

FIRE WISE

Official publication of:
Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria
CFA Rescue Association

Published monthly

Formerly 'The Fireman' from 1947-2016

Sharing information and stories to build capability, celebrate, remember and learn

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JULY 2023

Vol. 78/1, No. 1030

Subscription: \$37.00 per annum (Vic)
\$45.00 (interstate)
Office located at: 24 Castle Combe Circuit,
Cowes

EXPECT A WARMER, DRIER WINTER AS EL NINO DEVELOPS

PARTS OF VICTORIA EXPERIENCED a wetter than normal autumn, but the forecast for winter is drier with warmer conditions than average, according to the Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Winter, released Thursday 1 June.

Victoria's southwest saw above average rainfall in autumn and three consecutive years of La Nina have resulted in wetter soils across the state.

However, reduced rainfall and above average temperatures over the next three months could result in drier than average soil by late winter, when El Nino conditions are forecast to develop.

While Victoria is now in the lower-risk period for bushfires, emergency services remain well prepared and will continue to monitor any emerging risks including the potential for an earlier start to bushfire season.

The emergency management sector is continuing its preparedness activities with statewide preparedness briefings and state-level exercising, including community-centred scenario exercises.

Incident management personnel are doing all they can to prepare for emerging risks and respond to any emergencies.

VICTORIA

During Autumn, wetter than normal conditions were experienced in the southwest of Victoria while the remainder of the state received closer to average rainfall. Three consecutive years of La Niña has resulted in wetter soils across the state for this time of year as the winter period commences.

Winter will see Victoria transitioning into a low-risk period for bushfire activity, resulting in an assessment of normal bushfire potential across the state. The climate outlook suggests a high chance that drier and warmer conditions will eventuate across Victoria in the lead up to spring. As a result, there will likely be increased planned burning opportunities during winter.

The forecast drying patterns across the state will be closely monitored over the winter period to identify emerging risks and any potential for an earlier start to Victoria's bushfire season.

CFA Acting Chief Officer **Garry Cook** reiterated that Victoria is one of the most bushfire prone areas in the world.

"Despite years of wetter than average weather, CFA is continuing its work with partner agencies throughout the cooler months to keep every Victorian safe this fire season," he said.

"Our crews are working hard to identify areas with high levels of vegetation and fire risk to deliver targeted fuel reduction activities in partnership with land managers.

"Fire safety is a shared responsibility, and our people are continuing to engage with communities to help them plan and prepare for hotter summers and more dangerous fire seasons."

The Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Winter is developed by Australasian Fire Authorities Council and supported by the Bureau of Meteorology along with State and Territory fire and land managers.

Keep up to date with the Fire Danger Ratings and access local flood guides on the VicEmergency App and VicEmergency website.

To read the full Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for winter 2023, visit the AFAC website - <https://www.afac.com.au/auxiliary/publications/newsletter/article/seasonal-bushfire-outlook-winter-2023>

TRIAL TO DETERMINE HEALTH IMPACTS ON CFA MEMBERS

AN INITIATIVE OF DISTRICT 8 VFBV THROUGH THE HEALTHY FIRE STATIONS PROJECT has resulted in a trial commencing at numerous CFA brigades. This trial involves testing for elevated levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in stations and/or appliances. This is done through the placement of Air Cards in the stations and appliances of various CFA brigades to test for the presence of VOCs which can be harmful to the health of its members.

The health effects depend on the specific composition of VOCs present, their concentration and the length of exposure. General effects of exposure to VOCs include: irritation to the eyes, nose and throat; headaches; loss of coordination; nausea; and damage to the liver, kidney and central nervous system. Some VOCs are suspected or are known to cause cancer in humans.

The build up of VOCs in indoor environments can present health risks.

The presence of VOCs in stations and the potential harm on CFA members as a result was an issue raised by a number of members of District 8 VFBV some years ago.

These members combined to form the Healthy Fire Stations Project. The project includes numerous actions brigades can take responsibility to ensure their stations are healthy and their working environments around the station and in appliances and that PPC is clean and minimises health risks to members.

It also detailed concerns that VOCs could be present and aimed at raising awareness and pursuing the matter with CFA to have these concerns addressed.

The issue was championed by the late Bill Watson who was a VFBV State Councillor at the time as well as District 8 President. He was a major driver of the District 8 VFBV Healthy Fire Stations Project and was extremely passionate about this issue.

Bill passed away last year following a brief illness.

The trial has been named the 'Bill Watson Air Card Trial' in recognition of the outstanding work done by Bill in recognising the potentially harmful health impacts on CFA members and his efforts in gaining awareness

regarding this.

Identifying that many brigades potentially faced health risks to their members at their stations and in appliances he became a voice and champion for better conditions for all CFA members to ensure their health was not compromised in undertaking their commitments to volunteering.

As part of the trial Air Cards have been installed in a number of stations to monitor VOCs. The brigades participating in the trial include Bunyip, Epping, Keysborough, Monbulk, Nar Nar Goon, Narre Warren, Narre Warren North, Rye, Seville, Somerville, and Yarrambat. All participating brigades are from districts 8, 13 and 14. There are several more brigades about to commence or already commenced as Fire Wise goes to press with this edition.

At the end of the trial periods it is planned to evaluate the results and determine if there is a presence of VOCs at the stations being tested and the number of brigades, if any, with members are being exposed to VOCs

The Air Cards have only recently arrived in Australia and the trial commenced with the installation of these in three District 8 fire stations in late May. Air Cards have been developed and used in fire departments with the USA.

Installations are also occurring at fire stations in Tasmania, Western Australia and NSW.

Go to the following link to watch a video on the air cards and explanation on their purpose and operation - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=697NKn7KiUc>

Below are details about the testing using an **Air Card**.

The AirCard is an easy way to test for health harmful levels of VOCs in the air that you

and your crew breathe. The card is loaded with purple pellets that detect VOCs in the air. Inside of the 30-day testing period, the faster the pellets lose their purple colour, the higher the VOC levels are.

USING AIR CARD

Choose a location: Place your Air Card in a location where your crew spends time - usually the station, apparatus or appliances.

SCAN THE QR CODE

The QR code will bring you to a simple form. Locate your station and fill out any requested information. Occasionally you will get a reminder to check on your card.

WATCH YOUR AIR CARD

You should check in on your AirCard regularly. If you notice that the beads have lost

their purple colour (they may change to a variety of colours), scan your QR code again to submit your results. If there is still some purple remaining after 30 days, scan the QR code to end the air quality evaluation and consider testing again in 60 days.

EVALUATE YOUR RESULTS

After you submit your results, you will receive an email explaining what your results mean along with some next steps to help protect the health of your crew.

Interested brigades and personnel can obtain Air Cards from GAAM Emergency Products.

CFA is in the process of installing TFT Cabin Protect Filtering Systems in the latest build of five Rescue appliances.



Lieutenant Mark Ward and Lieutenant Dwayne Crerar from Nar Nar Goon Fire Brigade check the progress on one of the air cards installed in the station as part of the trial.



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VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES VICTORIA

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VFBV BOARD APPLICATIONS

Please refer to the advertisement that appears on page 3 of this month's edition of 'Fire Wise' for applications to the VFBV Board.

VFBV encourages any members who are interested in contributing to the Board to review the materials available on the VFBV website to

understand the roles and obligations.

Volunteers from all backgrounds and walks of life are welcome to apply. In particular, VFBV is seeking greater gender diversity, and encourages women in particular to consider applying.

MANDATORY WWCC

Feedback is being sought on a CFA proposal to update its policy covering Working with Children Clearances.

This draft policy extends the requirement for all volunteers to hold a current working with children check (WWCC). The policy proposes a phased approach, requiring all members of a brigade management team and various other roles to hold a WWCC by June 2024. The policy then extends this requirement to all group and deputy group officers, as well as all members of a brigade that has members under 18, requiring them to hold a WWCC from June 2025. The final phase requires every volunteer to hold a WWCC from June 2026 as a condition of membership.

VFBV is seeking feedback from volunteers to help inform a VFBV response. Feedback can be provided by individuals, brigades, groups and District Councils.

Please visit the VFBV website for more information, including copies of the draft policy.

Also turn to page 3 of this edition for article containing further details.

AFSMs for Dawn and Paul

VFBV congratulates the five CFA members who were among almost 1,200 Australian's recognised in the first King's Birthday Honours list this year.

Captain Dawn Hartog AFSM has provided 18 years of dedicated and exceptional service to CFA, initially as a staff member and now as a volunteer and member of the CFA Board. Dawn has extensive emergency management experience both as a firefighter and within Incident Management Teams as an

accredited Level 3 Public Information Officer and has distinguished herself with her ability to effectively engage with a broad range of stakeholders to achieve outcomes which have made a significant contribution CFA.

Captain Paul Denham AFSM has been recognised as a highly experienced and respected firefighter in both urban and rural settings for more than 40 years. Paul has served in leadership roles with Boronia Fire Brigade, Knox Group and Buxton Fire Brigade as well as serving as a State Councillor with VFBV for more than 20 years and three years as a CFA Board Member. Throughout his service Paul has been passionate about training, the safety

FINANCE POLICIES

Feedback is being sought on a proposed CFA Brigade/Group Finance Policy suite. The suite encompasses six draft policies that seek to clarify the processes surrounding the management of brigade and group finances. The draft policies cover things like approvals required for purchases, restrictions on the number of bank accounts, how funds can be spent and records required etc.

While many of the topics covered are similar to those that currently exist in the brigade management manual, there are several areas of changed policy. Brigades and groups are encouraged to go through the policies and provide any feedback to help inform VFBV response to CFA.

Feedback from members ultimately leads to either VFBV support or non-support for a specific policy, as well as contributing to our advocacy around amendments.

Feedback can be provided by individuals, brigades, groups and District Councils. Please visit the VFBV website for the draft policy.

CFA's newest brigade

VFBV welcomes CFA's newest Fire Brigade at Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust in District 11.

This decision follows representation from the dedicated volunteer members who've protected their land for two decades as a satellite station of Toorloo Fire Brigade.

In accordance with the wishes of the local community and the principle of self-determination, an indigenous name for the new brigade will be determined following engagement with Elders.

A local CFA presence was established in early 2000s by a group of First Nations women who wanted to join CFA and be trained as firefighters following a series of blazes on the former Lake Tyers Mission in East Gippsland.

You can read about the history of CFA's newest brigade, via CFA members online.

The last several months have seen some significant items out for broad consultation, with the two most recent items eliciting a very high number of responses.

We sought feedback on draft changes CFA was proposing to its Radio Allocation policy and procedure, and feedback on a new draft policy that CFA was proposing to cover the consumption of alcohol at social functions and other activities.

First and foremost, I wish to thank every volunteer that took the time to submit feedback and comment. Our networks are designed to provide the opportunity for volunteers from every part of the State to provide feedback. This is important as a policy impact can be very different depending on the location of your brigade, how large or small it is, the makeup of the membership, and your own experiences which often provide different perspectives. To canvass feedback from 52,000 volunteers across 1,214 brigades takes considerable time, effort and hard work.

Our forums are also the perfect place for volunteers to discuss these impacts. Often there may be a perception of what a policy is saying that elicits strong feedback. Being able to discuss the policy in open forums such as our District Councils allows volunteers to hear feedback from their peers and often leads to a much better understanding and appreciation of what impacts may or may not occur in their own brigade.

Essentially, this elaborate and well-structured network is what drives VFBV to be determined to ensure decision makers use it, and treat volunteer consultation seriously to ensure issues are well understood, discussed and tested, with enough time for these discussions to be meaningful.

And yes, sometimes it can be difficult. No one likes hearing negative feedback, but if a of protective clothing and equipment used by CFA members as well as advocating for improved amenities at fire stations.

VFBV congratulates Dawn and Paul for their outstanding contribution to CFA and the broader community.

