

WINTER 2010



# BRIEFING



## FAREWELL CHIEF

Russell Rees says goodbye

ALSO: WINTER SAFETY CAMPAIGN, CFA CONNECT TURNS ONE, NW DROUGHT STRATEGIES, CHAMPIONSHIPS

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Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM



## From the Chairman

# A lifetime of service to CFA

As you are probably aware, Chief Officer Russell Rees recently resigned from CFA following more than 40 years service to the organisation; first as a volunteer and then as a member of CFA's operations staff.

Russell has made a tremendous contribution to CFA throughout his long career and none more so than in recent months when there has been an enormous amount of leadership and implementation of initiatives that he has helped to introduce following the previous fire season.

Russell and the team have led CFA through arguably the most intense decade of major bushfires in the history of Victoria, from the Alpine fires of 2003 through the long running Great Divide fires of 2006 and, of course, the most damaging fires ever of 7 February 2009.

Over the last 12 months, Russell and the team have maintained stability in the organisation, especially throughout the implementation period of the Royal Commission interim recommendations and the recent fire season. He has also provided stability to CFA during a demanding period of a fire season and the raft of changes that have occurred and continue to be introduced.

Russell's role in CFA has, of course, been much more than being the head of operations during major fires and other emergencies. He and the team have overseen a modernisation of CFA's firefighting capacity, including significant improvements to firefighter safety and firefighting performance through the introduction of advanced equipment and technology. He also led the way in greater cooperation across the emergency services sector. He has had significant involvement at state and national level, influencing the direction of emergency management in Australia as Chair of the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) Steering Committee of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council. Russell has been a driving force on the National AIIMS Steering Committee and can take much of the credit for the development and advancement of this essential operational structure.

His legacy as Chief Officer of CFA is profound in that he has been a key team player in the enormous change that has been introduced and developed in CFA over the past 10 years. Russell has served CFA and the State of Victoria faithfully through a challenging period.

On behalf of all CFA members and the Board, I would like to thank Chief Officer Rees for his service with CFA and wish Russell and his family the very best for the future.

CFA has now begun the search for a new Chief Officer. We have advertised the position and expect to attract the best qualified applications from within Victoria, interstate and potentially from overseas. The Board is looking forward to finding the best person to lead our operational team into the future. It is an exciting time for CFA with a number of major projects ahead, including the implementation of the final recommendations from the Bushfires Royal Commission.

The Board is confident we will find an outstanding Chief Officer who recognises our proud history and the unique nature of the integrated volunteer-staff ethos while leading us through the next chapter of CFA. ■

Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM  
Chairman



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Cover: CFA Chief Officer Russell Rees inspects Operations Officers at a conference at Fiskville in 2006  
Photo: Peter Glenane

#### Change of address

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

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

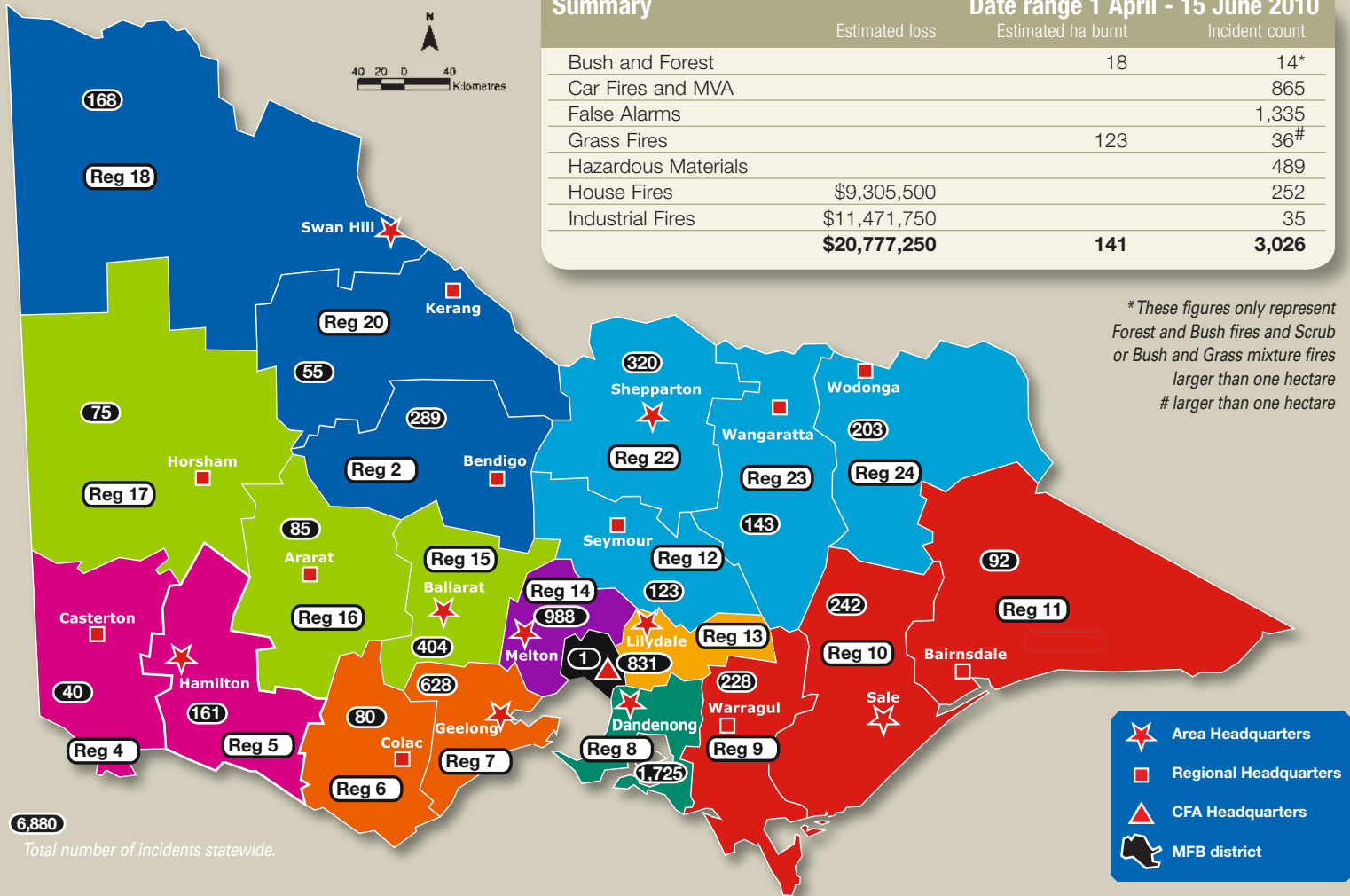
In this section of *Brigade*, we summarise CFA incidents and examine the total number of incidents for each region. All statistical information has been extracted from CFA's Fire and Incident Reporting System (FIRS).

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

Summary	Date range January - March 2010		
	Estimated loss	Estimated ha burnt	Incident count
Bush and Forest		8,018	88*
Car Fires and MVA			1,183
False Alarms			1,844
Grass Fires		3,195	196#
Hazardous Materials			646
House Fires	\$9,618,400		307
Industrial Fires	\$7,731,835		74
	<b>\$17,350,235</b>	<b>11,213</b>	<b>4,338</b>

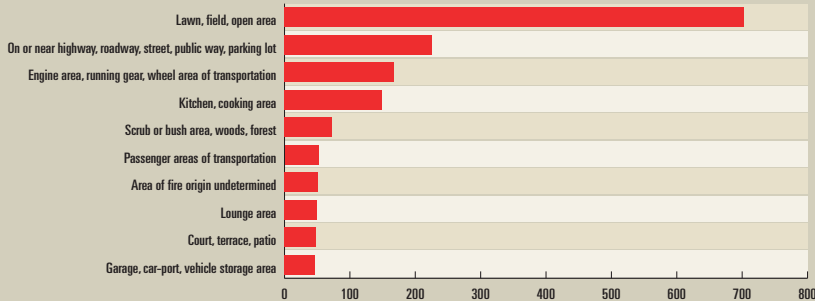
Summary	Date range 1 April - 15 June 2010		
	Estimated loss	Estimated ha burnt	Incident count
Bush and Forest		18	14*
Car Fires and MVA			865
False Alarms			1,335
Grass Fires		123	36#
Hazardous Materials			489
House Fires	\$9,305,500		252
Industrial Fires	\$11,471,750		35
	<b>\$20,777,250</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>3,026</b>

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



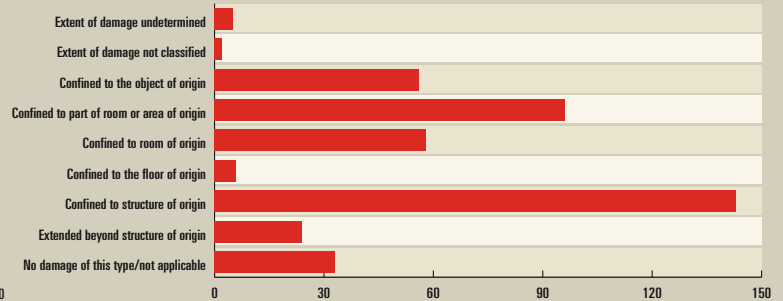
Top 10 fire starts

1 April - 15 June 2010

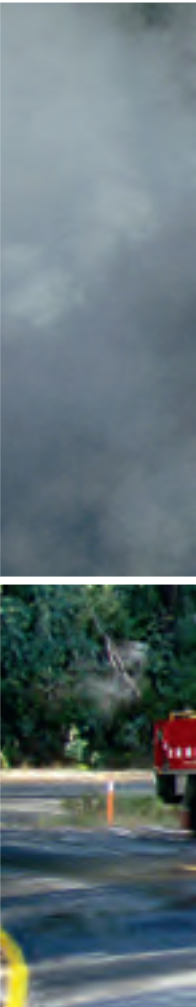


Extent of flame damage

1 April - 15 June 2010







# Thankful it wasn't worse

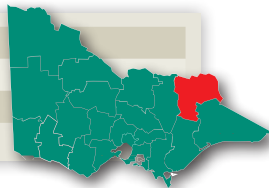
BY SARAH BLACK

**Incident name:** Mt Buffalo Rd car fire

**Region:** 24

**Date:** 14 April 2010

**Brigades:** Bright, Porepunkah



A quiet afternoon in the foothills of the Victorian Alps, tourists meander around town as the autumn leaves begin to show Bright at its best. Locals are at work, enjoying a day off or, as I was, heading home with a bag full of shopping.

The peace was interrupted by the pager screeching, delivering a disturbing message: car fire on the Mt Buffalo Road, followed with details about an exploding gas cylinder.

A small crew assembled fast, acutely aware that it could take us half an hour to drive the winding and, in parts, steep road up Mt Buffalo. Porepunkah Tanker radioed in its turnout departure, and we knew it would reach the scene before us.

As the Bright Tanker laboured up the climb, the valley slowly dropping away below us, we discussed the possibilities of what we might

find and what, more intriguingly, had caused a gas bottle to explode in a car. In the back of my mind, although we had no information about casualties, was the unknown state of the occupants.

Corner after corner, still we drove, still no sign of the situation, and still no word from Porepunkah Tanker. Finally, the Comms Officer at Bright gave us clear information on the location; Mckinnons Corner, a tight hairpin bend, not far from the top.

Arriving on-scene, we saw the shell of a van sitting in the middle of the road, fire still clearly visible underneath. Smoke engulfed the interior, debris was scattered across the road, some still alight and, eerily, a gas bottle, the side split open, nearby.

Porepunkah concentrated on the rear of the car, while we focused on the front. Parks Victoria Rangers were already on-scene dealing with the traffic.

I soon discovered the bitumen under the van was alight, adding to the intense heat inside, and adding to my frustration as I struggled to extinguish and cool the remaining fire. Unable to see anything in the cabin through the dense smoke, or find the source of intense heat, I used a fog pattern through the window to try to vent the space.





## Pine harvester goes up in flames

BY SARAH BLACK

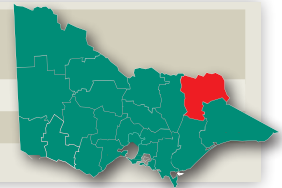
### Incident name:

Back Germantown Rd non-structure

### Region: 24

Date: 21 April 2010

Brigades: Bright, Porepunkah



I then knew I'd hit the hot spot. With the branch back on a jet, volumes of fresh steam would billow out the doors and windows. As hot oil and steam was splashed all over me, I was reminded why we have structural helmets with visors. Yes, I was probably too close.

Finally, as the heat subsided, the smoke and steam dissipated, and we mopped up, discovering pools of melted metal on the road, my thoughts went to the owners. I found them taking photos of the wreck of their car. I offered them my sympathy.

While they mourn the loss of their car, their holiday in Bright, and their trip up Mt Buffalo, I was just so thankful they were unhurt and we were only there to extinguish the vehicle fire.

It seems to me an important reminder about safety issues concerning gas bottles. The importance of keeping them in good condition, having them tested and transporting them very carefully.

Filthy and wet, I was relegated to the back of the tanker for the trip home. I had time to enjoy the view of late afternoon light over the High Country, and reflect on the life of a CFA volunteer.

*Bright Captain Paul Mansfield was the Incident Controller in both incidents on this page.* ■

There's something about the screech of a pager going off. That insistent call to action; the world it plunges you into as you drop whatever it is you're doing and head to the fire station.

