apologise for the error. Ed.



A PHOTOGRAPHIC DIARY OF A CFA BRIGADE



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The IGA state board assembles at CFA's Burwood East headquarters for its August meeting

CFA opens doors to IGA BY NANCY THOMPSON

CFA has had a long-standing partnership with IGA since July 2000. Thanks to the IGA Community Chest program, more than two million dollars has helped brigades right across Victoria. In 2009, over \$290,000 was raised for CFA brigades. This is in addition to the support IGA provided CFA and the wider community following the February 2009 bushfires.

In acknowledgement of the contribution, CFA hosted the

IGA state board meeting at CFA Headquarters in Burwood East on 11 August.

Chief Executive Officer Mick Bourke made a presentation to the IGA board, thanking the board members for their valuable contribution and presenting every member with a Firestar Rose as a gift. A framed 'Sprit of CFA' print was also presented to the group to display at its corporate office. ■

Career Firefighter

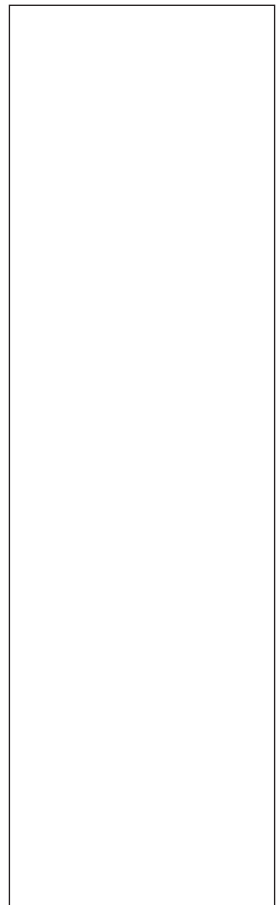
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