Congratulations are also extended to fellow CFA volunteers Leslie Kelly and Ian Graham as well as CFA Board Member Tony Peake who each received the honour of the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).

Transferring members

VFBV delegates have been raising concerns with the process of members transferring brigades. For some time now, there has been a changed process that has altered an operational member to non-operational status upon their transfer and has required the brigade to then specifically request their status be changed back to operational.

This has resulted in many members unaware their status has changed, and has the potential to impact on service records, insurance coverage and the like.

The Chief Officer has agreed to a VFBV request to rectify this anomaly, and the process has now been amended to ensure current operational members who hold a firefighting qualification retain their operational status upon a transfer, without the brigade having to submit a change of status form. Transferring members may not turnout or respond to fires until the Captain of the receiving brigade has endorsed that member to respond (as is the case now), but this no longer requires any paperwork and can be managed at the local brigade level.

FEEDBACK LOOP

by Adam Barnett, VFBV Chief Executive Officer

draft policy has missed the mark, or has not prepared for a potential impact or other negative consequence, it is better for everyone to know that while there is still time to fix it.

In this sense, VFBV was inundated with feedback from members on CFA's draft alcohol and other drugs policy. Only 13% of respondents indicated a high level of support for the draft policy. It was clear from going through the feedback that the draft missed the mark and underestimated many of the impacts caused by loose wording and vague scope and intent.

Without declaring what problem the policy was hoping to fix, it was left open to interpretation, of which there was many. In an organisation the size of CFA, it is important that policy writers maintain strict discipline in crafting policy language, scope and intent.

It is important to note that while there was overwhelming criticism of elements of the draft policy, we did not receive any feedback that advocated inappropriate policy settings or suggested volunteers did not support an overarching policy context that encourages the responsible use and serving of alcohol. This is unsurprising given the extremely high trust and reputation that CFA volunteers have built and earned in their communities.

However, there was overwhelming feedback that CFA policy must first and foremost be framed in the context that CFA is a volunteer and community embedded organisation and creating six pages of red tape that sought to reach across into people's personal lives and simply tie people in knots was neither well received, nor appropriate given the very low incidence of issues. The point that many made was that the CFA behavioural standards, founded on the volunteer code of conduct that volunteers themselves designed and wrote - expressly outlines the behaviour expected of CFA members, so why the need for more bureaucracy?

The VFBV Board and State Council have considered the feedback received and have developed five high level principles to guide a future sensible policy. We have formally advised CFA that we cannot support its draft policy in its current format and have

offered to assist CFA revisit its base assumptions, proposing a more effective policy that incorporates volunteer feedback.

While CFA has not yet formally responded to VFBV's feedback, I have been informed that our feedback has been welcomed and is being taken seriously, with the intent of diligently considering the feedback provided before discussing next steps.

While we don't always have to agree, this is the mature and professional way to approach consultation. Neither side is served by digging in or ignoring the others perspective, and I remain optimistic that genuine consultation, and a culture of actively seeking, listening and acting on volunteer feedback continues, and I congratulate the CFA CEO and Chief Officer on their approach to working with us to ensure volunteer consultation is not merely lip service.

There are two further major pieces of proposed policy currently out for consultation. Given their potential impacts, we are seeking broad feedback from all brigades, groups, district councils and individual volunteers.

The first is a revised CFA Finance Policy suite that proposes to streamline the various financial management policies and clarify processes for the management of brigade and group finances. In many respects, the new policies simply pick up elements from the brigade management manual that have been in place for some time now.

To its credit, CFA embarked on internal consultation with VFBV as it was developing its draft policies prior to their release, which has resulted in a better developed draft for broader consultation. While much of our initial feedback has been picked up, we are keen to hear from brigades and groups about the practicalities of some of the proposed changes, such as leasing arrangements, the use of brigade derived income from commercial activities such as fire equipment maintenance and the use of brigade social and welfare accounts.

The second item out for broad consultation is a revised working with children clearances policy. While CFA admits that the majority of roles in CFA do not perform "child related activities" and therefore do not require a working with children clearance under the Worker Screening Act, it is proposing to expand its policy to mandate that all members must hold a working with children clearance by June 2026.

Again, we are seeking brigades thoughts about the appropriateness of this requirement, and whether there may be any unintended consequences. In particular we are keen to gauge from volunteers their feeling about the administrative burden this may create, especially in remote and regional communities and the likelihood of maintaining such clearances in the future, and the workload of brigades to monitor and support members meet-



ing the new requirements.

Interestingly no new funding or administrative support has been announced or proposed to accompany the modified proposal, so we are also keen to hear from volunteers on what additional support they or their brigade may require to support the proposed position.

While I suspect that every member supports CFA being a child safe organisation (of which it currently is), people may differ in how they think an organisation actually becomes child safe vs administrative processes that simply tick a box. I encourage members to have mature and robust conversations about the practicalities of the proposal, and provide your feedback, both positive and negative. It is critically important we don't only hear from those opposed, but also those who support. We are committed to representing the diversity of views that are likely to be found across the membership. But unless we hear from you, this is difficult.

We are also keen to hear your views on the timelines of each schedule, the roles contained within each, how to manage members who rarely attend the brigade and the role of brigade management teams in overseeing compliance with the proposed policy.

I often remind people that genuine consultation isn't simply about asking a question and then waiting upon a single response. It's a journey - not a destination, it takes time, involves many discussions and sometimes it is difficult and challenging. But in the end, you get good policy and the desired outcome that because of the support, is actively complied with.

Good consultation is about empowering and trusting volunteers, engaging them as equal partners in the journey and sharing the underpinning issue, challenge or opportunity that we are seeking to address. While I am not convinced we are quite there yet, I do see positive signs.

Robust and genuine volunteer consultation is achieved by the proper analysis of the issue in partnership with volunteers; consideration of alternatives; providing timeframes that are respectful and appropriate for a large dispersed volunteer-based organisation; as well as a commitment to show how feedback has been taken into account and considered before decisions or next steps are taken.

Your voice matters and will have an impact on decisions affecting the future, so please get involved. And while we will keep striving for improved consultation arrangements with CFA, your involvement in feedback requests is critical. Visit our website for the drafts and where to send your feedback. We want to hear from you.



VFBV BOARD VACANCIES

Invitation to ALL CFA Volunteers to apply

Closing date for written applications is 28 August 2023

VFBV advances the interests of all Victorian fire brigade volunteers and VFBV BOARD POSITIONS

Vacancies on VFBV Board will arise when the terms of four VFBV Board members expire on 1 October 2023. Of the four members whose terms are expiring, two are eligible for reappointment. VFBV invites applications from any CFA volunteer who is motivated by the prospect of making a difference and believes they have the skills to contribute to the VFBV Board.

The role of a board member involves contributing to VFBV direction, policy determination and monitoring the performance and governance of the Association. This includes actively contributing to policy discussion, consulting with CFA volunteers and contributing to the identification and management of strategic issues.

VFBV is seeking applications from gender and culturally diverse candidates in addition to a diverse range of skills and experience including applications from diverse brigade types and classifications.

Members should familiarise themselves with the VFBV Board member role statement and key selection criteria available from the VFBV website or via the office at (03) 9886 1141.

Applications close on Monday 28 August 2023 and must be lodged to VFBV, 9/24 Lakeside Drive, Burwood East 3151; email vfbv@vfbv.com.au; telephone 9886 1141; fax: 9886 1618.

WWCC feedback to VFBV requested

Formal consultation has commenced on amendments proposed by CFA to its policy for Work with Children Clearances (WWCC).

The proposed draft policy is available for download from the vfbv website <https://www.vfbv.com.au>

Whilst the majority of roles in CFA do not require a WWCC under the Worker Screening Act, CFA is proposing to require all staff and volunteers to have a valid working with children check even if not legally required to.

The policy proposes a phased approach, requiring all BMT members and various other roles to hold a WWCC by June 2024.

The policy then extends this requirement to all group and deputy group officers, as well as all members of a brigade that has members under 18, requiring them to hold a WWCC from June 2025.

The final phase requires every volunteer to hold a WWCC from June 2026 as a condition of membership.

Members are encouraged to review the proposed draft policy and provide any feedback/suggestions/amendments including indicating support/non-support for the proposed policy.

Feedback can be provided by individuals, brigades and groups. All feedback is used to inform and influence formal VFBV positions as well as used to influence CFA positions and thinking during the deliberative process.

VFBV encourages members not to wait until deadlines to provide feedback, but rather provide it as early as possible to provide the chance

to conduct further research that may assist in being able to advocate more strongly for your desired outcome.

Feedback is due by **Monday 14th August, 2023.**

All members are welcome and encouraged to provide feedback. If you have any questions, please contact your local State Councillor or VFBV Support Officer in the first instance.

How to provide feedback

It would be preferred that members provide feedback ASAP, so it can be received incrementally, allowing VFBV enough time to consolidate, identify trends and research issues raised by members.

Feedback can be provided by emailing to feedback@vfbv.com.au; your local VFBV District Council or your local VFBV Support Officer or by post to 9/24 Lakeside Drive, Burwood East 3151 or fax (03) 9886 1618.

Feedback does not need to be long or detailed, but if you do have the time to make substantive comment that is always welcome.

If you generally support a principle or policy, then a quick note letting VFBV know would also be helpful. Similarly, advise if you do not support it, or which aspects of it you don't support.

Where indicating non-support, it would be helpful to understand the key reasons why, and brief bullet points would be adequate. Likewise, if you would prefer to provide a more detailed response, or

mark-up and suggest changes to the documents, that is welcome.

Your feedback will assist to form a position and response to the proposed changes and help VFBV advocate on behalf of CFA volunteers.

Remember to provide feedback in support as well as against. If VFBV only hears from those who are against, it can be harder to determine the general comfort level of members with the proposals.

PLANNED BURN TASK FORCE END OF SEASON REVIEW

Members of CFA's Planned Burn Task Force (PBTf) came together in Geelong recently to undertake a seasonal review of the 'burning season that was.' Forty-five task force members and several support staff attended the afternoon event, including Deputy Chief Officer Alen Slijepcevic and Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer Ian Beswick.

During the 2022-23 burn season the Planned Burn Task Force provided 146 volunteers to support 36 planned burns over a number of regions, adding significantly to CFA's capacity to deliver burns.

This was the first opportunity for active members of the Task Force to come together Post-Covid. The seasonal review identified a number of actions to enhance and improve the Task Force's contribution, supporting brigades across Victoria as they implement their planned burning activities.

Some of the discussion points captured at the review included:

- starting activities earlier in the day of a planned burn to reduce 'waiting time' before ignition.
- raking out accumulated fuels from under veteran trees prior to ignition to reduce time spent blacking out after the fire had passed beneath the tree.
- Improving the consistency of pre-ignition (SMEACSO) briefings, as these varied greatly (ie: consistency and quality to ensure planned burners are fully aware of the burn objectives, ignition procedures, and what their role is)
- Tankers and other appliances need to be ready and fully functional before the event
- Burn camps and other training activities provide important opportunities to learn and improve, and gain accreditations.
- Quality assurance and inspection of private appliances that are used at planned burns.
- Accommodation standards



Planned Burn Task Force leader David Robertson, David Toohey and David Muir at a planned burn at Point Wilson.

for PBTf members were good, but should be as close as possible to burns to minimise travel times.

One of the highlights of the day was a talk by **David 'Robbo' Robertson**, a Task Force Leader, who spoke of the benefits members gain from participating with the Task Force.

Some of the benefits David Robertson spoke about were:

- it builds our skills
- PBTf members are needed to fill the gaps when brigades struggle to get the numbers to burn
- To remain fit, both physical and mentally



Winter Campaign launched

by CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan

We're now in the depths of the chilly season and our winter home fire safety campaign is in full swing. We launched the campaign in May with a case study of a family who escaped their burning home at Belgrave Heights in the Dandenong Ranges, thanks to their working smoke alarms.