This day, the pager message read: 'Harvester Fire ... Near the tree felling sign ... Back Germantown Rd ...' So we knew it was an HVP (Hancocks Victoria Pines) operation, a tree harvester in the middle of a pine plantation, on a hill, rather than a farm.

A full crew on the Bright Tanker headed out, meeting one of the HVP operators at an intersection who guided us the rest of the way. Rounding a corner, the sight of the harvester came into view, the cabin and engine fully involved, and fire underneath between the caterpillar tracks.

Two lines were run out and the attack began. There was initial relief when it was clear the fire was not going to spread to the forest and the work could be concentrated entirely on the machine.

It didn't take long before the bright orange flames subsided, and were replaced by incessant smoke pouring from the engine, indicating the seat of the fire was still hot and smouldering. Unable to get water adequately into the engine bay, the second, unburnt harvester was called in and, with a heavy chain, was able to pull the cover free.

Speaking to the harvester operator, he said he'd become aware of flames behind him, and tried to get the fire extinguisher, but the fire was already too intense. He jumped clear. As he ran up the road to his workmate, knowing he also had an extinguisher on board, he heard the batteries explode and realised there was little he could do except call us. ■



# ConnectEast thanks CFA

**Incident name:** Rowville - Other  
**Region:** 13  
**Date:** 18 February 2010  
**Brigades:** Boronia, Dandenong, Ferntree Gully, Rowville, Scoresby

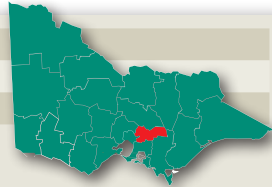


Photo: Keith Pakenham

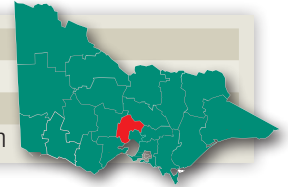
The Managing Director of ConnectEast wrote to CFA CEO Mick Bourke to personally express his gratitude to the CFA crews that attended a fatal accident on EastLink in February. ■



# A difficult job done well

BY PETER HARRY

**Incident name:** Calder Hwy MVA  
**Region:** 14  
**Date:** 20 April 2010  
**Brigades:** Gisborne, Riddells Creek, Mt Macedon



Firefighters at Gisborne averted a major catastrophe in April after a fatal collision between a car and a gas tanker. Emergency services received the early morning call at 4:50am on the Calder Highway two kilometres south of the township.

The tanker had jack-knifed and come to rest in the centre median strip, while the car wreckage was more than 50 metres away off the side of the road.

During a 'size-up' of the scene, crews discovered the prime mover's electrics arcing just centimetres from the fully laden tanker of gas, and a ruptured diesel tank that had released around 200 litres of fuel.

Captain Tony Wade says brigade members were confronted with quite an horrific scene when they arrived. "The initial challenge was dealing with, in effect, three separate incidents – a hazmat [hazardous materials] incident with the gas tanker, rescue of the car and truck drivers and subsequent securing the scene of a fatality, and a diesel spill over a large area."

Tragically, the teenage driver of the car died in the accident. The injured truck driver was transported to Royal Melbourne Hospital. VICSES, Victoria Police, and Ambulance Victoria were all on-scene promptly and worked hand-in-hand securing a very difficult scene.

Firefighters successfully isolated the arcing electrics to minimise the risk of fire and moved to quickly ensure the gas tanker was intact.

Once the scene had been secured, the long recovery commenced including decanting 19 tons of gas to another tanker and cleanup of the diesel spill and debris over two lanes of the highway.

The police major collision squad attended to investigate, as well as heavy haulage towing and VicRoads. Both north and south bound lanes of the Calder Highway were closed for almost nine hours.

This section of road has been the subject of nine major accidents this year including at least four involving semi trailers.

A debrief session was held with Critical Incident Stress peers later that night, which was of great benefit to members. ■



# Hazmat experts called in

BY LEITH HILLARD

A car collided with a truck on the Geelong Ballan Road in mid-February. Tragically, the car driver died. The truck driver, though, was uninjured and able to pass on information about his load.

Ian Beswicke, Officer in Charge of Corio station, was the Regional Duty Officer. "In the impact the truck had gone through some trees and lost its steering. The cabin tipped on its side and the truck had ripped along the side where urea fertiliser spilled out. It ended up under some powerlines and a small grass fire started that burned about half a hectare.

"I was on the way there when I heard that diesel was mixing with the fertiliser. I was concerned about a potential explosion and called CFA Scientific Officer Warren Glover to get some information. He told me that it wouldn't explode in the open but we needed to be careful about what it was off-gassing so we established an exclusion zone.

"Incident Controller David Gillett called the Corio Hazmat [hazardous materials] truck and I called for the enhanced hazmat detection unit with its specialist equipment. The hazmat detection made the job much easier because we used it to map out hot and cold zones. A small amount of ammonia was given off and about six firefighters from Anakie and Lara got into BA (Breathing Apparatus)".

Lara Captain Greg McManus was in attendance. "As we were the only pumper in the area, we set up to do a B-Class foam attack," he said. "The limited foam that the tankers in the area had was already used up and Lara pumper had a bulk foam tank on board. As well as the ammonia, acrid smoke was coming from the prime mover, which was fully involved." ■

**Incident name:** Ballan Road MVA  
**Region:** 7  
**Date:** 17 February 2010  
**Brigades:** Anakie, Corio, Geelong, Lara, Maude

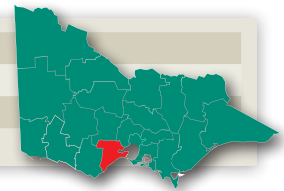


Photo: Greg McManus

# A miraculous escape

BY JENNA CLARKE

A woman was lucky to be alive after her small car was crushed by a semi-trailer on the Princes Fwy in February.

The semi-trailer collided with a cement mixer and lost control, spinning onto the wrong side of the road, crushing a small Holden Viva wagon and trapping the female driver.

It took rescue crews 90 minutes to remove the car from under the truck and another 20 minutes to cut the conscious woman out of her car. She was then airlifted to hospital and miraculously escaped with relatively minor injuries.

The male driver of the truck was taken to hospital in a stable condition.

Every piece of equipment in the Dandenong Rescue and Support vehicle was used in the rescue, which Allan Boyd, Berwick brigade Captain, described as the most complicated rescue in around 30 years for the Rescue Officer in Charge.

"The rescue guys did a great job on a really hot day and in a very unpleasant task. The work was physically draining, but the police, ambos and CFA all worked really well together. It was a fantastic outcome in the end," Allan said. ■

**Incident name:** Berwick MVA  
**Region:** 8  
**Date:** 20 February 2010  
**Brigades:** Berwick, Dandenong

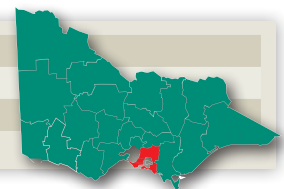


Photo: Keith Pakenham



# Weather hampers, then helps

BY MARTIN ANDERSON

Around 60 firefighters tackled a fire at a chemical factory in Dandenong South in early May. About 20 minutes into the call, the wind changed from a strong northerly to a southerly driving the smoke and fire back into the factory, hampering initial setups.

Dandenong Platform and Frankston Teleboom hit the fire from above and helped to prevent it from spreading to adjacent buildings as ground crews in Breathing Apparatus (BA) worked into any available opening.

Scoresby Hose Layer provided additional water supplies from surrounding sites while Patterson River Mobile Communications Vehicle controlled communications on the fireground.

Dandenong Pumper 2 provided higher water pressure around the property by setting up at the boost point just inside the main gate.

A storm then came through providing an additional lighting and sound fest and adding far more water than expected into the operation.

Frankston BA van recharged cylinders during the incident.

The factory was approximately 50 metres by 50 metres.

The fire was brought under control within an hour and a half under the guidance of Incident Controller Mick Lia from Hallam Fire Brigade. ■

**Incident name:** Dandenong Factory Fire  
**Region:** 8  
**Date:** 4 May 2010  
**Brigades:** Cranbourne, Dandenong, Frankston, Hallam, Hampton Park, Narre Warren, Patterson River, Scoresby

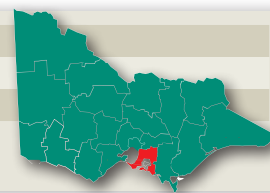
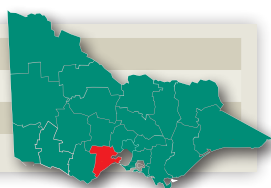


Photo: Keith Pakenham

**Incident name:** Bridge Street - other  
**Region:** 7  
**Date:** 13 April 2010  
**Brigades:** Queenscliff



# Awesome sinking feeling

BY JESSE BURN

A \$1.5 Million luxury cruiser was deliberately run aground by its crew off the new Queenscliff Harbour in mid-April. The 20-metre cruiser, named 'Awesome', was undertaking its first sea-trial after berthing in the new Queenscliff Harbour for approximately six months for repairs. It had to be run aground to stop it from sinking after it began taking on water.

Members of the Queenscliff Fire Brigade were paged to the incident to use the new Coast Guard pump to pump water from the boat's engine room.

First responding crews were taken out to the leaking boat and immediately began setting up the pump, along with Queenscliff Yacht Club's firefighting pump, and St. Leonards firefighting pump.

Crews worked all throughout the day, along with Queenscliff Harbour crews to get Awesome off the sand. The boat was eventually moved onto the Queenscliff Harbour Sling.

Numerous Queenscliff brigade members have recently completed one of the first Coast Guard training programs in the state. It was very satisfying for the brigade to see the first major marine incident on the new harbour go off without a hitch. ■



(l to r) Jarrod Howlett, Rob Mitchell and Dean Gibson

## Grateful for their training

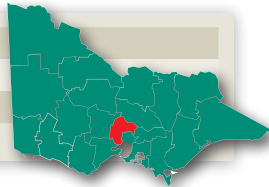
BY KRIS PERKOVIC

**Incident name:** Landers Court structure fire

**Region:** 14

**Date:** 31 May 2010

**Brigades:** Caroline Springs



Caroline Springs firefighters thanked their training for the rescue of a teenage girl from a burning two-storey property in Caroline Springs in late May. Battling flames and smoke in the burning home, they rescued a 14-year-old girl from the upstairs bathroom, carrying her downstairs and outside to safety.

Firefighters gave the girl oxygen before she was treated by ambulance officers and transported to the Royal Children's Hospital.

Fire Officer Dean Gibson said the incident, although dramatic, was managed in an almost textbook manner. "Everything was done according to our training and according to processes. All four of us – myself, Leading Firefighter Tony Smith, Qualified Leading Firefighter Rob Mitchell and Qualified Firefighter Jarrod Howlett – did our jobs as best as we could.

"Enroute to the scene, I asked Rob and Jarrod to be ready to don their BA gear and search the building. When we got there, we spoke briefly to the police and I did a size up of the property, quickly disconnecting power and gas. Tony ran the hoseline and Rob and Jarrod then went inside.

"The front door was wide open," Rob said. "From the front door, we could see fire on the stairs and fire up the stairs – there were multiple seats of fire.

"We then commenced the firefight immediately," Jarrod adds. "At the top of the stairs, you could not see your hand in front of your face, the smoke was that thick. Once we were on the top floor, Rob and I split off to search. It was then that Rob found someone in the bathroom. The rescue was like a training drill you undertake on your recruit course – it went that seamlessly."

"It was a textbook example of how training had helped," Rob added. "We had confidence in each other and we were confident in the PPE and equipment we were using."

Caroline Springs Officer-In-Charge John Anderson praised the efforts of all four firefighters, saying he would be nominating them for a Chief Officer's commendation.

The firefighters agreed that while "only a job" it was still nonetheless one that will remain with them for some time. ■

## Lights go out for Cobram cinema

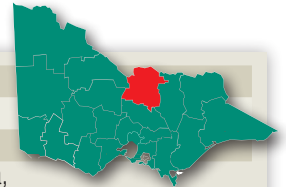
BY LEITH HILLARD

**Incident name:** Cobram structure fire

**Region:** 22

**Date:** 10 April 2010

**Brigades:** Cobram, Katamatite, Katunga, Muckatah, Numurkah, Shepparton, Strathmerton, Yarroweyah



Cobram's Melba Theatre went up in flames a short time after the end of a Saturday night session in mid-April. The fully-insured cinema on the town's main street opened in the 1940s but has now been demolished after suffering extensive damage.

Captain Mick Hilder of Cobram brigade takes up the story: "The call came in at 11.16pm. I live a bit of a distance away but I could see the glow and the plume of smoke.

"It's only about 300 metres from the station so we had a pumper on-scene in about 40 seconds but it was already well alight. Flames were coming through the roof after about 15 minutes.

"In the end we had about 55 firefighters. The crews were excellent under the conditions but unfortunately Saturday night meant that crowd behaviour was an issue and the police had their hands full. A couple of people were pepper sprayed, which was disappointing."

Steve Smith was the Region 22 Duty Officer that night. "The crews were able to establish that there was no-one in the building early on. I commend all the brigades on their performance. They did the best they could and their actions prevented fire spreading to adjacent shops."

"It's pretty devastating," Mick says. "It's really going to hit in the next few months for the younger ones especially. They loved having a pizza then going to see a movie. The Melba was one of our major entertainment centres. Apparently fundraising plans had started at the local high school by lunch time the following Monday." ■



Photo courtesy of Shepparton News



# Black day for the Isle of Wight

BY DANIEL CONNELL

The Isle of Wight has long been a landmark building for Phillip Island residents and visitors. So when my on-call media pager went off in the early hours of a Saturday morning in May and news of the hotel's impending demise settled in, I took a moment to reassure myself there was still hope for the great Island treasure.

A brief discussion with on-scene Narre Warren firefighter Paul Little was all it took to prove that hope a fallacy.

The fire broke out just after 2:00am; staff alerted from a triggered security alarm. More than 100 firefighters worked to contain the blaze within three hours of the call.

The hotel contained dangerous levels of asbestos so residents in the area were warned to stay indoors and close their windows.

While the fire itself was monstrous, Incident Controller Damien O'Conner said brigades performed admirably and professionally. "The boys and girls did an exceptional job to contain the fire to the three storey hotel," he said.

"Considering that when the first appliance arrived on-scene it was fully involved, to do that was an excellent result."

The fire was deemed under control around dawn, with a stop put on at around 7:30am.

The great irony is the three-storey 1920s building replaced its predecessor after it too burnt down. Now, at least for the foreseeable future, residents and visitors – writer included – will look to the plans for a new Phillip Island hotel complex as a beacon in an otherwise bleak time. ■

**Incident name:** Isle of Wight Hotel

**Region:** 8

**Date:** 22 May 2010

**Brigades:** Bass Coast, Casey, Cranbourne, Dandenong, Devon Meadows, Frankston, Hallam, Hampton Park, Inverloch, Nar Nar Goon, Narre Warren, Pakenham, Patterson River, Pearcedale, Phillip Island, San Remo, Scoresby, Wonthaggi

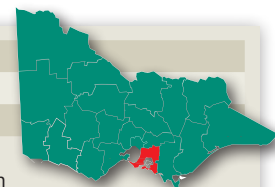


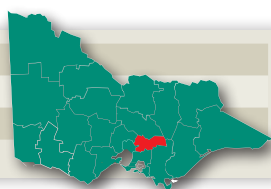
Photo: Peta Gapper

**Incident name:** Rowville MVA

**Region:** 13

**Date:** 16 April 2010

**Brigades:** Dandenong, Rowville



# Rowville's MooVA

BY SOPHIE JACKSON

Thanks to CFA, Brandy the milking cow will live to see another pet party. Brandy, who is a member of the 'Animals on the Move' Petting Zoo, was trapped in her trailer after it was involved in a motor vehicle accident in mid-April.

Rowville First Lieutenant Russell Smith said the initial call was for a normal motor vehicle accident, however they arrived to find something out of the ordinary.

"Once we were on scene we saw that one of the cars had what looked like a box trailer. On closer inspection we saw that it was a horse float with a cow trapped inside," he said.

"There were a number of people around the trailer trying to help. The cow was moving and kicking in distress so we moved them away from the trailer."

"Dandenong Rescue was on the radio, so we called them to the accident for assistance."

"A vet was also called to sedate the cow and we were able to extricate her by cutting the roof off and rolling her out of the trailer."

Brandy suffered some minor cuts and scratches but is otherwise fine. ■



Photo: David Rawson



# 2009 Royal Commission hearings come to a close

The public hearings of the 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission have ended after 155 days of evidence.

Commissioners the Hon. Bernard Teague, Ron McLeod and Susan Pascoe have retired to prepare their final report, which will be presented to the State Government by 31 July this year.

During its hearings into the events of 7 February 2009, the Commission reviewed almost 1700 submissions and produced more than 20,500 pages of transcript. The Commissioners also heard evidence from 434 witnesses, including 100 lay witnesses.

2009 Fires Task Force Coordinator Greg Esnouf said it has been an exacting process but CFA was now looking forward to receiving the final report and preparing for the next bushfire season.

"The release of the Commission's final report will herald an exciting new chapter for CFA and emergency management in Victoria, and many of our members will be busy implementing those recommendations before the next fire season.

"I would like to thank all the CFA members who appeared as witnesses or helped the Task Force team prepare evidence. It has been a mammoth effort and I'm very proud of all the work we have done."

## FINAL SUBMISSIONS

The final week of hearings was devoted to the presentation of submissions on three of the main issues to be addressed by the Commission: the Stay or Go Policy; Organisational Structure; and Leadership, Emergency Management, Coordination and Command and Control.

Counsel Assisting, led by Jack Rush QC, presented its proposed recommendations to the Commission, and the State Government and other parties presented responses. CFA contributed to the State response.

The submissions of all the parties, including the State and Counsel Assisting, are suggestions only and the Commissioners will consider all the documents before preparing their final report.

## STAY OR GO POLICY

Counsel Assisting asserted the policy in place on 7 February 2009 failed the community, but this was rejected by the State.

The State also rejected the notions that the policy was built around ideals and that it inappropriately narrowed the options available to individuals.

The State argued that the policy attempted to encourage behaviour change and to promote low risk options for households where it was not possible to have a fire truck at every house or issue personalised warnings. It acknowledged that, tragically, some people had a misplaced expectation that they would receive a personal evacuation message on 7 February, but there was no basis for this.

The State noted particular concern that Counsel Assisting's proposal may promote a leave late option, and that the evidence from 7 February showed that 24 people died while fleeing. Counsel Assisting placed considerable emphasis on evacuation as an option, recommending that Incident Controllers assess whether evacuation should be recommended and must recommend evacuation in all cases where it is the safest action.

The State noted this recommendation would place unreasonable burdens on Incident Controllers and did not take into account the real problems with information accuracy, the dynamic nature of fire and the changing condition of roads.

The State also rejected Counsel Assisting's recommendations about lowering the standards for Neighbourhood Safer Places and noted it may not be possible to provide the required number of shelters before the 2010-11 fire season.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Counsel Assisting's submission proposes that a new Victorian Fire Services Board be created, with CFA, DSE and MFB remaining operationally intact but responsible to that Board.

The State of Victoria rejected that proposal, stating the abolition of the current CFA and MFB boards makes the proposed model close

to a model of amalgamation, which the State does not support.

The State supports the implementation of a new command and control model for bushfires, with a single line of command and a single State Controller (CFA's Chief Officer in default of other agreement) to whom all fire services are answerable.

## LEADERSHIP, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, COORDINATION, COMMAND AND CONTROL

Counsel Assisting's submission comments in detail on the performance of individuals including CFA's Chief Officer, three senior CFA officers, DSE's Chief Fire Officer and two senior staff, former Chief Commissioner Victoria Police, the Emergency Services Commissioner and the Police and Emergency Services Minister.

Counsel Assisting has asked the Commissioners to find that CFA Chief Officer Russell Rees and three senior CFA officers failed to ensure timely and accurate warnings were provided to communities in the path of the Kilmore East and Churchill fires; ensure that a Level 3 Incident Controller was in place at the Kilmore ICC at the start of the fire; prepare or execute a statewide plan; or make adequate use of predictive maps.

Counsel Assisting suggests similar key findings against the DSE Chief Fire Officer and two senior officers in relation to the Murrindindi fire.

The State submits that the primary criticisms relate to systemic issues so the Commission should "refrain from attributing blame or fault and instead investigate practical measures that will assist in saving lives".

The State asked the Commission to recognise the changes it has already made and acknowledge that the fire conditions on 7 February were beyond the worst previously experienced.

Complete summaries of the three submissions together with transcripts of the oral submissions can be viewed on CFA Connect at [www.cfconnect.net.au](http://www.cfconnect.net.au) ■

**Russell Rees**

## From the Chief Officer

CFA has always been part of my life; I grew up with it in my blood and have been fortunate enough to make a career out of something I love. It has shaped and defined me, and I'll always be grateful for the central part it has played in my life.

Now, though, as I move on, I leave CFA with a clean break. It's important to me that once I'm gone, I'm gone. I'll never forget CFA, but I'll no longer be an active member after I step down from the post of Chief Officer. In fact, by the time you read this column, I will already have left.

Many people have asked me what stands out the most in my 30 or so years as a career officer, and my answer is always the same; the people and, particularly, the volunteers. They are the greatest thing about this organisation. It has always been them I have turned to in difficult times to pick me back up and get me on the rails again.

Similarly, the support I have had from the Board, CEO Mick Bourke and my fellow officers has been a source of strength and inspiration. Their loyalty and friendships will never be forgotten, both in recent times, and through the decades past.

CFA is an organisation made up of tens of thousands of extraordinary individuals. And yet, it will always be bigger than any individual. Bigger than you, and bigger than me. So as I leave, I become a part of the past; one of so many who has helped bring CFA to where it is today.

And now, as always, it is time to continue moving forward. Nothing great is achieved by standing still. No reward is given to those who forever look back. CFA is no exception.

The organisation is in your hands and I encourage you to learn from the tough times and celebrate your successes. Pat yourselves on the back when you've earned it, and take CFA confidently into the future.

Thank you. Stay safe. And farewell. ■

**Russell Rees**  
Chief Officer

# Four decades

**BY SHARON RAINSBURY**

Russell Rees has been involved with CFA for more than four decades. He joined as a career officer in 1978 but prior to that was a volunteer firefighter at Moe and Belmont, and had been a junior member from the age of 11.

Russell has had a long and distinguished career in CFA working across a range of locations including Melton, Ballarat, Ararat, Geelong, Seymour, Colac and Lilydale. For some time he was an instructor at CFA's Training College at Fiskville and in his last two years there was the Officer in Charge of Operational Training.

After an organisational restructure of CFA in 1994, Russell was appointed the Area Manager for the Yarra Area, based in Lilydale. Russell was responsible for a range of organisational change initiatives, as well as leading his team during the 1997 Dandenong Ranges fires.

In 1998, Russell was appointed a Deputy Chief Officer at CFA headquarters, with responsibility for Policy and Standards.

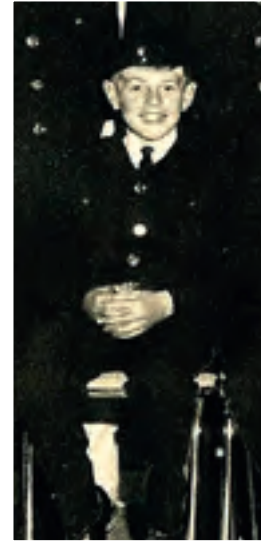
In August 2001, he was appointed by the CFA Board to the position of Chief Officer, and has since been reappointed twice, in 2006 for three years and in 2009 for a further two.

Russell has played significant roles in CFA's operational response during major campaigns such as the January - March 2003 North East and Gippsland fires, the December 2005 - January 2006 Grampians fires, the December 2006 - February 2007 Great Divide fires and the 2009 firefight.

Russell has also had significant involvement at state and national level, influencing the direction of emergency management in Australia. He has chaired the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System Steering Committee of the Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) and sat on the Operations Strategy Group and Environmental Management Working Group at AFAC.

He has represented CFA across Victoria on a range of committees, including the Victorian Emergency Management Council Coordinating Group.

Russell is a recipient of the Centenary Medal awarded in 2003 and the Australian Fire Service Medal awarded in 2005. ■





# at CFA



*Photos compiled by Keith Pakenham*



Mick Bourke



From the CEO

## Leading the way online

**A** new landscape is developing in the online world. When people log on to the internet now, they expect to be able to engage with corporations. Simply providing information without further means for discussion is no longer enough.

At CFA, we're embracing this new wave of online engagement; not because it's trendy, or it's fun to use the latest gadgets, but because it's what our community is demanding. Increasingly, our members, and the wider community, are relying on the online environment to find news, incident information and community safety advice from CFA. As a community service organisation with a diverse and geographically spread membership, we must listen and respond.

It's a source of pride for me to know that CFA has adapted quickly and professionally to this new and evolving way of doing business online. We are recognised across government and the broader private sector as a leader in this field.

We've been running a YouTube video channel for nearly four years. We have a Facebook page with 65,000 fans and we manage various Twitter accounts that provide news, incident and safety updates to subscribers. And finally, we celebrated, in May, the first year of CFA Connect, the only website of its kind in our industry; built almost exclusively on user-generated content.

No-one else is doing all this, and CFA is rightly cited as a case-study and benchmark for the way to go about engagement in a changing online world.

There are many success stories from the first 12 months of CFA Connect and I can think of a couple that highlight its broad-ranging benefits. Firstly, CFA Connect has been and remains the chief, and official, portal of information for CFA members about the Royal Commission. The website was launched on the day the Commission began and daily summaries, media coverage reports and even video blogs from the CFA 2009 Fires Taskforce have been uploaded to the site.

The second example is a one-off incident report from Dandenong in May. We had photos and an article on Connect about the factory fire before the mainstream media, with story updates posted as the incident unfolded. In fact, the media used content from the CFA Connect story in their own news pieces. Since then, the Connect article has had more than 6,000 views.

These are just two examples of more than 1,400 stories published on Connect in its first year that prove the site's worth day in, day out.

Our focus in building CFA Connect and our social media presence has been a strategic one. We're looking at how we can use this online environment to better serve our members and to better serve our communities from a broader communications perspective. In line with this strategic focus, we have recently renamed our Public Affairs department Strategic Communications, which better reflects the role, goals and outcomes of that team.

CFA's success, though, will not be measured by what we did yesterday. We will be judged by what we do tomorrow. And the day after.