Throughout the campaign we have been strategically choosing key topics to focus on each fortnight such as kitchen safety, heating and burns awareness with more to come throughout July and August.

Last month, two of our well-regarded CFA members were awarded an Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) as part of the King's first Birthday Honours List. Congratulations to Paul Denham from Buxton Fire Brigade and Dawn Hartog from Toolangi Fire Brigade who is also a current CFA Board Member.

These two members have more than 58 years of service between them and have made a tangible difference to CFA and their communities. I also want to recognise CFA volunteer Leslie Kelly from District 7 Brigade, who was awarded the prestigious Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). AFSMs and OAMs are highly regarded awards and I'm incredibly proud to see our members recognised for their

outstanding dedication and contribution to CFA and the Victorian community.

The Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) recently released the Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Winter 2023 which forecasts a drier winter with warmer conditions than average over the next few months, possibly resulting in drier than average soil, when El Nino conditions are forecast to develop.

This reiterates the importance of continuing our work with partner agencies throughout the cooler months and leading into the next fire season. I encourage you all to keep engaging with your local communities and help them plan and prepare for the fire season ahead.

While we're in the depths of winter here, our partners in Canada are facing one of their most challenging fire seasons. More than 400 firefighters from Australia have been deployed to assist our Canadian colleagues, over 100 of those are from Victoria. We are always willing to help our international partners and it's great to see our expertise and skills being utilised in these extremely challenging wild-fires. I'm proud of all our members on deployment and I wish them all a safe return to Australia.

CFA has a rich history of

supporting many good causes throughout the year. CFA is currently supporting the 2023 Emergency Services Blood Drive and I encourage our members and their families to roll up their sleeves for this incredible cause.

The annual Blood Drive, held by Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, kicked off on 1 June and will run through to 31 August. We can all make a significant contribution to those in need by donating blood or plasma.

You can register to donate at www.lifeblood.com.au. To find a donor centre near you, visit www.lifeblood.com.au/donor-centre. Donations only take around one hour of your time so I hope our members can get behind the challenge once again this year and help save lives.

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Right: Some of the Planned Burn Task Force members – Back: Marc Graesser (Natimuk), David Freeman (Leopold), Evan Belfrage (Gnarwarre), Hardy Clemens (Bainbridge), Richard England (Creswick), Adrian Ritchie (Cororooke). Front: David Robertson (Cobden) and Kerryn Tait (Wonga Park).



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AFSM HONOURS FOR PAUL AND DAWN

Two dedicated and inspirational CFA leaders have been honoured in the King's birthday Honours List announced last month. Captain Paul Denham (Buxton) and Captain Dawn Hartog (Toolangi) were most deserving recipients of the fire services highest honour, the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM). Both Paul and Dawn have not only worked as great leaders within the local communities but have both been champions for all CFA volunteers at State level.

Paul Denham commenced his CFA service in 1978 when he joined Barmah Fire Brigade. After a brief period he transferred to Boronia Brigade and more recently to Buxton holding dual membership of both.

Maintaining an exceptionally high level of service during a 45 year period his service with CFA has covered local, District and State level. His contribution has been for the betterment of the communities he has served, and for CFA volunteers as a whole.

During this time Paul has held multiple leadership roles. He was elected as Captain of Buxton Brigade in 2022 and served as Lieutenant prior to that in his brief time there but it was at Boronia where his leadership roles flourished initially.

He served in various Lieutenant roles there rising to 1st Lieutenant, the senior volunteer leadership role at that time. He was also a DGO with the Knox Group for an extended period.

Paul is a highly experienced and respected firefighter in both urban and rural settings. Throughout his service he has established himself as a capable and trusted operational leader in field command roles. He holds Level 3 Accreditation as a logistics officer and his expertise as a project manager in the building and construction industry and his prior service in the Royal Australian Navy is an asset during major emergency situations.

Frontline operational experience includes contributing his skills on the fireground during the 2019/2020 fires in and around Corryong. Paul also has extensive experience as a Strike Team Leader and his expertise was put to the test during the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in the Kinglake and Yarra Glen areas where he also served time as Divisional Commander - Kinglake Division. He is also an accomplished and experienced structural firefighter.

Paul became involved with the former Urban Association Executive and attended numerous State meetings as District 13 deputy delegate. He was elected to represent the district in 1992 and continued to give the District and volunteers great representation. In 2018 he resigned as a VFBV State Councillor for District 13 before immediately being elected to the same position representing District 12.

Some years earlier he received nomination by VFBV for membership of the CFA Board on which he served from 2011-2014. During this time he continued as a forthright advocate for volunteers.

Through his participation in many committees and working parties, Paul has championed the welfare and interests of volunteers and contributed to a better informed, educated and resourced volunteer firefighting and emergency response organisation. For example, he has served on the VFBV/CFA Joint Research and Development Committee, the PPC/E Consultative Committee, the Structural Ensemble Working Party, the Heavy Pumper Working Party and the Respiratory Protection Replacement Project that selected CFA's current MSA breathing apparatus.

Paul recently moved from the Joint Training Committee to the newly formed Joint

Operational Capability Committee. His contributions have resulted in improved performance and safety of the clothing and equipment CFA volunteers use, as well as advances in the training available to CFA members.

Paul's work as a volunteer trainer and assessor and mentoring others has been and remains a valuable asset to CFA. He has influenced policy at the training committee level and has used that knowledge to be a valuable trainer and assessor. He has used his training and assessing skills to help volunteers across the state. He instructs in General Firefighter and Breathing Apparatus.

Throughout his service Paul has displayed exceptional competency in assessing risk, determining plans of action and resolving problematic situations, always with safety as a priority. He is qualified as a field safety officer for both bushfire and structural incidents.

He works to ensure CFA members are recognised for their gift of service and inspires others to join CFA. He engages with the community and helps them share responsibility for their safety. His confident, approachable manner and his disciplined systematic approach have earned the respect of his peers, CFA staff and the community.

After the 2009 Black Saturday fires, Paul headed up the administration team tasked with clearing up the thousands of destroyed homes and buildings throughout Victoria. During this work, he travelled to each of the impacted areas liaising with government officials and administration teams. This project was completed ahead of time and under budget, and established itself as a model for future large-scale emergency clean-ups.

He has a long association with, and enthusiastic support for, the CFA Juniors Program. He introduced and assisted in establishing the Juniors Program at Boronia Brigade in 2002, consisting of 20 juniors from Boronia and Bayswater brigades; many of those juniors are now leaders in their brigades. Since transferring to Buxton Brigade, he has continued as a junior leader and is now driving the restart of the lapsed Juniors Program (delayed due to COVID-19) for the triangle brigades of Marysville, Narbethong, Taggerty and Buxton.

Like most successful CFA leaders, Paul has a supportive family.

"I wouldn't have achieved anything without support from my family, especially my 93-year-old mother and my wife Carmel.

"As a young man, my mum supported my involvement with the brigade at Barmah and she has supported me through 45 years of service.

"Carmel is also a CFA member and has accompanied me to countless activities both when I was a CFA Board Member and now as a VFBV State Councillor. This award is really a recognition of the time and sacrifices these two people have made to CFA.

"I'd also like to acknowledge the members of all three brigades who have tolerated me spending time away as a State Councillor. I'd also like to acknowledge the many CFA staff and volunteers, from across the State, who have worked on the various committees and projects I have been privileged to con-

tribute to; their help and advice has been invaluable."

Paul is as passionate about CFA now as he was 45 years ago.

"When I look at a brigade's trucks, structural and bushfire PPC and equipment, and the training our members receive, I can see we are in a far better place than we were when Barmah got its first truck – a second-hand Austin tanker – and I'd like to think I've contributed to that.

"We exist to protect our communities and we must do our best to protect our communities."

Dawn Hartog is an active operational firefighter with Toolangi Fire Brigade since 2012 and a current member of the CFA Board. Prior to this she was a dedicated staff member of CFA with an advanced background in training and education who took the opportunity to join CFA in 2005

She was employed as a Community Development Coordinator assisting communities and partner agencies. In her role her commitment to getting all stakeholders, to work more effectively together has facilitated a more strategic and integrated approach to community preparedness engagement and information.

Following fires in 2006 that were in close proximity to her home in Kinglake, and with her knowledge gained through her CFA employment, Dawn established a Community Fireguard Group for her residential street. This proved instrumental on that fateful day – 7 February 2009 also known as 'Black Saturday'.

It was discovered after the fires, that Dawn's communications went far wider to other groups leading up to the tragic day and beyond. Focused on community confidence building and as a trusted source for information she took on a local leading role following the fires leading her to be asked onto the local Neighbourhood House Committee of which she later became president.

The experience solidified her understanding and cemented her knowledge of what CFA does in the areas of emergency management, community engagement and regulation.

One of the key projects that Dawn delivered out of the Black Saturday fires was a video project that she developed and led 'When the Fires Come'. Information to assist members of the community to prepare for bushfires. She was also able to secure funding to make enough digital copies of the video that were then distributed to all CFA Brigades, community fireguard groups and neighbourhood houses across Victoria. Copies of the videos were also sent interstate to agencies including the Commonwealth's Department of Defence.

Becoming a member of Toolangi Fire Brigade in 2012 it was soon evident that Dawn had exceptional leadership qualities which were now matched by her firefighting skills she had developed and in 2015 she was recognised by her peers being elected as a Lieutenant. Two years later her peers again supported her to take on the Captaincy of the brigade, and she has provided strong and dedicated leadership for the past six years.

She was deployed as part of Strike Teams to assist fire affected communities during

the 2019/2020 bushfire season. As well as her active firefighting roles, she also provides frontline service working within Incident Management Teams in the field at Incident Control Teams and at the State Control Centre leading and managing the Public Information Section.

An active firefighter, Dawn regularly attends fire calls, car accidents, rescues and emergency medical calls. She has led incident control and crews on the frontline for fires, storms and floods and was deployed as part of strike teams to the 2019-20 fires. An accredited Level 3 Public Information Officer, Dawn works in Incident Management Teams in the field, at Incident Control Centres and at the State Control Centre during over the fire season and during major state emergencies. She has also performed the roles of Deputy Group Officer for Yea Group of fire brigades and District 12 Planning Committee Chair.

Throughout her CFA membership she has distinguished herself by her outstanding ability to effectively engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders and achieve outcomes that have made a significant contribution to increasing CFA's capability and performance and increasing community safety in Victoria. She has driven the development and application of improved ways to interact and educate the community and schools to understand and manage bushfire risk in partnership with other fire agencies, with local brigades and with communities. This has generated advances in how Victoria promotes and manages fire prevention and preparedness efforts.

Dawn's compassionate and inclusive nature has established her as a trusted leader and advocate for CFA members. She is well-regarded within CFA and across the emergency management sector for her outstanding contribution as a leader of volunteers, and as a CFA Board Member since 2019. Her outstanding dedication and contributions have greatly improved service delivery to, and safety of, the Victorian community as well as assuring that appropriate governance arrangements are effectively and efficiently implemented for the best CFA possible.

Since 2018 Dawn has been employed by Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA, formerly DELWP).

During this time she has been a Senior Advisor to the



PAUL DENHAM AFSM



DAWN HARTOG AFSM

Chief Fire Officer; Senior Project Officer - Continuous Improvement; Worked in the Forest and Fire Operations Division across DELWP; Senior Program Manager - FFMVic Culture and Diversity (Women in Fire and Emergency Leadership); Acting Manager, Energy Emergency Management (Secondment) with a current role of Senior Manager, Water Emergency Management which includes leading a team to deliver DELWP's water-related emergency management obligations, including planning and preparedness, response and recovery.

Dawn's year in between working at CFA and DEECA was a year secondment to EMV as Manager Emergency Management and Community Information.

Dawn is a Level 3 Accredited - Public Information Officer, Level 2 Incident Controller (Class 2 - Water), currently undertaking Planning Officer training (Class 2 Water focus).