So as we celebrate the first year of the success of CFA Connect, we're doing it with our eyes on the future. It's a new world, with new discoveries and new potential. If you're yet to take a walk through it, I encourage you to visit [www.cfconnect.net.au](http://www.cfconnect.net.au) Have a look around, follow the links and get involved. ■

**Mick Bourke**  
CEO

*This column was originally published in Mick's blog on CFA Connect.*

## CFA Connect: an online community

Online media has been viewed by some as the B-side on the vinyl of communication. Now, though, it's starting to get some serious and increasing airplay.

Daniel Connell writes about the new way CFA is connecting with communities online.

**W**ith online communication developing at such a rapid rate – Facebook and iPhone apps, 'tweets' and emails, YouTube and Flickr – the ability to share information, new or otherwise, has never been so widespread and accessible.

So when CFA Connect was born in early 2009, one of its goals was to create a CFA online communications one-stop-shop; a hub for news, a portal for CFA's social networking sites, and a platform for YouTube videos.

The project was similar to an exploratory search mission – CFA wanted to boldly go where no other organisation had gone before. To give members a stage and an open mic where they could step up and have their say.

CFA Connect has now gone from 'new kid on the block' to first port-of-call for the latest CFA news and discussion. In its first year, the site had 336,000 visits, 1.5 million page views, more than 1,400 stories from hundreds of different contributors and 5,000 forum posts.

To put these numbers in context, it took CFA Connect's predecessor Fire Flyer a year and a half to reach just 630 articles – less than half of what CFA Connect has produced already.

Informative news stories, great photos and videos, a home to media releases and incident updates, personal blogs and passionate commentary from members right across the state have created not just a news site, but an online CFA community. ■



# CONNECT

News · Multimedia · Chat

CFA Connect has also been used as a community engagement tool, hosting Victoria's first ever online Bushfire Safety Meeting. It was used as the primary source of information for the Bushfire Preparedness Program leading in to the 2009/10 fire season and its potential for further community engagement is being explored.

## Top of the charts

HERE'S A COLLECTION OF SOME OF THE TOP VIEWED STORIES POSTED ON CFA CONNECT.

### HELP FOR HIGH RISK COMMUNITIES

The Premier and Chief Officer's announcement of new Township Protection Plans for 52 Victorian communities at high risk from bushfire is CFA Connect's highest rating story ever.



### DANDENONG FACTORY FIRE

CFA Connect provided instant images, video and updates from the scene at this very large chemical factory fire.



### THE RECRUITS - EPISODE 5

An eight-part documentary following CFA career firefighter recruits over their 16-week course at CFA Training College – Fiskville. Episode 5, 'Hazmat and Back to Basics', featured a look at the technical side of training.



### AN EXPLOSIVE WAKE-UP CALL

Images and information of this exploding van in suburban Melbourne gained national media coverage.



### CHIEF OFFICER RUSSELL REES RESIGNS

Comments from readers flooded in when Chief Officer Russell Rees announced his resignation earlier this year.



Together, this collection of stories was viewed more than 20,000 times!

**Lisa Sturzenegger**

From the Director  
Community Safety

## A new winter campaign

Last winter, CFA attended 10 house fires that resulted in people losing their lives. We also recorded injuries to 39 people. This is too many.

This year's residential fire media campaign, run jointly with MFB, aims to reduce the number of preventable fires by focussing on the kitchen, the point of origin of most house fires; last winter CFA and MFB attended 374 residential property fires that started in the kitchen/cooking area.

Based around the key message: 'Kitchen fires start when your attention stops', the campaign is being promoted through television, radio, print and a special website: [www.homefiresafety.com.au](http://www.homefiresafety.com.au)

We've made a huge effort to produce a brand new creative message for the campaign and will keep working to tackle this huge but preventable risk.

A great deal of work is also being done behind-the-scenes this winter to spread the message to people we've traditionally found difficult to reach through mainstream media. Partnering with organisations like the Department of Human Services and Department of Justice is proving an effective way to reach high-risk individuals more directly, incorporating fire safety messages into day-to-day communication through carers and other support workers. CFA will continue to expand on this work into the future.

Finally, we've also continued to promote the importance of smoke alarms as a support message, because we know that working smoke alarms save lives. Thanks to the hard work of brigades, the 'Change Your Clock, Change Your Smoke Alarm Battery' campaign in April was promoted in more than 125 media articles.

I'd like to thank you for your ongoing support of our safety campaigns and to ask you to keep reminding your communities that fire safety is a year-long issue. ■

**Lisa Sturzenegger**  
Director Community Safety



Upwey brigade's Mitch Emmett with Duracell Ambassador Nicky Buckley

## Changing batteries to save lives

BY JASON LEIGH

It was a beautiful crisp morning at the MFB headquarters in Burnley in early April. CFA's Director Community Safety Lisa Sturzenegger and Upwey brigade Firefighter Mitch Emmett were there with MFB's Frank Stockton and Duracell's Ambassador Nicky Buckley to launch the annual 'Change Your Clock, Change Your Smoke Alarm Battery' campaign.

The campaign promotes the importance of working smoke alarms and urges Victorians to change their smoke alarm batteries when they turn back their clocks for daylight saving.

In 2009 CFA and MFB attended 3,192 residential fires, during which 22 Victorians lost their lives. As part of the launch, Mitch hosed off 22 red batteries from the map of Victoria to symbolise how we can prevent the tragedy of house fire fatalities.

As always, the campaign received tremendous support from CFA brigades, which were again extremely active in promoting working smoke alarms in their communities. CFA members distributed batteries among vulnerable elements of the community, worked with their local papers to spread the message and even distributed fire safety information outside Bunnings stores across the Easter weekend. ■

## The dangers of candles

After a spate of house fires leading up to winter, CFA warned residents to take care when using candles.

"We've had four serious incidents caused by candles in the last month," State Duty Officer Mark Reid said in early May. He reminded people to never leave candles unattended and to keep them away from curtains and other flammable materials, especially when there are children or pets in the house.

"A woman was taken to hospital suffering burns and smoke inhalation after a candle started a house fire in Huntly," Mark said. "It follows an incident in Maryborough two weeks ago, where a woman was killed in a house fire believed to have started from a candle. It is heartbreaking to think that the fire could have been easily avoided."

There were two other serious incidents started from candles in April. A house burned down in Castlemaine after a candle set fire to curtains in one of the bedrooms. The house was 75 per cent engulfed when brigades arrived, and they were unable to save it.

Three days earlier in Shepparton, a candle set fire to a television after the occupants fell asleep with the candle burning. Luckily, the house had a working smoke alarm and the woman and her three children were able to escape and notify the fire brigade before the fire caused extensive damage.

Mark said the incident in Shepparton showed a working smoke alarm was a simple way to ensure your family's safety. "People without a working smoke alarm are 60 per cent more likely to die in a house fire," he said. ■



# Mapping out a new future

BY TAMMY LEAHY

Since the release of EIMS Mapper in December 2009, the team from GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and Operations has been reviewing the Mapper's functionality and preparing for the 2010 release.

In the last six months of development, 12 new test versions have been produced, aimed at functionality enhancements, usability improvements and modifications to the application engine (the internal workings of the Mapper).

## NEW AND ENHANCED FUNCTIONALITY THAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED FOR USERS INCLUDES:

- increased observation types (flood, storm, hazmat, and search)
- introduction of both grid and magnetic north readout capabilities (fire tower tool, bearing draw tool)
- the distance measure tool displaying different measurement units (miles, nautical miles and feet)
- further development on including VICSES incident feeds
- enhanced editing and identifying tools
- improved background management
- Mansfield group resource tracking concept and
- an updated dataset.



## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The team is working on other developments for EIMS Mapper prior to the 10/11 fire season including:

- support for the Windows 7 operating system
- enhanced data feeds; for example, fire area
- data integration/sharing with CFA's incident management system and
- customisation of the interface with preference settings. ■

# Volunteer initiative cuts call outs

BY JASON LEIGH

False alarm callouts in the Alpine Region have been dramatically reduced thanks to new burn off notification signs, which were an initiative of local volunteers. The signs were first trialled by the Alpine Shire at the request of Bright Fire Brigade Captain Paul Mansfield as a response to local brigades being inundated with unnecessary callouts to burn offs.

When the signs went up to direct people to contact the Vicfire Burn Off Line before lighting up, unnecessary callouts to burn offs by Bright brigade were more than halved because VicFire phone operators were able to log burn offs and share the information with callers. The signs had to be temporarily removed because they didn't meet VicRoads requirements, and as soon as they were taken down the number of false alarm calls rose!

Through Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, as well as the Region 24 Catchment Team, Alpine Shire volunteers were able to bring the success of the trial to CFA Community Safety, which then worked with VicRoads to design appropriate signage.

The Alpine Shire has already purchased and installed 12 signs and there are also some throughout the Gippsland Area.

If you think burn off notification signs would reduce the number of unnecessary callouts for your brigade, approach your municipality to talk about your options. ■



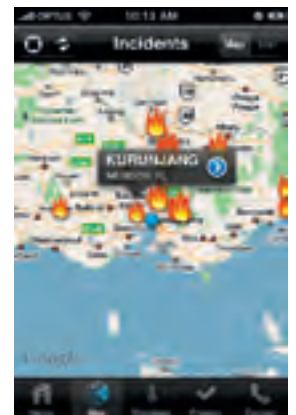
# Safety in the palm of your hand

BY MARTIN ANDERSON

Victorians with an iPhone or Facebook profile can now access critical fire safety information wherever they are thanks to two new applications.

The iPhone and Facebook applications deliver emergency information and fire safety advice from the CFA website directly to users' iPhones and computers. Warnings, updates and advice and the location of fires are plotted on Google Maps as well as links to a wide range of community safety advice.

The applications also provide easy access to Fire Danger Ratings and Total Fire Ban details and allow users to share information with friends, neighbours and loved ones through e-mail and social media. The applications have been designed to gather feedback and learn from user experience ahead of the next bushfire season. Please use the feedback links on the applications to tell us what you think and to give us suggestions about what you'd like to see in future application updates. ■





*"You've got to have something that makes you feel worthwhile away from your work and family."  
Helen Fulton (right, with Maxine Sleep),  
married to Rodney, Secretary of Ultima brigade*



*"Small communities are not ones to stick up their hands and say they need help."  
Doug Afford, Southern Mallee Group Officer*



*Landscape photos by Keith Pakenham*



## Looking after each other

Dedicated CFA members in the North West Area (NWA) are working creatively to get practical drought assistance to brigade members, their families and communities.

"Our thinking is clear," NWA General Manager Pat O'Brien says. "We ask a lot of our members and if you look after your people, your people will look after you, and they'll look after themselves. Without them we don't have a fire service.

"The drought is part of our risk environment and we're still on the path to understanding its effects. What we do know is that any support given to members has flow-on effects into families, brigades and communities."

With the drought affecting the long-term livelihoods of many brigade members, pressures build up in families. The Area has faced down the very real threat of brigades closing as members are forced to leave town.

And so NWA's drought strategies are not about stations, trucks and firefighting equipment, but an injection of funds to boost spirits and help families look ahead and make plans.

"We've been incredibly fortunate," Pat continues, "with the extraordinary generosity of brigades in Regions 8, 13 and 14, which have raised funds for us. Our support programs started small about five years ago but they've been boosted by state and shire support. VFBV (Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria) has given us \$25,000 this year alone." ■

## Putting out fires

From the outside, the North West's drought strategies might not appear to put out fires. "Wrong", says Operations Manager Bill Johnstone. "They do help CFA put out fires because they go to the heart of keeping communities viable. In so many communities we're the last thing left after the footy club and pub have closed. Maintaining brigade viability is our number one responsibility; full respect goes to our volunteers."

"Drought is a traumatic event in terms of its impact on families," North West Area Community Development Coordinator Maxine Sleep says. "Relationships and trust are the most important thing when times are tough.

"I hope our members know that we're an organisation that cares about their health and wellbeing. If they have an issue they can talk to us. We might not have the answers for them but we have the contacts and can refer them on to the most appropriate people. We use our networks – peers, chaplains, Centrelink, shire drought officers, local

health services, the Departments of Primary Industries and Human Services to help facilitate this.

"Our support doesn't distinguish between a brigade member and a family member. They're all CFA. We've even had BASOs driving around with bags of dog food in their cars for farmers who were looking at their dogs as a mouth they couldn't afford to feed.

"These are all ways we can say thanks for your service and thanks to your family for supporting your contribution. Thanks to the people left at home when members go off on strike teams in the middle of harvest. We know you're doing it tough when you're getting the kids off to school and getting on the header. Kids deserve a pat on the back too, and we put a lot of thought and research into the presents given away at brigade Christmas parties, the pamper packs, the health packs for men.

"And it's a two-way street. CFA has added so much to people's lives – testing leadership skills, building pride in communities. The bottom line is that we're all in this together." ■





*"It's encouraging to know that our families, friends and brigade members will be supported and cared for by CFA."*  
Trudy Ryan, Robinvale Group Secretary



Peer Support Program Coordinator Norm Bowen (left) with NWA General Manager Pat O'Brien



*"The boat trip was a pressure cooker release. We all switched off and that feeling lasted."*  
Megan Lynch, Communications Officer, Werrimull brigade; pictured second from left with Werrimull and Meringur members



## Volunteer support in the driver's seat

Norm Bowen, coordinator of the peer support program, is a guiding light of the NWA's drought strategies. He's driven 43,000 kilometres in the volunteer role since last August.