She has been a guest speaker for Barrington Centre's Executive Consequence Management course on the topic of inclusion and diversity; Life Saving Victoria's Ready 2 Lead program as a senior woman in the emergency management sector; Eyers & Associates (through DEECA and partner departments) People Management Fundamentals course on her experiences and journey of leadership and those she has experienced.

She was also an inaugural participant of DEECA's (then DELWP) ACCELERATE program, which pulled women from the department across Forest and Fire Operations Division. There were 26 participants.

Her deployment during the 2019/20 fires to Swifts Creek ICC as PIO, and any of her ICC/SCC IMT roles since 2018 have been under the DELWP/DEECA/FFMVic banner.

Dawn has actively engaged in the education, leadership and training of others within brigades, incident management teams and the community over the course of her time at CFA, making a significant contribution to increas-

ing community safety in Victoria. This has included the development of programs that strengthen the skills and experience of others in emergency management and disaster resilience.

Dawn champions diversity in her brigade, CFA and broader sector through directly supporting and empowering women, youth and diverse members in CFA at events, committees and forums. In addition to captain, Dawn has led her brigade's Junior volunteers, and is currently still a Junior Leader. She also sits on CFA's Young Adults Advisory Committee providing her with a direct ability to support the development of young volunteers.

"For CFA to continue to be the backbone of our community, we need to get new generations involved," Dawn said.

"Along with their membership comes new and diverse ways of thinking, working and responding. This is one of the real strengths of our younger members.

"My daughter has recently signed up as a Junior member, and I hope she gets just as much satisfaction as I do in doing her part for our communities."

Dawn has directly influenced and advocated for gender equality at CFA. She is a member of CFA's Women's Advisory Committee where she provides advice and expertise on emerging issues and matters that have relevance for members. She has championed the establishment of a forum for women captains which has given a voice to women in CFA brigade leadership roles and also provides support to other women members as a formal and informal mentor.

"I have seen and been a part of some of the change that is occurring as a result of more women joining CFA and the broader emergency services," Dawn said.

"There is a strength and new ways of looking at things that I think women bring to our sector. You can see this change actually benefiting the entire membership, whether it be through improvements to PPC or the way our vehicles are designed."

OAM FOR LES KELLY

Recipients of the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the King's birthdays Honours List included Les Kelly who has given 57 years of dedicated service to CFA, which includes leadership roles, and an enormous contribution to the communities he has served.

Les recalls growing up on the family farm and joining his father by helping out Mannerim Fire Brigade at 12 years of age because "CFA was just a part of life there."

"As a kid I was excited to get involved and at that age was most interested in running for the brigade at the CFA-VFBV State Firefighter Championships."

He initially joined CFA to have fun and meet people as a young teenager and it turned into a lifelong passion for emergency management.

Les has held many leadership and critical roles in CFA.

He was Captain of Lara Brigade from 1999 to 2006 and is currently the Captain

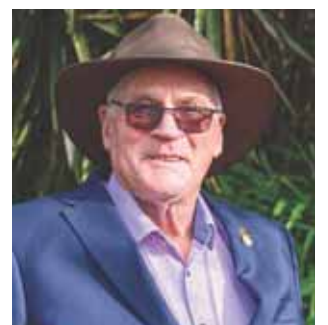
of District 7 Headquarters Brigade.

He was made a life member of CFA in 2017 and has also been awarded a 50-year Long Service Award and a National Medal 3rd clasp in 2014.

"I've always enjoyed volunteering for CFA and loved being involved in the emergency management sector and helping to protect my community.

"However, I couldn't have given 57 years of my life to CFA without the support of my family and the organisation."

He believes CFA has taught him many tangible and intangible skills that have equipped him to be better in



LES KELLY OAM

Image by Ivan Kemp

his personal and professional life.

"It's built me up to be a better communicator and leader, which has been a great asset to me and those around me."



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SIX BRIGADES AT HOUSE FIRE

A house fire in Chum Creek in District 13 at 1300 hours on 30 May drew numerous resources including a response from six brigades.

Personnel and appliances from Healesville, Toolangi, Badger Creek, Yarra Glen, Dixons Creek and Coldstream brigades attended the structure fire which was well alight by the time first crews arrived on scene.

A request was made by controlling brigade Healesville in the very early stages for additional tankers as extra resourcing was required on the fire ground immediately to help save what could be saved.

In rotation appliances from supporting brigades backed up the driveway of the property to keep supplies up of additional water to those on the fire ground. This worked extremely well despite the steep access and bushy terrain around the property.

The fire was eventually controlled within about 45 minutes thanks to a great team effort by all involved.

Ambulance Victoria and VicPol personnel were also on scene.

District 14 brigades work well together

At 1430 hours on 11 June local crews responded to a fire on a truck load of hay.

Crews from Wandong, Wallan, Whittlesea, Clonbinane, Kal Kallo and Wollert brigades (all District 14) responded quickly to the fire on the back of the vehicle.

Captain **Yorin Miller** (Wandong) said the main priority of crews attending the incident was to being the fire under control then ensure there would be no reignition.

“When we arrived on scene the hay was well alight and it was basically just a case of extinguishing the flames. Once it was extinguished we water for an excavator to arrive.

“It was just a case a getting it all off the back of the truck, pushing it to the side of the road, pulling it apart, making certain it was fully extinguished and then clearing it up. It was a good effort by everyone involved.”

The driver left the scene and returned with an excavator on the back of another truck, whilst a nearby resident also assisted with his tractor.

The scene was reopened at 2130 hours.

Captain Yorin said the blaze was likely caused from the heat of the truck’s exhaust igniting the hay – an incident quite uncommon for firefighters in the area.

HIKER RESCUED

It was a terrific team effort by members from multiple agencies that resulted in the rescue of a hiker trapped in harsh conditions in the Cathedral Ranges. CFA crews played a major role in the successful recovery.

Crews from Monbulk, Buxton and Marysville fire brigades, Fire Rescue Victoria, Marysville SES, Victoria Police and Ambulance Victoria responded to he call at 1017 hours on 10 June.

A hiker who had injured herself near the peak of the Ranges needed to be airlifted from the scene.

A combined crew of emergency service members made their way up the rocks towards the patient. The climb was made difficult by the cold weather and wet rocks.

Monbulk Fire Brigade 4th Lieutenant **Josh Leigh** said it was a tricky ascent.

“It was a difficult hike having to carry gear, including ropes and a stretcher, on wet and slippery rocks. We had to setup our own ropes to safely climb in some areas and it was also extremely foggy which made it bitterly cold towards the top.”

SES and Ambulance Victoria members stabilised the patient in preparation for rescue before CFA, SES and FRV crews set up a high angle rescue system, moving the patient 20 metres up to the peak for airlifting to Ambulance Victoria’s awaiting helicopter.

The heavy fog made extraction of the patient impossible, so the difficult decision was made to camp overnight with two wilderness paramedics remaining behind while the

ANSWERING THE CALL

(by Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman, FFMVic)

As mentioned in last month’s column, fire agencies from around Australia and New Zealand sent a 200-strong team to support already stretched Canadian firefighters as they battled some of the worse wildfires ever seen in Canada.

I was incredibly pleased to be able to welcome back the first deployment when the Victorian contingent returned to Melbourne late last month after 37 days of giving their all.

Forest Fire Management Victoria’s (FFMVic) arduous firefighters had spent much of their time backburning areas not yet impacted in an effort to contain the fires. Through their work, several communities have been able to return to their homes.

After a well-earned rest, I look forward to catching up with them to hear in more detail about their experiences and any learnings they have brought back.

Since that first deployment there has been an additional three teams sent from Victoria bringing the total to 112 crew on the ground, including a total of 80 forest firefighters.

They have been supported by amazing incident management, vehicle support, logistics, and communications personnel from our partner agencies across from Australia and New Zealand, who have integrated easily into the Canadian wildfire management system.

Crews have also been sent to Canada from across the United States, South Africa, France, Chile, Costa Rica, Portugal, and Spain.

Many of our firefighters involved in the deployment

would have started their careers with FFMVic as seasonal project firefighters. With applications now open for this year’s intake, it’s exciting to think about where successful applicants’ journey will take them.

We are looking to recruit 300 project firefighters (PFFs) to help keep Victorians safe in the upcoming fire season. Designated positions are also available for applicants who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Applications close 30 July 2023. Find out more at jobs.careers.vic.gov.au/pff

Read more about what it is like to be a PFF from previous and current PFFs here: <https://www.decca.vic.gov.au/ourpeopletheirstories>

Following government investment in 100 new ongoing and 54 fixed-term Forest Fire Operations Officer (FFOO) roles through its 2022/23 and 2023/24 State Budgets, 50 new ongoing forest firefighters started work on 1 July with the 54 fixed-term firefighters to start in coming months.

Applications are now also open for the next round of ongoing Forest Fire Operations Officers, who will join



FFMVic before the fire season. These roles include Field Operations Supervisors, Technical leads, Field Team Leaders, and entry-level Forest Fire Operation Officers. Applications close on 17 July 2023. More information can be found here: <https://www.ffm.vic.gov.au/who-we-are/firefighting-and-employment>

With the addition of these PFFs and FFOOs, it means Victoria will have more than 1000 frontline forest firefighters this fire season, which is predicted to be drier than recent summers affected by a La Nina weather pattern. They will work closely with CFA colleagues and will also be supported by 2000 staff from across the sector who have a fire and emergency role in addition to their usual role.

Together, we will be well prepared for what the season might bring.

Great work at Sale blaze



A large structure fire in Sale in the early hours of 3 June caused a huge amount of damage despite the best efforts of local fire crews. The fire was reported at 1237 hours and fought a quick response with support coming from as far away as Traralgon. When the first responding crews arrived on scene the building was already well alight.

Attending crews worked hard to save the adjoining buildings which received minor damage. Unfortunately the main building was completely destroyed as a result of the fire.

The priorities were to prevent the lateral spread and also protect nearby exposures.

CFA had 20 appliances on scene with support from FRV crews. More than 60 firefighting personnel were on scene.

The incident was brought under control at 0314 hours and a few more to fully extinguish the blaze. It was declared safe around 0530 hours, with local crews remaining on scene well into the following day.

CFA District 10 Commander **Ian Bounds** said the incident was a successful multi-agency response and crews did an incredible job containing the fire to the main building.

“I want to thank VicPol, FRV and Wellington Shire for their support and assistance,” Commander Bounds said.

“We are also grateful to a number of local businesses that provided food and other support throughout the incident. It was a great team effort by everyone involved.”

The cause was investigated and has been deemed undetermined due to the amount of damage to the building. It is not believed to be suspicious.



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<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fire-Wise/351678354181>



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OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3	OPTION 4

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PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS SCHEME EXPANDED TO MORE CANCERS

Female firefighters who develop specific cancers will have fairer access to compensation under an expansion to the Victorian Government's presumptive rights scheme.

Minister for Emergency Services **Jaelyn Symes** announced that the scheme's legislation will be amended to include primary site cervical, ovarian and uterine cancers.

The expansion of presumptive rights to include the additional cancers follows consultation to ensure more equitable access to cancer compensation for eligible personnel and remove barriers to compensation.

Previously, it has been difficult to prove a particular event or exposure caused the development of these cancers, due to the significant number of incidents they respond to throughout their careers and a lack of international research into female-specific cancers in firefighters.

The expansion of presumptive rights recognises the invaluable service firefighters and personnel provide to the community, which requires them to work in inherently dangerous conditions and exposes them to carcinogens.

Presumptive rights for cervical, ovarian and uterine cancers will be subject to a qualifying period of 10 years to align with other Australian and international jurisdictions. It will relate to cancer diagnoses on or after June 1, 2016, which is in line with cancers already included under Victoria's presumptive rights legislation.

Fire personnel engaged by Fire Rescue Victoria, CFA and the organisations that make up Forest Fire Management Victoria are eligible under current presumptive rights legislation to apply for compensation if diagnosed with one of the 12 cancers without having to prove that firefighting is the cause.

Administered by WorkSafe Victoria, the presumptive rights compensation legislation presumes that a worker's cancer was related to their service, providing relevant eligibility criteria is met.

Eligible personnel can make a compensation claim with WorkSafe by submitting a Worker's Injury Claim Form to the organisation. Since the initial introduction of presumptive rights legislation in 2019, 211 claims have been processed.

Legislation to expand the scheme for the three cancers is expected to be introduced into Parliament as soon as possible.

Focus on support to Canada

by Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp

Great to join you again after a few weeks away on holiday.

It was important to have a break to spend some time with my family. Given my impending retirement I also did some thinking about our priorities as a sector and where we need to go in the future. I look forward to sharing some thoughts with you in my next and final column in Fire Wise.

Getting back to my holiday, I'd encourage you, if you can, to also prioritise having a break.

At the state level, we've been focused on coordinating support to Canada, with three deployments so far totalling about 120 Victorian personnel. Another positive is that nearly 40% of those personnel are women, filling roles from arduous fire fighter through to the Senior Liaison Officer for all the Australians deployed to Canada.

Thanks to the CFA personnel who have formed part of the national and international contingents supporting Canadian emergency services and their communities. My thanks to your families and employers for their support, too.

It's also been great to visit local communities and brigades over the last few weeks and thank you for the work you do every day to keep your community safe.

I find these visits so rewarding – they provide me with the opportunity to hear your insights and learn from your experience. This then enables me to better inform the many discussions I have with our emergency services, government departments and key partners.

I've had many productive conversations with CFA members in my time as Commissioner and want to thank those who have given me their time. One thing I have learnt is that there are many passionate CFA members that have an idea or a point of view and long may that be the



case!

I'll be continuing these visits over the next few weeks and look forward to checking in with more of you.

We've faced some significant challenges in the last few years and you have taken it in your stride and been instrumental in the response and what we can do to improve things in the future.

Just last month, parts of Victoria were confronted with minor and up to moderate flooding warnings, particularly in the Hume region. It was a timely reminder to all of us that we must always be ready and prepared to respond to all types of emergencies. In saying that, it appears that we are moving into more of a long-term drying weather pattern with, at this stage, a 70% chance that we will have an El Nino event.

I know that you and all our emergency services will be focussed on what hotter and drying conditions will mean for us and will prepare accordingly.

At the State level we have conducted a major discussion exercise, with a bushfire scenario, to test our state control arrangements.

Thanks again for all you do and take care.

Celebrating 150 years

For the officers and members of Eaglehawk Fire Brigade being a member is so much more than just firefighting.

Eaglehawk Fire Brigade and its members have been serving the community since 1873 and are celebrating 150 years with several celebratory events. To commemorate this milestone, the brigade has developed a video to showcase its history and assist in the recruitment of new members.

Former Captain of the brigade **Eric Smith**, a CFA veteran with over 50 years' of experience, said brigade life gets into your blood.

"I originally joined Stawell Fire Brigade in 1965 and was employed as a Regional Officer with CFA for 20 years," Eric said. "After retiring in 1997, I signed up as a volunteer with Eaglehawk Brigade the very next day.

"The brigade plays an important role in the community and becomes part of your family, so from my point of view, it's worth getting involved."

To mark its 150 year anniversary, festivities kicked off with an informal gathering of current and past volunteers at the fire station, followed by a formal awards dinner.

The brigade has called its station home since it was officially opened in December 1900, after relocating from its former timber station.

The current site has undergone redevelopments over the years to accommodate the growing brigade and house modern firefighting appliances.

Like many stations, Eaglehawk fire station is adorned with the usual antique memorabilia such as trophies, silverware, and certificates of achievement. However, a special piece of memorabilia is a competition running reel used over the years before the brigade purchased a new one.

Eaglehawk Fire Brigade has the last known horsedrawn fire reels to be used in Victoria, on the ceiling of the engine bay of the original brick station. This harness belonged to a horse called 'Jack', who was known to bolt if the doors were opened too early during a fire call.



Chief Officer Jason Heffernan presents Captain Kylie Davis with a 150th anniversary plaque for the brigade.

Captain **Kylie Davis** said the anniversary isn't tied to a particular date and celebrations will continue throughout 2023, with a community open day planned for later in the year, reflecting the brigade's commitment to putting the community at the centre of everything it does.

"It's the brigades 150th year serving the community and the community deserve to celebrate this milestone just as much as brigade members do, because the community is our reason for being part of the brigade. We welcome anyone interested in joining to come along and new members can expect lots of support from their fellow volunteers, including a mentor to help them navigate their new role.

"As a brigade, we are proud of how far we've come and look forward to continuing to serve the community for many more years to come."



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Supporting our volunteers

CFA & Brigades Donations Fund supporting brigades

The CFA & Brigades Donations Fund (the Trust) is a public charitable trust established for the purpose of receiving tax-deductible gifts and donations for the benefit of brigades.

All donations over \$2 received by brigades must be deposited into the Trust to comply with ATO Deductible Gift Recipients (DGR) requirements. Brigades can elect to have donations received by the Trust disbursed to the brigade or retained within the Trust fund to earn interest for the brigade. More information regarding the administration process can be found on Members Online.

Community members can choose to donate directly to the CFA & Brigades Donations Fund or to a specific brigade at www.cfa.vic.gov.au/donate. Donors will receive a tax-deductible receipt at the time of donation, reducing administration time for brigades.

If a community member nominates a specific brigade, 100 per cent of donated amounts are disbursed to the nominated brigade. If a donor doesn't nominate a specific brigade, the trustees will apply those funds to projects that benefit volunteers more broadly.

DONATE TO THE CFA AND BRIGADES DONATIONS FUND



All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

The CFA & Brigades Donation Fund has Deductible Gift Recipient status (DGR) Item 1 and is a Registered Charity with ACNC.



Grants

The Trust can support brigades and groups who seek grants to fund the purchase of assets or relevant projects and initiatives. The Trust is a charity registered with The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. More information regarding grants and FAQs can be found on Members Online.

Community Benefit Program

Ritchies Community Benefit Program has been supporting CFA for 30 years donating over \$3 million to brigades. Brigades can contact their local Ritchies store to get involved and benefit from the program.

Make a gift in your will

Leave a lasting legacy and include a gift in your will to a CFA brigade or the CFA & Brigades Donations Fund. Sample wording can be found at www.cfa.vic.gov.au/donate.

Emergency Memberlink saves you money

The Emergency Memberlink program is a way for us to recognise your commitment and contribution to emergency services and Victorian communities. By using Emergency Memberlink, you can receive discounts and benefits on a wide range of products and services in Victoria and interstate including electrical items, gift cards, hotels, cinemas and other attractions.

Details of the offers and full terms and conditions are at emergencymemberlink.com.au.

To join Memberlink phone 1800 820 037 or register online at emergencymemberlink.com.au.

You can also access your Memberlink card on the website.

The Memberlink team welcomes feedback about the program and your suggestions about new benefits you think would be of value to you, your family and your colleagues. You can phone the team or leave a message on the Emergency Memberlink Facebook page.



A vibrant past, a troubled present, but hope for the future

by FIREMAN SAM

In the past six months, I have been reflecting on the highs and lows of my time in CFA and it caused me to go back through the columns I have written and think about what motivated me to keep writing for such a long time.

As a young member, who had studied engineering at school, I used to enjoy reading 'Monitor', a little column in 'The Fireman', (as Fire Wise was at that time) that posed questions and explained theories and practical aspects of firefighting.

As someone who had the benefit of formal studies in fire engineering and emergency management and broad practical experiences and observations in these fields, I began writing these columns because I thought I could supplement the available training materials and provide some information to members before you had to confront emerging hazards and developments in the emergency services environment.

Like Monitor, I wanted the content to capture your minds, not my name.

My early writings were directed at trying to ease your load and to better equip you for the complex and potentially dangerous activities that you undertake. My topics for each month tended to be prompted by fires and incidents that had been attended somewhere in the State, or by some publicity about technological developments and the issues and/or opportunities the use of that technology might create for us, particularly potential hazards or need for modified procedures.

In more recent years, certainly since 2015, I began to sense the need to analyse and write about the issues and changes created by external forces. This coincided with the inclusion of the so-called veto clauses in the Operational staff

EBA and the excessive influence that gave to the United Firefighters Union (UFU).

Life for CFA, and particularly for its volunteers became increasingly difficult from that time forward.

The sacking of the CFA Board convinced me that I should transition towards being an advocate for the interests of volunteers and a strong and independent CFA.

Consequently, since that time, I have used my knowledge and understanding of what made CFA the highly respected organisation that it was to advocate for greater recognition of volunteers and the importance of including them in key emergency management roles. I say was, because we are definitely not the front runner organisation that we were. Sadly, neither can Victoria claim to be the leader in Emergency Management that it once was.

CFA has been allocated the role of poor cousin to FRV due to the transfer of a significant proportion of its Fire Service Levy revenue collected in the provincial cities that now goes to FRV. The ability of CFA to provide and maintain basic infrastructure and equipment needs to brigades and volunteers has been significantly compromised. We are all well aware of the age profile of the CFA vehicle fleet and the inadequacies of the buildings some brigades occupy. We are also aware of the ever lengthening timelines to address the backlog.

Don't be misled by the Government's injections of special funding like VESEP or other special equipment programs. They are actually funds held back that should have been part of the Capital and Operating Budget of CFA, but are announced at a time of the

Government's choosing to show how generous they are and how much they appreciate volunteers!

Community engagement and fire safety in country Victoria has also been compromised. The close connection between the community and CFA volunteers is damaged. FRV has no interest or understanding of the importance of using CFA's well established and sensible practice of fostering and maintaining strong relationships with local businesses to gain their support for the release of volunteers from workplaces. Having two agencies delivering services in provincial cities and their surrounds has generally taken the fire safety arrangements in Victoria back to the early 1900s.

The Implementation Monitor has hinted at these issues in his reports but his charter does not really allow him the freedom to say the arrangements are fatally flawed. I feel sure that what he was told during his consultations would have made him consider that option!

Our Board and Executive are operating with the threat of being sacked over their heads if they were really to tell you what the fire services restructure has done to CFA. So I will have a crack at providing what advice they would probably offer were there not a precedent that shows what happens if you provide frank and fearless advice.

Firstly, Minister, I would ask that you please read my comments above, and then some further explanations made below.

The flaws in the current model are easy to see. The \$132 M deficit incurred by FRV is proof that its management has failed or is incapable of adjusting to the practicalities of managing a distributed

state wide system and providing seconded staff with appropriate skills and experience to CFA. The long term vacancies in CFA and the churn of personnel are steadily weakening the leadership structures in CFA.

My hope is that you and your Department will end the ridiculous secondment model that conflicts with many established principles of management sooner rather than later. It has seriously damaged the morale and interest of many volunteers. Declining membership and response crew numbers provide undeniable evidence.

A "wholly volunteer" CFA needs leaders of volunteers who actually believe that volunteers are the vital people in building community resilience and safety, leaders that understand their role is developing and supporting capable volunteer leaders. That can only happen if CFA can be an independent organisation with employees who have no ties to the UFU.

Minister, I am as passionate about CFA and the welfare of volunteers as I have ever been. I have met, worked with, trained with, and socialised with hundreds of volunteers. I have been put in my place by some of them too. They are the salt of the earth. It has been my experience that volunteers are loyal, reliable, caring people who can, together achieve fantastic results against the odds.

I know that CFA volunteers are struggling to maintain their enthusiasm and involvement. They continue to show their loyalty to the communities. Our communities value and appreciate us. You and your parliamentary colleagues regularly say they appreciate us, but they have a strange way of showing it.