"That's what the program deserves," he says simply. "I wouldn't do it if I didn't want to do it. The friends I've made! It makes you feel good and I think one of the reasons it works so well is because it's a volunteer role. I can say no.

"We have about 50 to 60 activations a month in the North West alone and our people are available within 48 hours. We're called in to play a personal role; be a sounding board. 'Are you safe? Are you comfortable and well supported?'"

"The service is easy, accessible and completely private. People know they'll be cared for in a confidential manner. We'll do anything we can: it might be driving someone in the family to a doctor's appointment or visiting someone in hospital.

"All the peers have been hand picked, then done a 12-month course, so it's a big commitment. We have a colossal chaplaincy service with fully-ordained ministers from a number of denominations, and we also have contact with people like social workers who can open doors twice as quick as I can.

"Ops Officers often get in touch with me if there's been a vehicle accident with a fatality and we'll get a peer on-scene. I really encourage that. You can see the reactions and you get to know where the problems are going to lie. I'm better at recognising that now than when I started in 1987.

"I've seen a lot of positive changes in that time. We do a diffusion after an incident now and blokes are more keen to have a coffee and get out the facts and feelings.

"We've run a lot of health and wellbeing awareness nights within Groups and brigades. We take members and their partners out for a meal and let them know about what we do and who we have contact with. Group Officers who use the service are our best advertisers.

"We were the first emergency service to start this sort of program. We pioneered this support work because of the need, and World Vision has told us that it fits world standards after seeing us operate around Black Saturday." ■

### VOLUNTEER SUPPORT ROLLING OUT IN TARGETED AREAS

The **Back to School program** has injected more than \$230,000 into CFA families struggling with the expenses of a new school year. Some funding has also gone directly to schools so children can enjoy the benefits of excursions and other educational activities.

The **Rural Youth Driver program** will help young people in CFA families get a driver's licence by funding four lessons. The aim is to give some financial relief to families and support independent young people who can take on employment and study.

The **Skills Connect program** will financially support volunteers with skills and experience to earn formal qualifications. This will lead to career opportunities off farms, a new income stream and families able to see a different way forward. Berrinwillook will be the first community to benefit from the program.

The **Participation program** focuses on keeping brigade families socially and culturally connected.

This program has been kicked off by the funding of Murray River cruises out of Echuca, Swan Hill and Mildura for members of targeted brigades and their partners. The aim? A day off to get dressed up and take time away to relax with friends.

*Are you a member of a Loddon Mallee brigade family who could benefit from these programs? Talk to your brigade captain or Group Officer to find out more.*



# YOU'VE EARNED IT



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](http://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.



Like to win a Sunbeam Café Latte EM5600 valued at \$329 for your Brigade?

Visit [www.emergencymemberlink.com.au](http://www.emergencymemberlink.com.au) to find out details.



## Members save 5% on pre-purchased Gift Cards.

Cards available include WISH, Coles, Liquorland, Rivers, Sanity and Roger David.

Plus they don't have to be a gift. Pre-purchase these cards for yourself, and save money on items such as groceries, fuel, liquor, electrical and whitegoods, music and DVDs, clothing, plus so much more.

In the past 2 years CFA members have purchased over \$650,000 worth of Gift Cards, saving themselves a combined total of \$32,500. Why not join these savvy shoppers and start making savings yourself?

Gift Card Value	Memberlink Price*
\$50	\$47.50
\$100	\$95
\$250	\$237.50
\$500	\$475

\*Visit the Memberlink Website for Terms & Conditions

**WISH Gift Cards** are redeemable at Safeway Supermarkets, Caltex Safeway co-branded outlets, HomeShop, BIG W, Dick Smith Electronics, Safeway Liquor, BWS and Dan Murphy's.

**Coles Gift Cards** are redeemable at Coles Supermarkets, Coles Central, Pick 'n' Pay Hypermarkets and Bi-Lo.

**Liquorland Gift Cards** are redeemable at Liquorland stores.

**Sanity Gift Cards** can be used online [www.sanity.com.au](http://www.sanity.com.au) or in Sanity stores.

**Roger David Gift Cards** are redeemable at Roger David stores.

**Rivers Gift Cards** are redeemable at Rivers stores.

**To purchase your Gift Cards visit [www.emergencymemberlink.com.au](http://www.emergencymemberlink.com.au) or call your Memberlink Team on 1800 820 037.**



## MEMBERLINK PROVIDERS

Full listing and more information call **1800 820 037** or visit [www.emergencymemberlink.com.au](http://www.emergencymemberlink.com.au)

\*Conditions apply and offers are subject to change. Valid to 31 December 2010.



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A joint initiative of CFA and SES



Ray's Outdoors is a global leader in the leisure, lifestyle and outdoor entertainment industry.

Ray's Direct have organised an extra special Trade Discounts offer

- 22.5% discount on all Industrial Workwear and Footwear
- 20% discount across all other departments in the store (Camping, Fishing, BBQ's and Outdoor Living)

\*Some exclusions apply

**Offer valid for 3 DAYS ONLY**

<b>Friday 23 July</b>	9am – 7pm
<b>Saturday 24 July</b>	9am – 5pm
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Simply show your Memberlink card at the registers when making your purchase and quote discount number: D144769

**All other days members can receive the Ray's Direct trade discount of: 22.5% on all Industrial Work Wear and Foot Wear and 6.5% across the other departments\***

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HBA Private Health Insurance can help you do just that. CFA & SES Members get a great deal with HBA including EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS, 1 MONTH FREE PREMIUM and no gap dental for kids on 250 services at Members First Dentists. Plus, there are regular special offers! See the Emergency Memberlink website for the latest offers.

To find out more, compare or join call **HBA on 1800 649 406** and ask about the Emergency Memberlink CFA & SES HBA Health Plan.



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Save on Selected Fares



10% Discount off RRP



50% – 70% off RRP



# Boundaries aligning

CFA's Ready for the Future Program is making good progress in aligning CFA's boundaries to the Victoria State Regional Boundaries (SRBs).

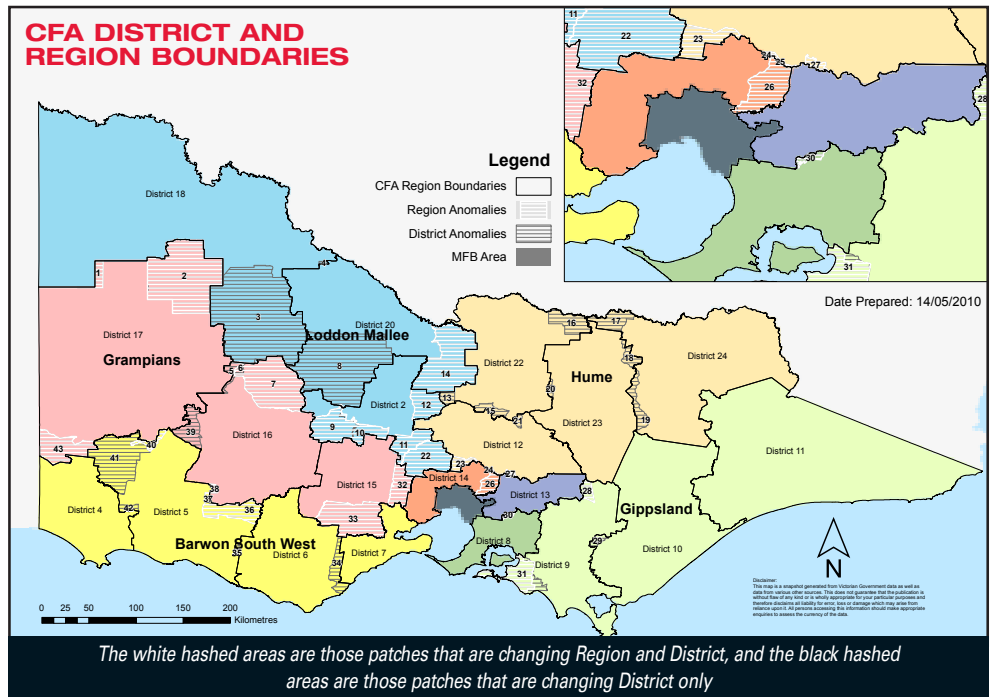
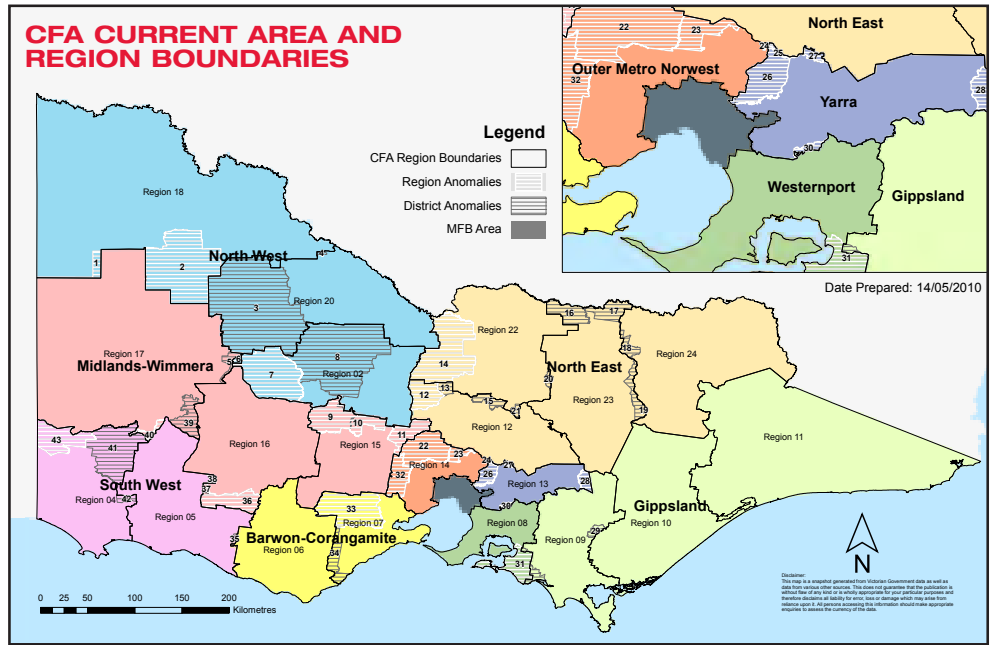
In June, detailed Area and Directorate Plans, which identified the changes and their impacts and risks, were completed. These Plans were aggregated into a single Transition Strategy to guide the progressive implementation of the changes.

Importantly, alignment with SRBs will facilitate effective implementation of the Command and Control structures in CFA. The Integrated Fire Management Planning Project, which has been in progress for some time, is also being delivered via SRBs. CFA will also be able to direct operational investment towards growth areas and target community safety to specific demographics on a geographic basis.

With other emergency services aligning with the SRBs, brigades will be able to team more strongly with those operational units and build valuable working relationships during normal operations.

Communication-wise, a survey on the effectiveness of communication with members attracted almost 1,800 responses with more than 90 per cent from volunteers. Seventy-three per cent were satisfied with the way the change was going and more than 60 per cent had received face-to-face communications; most from management or brigade captains.

The survey identified that while there were some concerns, particularly relating to the initial change process, many volunteers had received the opportunity to learn what the changes meant and work through their concerns. ■



# Command and Control continues

Over the past six months, CFA, DSE and MFB have implemented Command and Control arrangements to align to changes in the state's Emergency Response Plan.

New Emergency Management functions have been developed including the Area of Operations Controller, Agency Commander and Executive Officer. These functions are critical to the Area of Operations Emergency Management Team (EMT) with the EMT

structure ensuring preparedness planning is based on known risks to the community and predetermined operational triggers.

Highlights of the Command and Control Project have included the development of:

- standard State Reporting methods and tools
- an Area of Operations Manual, providing overall project context and details
- a generic HR Planner developed by Hume Region now being used state-wide and

- legislative compliance with both the Emergency Management Act and new provisions of the CFA Act.

The next phase will continue to develop the role, taking into consideration the Government's response to the Royal Commission findings, input from the new Chief Officer, and revisions to the State Emergency Response Plan and Command and Control Arrangements. ■



# Championships

BY ALISON APRHYS



## AGGREGATE RESULTS

### DRY AGGREGATE

- 1st Wendouree
- 2nd Maffra A
- 3rd Kangaroo Flat A & Pakenham A

### WET AGGREGATE

- 1st Maffra A
- 2nd Kangaroo Flat A
- 3rd Maryvale

### UNDER 14 YEARS AGGREGATE

- 1st Wendouree
- 2nd Maffra A
- 3rd Tatura B

### UNDER 17 YEARS AGGREGATE

- 1st Maryvale
- 2nd Kangaroo Flat A
- 3rd Wendouree & Echuca

### GRAND AGGREGATE

- 1st Wendouree
- 2nd Maffra A
- 3rd Kangaroo Flat A

## EXCITEMENT AT ECHUCA

The 37th State Junior Urban Championships in February saw more than 600 competitors in 80 teams from 55 brigades participate in an action-packed weekend at Echuca. Around 2,000 people including senior CFA officers, board members, regional staff, state and local government officials and the media descended on the Murray River town for two days of events, camaraderie and fun.

Former Chief Officer Russell Rees welcomed competitors and congratulated them on their involvement. He spoke about the wonderful opportunity for CFA's future firefighters to display skills, enthusiasm and good sportsmanship. Many senior members who took on marshalling, judging and other official duties recalled getting their start in the junior events.

Echuca Fire Brigade was integral in hosting the event and Captain Paul Nicoll proudly declared that his crew had done an amazing job. "The brigade has 40 operational, 15 non-operational, 15 auxiliary and around nine junior members and just about everyone was involved," he said. "It's been a big effort but everyone has worked hard, pulled together and helped each other really well." ■





# MAGICAL MILDURA

The 127th Urban Senior Championships at Mildura saw 4,000 visitors comprising 72 brigades and 1,000 competitors participate in a weekend of intense competition, mateship, sweat, laughter and smiles in early March.

Mildura Rural City Council CEO Mark Henderson said how honoured the city was to be hosting the championships for the ninth time in as many decades.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron spoke warmly of the wonderful commitment made by CFA members and the relationship between CFA and local councils.

Teams from WA and NSW also participated in running events, marching and the torchlight parade.

According to Peter Bishop, Mildura Fire Brigade member and Vice-Chairman of the 127th Volunteer Fire Brigades' Urban State Championships, it was indeed a marvellous weekend. "The hard work by those involved has been fantastic," he said. ■



## OVERALL WINNERS

	A SECTION	B SECTION	C SECTION
<b>FIRST</b>	Dandenong	Echuca	Traralgon
<b>SECOND</b>	Bassendean	Belgrave	Belmont
<b>THIRD</b>	Melton	Bairnsdale/Lakes Entrance	Warracknabeal
<b>FOURTH</b>	Wendouree	Morwell	Euroa B
<b>FIFTH</b>	Maryvale	Tatura	Kooweerup





Photo: Andrew Cameron

# WHITTLESEA WRAP

The 2010 State Rural Championships held at Whittlesea in March were a huge success, attracting 1000 competitors comprising 73 senior and 84 junior teams representing 45 brigades.

It was a fantastic weekend according to Outer Metro Norwest General Manager Gill Metz. “The championships were a great success and thank-you to all the brigades that made the trip to Whittlesea – it was wonderful to have such a diverse gathering of brigades from across the state,” she said.

Gill applauded the Championships Committee, which she says did a marvellous job. “I would like to thank Region 14 Host Committee President Darren McQuade and his team for their efforts in the lead-up to, during and after the event,” she said.

Darren said that it was a fantastic event and he is really proud of the hard-working crew who pulled it together and worked right across the weekend. The event included displays of vintage and modern fire trucks and equipment, a Helitak, ‘CFA on Display’ and a special guest announcer, New Zealand firefighter Dave Greensmith, who kept the crowd entertained in between heats. ■



## SENIOR AGGREGATE RESULTS

### DIVISION A

- 1st Hurstbridge A
- 2nd Napoleons/Enfield A

### DIVISION B

- 1st Hurstbridge B
- Equal 2nd Truganina A and Beeac A

### DIVISION C

- 1st Greta B
- 2nd Corio A

### DISCIPLINE AWARD

- 1st Region 24

## JUNIOR AGGREGATE RESULTS

**CHAMPION BRIGADE** Greta

### GIL O'CONNELL ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD

Irrewarra A 11-13

### STAN ROSS CONDUCT TROPHY

Bowmans Murrumbidgee Brigade

### 11-13 YEARS AGGREGATE

- 1st Dunrobin/Nangeela Brigade
- 2nd Napoleons/Enfield Brigade

### 11-15 YEARS AGGREGATE

- 1st Moyhu Brigade
- 2nd Mt Buninyong Brigade





Moe South brigade members. Photo courtesy of the Latrobe Valley Express

## New life fires up Moe South

BY BRENDAN JENKINS

When Moe South brigade's then-Captain Charlie Gatt heard the brigade had been earmarked for closure if it was unable to attract a significant number of new local members, he was shocked.

The brigade, which had been formed 45 years previously, had seen a decline in membership in recent years. "It was all we could do to staff appliances with little, if any, energy focused on the recruitment of new members," Charlie says. Now, it was a fight for survival.

The brigade had little time to act so it formulated a strategy to doorknock every house within a one kilometre radius of the station, pamphlet-drop further away, and seek support through local media.

An open day and sausage sizzle were the favoured weapons of choice in the campaign armoury. "No one was going to do this for us," Charlie says. "The future of the brigade was up to the Moe South community."

Within three weeks, 500 pamphlets were hand delivered, more than 100 houses were door knocked, and 150 people turned up to the sausage sizzle. Eighty-seven people signed up to become brigade members in either active or support roles. Within a few weeks, the first 30 men and women began their training.

Charlie puts it down to the "right mix of people at the right time. We had long-term and new members; locals from close by and those from a bit further afield; tradespeople, teachers, doctors, farmers, lawyers, truckies and even an ex-politician. They all had a bit to add and a different circle of contacts."

"It proves the value of facing tough facts as a team," Region 9 Operations Officer Ian Pattie says. "The success of this process has exceeded our expectations. We've now achieved a firm foundation for the long-term viability of a vibrant Moe South brigade."

On the first weekend of September 2009, local trainer and Yallourn North Captain Mark King presented that first batch of new brigade members with their Certificates of Competency as Wildfire Firefighters.

New Captain Duncan Walker says he is looking forward to leading a new-look brigade "into some pretty interesting times." ■

## Laharum's shed trains jobseekers

BY LEITH HILLARD

The building of the new Laharum shed will give vital construction and engineering experience to locals seeking qualifications.

Captain Mark Francisco explains the brigade's innovative relationship with WorkCo Limited, a not-for-profit organisation that is the largest provider of employment and training services in the Wimmera and Grampians regions.

"We go to turnouts and do training programs and if we had to build a shed ourselves, well, we just haven't got the time and none of us is in the building trade.

"Instead we're going to have about 30 people doing civil construction and engineering training by putting up a shed for us over about six weeks. Everybody wins. They're going to get experience as they work towards a qualification and we're going to get a very good shed.

"It's going to be an 8 x 11 metres double bay for our tankers: one of them is CFA and the other is brigade owned. The sheds are both just for vehicle housing. We couldn't fund this without WorkCo.

"Horsham Rural City has been great and we've moved through the permit process quickly because it's a community project. Region 17 has organised a water tank and a pressure pump for the tank for us so it's all coming together.

All the work on the shed will comply with industry standards, be carried out under the supervision of WorkCo trainers and be completed within a strict timeframe. ■



Photo courtesy of The Weekly Advertiser





The Memorial Wall

## CFA remembers

BY BLAIR DELLEMIJN

Following the tragic Ash Wednesday fires of 1983, CFA established a Memorial Wall dedicated to the men and women of CFA who have lost their lives while serving their communities. It was officially opened at CFA Training College – Fiskville by the then Premier of Victoria John Cain on 12 April 1987. The Memorial is a reflective pool and natural stone wall set in a landscaped garden.

Plaques are mounted on the stone wall with the name, fire brigade and date of the incident of each CFA firefighter who has lost their life since CFA's inception in 1944. These plaques and the events that led to them underline the bravery shown by our members, ordinary Victorians who, year after year, selflessly protect their communities.

Each year since the dedication of the memorial wall at Fiskville, CFA has conducted an Annual Memorial Service. In the past decade, CFA initiated a program where the memorial service was taken to regional centres around Victoria. In 1998 the first regional memorial service was held in Bendigo. Services have since been held in Wangaratta, Sale, Warrnambool, Shepparton, Lilydale, Leongatha, Stawell, Frankston, Myrtleford and Geelong.

A banner representing the memorial wall is taken to each Memorial Service. Whenever an additional plaque is included on the memorial wall, the firefighter's name and other details are also embroidered on the banner.

In recent years this service has been held on the Sunday closest to 4 May, which is both International Firefighters Day and St. Florian's Day (St. Florian is the Patron Saint of Firefighters).

This year, the 2010 Memorial Service for Firefighters was held at the Memorial Garden at CFA Training College – Fiskville. As well as honouring those members who have sacrificed their lives over many decades, CFA also unveiled a plaque commemorating the service of Firefighter Hugh Monroe, who died in the line of duty on 10 January 2010.

As part of an ongoing project identifying fallen firefighters prior to the formation of CFA, a plaque was also unveiled commemorating the sacrifice of Bendigo Fire Brigade member Arthur Swanwick who lost his life in 1908. An invitation was extended to Mr Swanwick's descendants to attend this ceremony, which they humbly accepted to honour his memory.

The families and descendants of the firefighters who have fallen also paid their respects by laying flowers and wreathes.

Official guests and dignitaries at the service included Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron, Anglican Diocese of Ballarat Bishop Michael Hough, CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy and CEO Mick Bourke.

At the conclusion the official ceremony, guests were invited to collect a token of CFA's appreciation with cuttings of the CFA FireStar Rose to take home. ■

## Brigades by torchlight

BY BLAIR DELLEMIJN

### SUNBURY

Sunfest, Sunbury's Community Festival, was held in late March and the Sunbury Fire Brigade saw it as a great opportunity to organise a Torchlight Procession through one of the main streets in town.

With many brigades invited to attend, and most of the community lining the streets, it made for a striking procession. After the Torchlight, everyone was invited back to the Gap Road (Sunbury) Fire Station for light refreshments provided by the tireless work of the Salvation Army.

### CRAIGIEBURN

Earlier, brigades from around Region 14 were invited to the Annual Craigieburn Torchlight.

Even with the intermittent rain and cold, brigades, juniors, VICSES and Ambulance Victoria's Community Emergency Response Team members made their way through the township of Craigieburn, to the well-wishes of the locals lining the streets.

The night was capped off by a fireworks display, and marchers headed back to the Craigieburn Fire Station for a light supper catered by the Salvation Army. ■





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(l to r) Geelong City Fire Brigade Chairman Laurie Hill, Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron, Premier John Brumby, CFA Deputy Chairman Claire Higgins and Operations Officer Mick McGuinness

## Jewel in Geelong's crown

BY BLAIR DELLEMIJN

It was a day of much jubilation as Geelong City Fire Brigade members were officially handed the keys to their new fire station. Invitations were extended to past members, firefighters, and dignitaries to watch Premier John Brumby officially unveil the plaque for the station, and hand over keys to Operations Officer Mick McGuinness.

Premier Brumby said that because it was built by tradespeople from Geelong and surrounds, the station was “built by the people – for the people.”

The brigade was inspected by Premier Brumby, Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron, Chief Officer Russell Rees and Operations Officer Mick McGuinness.

General Manager Barwon-Corangamite Area Paul Stacchino invited guests to take a tour of the brand new facility, with brigade members as tour guides. It was a huge eye-opener for past and retired members of Geelong City, who were in awe of the size of the station, and how far it had come since they were ‘in the job’.

For your own personal tour of the station with Fire Officer Mark Sinkinson visit [www.cfaconnect.net.au](http://www.cfaconnect.net.au) ■

## Newest station for oldest brigade

BY ALISON APRHYS

According to Paul Stacchino, General Manager, CFA Barwon - Corangamite Area, the opening of the new Geelong City Fire Station is a significant milestone in the long and proud history of a brigade that has served its community diligently for 156 years.

The two-storey station has been designed for future growth in staffing – meeting the demands of the 21st century as the City of Geelong develops and grows. “This new station is the largest and most modern fire station constructed by CFA and will no doubt set the benchmark for future major CFA locations with a similar risk profile to Geelong City,” Paul said.

During construction the brigade moved into a temporary fire station in a warehouse at 84 Barwon Terrace; the only period when the brigade has not occupied the McKillop Street site in more than a century.

Not surprisingly, the GCFB volunteer members are delighted with their new station. “It’s just amazing,” brigade Secretary Danny O’Toole said. “All the facilities we have now are modern and up-to-date, and the space out the back of the engine bays allows greater capacity for practical drills on station.”

Mick McGuinness, Region 7 Operations Officer and OIC Geelong City Fire Station, echoes this sentiment. “The volunteers and the staff are extremely happy, not only because of the fantastic facilities and work environment now available for the brigade, but also having been involved [with planning] from the start,” he said. ■



Photo courtesy of Geelong City Fire Brigade



Take an online video tour of the new station with Fire Officer Mark Sinkinson by visiting [CFA Connect](http://CFA Connect)



Blair's award-winning photo 'Lean on Me'

## Melton firefighter snaps up awards

BY ALISON APRHYS

Melton Fire Brigade's Blair Dellelijn was recently honoured at the 2010 National Emergency Management Volunteers Photographic Competition in Canberra.

Blair, 30, was presented with a National Highly Commended Award and a Victorian Highly Commended Award for his photograph 'Lean on me' (above). It was taken at a memorial service at Kinglake West on 7 February 2010, the first anniversary of the Black Saturday bushfires.

While Blair says he enjoys taking photos of firefighters, particularly torchlight marches, he confesses that he's really a red-truck rev-head at heart. "My mum always says that there was a building on fire opposite the hospital when she gave birth to me so the first thing I heard was a siren and the first thing I smelled was smoke," Blair says.

Word of Blair's skills behind the camera means he now regularly receives calls from brigades. But while others sing his praises, Blair modestly credits Keith Pakenham, CFA Strategic Communications' award-winning photographer, as being a real inspiration. Blair reckons that 'Pako' is up there with the best.

Keith says that CFA is very fortunate to have someone of Blair's calibre. "Blair has initiative and foresight and his images and articles are going from strength-to-strength," Keith says.