Minister, what volunteers

really need to make CFA viable and sustainable into the future is for you and your Department gurus to develop a greater understanding of what motivates them, what cheeses them off, what tremendous community safety benefits they generate, and of course a sufficiently large piece of the budget cake to address all the shortcomings and backlog.

I am an optimist at heart. There are better times ahead. I just don't have a clue how far ahead. I hope it will be, as I said to the Minister above, sooner rather than later.

On that note I have to tell you of a puzzle that I have been battling with for some time.

There is a poem somewhere in my childhood that contains these words; "You are old father William, the young man said" and these days I think my body is sending me signs that I am too!

I relinquished my operational status a few years ago and I know I am now attending fewer meetings and events where I used to get the latest intel. My heart wants me to keep writing but my brain says that it might be time to hope there is another Monitor or Fireman Sam out there.

I am sure there will be particular issues or events about which I will feel compelled to write something, but dear readers, my regular monthly column will not be as regular from here on.

As I scanned the long list of articles I have written over the years I found that as I got older I must have got more annoyed, even angry, about what strangers were doing to 'My CFA'; Our CFA. I found columns that celebrated achievements and improvements we could be proud of; our improved performances

because of the benefits of the Incident Control System for instance. Then, there were columns I would have preferred that I did not have to write; most of those have been in recent years.

On several occasions I wrote articles that referred to, or drew on the content of the "Little Red Book". It was the CFA's book of doctrine in the 1970s and served the organisation well for decades. Our adoption of ICS saw the Red Book put on the shelf but today's Incident Controllers could really benefit from a read of the Chapters on Principles of Operations and The Seven Cardinal Sins of Firefighting.

I saw that I regularly championed the importance of retaining Groups and their involvement in staffing LCFs for day to day operations. They are the training ground and classroom for development of the next generation of operational leaders and the breeding ground for support staff. The difficulties we have in finding experienced radio operators, telephone staff and other support personnel for ICCs is a direct result of removing LCFs (Group Headquarters) from the operational chain of command.

I really want to thank Gordon for providing me with the opportunity to use the pages of 'Fire Wise' to express my views and to encourage you to discuss the issues that I wrote about.

I have enjoyed the journey. I hope that at least some of you can reflect on something that you did, or that your brigade did, because Fireman Sam said.....

I am sure there is somebody out there with a few itchy keyboard fingers and a bit of a literary flare. If that is you, give Gordon a call. Nobody else needs to know!

FIRE ALERT

GET READY

BRIGADES BUY DIRECT



Ultralites



Fire Chief



Fire Captain



Sea Skipper



Brigade Boss

EL NINO COMING

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SERVICE AWARDS

10 YEARS

Lieutenant A. Hart Bright
 Lieutenant K. Higginbottom Marong
 Lieutenant J. Phillips Wurdale
 Lieutenant T. Scholfeild Woodhouse
 Lieutenant D. Brogan Lethbridge
 Lieutenant J. Lowry Greendale
 Lieutenant A. Toth Teesdale
 Group Secretary C. Longmore Mannerim
 Secretary B. Smith Mannerim
 Secretary A. Free Clarkefield
 Secretary K. Blake Lethbridge
 Secretary N. Thompson Wurdale
 Community Safety D. Heir Greendale
 Firefighter N. Taylor Sorrento
 Firefighter A. McIntyre Maldon
 Firefighter E. Avery Mannerim
 Firefighter Sam Beasley Mannerim
 Firefighter L. Yeo-Pfluger-Sinclair Mannerim
 Firefighter G. Thwaites Bright
 Firefighter B. Drennan Bright
 Firefighter B. Hinton Bright
 Firefighter M. Scicluna Bullengarook
 Firefighter R. Hann Wurdale
 Firefighter B. White Marong
 Firefighter J. Mathieson Wonthaggi
 Firefighter N. Christophers Smythesdale
 Firefighter M. Goetz Smythesdale
 Firefighter S. Dowthwaite Teesdale
 Firefighter W. Earl Mosquito Creek
 Firefighter J.P. Lubin Berwick
 Firefighter C. Murphy Woodhouse
 Firefighter R. Perkins Woodhouse
 Member J. Hunter Bullengarook
 Member D. Hulyer Anglesea
 Member B. Mason Clarkefield
 Member R. Stebbing Wonthaggi
 Member P. Stancombe Maldon
 Member A. Wilkins Maldon
 Member S. Marshman Wurdale
 Member K. Fahnle Wurdale
 Member C. Fahnle Wurdale
 Member J. McIntyre Wurdale

15 YEARS

Captain B. Michie Bright
 Captain R. Wright Wurdale
 Lieutenant R. O'Connor Anglesea
 Lieutenant J. De Smet Anglesea
 Lieutenant A. Phelps Wurdale
 Lieutenant Sandra Beasley Mannerim
 Lieutenant J. Grasser Bright
 Lieutenant A. Spiteri Clarkefield
 Lieutenant B. Killen Lethbridge
 Firefighter W. Bischof Mannerim
 Firefighter S. Gillham Bright
 Firefighter T. Maynard Bright
 Firefighter D. Butler Bright
 Firefighter M. Balfour Bright
 Firefighter T. Elliott Eaglehawk
 Firefighter S. Matthews Eaglehawk
 Firefighter G. Wilson Wonthaggi
 Firefighter C. Challis Bullengarook
 Firefighter G. Finck Wurdale
 Firefighter B. Dows Hampton Park
 Firefighter C. Braden Mosquito Creek
 Firefighter A. Gallagher Mosquito Creek
 Firefighter S. Gallagher Mosquito Creek
 Firefighter R. Tinney Mosquito Creek
 Firefighter C. White Mosquito Creek
 Firefighter A. Macgill Smythesdale
 Firefighter A. Armstrong Lethbridge
 Firefighter M. Scanlon Marong
 Firefighter J. Gildea Marong
 Member A. Irwin Mannerim
 Member K. Preston Bullengarook
 Member R. Turner Bullengarook
 Member B. Verity Wurdale
 Member S. White Mosquito Creek
 Member P. Killen Lethbridge

20 YEARS

Captain B. Boyle Clarkefield
 Captain N. Foster Anglesea
 Captain B. Tomlin Teesdale
 Lieutenant R. Calvert Anglesea
 Lieutenant A. Lowe Wonthaggi
 Lieutenant J. Avery Mannerim
 Lieutenant T. Noble Woodhouse
 Lieutenant D. Burge Teesdale
 Lieutenant G. Ferguson Teesdale
 Comms Officer T. McKnight Anglesea
 Community Safety R. Noble Woodhouse
 Firefighter S. Axup Sorrento
 Firefighter J. Rowe Woodhouse
 Firefighter F. Bleicher Smythesdale
 Firefighter A. Goetz Smythesdale
 Firefighter P. Sanders Bullengarook
 Firefighter S. Needham Mannerim
 Firefighter I. Hendry Wonthaggi
 Firefighter A. Justice Marong
 Firefighter A. Jochs Marong
 Firefighter R. Malone Marong
 Firefighter S. Foreman Lethbridge
 Firefighter L. Griffiths Clarkefield
 Firefighter S. Cunningham Clarkefield
 Firefighter S. Ralph Clarkefield
 Firefighter N. Cicer Teesdale
 Firefighter M. White Mosquito Creek
 Member S. Twynham Mannerim
 Member L. Irwin Mannerim
 Member B. Needham Mannerim
 Member N. Stebbing Wonthaggi
 Member S. Hawkins Anglesea
 Member G. Thornton Bullengarook

25 YEARS

Captain M. Jury Lethbridge
 Lieutenant P. McGregor Wurdale

25 YEARS (CONTINUED)

Lieutenant A. Hill Kalora
 Lieutenant A. Hill Kalora
 Lieutenant I. Abraham Teesdale
 Lieutenant L. Weston Marong
 Lieutenant C. Herbert Marong
 Secretary J. Edwards Woodhouse
 Firefighter A. Bryant Mannerim
 Firefighter M. Tonkin Smythesdale
 Firefighter B. Parsons Kalora
 Firefighter D. Doherty Clarkefield
 Firefighter P. Walters Wonthaggi
 Firefighter G. Oakley Wonthaggi
 Firefighter N. Malone Marong
 Firefighter H. Malone Marong
 Firefighter A. Jones Berwick
 Firefighter A. Fenwick Woodhouse
 Firefighter P. Metz Maldon
 Member E. White Eaglehawk
 Member J. Twist Sorrento
 Member M. Griffiths Clarkefield
 Member D. Moloney Kalora
 Member J. Bell Bullengarook
 Member M. Johns Teesdale
 Member M. Malone Marong
 Member Janet Scott Marong
 Member A. Scott Marong

30 YEARS

Group Officer A. Longmore Mannerim
 Captain G. Morris Marong
 Captain L. Maylor Woodhouse
 Lieutenant C. Dowler Maldon
 Lieutenant J. Moresco Wonthaggi
 Lieutenant G. Mix Clarkefield
 Lieutenant B. Morton Woodhouse
 Lieutenant A. Haywood Bullengarook
 Lieutenant B. McCooke Mosquito Creek
 Secretary S. Ewing Berwick
 Treasurer D. Fischer Berwick
 Firefighter A. Moloney Kalora
 Firefighter R. Farrell Marong
 Firefighter M. Shay Marong
 Firefighter G. Diprose Woodhouse
 Firefighter D. Zabinskis Greendale
 Firefighter S. Cirulis Berwick
 Firefighter A. Mason Clarkefield
 Firefighter J. Mason Clarkefield
 Firefighter C. O'Connor Lethbridge
 Member P. Shepherd Maldon
 Member S. Mason Eaglehawk
 Member A. Hards Wurdale
 Member D. Loone Wurdale
 Member G. Perry Wurdale
 Member S. Mawson Wurdale
 Member P. De Waart Bullengarook
 Member P. Scott Marong

35 YEARS

Captain M. Versteegan Sorrento
 Captain M. Forder Mosquito Creek
 Captain J. Pekin Kalora
 Lieutenant P. Mansfield Bright
 Lieutenant J. Purdy Marong
 Lieutenant M. Millar Lethbridge
 Lieutenant R. Holmes Kalora
 Treasurer R. Walker Clarkefield
 Chair H. Edwards Woodhouse
 Firefighter J. Wymond Bright
 Firefighter K. Preston Bullengarook
 Firefighter F. Deane Wurdale
 Firefighter P. Kennedy Wonthaggi
 Firefighter R. Plowright Marong
 Firefighter P. Bouchier Marong
 Firefighter A. Malone Marong
 Firefighter A. Gildea Marong
 Firefighter B. Allsop Hampton Park
 Firefighter T. Payne Kalora
 Firefighter B. Moloney Kalora
 Firefighter D. McConnell Kalora
 Firefighter A. Lumsden Kalora
 Firefighter R. Grice Kalora
 Firefighter A. Conheady Kalora
 Firefighter D. Addington Mosquito Creek
 Firefighter G. Pearl Teesdale
 Firefighter D. Collins Woodhouse
 Firefighter J. Montgomery Woodhouse
 Firefighter A. Wyllie Clarkefield
 Member M. Mason Eaglehawk
 Member C. Justice Wonthaggi
 Member B. Russell Clarkefield
 Member K. Burns Clarkefield
 Member P. Scott Marong
 Member D. Coleman Lethbridge

40 YEARS

Captain G. Wilson Hampton Park
 Secretary P. Dolphin Greendale
 Group Community Safety D. Smith Wurdale
 Firefighter G. Cocks Bright
 Firefighter N. Schlipaliaus Sorrento
 Firefighter R. Brimacombe Smythesdale
 Firefighter T. Scott Marong
 Firefighter B. Frost Woodhouse
 Firefighter J. Perdrisat Lethbridge
 Firefighter L. Millar Lethbridge
 Firefighter P. O'Beth Berwick
 Firefighter T. Marshall Bullengarook
 Firefighter E. Dyer Teesdale
 Member D. Murley Eaglehawk
 Member G. Healy Maldon
 Member C. Gibbs Mannerim
 Member S. O'Malley Anglesea
 Member N. Reynolds Wonthaggi
 Member P. Burns Clarkefield
 Member C. Mawson Wurdale
 Member G. McPadden Wurdale
 Member R. Hunt Marong
 Member M. McKeown Marong

45 YEARS

Captain S. Beasley Mannerim
 Comms Officer M. Beasley Mannerim
 Firefighter R. White Eaglehawk
 Firefighter M. Menheere Wurdale
 Firefighter R. Schwarz Woodhouse
 Firefighter R. Jackson Marong
 Member P. Littlejohn Clarkefield

Catherine takes on the red helmet

Catherine McAllister never had plans to jump on a fire appliance. She joined Avenel Fire Brigade six years ago to fill the role of secretary.