Blair also credits Chris Maxwell, whose MFB role is similar to Keith's at CFA, as an inspiration.

According to Melton brigade First Lieutenant Ray Dickson, Blair's ability with a camera is as important as his skills with a hose and branch. "Blair's been an asset not just with firefighting, but with his ability to take photos and assist the brigade with publicity over a number of years," Ray says.

With his passion for model fire trucks extending to thousands of images and more than 2,000 models, it's a good thing Blair's wife Chantel is also a volunteer firefighter. "We met at the Melton Fire Station," Blair says.

Blair's advice to anyone interested in recording their brigade's social history is to go for it. "Don't be swayed by the naysayers," he says.

As a volunteer member of CFA's Strategic Communications Digital Media team Blair emphasises that taking photos on a fireground or an incident is a completely different matter and formal permission from the Incident Controller would be necessary before snapping away.

CFA also has comprehensive Photo/Video guidelines that must be followed at incidents. ■



Photo: Keith Pakenham

## Brigade-inspired art

BY ALF VELLA

I've been a hobby artist for close to nine years, and when I joined Tanjil Brigade five years ago, firefighting provided a whole new avenue of inspiration for my art.

Like many other artists, I was overwhelmed by the incredible scenes of Black Saturday and its aftermath. Tanjil Tanker was deployed to Longwarry that day and almost all of our members took shifts to man the tanker over the days that followed.

With the completion of the renovations to our old fire station, which is now a meeting and training room, it gave me great pleasure to offer the brigade a painting created as a tribute to Tanjil's involvement in the Black Saturday campaign. The piece was unveiled in May and now hangs proudly in Tanjil's new facility.

The dominant feature in the painting is a wedge-tailed eagle in full flight soaring over the bleached Labertouche landscape with a huge pall of smoke that obliterates the sun leading into a crumpled Australian flag. Tanjil Tanker features prominently in the middle ground.

To me, the big wedge-tailed eagle is a symbol of everything Australian – tough, determined and able to rise above any adversity, and they are often seen in the hills surrounding our area. ■



Captain Dick Harrison (right) and Firefighter Alf Vella hang Alf's work in the new meeting room





(l to r) Geelong City Fire Brigade Chairman Laurie Hill, Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron, Premier John Brumby, Parliamentary Secretary Danielle Green and Operations Officer Mick McGuinness

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Photo courtesy of Geelong City Fire Brigade



Take an online video tour of the new station with Fire Officer Mark Sinkinson by visiting [CFA Connect](http://CFA Connect)



Bamawm Extension brigade members, Ron Trail, Victorian president of the ACTA, and Regions 12 and 20 members at the cool room handover

## Coollest brigade in CFA

BY ALISON APRHYS

After the Black Saturday bushfires, the Bamawm Extension Rural Fire Brigade (BERFB) raised \$6,300 at an auction night to support brigades affected by the 2009 bushfires.

Captain George Calleja explained that many of the BERFB members were on strike team duty on and after the 7 February bushfires and came back determined to do more to help their CFA colleagues. "We saw the devastation and we wanted to do something in return," George said.

George is also a keen clay target shooter and was delighted when fellow shooter Ron Trail offered his assistance. "Ron is the Victorian president of the Australian Clay Target Association (ACTA) and vice-president of the association and when he heard what we'd done, he said he'd see if they could raise some money at the national titles," George said. Another \$7000 was raised.

Now with \$13,300 at their disposal, BERFB discussed with Region 20 Operations Officer Mark Owens how they could best support brigades that had lost equipment during the fires. Mark spoke with Region 12 Operations Manger Peter Creak who suggested a mobile cool room would be very much appreciated.

Peter says Region 12 brigades and members will greatly benefit from the project. "The new mobile cool-room will have a compressor and there will be a generator so it could be parked at a staging area, water point or sector command so people can grab water when they need it."

Peter added that it was a wonderful example of how CFA members look out for each other. "It just shows that a small brigade in Region 20 had the presence of mind to think of what our brigades had gone through," he said.

Mark said the partnership between BERFB and the ACTA "shows the true sprit of volunteerism and helping out friends who have suffered. The camaraderie between the volunteers of Bamawm Extension Fire Brigade, Australian Clay Target Association and Region 12 volunteers is higher than ever before."

As well as the cool-room each of the four Region 12 groups also received a cheque for \$975 from the money raised.

In keeping with the desire to assist Region 12, all the work on the mobile cool room was undertaken in the local area to assist local businesses and tradespeople. The new cool room will be housed at Alexandra or Yea as required. ■

## Protecting firefighters

BY DAVID BRUCE

An online multimedia package based on Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) research into firefighter protection is now available.

The Bushfire CRC held a number of workshops for fire and land managers at the Bushfire CRC/Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council Annual Conference in September last year. Much of what went on at the workshops was captured for future use, both for workshop participants and for those unable to get to the conference.

The online package of information and resources is one outcome of the workshop on *Protecting Firefighters*. Presentations and discussion at the workshop spanned several related research projects out of the Bushfire CRC including Safe Behaviour and Decision Making, Effective

Incident Management Teams, and Firefighter Health and Safety.

You can access the full online package of materials from a quick link on the Bushfire CRC home page at [www.bushfirecrc.com](http://www.bushfirecrc.com)

The online resource includes the introductory video presented by CFA Operations Manager Peter Baker, an interactive slideshow that summarises the aim and outputs of the workshop, further slideshows from the research presenters, video interviews with participants, and all the workshop pre-reading material and handouts.

In addition, the *Fire, Fuels and Weather* seminar from the conference is currently being developed as a video project for Bushfire CRC members to use.

Other research projects in the Bushfire CRC are also planned to be presented in similar formats in the near future. ■





Toolangi Brigade members with nurseryman Robert Wakelam, CFA Board Member Robert Spencer, R13 OM Gary Weir, R12 OM John Leben and Murrindindi Shire Councillor Cris Ruhr.

## Firestar flourishes at Toolangi

BY JENNA CLARKE

Members of the local community were treated to the official planting of the Firestar Rose at the Toolangi Fire Station in June. Official CFA representatives were joined by members of the Toolangi Community Recovery Committee, Murrindindi Shire, Parks Victoria and the State Forest, along with Victorian nurseryman Robert Wakelam representing Knight's Roses.

Murrindindi Shire Councillor Cris Ruhr, together with Toolangi brigade Captain Ben Rose and CFA Board Member Robert Spencer, planted the rose outside the fire station.

Captain Rose said the rose was symbolic in recognising the many dedicated CFA members who worked hard to serve the community. "Having the launch of the Firestar Rose at the station is a real stepping stone for the recovery of the Toolangi, Castella and Chum Creek communities who were heavily impacted by the 2009 fires," he said.

"Like the lifecycle of the rose, the community and the brigade will continue to regenerate as we work through the recovery process."

The Firestar Rose can be purchased online at [www.firestarrose.com.au](http://www.firestarrose.com.au). Tips on how to care for and maintain your rose are available on the website.

Sales of the rose will benefit brigades with \$11.50 from each online sale this year going to CFA. Customers can nominate a brigade to receive the money when ordering.

The Firestar Rose is the first rose in the Firestar series, with a new commemorative rose to follow each year. ■

### HOW TO PURCHASE A FIRESTAR ROSE

1. Visit the website [www.firestarrose.com.au](http://www.firestarrose.com.au)
2. Go to the 'Shop' tab, and follow the prompts to order and purchase your rose.
3. Orders for bare-rooted roses will be taken from 1 June through to 30 July 2010.
4. Once you have received your rose, visit the website for tips on how to plant, care for and maintain it.



### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIRESTAR ROSE

- TYPE:** Floribunda
- COLOUR:** Orange, becoming raspberry-pink
- SCENT:** Light
- FLOWER:** Double (about 30 petals), in clusters
- DISTINCT:** Unusual frilly petals, attractive colour-change as the flower opens. Diameter approx 10cms
- BUSH:** Bushy, excellent flowering continuity, mature dimensions approx 0.80m x 0.75m
- HEALTH:** Very good disease resistance



### WHY IS IT CALLED THE FIRESTAR ROSE?

Firestar Rose is named after the eight-pointed Fire Service Star, which is CFA's operational insignia. The star is the Cross of St John and its tenets were said to represent the virtues of tact, loyalty, dexterity, observation, sympathy, explicitness, gallantry and perseverance.



Photo: Keith Pakenham

## Captain honoured for Women's Day

BY ANNE SHEEDY

The Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) celebrated International Women's Day on 3 March and recognised St Andrews brigade Captain Helen Kenney for her tireless work in protecting the community.

Helen is a mother of eight and a pillar of strength for the local community. She led fire crews from St Andrews brigade as they fought the battle of their lives on Black Saturday.

CFA Yarra Area General Manager Lex de Man described Helen as “a dynamo, an extremely determined woman who showed extreme sacrifice and courage in protecting the community on Black Saturday as the fires ripped through St Andrews.”

In the days following the fires, Helen supervised the recovery process. She also kept the outside world informed and responded to numerous calls from newspapers, radio and television networks.

Helen continues to assist the community in the recovery process and is an active member in the Bushfire Community Recovery Committee.

Helen joined CFA as a volunteer in December 1999 and moved through the ranks to the role of Captain in July 2007. ■

## Vital contribution recognised

BY MARNIE UMBERS

Narre Warren brigade's Karen Bundock has won an award for outstanding service to firefighting over many years in the City of Casey's Volunteer Awards 2010.

Karen has volunteered extensively with the Berwick and Narre Warren brigades for 15 years.

“The Casey Volunteer Awards provide an opportunity to acknowledge the vital contribution of a group of people that I like to think of as the real heroes of community life in Casey – our volunteers,” City of Casey Mayor Cr Lorraine Wreford said at the awards ceremony in mid-May.

The City of Casey received 67 nominations in a range of categories for the awards and more than 260 people attended the ceremony. ■



Photo: Tony Bundock



Photo: Keith Pakenham

## Welcome Tagi!

BY KEITH PAKENHAM

CFA welcomed Tevita Tagilala (aka Tagi) who began a ten-month attachment from Fiji's National Fire Authority (NFA) in March.

Tagi will be working at Operations Officer level, so will spend quite a bit of time shadowing Operations Officers, observing and learning from what they do. He will also be interested in CFA's community education and engagement, public and media relations and other general management practices.

At NFA, Tagi is the Senior Training Officer working at NFA's Suva Headquarters. Tagi is here with his family; wife Mere, daughter Leba and son Soni. ■



## A boost to access

BY MARNIE UMBERS

**T**ooradin brigade received a major boost with the handover of a new \$120,000 Ultra Light Tanker in May.

Captain David Bulman accepted the keys to the 600-litre tanker from the Member for Eastern Victoria, Johan Scheffer MP, during his visit to the brigade.

“This new tanker will provide greater firefighting capability and accessibility to local coastal heath areas around Tooradin that are not as accessible to larger tankers,” David said.

The new tanker was funded with the help of the State Government’s Community Safety Emergency Support Program.

Tooradin Fire Brigade recently completed a station extension funded through exceptional support from the community, and Westernport Area and brigade funds. ■



Tooradin Captain David Bulman with Member for Eastern Victoria Johan Scheffer



Recently completed firetrucks lined up and awaiting delivery to CFA. During the 2009/10 financial year, CFA had 30 Light Pumpers and 28 Type 3.4C Heavy Tankers manufactured by Varley Specialised Vehicles in Newcastle. These new CFA vehicles come fully stowed with all the appropriate firefighting equipment. Photo: Keith Pakenham



Capt Gavin Brien receiving the ULT KEYS from Gayle Tierney MP  
Photo: Melissa Elliot

## Worth its weight

BY GAVIN BRIEN

**A**s part of the festivities to celebrate the centenary of the Barwon Downs township in May, Barwon Downs Rural Fire Brigade held the official handover of the new Ultra Light Tanker (ULT) it received in December 2009.

Member for Western Victoria Region, Gayle Tierney MP, handed the keys to the ULT to Captain Gavin Brien in front of an estimated 200 former and current Barwon Downs locals.

Region 6 acting Operations Manager Nick Brown also handed out service awards to brigade members and a BBQ lunch was cooked by the Forrest Lions Club, with Devonshire Teas by the Barwon Downs Tennis Club. ■

**T**wo months before the official handover the Barwon Downs ULT was proving its worth at its first major fire at Yeodene in March.

The incident showed local brigades what the ULTs are capable of, including getting to a creek a tanker couldn’t access. We were also able to run out hoses to black out while filling DSE slip-ons working in the same sector – this saved quite a few trips off the fire line to refill. ■





FF Grambau at high angle



FF Duda enters a confined space tank to perform a rescue 25m below

## Mildura 'special ops' rescue

BY RYAN BAXTER

If you were visiting Mildura in June and noticed several people swinging from the regional centre's tallest buildings you would be surprised to know these 'spidermen' were actually the staff at Mildura Fire Station.

Eight of Mildura's career firefighters took time away from operational duties to be involved in an 11-day technical rescue course to help increase CFA's rescue response for the North West Area.

The course involved low, steep and high angle rescue to begin with, and followed on to advanced atmospheric monitoring and confined space rescue. The Mildura eight found themselves picking heavy dummies from

the sides of building, the edges of cliffs and deep inside industrial tanks.