But one thing led to another and on July 1 she took over the role as Captain of Avenel Brigade.

Dedicated and well-respected captain of 22 years **Dave Keamy** will step down as the brigade enters a new era.

"He will stay on as first lieutenant for the first term to show me the ropes, which is great," Captain Catherine said. "He has done an amazing job, he is handing over a well-oiled machine here. It's a great brigade to be a part of... everyone knows what they are doing, everything is up to date."

Secretary **Tom Newton** is also stepping down after 36 years in the job.

"There are a few changes coming through; we've got a few younger ones stepping up and taking responsibility as lieutenants as well, which is good."

Catherine's journey to becoming Captain has been one of gathering momentum. Having become a mentee in the CFA women in leadership mentor program last November, she was unaware of Dave's plans to step down.

"Because I was a lieutenant myself and wanted to learn more about the leadership

side of CFA.

"Dave said to me at the end of December, early January – I'm thinking of stepping down this year... would you like to take it on?"

Although the role comes with great responsibility, Captain Catherine is confident in her team.

"The guys here are all very supportive. It's a big job but with this brigade I don't think it's going to be a huge issue; I've got a good group here."

"We are all pretty close-knit, I wouldn't have met half the people that are part of this brigade if I hadn't joined, it's been a good thing."

A single mother with two children, aged 11 and 12, she has her hands full.

"I'm always busy, but I love it. I've got friends that will pick up the kids from school if I'm out on a call... so I couldn't do what I do without the community that we have here."

Both of her children are also junior CFA members.

A beautiful example of finding strength in community, Captain Catherine encourages anyone who is interested to take the leap and get involved.

Tanker tribute to Alan McGee

St Arnaud Fire Brigade CFA has honoured the late Alan McGee by naming its tanker in his honour.

Group Comms Officer **Simon Burge** said knowing Alan McGee meant you had a friend for life.

"His leadership and commitment and passion for St Arnaud Fire Brigade was unmatched," he said.

A dedicated member of the brigade for 58 years Alan served in officer roles as Captain, Lieutenant, Secretary and Treasurer prior to his passing in May 2019.

The commemorative naming of a brigade vehicle is only considered when the member has exhibited a majority of items from a set criteria.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer **Bernie Fradd** and Captain **Rodney Wilton**, together with Alan's family and members of the brigade, gathered on June 25 to unveil the brigade's last- ing tribute.

"The family really loved and appreciated the gesture," Comms Officer Simon said.

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Email: gordon@fire-wise.com.au
Telephone: 0402 051 412

Morwell elects Wayne to lead

Morwell Fire Brigade has elected Wayne Draper as its new Captain and wishes to thank out going Captain Peter Keenan for his service and commitment to Morwell Brigade and wider community.

Wayne joined the brigade in 1986 and was made active in April 1987. His association with the brigade has seen him in many positions and awarded for his service - most recently the 30 year service medal in 2016.

He held the position of 2nd Lieutenant from July 1998 to June 2002. His service to the brigade has seen him awarded the National Medal in 2005 and the National Emergency Medal for his role in the 2009 Victorian Fires. Wayne's involvement was also invaluable as FEM Officer for six years.

Morwell Brigade looks forward to working with Wayne and the BMT.

Senior member **Rodney Lucas** has retired as Treasurer. Joining the brigade in 1967 Rod took on the Secretary position in 1988 and the Treasurer' role in 2004.

Other election results include Lieutenants: **Cam Bowman** (1st), **Peter Keenan** (2nd), **Bayley Charalambous** (3rd), **Aaron Robert Yates** (4th); Secretary: **Don Lovison**; Treasurer: **Steve Darling**; Chairperson: **Peter Quinn**.



Captain Wayne Draper, Morwell Fire Brigade.

50 YEARS

Firefighter M. MacDonald Mannerim
 Firefighter G. Clifford Kalora
 Firefighter S. Hill Kalora
 Firefighter G. Parlyb Marong
 Firefighter J. Scholfeild Woodhouse
 Firefighter J. Diprose Woodhouse
 Member P. Schmidt Sorrento
 Member D. Peacock Wonthaggi
 Member John Scott Marong
 Member A. Parish Wurdale

55 YEARS

Captain A. Parker Smythesdale
 DGO G. MacDonald Mannerim
 Firefighter B. Davidson Anglesea
 Firefighter M. Whiting Kalora
 Firefighter N. Roll Woodhouse
 Firefighter B. Watson (deceased) Wonthaggi
 Member L. Boston Eaglehawk
 Member B. Beasley Kalora
 Member S. Mathison Wurdale
 Member P. Mathison Wurdale
 Member R. Mathison Wurdale

60 YEARS

Firefighter W. Shay Marong
 Firefighter B. Parsons Kalora
 Member B. Bubb Anglesea
 Member D. Irving Kalora

CFA LIFE MEMBER

Captain A. Parker Smythesdale
 Captain G. Wilson Hampton Park
 Captain G. Morris Marong
 DGO G. MacDonald Mannerim
 Lieutenant P. Mansfield Bright
 Lieutenant J. Purdy Marong
 Secretary P. Dolphin Greendale
 Treasurer R. Walker Clarkefield
 Group Community Safety D. Smith Wurdale
 Firefighter B. Davidson Anglesea
 Firefighter R. White Eaglehawk
 Firefighter W. Shay Marong
 Firefighter G. Parlyb Marong
 Firefighter R. Jackson Marong
 Firefighter T. Scott Marong
 Firefighter R. Plowright Marong
 Firefighter P. Bouchier Marong
 Firefighter A. Malone Marong
 Firefighter R. Farrell Marong
 Firefighter M. MacDonald Mannerim
 Firefighter G. Cocks Bright
 Firefighter J. Wymond Bright
 Firefighter A. Wyllie Clarkefield
 Member P. Littlejohn Clarkefield
 Member B. Bubb Anglesea
 Member L. Boston Eaglehawk
 Member D. Murley Eaglehawk
 Member M. Mason Eaglehawk
 Member S. Mason Eaglehawk
 Member C. Gibbs Mannerim
 Member M. McKeown Marong

SERVICE HONOURED

Some long serving and newer members were honoured for their community service at the Sassafras-Ferry Creek Fire Brigade's annual dinner recently.

CFA Board Member **Dawn Hartog** AFSM was on hand to present CFA service medals ranging from 10 to 45 years as well as one National Medal. Also representing CFA at the presentations was Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer **Andrew Booth**.

Long-serving member **Geoff Horner**, who served as a Lieutenant for more than 20 years, was presented with a 45-year service medal.

Community Safety Co-ordinator **Wolf Wirthensohn**, who transferred to Sassafras Brigade from neighbouring Upwey Brigade in 2022, was awarded both a CFA service medal marking 20 years of service as well as the National Medal. Brigade member

Geoff Birkett received a 20-year service medal recognising his contribution in a range of areas.

Captain **Jeff Harbourd** and wife **Di Harbourd** were each awarded medals for 15 years of service along with Secretary **Alison Brown**, marking three outstanding contributions.

Other medals went to **Lachlan Diprose** and **Harry English** who were both presented with service medals for 10 years of service.

Terry Jones received Sassafras-Ferry Creek Brigade's Firefighter of the Year award for his exemplary service, particularly in the role of Asset Maintenance Officer, while **Justin Walsh** and **Robert**

Combined 165 years



Comms Officer Wayne Lewis



Chairperson Rodney Young

Thompson were joint recipients of the Officers Awards for their contributions to the brigade over the past 12 months.

Members and friends were treated to a brief reflection by **Bob Horner** AFSM, a 67-year stalwart of the brigade, on his time with CFA.



Bob Horner AFSM



Captain Jeff Harbourd and Firefighter of the Year Terry Jones.



Harry English (centre), who received a 10 year service medal with CFA Board Member Dawn Hartog and Acting ACFO Andrew Booth.

Mornington Fire Brigade held its annual awards night recently with guests including **Chris Crewther MP** - Member for Mornington, **Cr Steve Holland** - Mornington Peninsula Mayor and other CFA figures.

There was more than 165 collective years of service acknowledged between five members with two of these becoming CFA life members. One of the recipients that received Life Membership is challenged with a disability. This shows this members resilience but also the Brigade's inclusion of him over the years. The brigade maintains an acknowledgement of fairness within the community.

Mornington Brigade faces similar challenges to other brigades across the state with the hope of finding a stronger future with more recognition awards being able to be presented for members service.

The following awards were presented at the function.

Comms Officer **Wayne Lewis** and Chairperson **Rodney Young** (both 45 years service medals), Captain **Michael Licciardo** and **Stephen O'Hara** (both 30 year service medals and CFA Life Memberships) and **Russell Pritchard** (15 year service medals).

Coveted brigade awards were also presented during the evening with **Russell Pritchard** named as Firefighter of the Year, Rookie of the Year went to **Adam Ely** and the prestigious **Michael 'Squizzy' Taylor** Recognition to **Stephen O'Hara**.



Russell Pritchard was named as Firefighter of the Year during the evening.



Stephen O'Hara (centre) was a deserving recipient of the prestigious Michael Taylor Recognition award. With him are Captain Michael Licciardo and CFA Commander Stuart Walker.

Jim thanked for leadership

Following 26 years as Group Officer of Benalla Group **Jim Rankin** stepped down on 30 June. During his strong leadership the group has gone from strength to strength and Jim will continue as a DGO under the new leadership of **Phil Rees** who was elected as Group Officer.

To pay tribute to Jim and farewell him from the position he has served for more than a quarter of a century, 26 appliances from within the Group, each representing a year of Jim's service, were assembled at Winton Raceway together with CFA members.

Jim commenced his service with CFA with Swanpool Fire Brigade as a 17 year old as his father had done many years before and serving as Swanpool's first Captain.

Says Jim: "The reins have been handed to Phil who will do an excellent job as Group Officer. He has 24 years of service and is very experienced . . . a people's person, a great operator and I will be in the background offering my support."

Also commencing in a DGO role is **Helen Bromley**, the first female firefighter elected to this position within

the Group. According to Jim Helen is a great choice for this position.

Said Jim: "When I first started with CFA there wouldn't have been a single female member. I am so proud of the amount of female members we now have in CFA many of whom serve in a leadership capacity within their brigades."

At the Winton Raceway tribute was made by State Member for Euroa **Annabelle Cleland** who addressed the gathering about Jim's incredible service.

"Jim Rankin is a remarkable individual who has dedicated the vast majority of his life to this community, particularly through his 50 plus years of service."

"The turnout today is a representation of that – and I think everyone that has made the journey to attend today."

"Your expertise, acquired



Image courtesy Benalla Ensign

through years of experience and a tireless pursuit of excellence, has been instrumental in shaping the success of our local brigades.

"Jim, you standing down as Group Officer, marks the end of an era but I have no doubt you will continue to be an enormous presence in many of our lives in your role as DGO, firefighter and respected friend."

VFBV District 23 State Councillor **Mary-Anne Egan** said her role had been made so much easier by having Jim as Group Officer of Benalla Group.

"Our Volunteer Charter highlights the five CFA values which are safety, respect, together, integrity and adaptive and Jim epitomises every one. He lives these out in his daily dedication to CFA and the community."

An emotional Jim addressed the gathering paying tribute to all for their support and thanking them for all making the special effort which had taken him by surprise.

the event in the event of a fire season like the Black Summer of 2019-20 repeating itself. That season saw firefighting authorities overwhelmed by the scale of the disaster and homeowners having to flee rather than protect their properties. The Bushfire Survival Guide is available free of charge to brigades, firefighting authorities and of course to homeowners not only in Australia but around the world.

Aussie ups Red Brigade production

(information supplied by Australian Pump Industries)

With a huge fuel load on the east coast states of Australia, and massive fires already burning in Canada, Sweden, Spain, France and even the UK, we know climate change is having a direct effect on catastrophic fires.

Australian Pump Industries moved fast to increase production of its popular Red Brigade version of the Aussie "Fire Chief".

The "Fire Chief" is regarded as the world's best lightweight portable fire pump with a maximum head of 75 metres (100 psi) and a maximum flow of 450 litres per minute. The pump is loaded with features and benefits for users including a big 7" one piece impeller that outlasts and outweighs cheap third world style products.

Compared to other Australian manufacturers the pump produces 25% more head giving it more capability. Powered by a Honda petrol engine, either GX160, 5.5hp, or Honda GX200 (6.5hp), the "Fire Chief" in its Red Brigade format is built with a bright red fully welded steel frame that makes it easy for two people to run with it if

necessary.

Key pump features include a "Big Belly Body," that enables the incorporation of a perfectly matched volute and impeller to provide maximum performance, utilising engine horsepower without over-

Below: Aussie gears up Red Brigade Fire Chiefs for volunteer brigades and Fire & Rescue.



load!

"Under tests we see our pump will run at full performance without experiencing rpm droop," said Aussie Pumps Chief Engineer **John Hales**. "We tested other brands and found that they dropped 1000 rpm when under full load! The Aussie Fire Chief doesn't do that!"

The pump also features a

PRODUCT REVIEW

flanged suction port that in a standard version of a 2" suction compared to other producers who use 1½" suction. Hales points out that means 25% more water into the pump and obviously can substantially improve performance when putting out fires.

"Its high flow at pressure which gets the fire out, not just pressure alone!" he said.

Other key points that may seem unimportant to a homeowner but make a big differ-

ence to professional firefighting authorities is the metal caps on outlet ports. The "Fire Chief" has one 1½" outlet and two 1" outlets. Those outlets are capped with metal caps and chains, not plastic like competitors use.

"The only reason for using plastic is cost and we still don't understand why people would put a plastic impeller in a firefighting pump either," said John.

Aussie has acknowledged that its pump costs more, but the company put it on the market in Australia at a homeowner price of only \$800 + GST.

"That's the seasonal price for this year. Export customers can take advantage of our wholesale prices if they buy in bulk."

Further information, including free copies of Aussie's Bushfire Survival Guide are readily available from Australian Pump Industries. The Bushfire Survival Guide helps homeowners be prepared in

FIRE WISE

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Roll up your sleeves

The 2023 Emergency Services Blood Drive has kicked off and CFA is calling on its members and their families to roll up their sleeves to save lives.

The annual Blood Drive, held by Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, kicked off on 1 June and will run through to 31 August.

The drive encourages emergency service members to make a significant contribution to those in need by donating blood and plasma.

CFA Assistant Chief Fire Officer **Glenn Pröbstl** and **Tash Sinclair** (Kangaroo Ground Brigade) joined Lifeblood Executive Director of Donor Experience **Cath Stone** and representatives from Victorian emergency services to launch this year's blood drive at the Melbourne Donor Centre.

ACFO Glenn made his own plasma donation on the day and rallied CFA's 52,000 members, encouraging them to donate blood or plasma at their convenience before 31 August.

"Our members always rise to the occasion for worthy causes and the Lifeblood Emergency Services Blood Drive is no exception," he said.

"I hope our members can get behind the challenge once again this year to help save lives.

"Making a blood donation takes about one hour of your time and you can make a significant difference to someone else's life."

Firefighter Tash Sinclair represented CFA's volunteer members at the launch and urged all her colleagues to roll up their sleeves and give blood during this year's blood drive.

"It's such a worthy cause and you need to remind yourself that the people receiving your donation don't have time on their side either.

"You just have to decide to put aside a short amount of time and get it done."

CFA members are encouraged to donate from now until 31 August to be a part of this challenge.

You can register to donate at www.lifeblood.com.au.

To find a donor centre near you visit www.lifeblood.com.au/donor-centre.



ACFO Glenn Pröbstl donates plasma at the 2023 Emergency Services Blood Drive launch at which CFA members and families were encouraged to roll up their sleeves to save lives.

FIRE WISE

NEWSPAPER OF THE FIRE SERVICE
First published in 1947

Published monthly
Subscription \$37 per annum in Victoria (\$45 interstate)

Editor: **Gordon Rippon-King**
Official publication of: **Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria** and **CFA Rescue Association**

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Published by HL King Pty Ltd,
ABN 89 004 589 673,
PO Box 496, Cowes, Vic. 3922

ISSN 2206-1096
Publication Number 100018119

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WERRIBEE'S NSW THREE PEAT



For the third year in a row Werribee Fire Brigade's road crash rescue team has won the 2023 NSW State Road Crash Rescue Challenge.

Werribee's successful road crash rescue team. From left: Daniel May (Team leader), Dominic Triflo, Neil Davie, Scott Green, Anthony Hill and Trevor Weston (Team Medic).

Werribee competed against 15 teams from NSW SES, FRNSW and VRA Rescue NSW across seven events, with participants assessed on their teamwork, efficiency and techniques across a range of different rescue scenarios.

The team of six won the Overall Road Crash Rescue (Entrapped and Controlled) and Best Medical, and placed second in Controlled Rescue, Entrapped Rescue, Best Medical Team, Best Technical Team, Team Commander and the CPR Challenge to take the points overall.

Held in May at Coffs Harbour Stadium, the annual NSW State Road Crash Rescue Challenge is designed to replicate road crash rescue scenarios, evaluating the capabilities of participants in road crash rescue and related activities in a multi-agency response environment.

The event includes a one-day learning symposium to provide attendees with practical knowledge and learning opportunities.

This is only the third year

the team has competed in the event. Team leader, Werribee firefighter **Daniel May** said it was great to take home another first place.

"The time we spend training in road crash and heavy rescue has paid off and the team has been rewarded for its efforts," Daniel said.

"To win was a bit unexpected as we had mixed results, but it was all about consistency this year and maintaining our energy across the whole weekend."

Daniel said winning the event was a great way to demonstrate the capability of Werribee and CFA's rescue operators.

"We have really strong road rescue and heavy rescue capability at Werribee," he said.

"The event not only highlights the professionalism of our rescue team; it also helps to build the wider profile of our brigade and members as well."

Following the win the team was already back training for its next competition – the Australasian Road Rescue



Organisation (ARRO) Challenge, which was held in Adelaide on 29 June to 2 July.

"Participating in these types of events sets a benchmark as to where we are compared to other fire and rescue organisations," Daniel said.

"Each challenge focuses on specific areas of expertise and exposes us to new knowledge and techniques that broadens our depth to work with other agencies.

"Ultimately it's the community that benefits as we return better operators and we share what we have learned with our brigade.

"The team is grateful for all the support we receive from all our fellow brigade members and CFA members such as ACFO **Rick Owen** who support us to not only train but keep us upbeat and focused when the chips are down."

Vale Quinten Walker

Regional Officer (retired) **Quinten Walker** passed away peacefully at hospital in Queensland on 12 June. His daughter was with him at the time.

Quinten gave invaluable service to CFA during his younger years, firstly as a volunteer with Willaura Brigade from 1949 to 1968 including service as 1st Lieutenant for seven years. In 1968 he joined CFA staff as a Regional Officer serving in numerous districts until his retirement in 1990.

Quinten was born in Willaura and went to high school in Ararat where he boarded with his grandfather in a tiny house. In 1943, there was still no electricity, wireless (radio) and definitely no flush toilets, typical of the time. There was no hot water, and the copper had to be lit for a bath.

He was a goer, that's for sure, scramble bike racing, and in 1953, Quinten and his mate built a water ski boat, and he became an excellent water skier. Being a mechanic, he marinised a Ford 10, side valve engine. He and his mates also made their own skis.

He scrambled raced a Velocette 350cc MAC for quite a few years all around western Victoria and into South Australia. He was luckier than most as he only had one significant accident, and he gave away racing in 1959. He was also a keen dancer, regularly going to country balls.

Quinten was a superb athlete and as a child, he wanted to be an acrobat in a circus, something he would have excelled at. His pet hobby was as a volunteer firefighter in Willaura Brigade and he became a ladder man for its competition team. He was born for climbing. As a two



year old, he could easily climb the high front fence, and he walked down to the fire station and climbed to the top the 7.5 metre ladder there. Gave the neighbour a huge fright.

He was a champion and became known as "the ladder man from Willaura." He won four State Ladder Race titles and a State Rope Climb title. He is the only person to ever achieve this double at Urban and Rural State championships. In 1959, the Willaura team went to Tasmania for the State demonstration and won every wet event on the program.

In 1959, his mother became very ill, and he used to visit her every night in hospital. It was a coincidence that Margaret (his future wife) was the nursing sister there and his mother used to wonder who he was visiting, her or Margaret.

Quinten joined the CFA staff and became a Regional Officer, firstly at CFA Headquarters, then District 17, District 20, District 16 and, finally, District 7.

He retired to Banora Point

District 27 Olympics

CFA members from across the Latrobe Valley put their firefighting skills to the test when they took part in the inaugural District 27 Firefighter Olympics earlier this month.

The two Groups within the District battled it out at Maryvale Recreation Reserve in Morwell on 18 June, breaking into two mixed teams of Merton and Hyland Group members.

Volunteers participated in a series of challenges utilising their operational skills and knowledge, much like what they use during emergencies and deployment.

Andrew Mapleback (Tyers Fire Brigade) who has been with the brigade for just over a year, said a highlight was the expedition challenge as it provided the most real-life scenario.

"It was quite realistic because we got sent a page, jumped in the truck, and navigated where we had to go. We worked on our radio comms and map navigation skills and got to go for a walk through the bush," Andrew said.

"In other challenges we focused on first aid, agility and strength, hose bowling and hose target shooting. Everything we did was based off the skills we use on the fireground."

in NSW with Margaret in 1990. He had always been a gifted timber worker. He hand made much of the beautiful furniture in their house and joined the Murwillumbah wood workers club. His work, particularly of jewelry boxes was gorgeous.

He was a widely admired and respected man, and a wonderful husband and father. He is survived by his children Shane, Michelle, and Joanne.

For Captain **Adam Watt** (Newborough) the day was all about getting out of the station and doing something different, and although the competition was fierce, the camaraderie between members was evident and many laughs were shared.

"As we were in mixed teams, you're not used to working with everyone, so you had to uncover what their strengths and weaknesses were," Captain Adam said.

"Although it's a bit of healthy competition, these events are a great opportunity to network with other brigade members you wouldn't usually work with on the fireground."

Given Adam's team was loaded with a Group Officer, Lieutenant, and Captain, they opted to hand over the reins to a new operational member for the ultimate learning experience.

"We had a woman in our team who had never done those activities before, so we elected her to be crew leader for the day," Adam said.

"We're usually the ones who run the jobs, so it was nice to get our hands dirty and offer that role of responsibility to someone else."

Merton Group: Boolarra, Churchill, Driffield, Hazelwood North, Moe, Moe South, Morwell, Newborough, Tanjil, Yallourn North, Yinnar and Yinnar South

Hyland Group: Callignee, Flynn, Glengarry, Maryvale, Toongabbie, Traralgon, Traralgon East, Traralgon South, Traralgon West and Tyers