The Mildura crews were very grateful for the use of several local establishments that offered real life scenarios in their own response area. These included the Old Mildura Hospital, cliffs along the banks of the Murray, Mildura Council storm water drains and Lindeman's Winery.

Mildura will now continue to develop itself as a technical rescue hub for the north west of the state.

The members will also be putting in measures to build on the skills of the Area's volunteers and ensure CFA's responsibilities to the community continue to be met well into the future. ■

## Smoke-filled exercise

BY MARTIN FLANAGAN

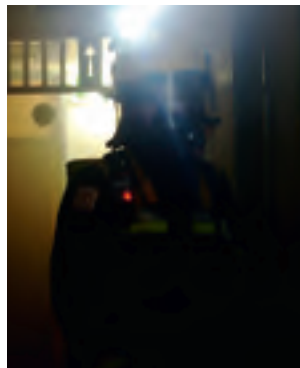
Echuca and neighbouring brigades held a search and rescue exercise in a disused nursing home in May.

Crews had to search smoke-filled rooms looking for 'elderly patients' to transfer to an assembly point outside the building.

Bendigo Protective Equipment Van refilled Breathing Apparatus (BA) cylinders, which were used to allow a large number of people to participate, while keeping all fire vehicles operational.

CFA Health Support conducted health checks and recorded before and after statistics of BA operators wearing the new turnout gear.

Participating brigades and appliances: Echuca, Echuca Village, Tongla, Rochester, Kyabram, Echuca Search & Rescue, Moama RFS, Moama NSWFB, Bendigo PE Van. ■



## Having fun at Kalorama

BY ANNE SHEEDY

More than 75 junior brigade members took part in the Kalorama Fun Day in late March. The event is a great opportunity for junior CFA brigade members from neighbouring areas to come together and participate in some healthy, competitive fire drills and exercises.

The juniors came from Belgrave, Clematis, Emerald, Kallista, Kalorama, Monbulk, Sassafra, The Basin and Upwey brigades.

Thirty-five brigade leaders were on hand to watch their teams compete, with approximately 100 parents and supporters to cheer on their teams.

CFA Junior Coordinator/Leader for Emerald brigade Trevor Island said it was great to see how the teams worked together and used their skills and knowledge to compete on the day.

The event was first held in 1997 and was set up in partnership with the Olinda Police, Montrose and District Rotary Club and the Mt Dandenong-Kalorama Fire Brigade. ■





Flowerdale and Kinglake members with Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron, Newman's Own Foundation Australian Representative Sue Home and Yarra Area General Manager Lex de Man. Photo: Keith Pakenham

## Newman's own reaches out to CFA BY ANNE SHEEDY

Kinglake West and Flowerdale brigades hosted Minister for Police and Emergency Services Minister Bob Cameron when they received two new tankers in May thanks to the Newman's Own Foundation.

The Australian Administrator of Newman's Own Foundation Sue Home officially handed over the keys to two new Ultra Light Tankers at the Kinglake West Fire Station. CFA Yarra Area General Manager Lex de Man thanked Newman's Own for getting behind the local community.

Kinglake West brigade Captain Karyn Norbury said the new Ultra Light Tanker would make all the difference in the firefighting effort.

"The new Ultra Light Tanker will be able to traverse a much larger part of the local area including dense scrub and small dirt tracks that can be difficult for larger firefighting appliances to access," she said.

Flowerdale brigade Captain Glen Woods said he was ecstatic when he heard of the donation to help Flowerdale purchase the new tanker. "Newman's Own charity work is world renowned, and we are so grateful to receive their assistance with this new firefighting unit," he said.

The St Andrews Fire Brigade also received over \$71,000 towards much needed infrastructure improvement works for the fire station making the total Newman's Own donation more than \$191,000. ■

## Lions share

BY JEFF NUNN

Yarrowonga and Tungamah Fire Brigades Groups recently received a \$4,000 cheque from the Yarrowonga Lions club. The funds came as a result of CFA members' efforts on the BBQs and at the gates at the annual mower races at Yarrowonga over the Christmas holiday period.

It is not the first time these two groups have worked together. The Lions Club was extremely supportive in helping the Yarrowonga Fire Brigade build its training track adjacent to its fire station in the 1990s.

Deputy Group Officer Jeff Nunn accepted the cheque at a recent Lions Club dinner and was glowing in his praise of the work the Lions Club does, saying he looks forward to working with the Lions again. ■

## Cann River's great bore

BY ERIN SEMMENS

East Gippsland Water has donated one of its water bores and a pump station to the people of Cann River to help strengthen the defence of the town against future threats from bushfires. The bore had become surplus to East Gippsland Water's needs and it decided to refurbish and donate the bore to the town, rather than permanently remove it from service. Located in a caravan park owned by East Gippsland Shire Council, it comes complete with a new water storage tank.

"We're delighted to be able to assist the people of Cann River in this way and have been working closely with East Gippsland Shire Council, DSE and CFA to make it happen," East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Les Mathieson said. "It's great to see our water bore being given a new, very worthy lease of life."

The bore, pump station and water storage tank will be maintained by East Gippsland Shire Council on behalf of the local community and will be available for use during emergencies by DSE and CFA fire crews. ■



Members of Cann Valley brigade with DSE's Ross Cutlack (top left), and Daniel Marsden and Ismail Hassan from East Gippsland Water (front row middle)  
Photo: Ronan Carroll, East Gippsland Water



Officers of the Truganina Fire Brigade with Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard

## Seventy years of service

BY BLAIR DELLEMIJN

**T**ruganina Rural Fire Brigade celebrated its 70th birthday in May with members and their families coming together for a night of dinner, slideshows and awards.

The brigade has 81 members, and its area takes in 9000 homes, 11 schools, industrial precincts, grass and bushland.

Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard was a special guest on the night and the evening's speaker was Anne Hooker, Youth Development Officer

from G4S Australia, the company behind security for the Port Phillip Prison, located in Truganina's Area. Just as Anne was about to begin her presentation ... beep beep beep beep beep ... the pagers sounded for a call to none other than Port Phillip Prison! It was a false alarm.

Just think Truganina Fire Brigade, 30 more years and you'll be 100. We hope to see some of the younger members receive their 30+ year awards then. ■



Member for Ripon Joe Helper hands over the keys for the new command vehicle to Captain Alwyn Parker

## Busy day for Smythesdale brigade

BY ANDREW GOETZ

**I**t was a busy and important day for the Smythesdale Fire Brigade in late May with both the handover of a new command vehicle and the presentation of long service awards.

The day started at the Smythesdale Fire Station with Minister for Agriculture and Member for Ripon Joe Helper handing over the keys of a new command vehicle – a Nissan Patrol 4WD turbo-diesel station wagon – to Captain Alwyn Parker

Between brigade fundraising activities and donations from the communities of Newtown, Scarsdale, Ross Creek and Smythesdale, more than \$16,000 was raised to match government grants of \$33,000, which funded the purchase of the vehicle.

Following the handover, 21 volunteer members of Smythesdale brigade were presented with long service awards by Region 15 Operations Officer Bernie Fradd. The ceremony was held at the Smythesdale Recreation Reserve hall with a luncheon prepared by the Auxiliary.

Brigade Support Officer Leanne Blenkiron was presented with a bunch of flowers in recognition of her assistance to the brigade and to Secretary Wayne Bourke. ■

## Wonthaggi celebrates centenary

BY MARNIE UMBERS

**E**arlier this year, the township of Wonthaggi celebrated its centenary alongside the local CFA brigade. Celebrations included a street parade and garden party thanks to the team at Bass Coast Shire.

The Fire Services Museum Victoria also came on board, providing a 1952 Austin Series II front-mounted pumper and a horse-drawn pumper from the late 1890s. The museum pieces took pride of place in the community parade alongside Wonthaggi Brigade's new Hazmat appliance.

Wonthaggi members participated in the parade dressed in a variety of uniforms from the past 100 years. The future of the Wonthaggi brigade was also highlighted, with members from the Junior Volunteer Development Program taking part.

Celebrations also included a fantastic static historic display organised by Wonthaggi brigade at the station. Local primary schools as well as members of the public visited the station during the celebrations to receive a briefing on the history of the brigade. ■







Westpac officials and CFA firefighters - Fiona Burns Yarra Valley 4th Deputy Group Officer, Diana Ferguson 1st Lieut. Bayswater, Phil Craig Captain Nar Nar Goon - with Collingwood Football Club officials including Coach Mick Malthouse, President Eddie McGuire and Captain Nick Maxwell

## CFA vols recognised in partnership BY DANIEL CONNELL

CFA's volunteers are to be recognised in a new community partnership between Westpac and the Collingwood Football Club through the 2010 Westpac Community Cup – a match between Collingwood and the Adelaide Crows at the MCG in Round 21. The match will recognise and pay tribute to the 60,000 volunteer firefighters in Victoria, raise significant funds and acknowledge the victims of bushfires. ■

## Balliang's millennium

BY KRIS PERKOVIC

Balliang Rural Fire Brigade held its service awards in mid-May, with more than 60 members and guests gathering on a lovely Sunday afternoon at Balliang Hall.

Close to 1,000 years of collective service experience was recognised at the ceremony; an amazing figure for a small, rural fire brigade.

Secretary Andrew Prime said it was an enjoyable afternoon with catering provided by the local Country Women's Association. "It was most enjoyable and it was good to see so many people attend, especially the partners of members," he said.

Balliang is a small town (2006 census: 233) within Moorabool Shire but the brigade services three local government areas: Shire of Moorabool, City of Greater Geelong and City of Wyndham. It has 69 members. ■



Balliang brigade members: (l to r) Peter Bufton, Andrew Prime, Judy Craig, Rick Oldfield, John Anderson (Ops Officer Bacchus Marsh Group), Pam Heath, Stuart Wilson and Peter Griffiths

## Back kicking goals

BY DANIEL CONNELL

For the second season in a row CFA is the major community partner of AFL Victoria and its flagship league – the VFL. The front of all VFL guernseys are adorned with the CFA logo, as well as billboards, signage and the ground at VFL venues.

All season long, CFA members will receive free entry to all VFL games – simply bring your Memberlink card or turnout coat for proof of identity. ■





## Fair bit of volunteering

BY PETER BEATON

Melbourne University's Community Volunteer Fair gave Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) an opportunity to show thousands of students the benefits of joining volunteer brigades.

It also brought opportunities to discuss possible cooperative projects with Melbourne University researchers. VFBV talked with university staff about the possibilities of designing research projects that can benefit the health and wellbeing of current volunteers or explore ways to encourage and make the most of volunteering in the future.

Seventy organisations took part in the one day event, which attracted thousands of students, many of whom will make volunteering or research part of their successful study. ■



Mt Taylor brigade's Erika Lind talks with students at Melbourne University's Community Volunteer Fair



## Having a field day

BY CHRIS LEWIS

A joint display by CFA Community Safety Gippsland Area and the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) won 'Best Stand Award – Information' at the 24th Annual East Gippsland Field Days on 30 April and 1 May.

The 'On The Land' program was a focus of the display, providing information about agricultural fire management procedures, planned burning on private land, using private equipment fighting fires and basic community safety in rural areas.

Nearly 1000 people visited the site with the fire simulator being a big draw card. Captain Koala was also popular with the younger visitors. ■



## Volunteer week 2010

BY JODI BUTLER

In mid-May, brigades in the South Gippsland Shire participated with other volunteer organisations at an expo for Volunteers Week.

Pictured with our display are Ken Roche (left) of Toora brigade and Peter Atkin from Leongatha brigade. Ken also assisted by bringing Toora's new Big Fill for display outside the hall.

The day was also attended by Leongatha Captain Andy Kay, BASO Gary Burns and BASO Jodi Butler, all from Region 9. ■





A PHOTOGRAPHIC DIARY OF A CFA BRIGADE



THROUGH THE AGES

KILMORE



COMPILED BY KEITH PAKENHAM



# 2010 Fire Awareness Awards



## Media Award category

### 2009 Recipient: Wimmera Summer Fire Awareness Media Campaign – ACE Radio 3WM, CFA, DSE

This media campaign over the 2008-09 summer fire season incorporated a suite of pre-recorded fire awareness messages for locals, workers, tourists and travellers in the Wimmera region, as well as live interviews with CFA and DSE fire staff, to inform and educate listeners across the Wimmera about fire safety.

## Entries are now open

Be in the running to receive the \$10,000 RACV Insurance Fire Safety Grant to help implement an innovative fire project – turn your great ideas into reality. Or apply for a Special Incentive Grant of up to \$2,000.

You or your brigade can also enter for an award, or help the community by encouraging an individual, group, or organisation to enter. We want to hear about people doing great work on projects about:

### Fire safety, Fire awareness, Fire prevention, Fire response, Recovery after fire.

This is a great opportunity for individuals, groups and organisations working on innovative fire projects to receive thanks for their hard work in reducing the number or impact of fires in this State.

Entering is easy. You can enter online at [www.fireawarenessawards.com.au](http://www.fireawarenessawards.com.au) or by email or mail.

Applications for the 2010 Fire Awareness Awards close at 4pm, 20 August 2010. Awards and grants will be presented by dignitaries at the Fire Awareness Awards event to be held at the RACV Club in Melbourne on 7 October 2010.

**For further information about the 2010 Fire Awareness Awards, or to apply, visit [www.fireawarenessawards.com.au](http://www.fireawarenessawards.com.au) or call (03) 9412 4465.**



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