

Newsletter

Combined Newsletter of:

APRIL 2006



VFBV

PO Box 453, Mt Waverley Vic 3149
Tel: 03 9886 1141 Fax: 03 9886 1618
E-mail: vfbv@vfbv.com.au
Web: www.vfbv.com.au



VRFBA

5 Hamilton Street, Gisborne Vic 3437
Tel: 03 5428 4005 Fax: 03 5428 4406
E-mail: vrfba@vfbv.com.au
Web: www.vicnet.net.au/~vrfba/



VUFBA

PO Box 91, Patterson Lakes Vic 3197
Tel: 03 9775 0117 Fax: 03 9775 0096
E-mail: vufba@vfbv.com.au
Web: www.vicnet.net.au/~vufba/



VFBV

Executive Officer Peter Davis – 0407 334 685
Executive Officer Bob MacDonald
– 0418 322 680

AUSTRALIAN FIRE SERVICE MEDALS

Congratulations are extended to the recent recipients of the Australian Fire Service Medal awarded in the Australia Day Honours. This is the highest award available in our fire service and is well deserved recognition of outstanding contributions by these members.

Our congratulations to:

- Captain Sydney Green AFSM (Lancefield)
- Mr Daryl Love AFSM (former Instructor and OIC Warrnambool)
- Firefighter Reg Stevens AFSM (Winchelsea)
- Area Manager Trevor White AFSM (Yarra)

PRE-AMBULANCE BASIC LIFE SUPPORT STRATEGIES

Following discussion with CFA CEO Neil Bibby and DCO Graham Fountain VFBV has agreed to be represented on a steering committee to look at CFA's capacity for Pre-ambulance Basic Life Support in the MAS area ie. Outer Metro.

Vice Chairman Mick Taylor and Werribee Captain Darryl Wells will represent VFBV.

MEETING OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

An invitation has been extended to VRFBA State Executive and VUFBA Policy Committee to meet the VFBV Board on May 21 in Bendigo.

The meeting will review VFBV's constitution and many of the outstanding issues relating to future directions.

IMPACT OF ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT ON VOLUNTEERS

The last two Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBAs) between the CFA and the United Firefighters Union on behalf of career firefighters, have had adverse impacts on volunteers.

Even though we attempted to have these issues rectified after the initial EBA, the last EBA continued to disadvantage volunteers.

Afraid of this happening again, VFBV approached all volunteer brigades requesting them to make representations to their local Members of Parliament to ensure we were consulted with as provided for in the Volunteer Charter. We also provided the brigades with examples of where volunteers were being disadvantaged by the EBA.

Our issues are not with the career firefighters. Volunteers and career firefighters have an excellent relationship with each other and we do not want to see this relationship deteriorate. Our issues are with their Union. We would certainly hope that the career firefighters would not want to see the volunteers disadvantaged by certain parts of their EBA which are not related to their wages or conditions.

Our volunteer system has been in existence for more than 120 years – the Union should ensure that these EBAs do not disadvantage our 58,000 volunteers.

VFBV met with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on 1 March and 5 April. The meetings were positive and we received an assurance that we will be consulted on matters which impact on volunteers. This is all we want. On 27 March representatives of VFBV met with the Premier Steve Bracks to acquaint him with our concerns as well.

We wish to thank those brigades who have been active with their local parliamentarians. You have ensured that the voice of the volunteers has been heard.

VISITS TO REGIONAL COUNCILS

Members of the Board of VFBV accepted invitations from Regional Councils Nos. 4, 10 and 16 to meet with them to discuss proposals for the future development of VFBV and joint Regional Council meetings. All meetings were successful with a mutual sharing of information.

The Executive Officers are scheduled to meet with Regional Council 7 on 17 May.

CATERING AT LARGE INCIDENTS

We are aware that during the recent bushfires CFA experienced problems with catering. Hopefully, these issues and any other problem areas will be identified in incident debriefs.

VFBV has made representations to the Chief Officer to work with him to address the catering issues to have an improved system in place for the next summer fire season.

MEETING WITH INTEGRATED BRIGADES

We held a meeting with volunteer officers from integrated brigades, and brigades supporting and supported by these brigades, on 12 February 2006.

The purpose of this meeting was to ensure the volunteers at those brigades were aware of the industrial bans in place and to discuss any impacts of the bans on the volunteers.

All who attended agreed the meeting was valuable and should be repeated if necessary.

REGIONAL MEETING – WARRNAMBOOL

As part of its policy of holding meetings around the State, the April meeting of the VFBV Board will be held at the Warrnambool Fire Station on Friday 28th April. Invitations have been issued to all brigades in Regions 4 and 5 to meet with the Board at 7.00pm following the Board meeting. A light meal will be available from 6.30 onwards.

These meetings provide an ideal opportunity for volunteers to raise issues directly with VFBV and to hear direct feedback on our activities over the past months.

A plan to hold a meeting at Ouyen on 26 May has been deferred on the recommendation of Region 18 as that month could be extremely busy from a farming point of view.

The VFBV Board May meeting will now be held at the Eaglehawk Fire Station and brigades in Region 2 will be invited to meet with the Board at 7.00pm with a light meal available from 6.30pm onwards.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Board has agreed to advertise to fill the vacant Chief Executive Officer position and is currently developing the position specifications. On current indications, it is possible that the position could be advertised initially as a part-time position.

CFA SERVICE AWARD

The VFBV Awards Working Party has continued to meet to design a medal to replace the current rural and urban service awards. A design has been agreed upon and sample medals and ribbon bars are currently being produced for further consideration by the Working Party.

BRIGADE AUXILIARIES

VFBV has been requested to give consideration to an appropriate forum to assist and provide a level of representation for all brigade auxiliaries.

VFBV recognises the important role played by many brigade auxiliaries and the need for auxiliary activities to complement the role of their brigades.

Whilst auxiliaries have traditionally had a level of representation provided by the VRFBA or the VUFBA, VFBV is happy to work with both Associations to examine alternative structures.

This would be an ideal topic to be discussed at the annual Auxiliaries Conference which is set down for Saturday 14 October at Wendouree Fire Station commencing at 1030 hours. Further information from Shirley Jones 5338 7805 or Rachael Jones 5338 2575.



VUFBA

Secretary Peter Davis – 0407 334 685

OPEN FORUM WITH URBAN BRIGADES

A successful Open Forum meeting with representatives of urban brigades was held on Saturday 8th April 2006. Those attending were given a summary of the Association's activities over the past 12 months and were able to raise issues or concerns directly with the Executive Members of the Association.

Issues raised by brigades and which the Association will be following up with the CFA include: BASO's being seconded to undertake work for the Regions; BASO's availability to assist integrated Brigades; part-time nature of Region 15 storeperson; are structural turn out coats only being issued to members with BA accreditation?; lack of training materials (FGP's and CD) for new tankers being delivered; FEM issues eg. lack of standard accounting reports, clients dropping out of the system, reports in differing order etc.; development of a process to advise members when skills maintenance is required; inconsistent method of Integrated Brigades supporting volunteer brigades; out of date information on Brigades On Line; recommendation to reinstate Regulation 55 to enable brigades to remove non-attending members from its roll; need for an improved system for dealing with volunteers or prospective new members who have a medical condition; lack of follow up on Observation Reports.

CFA BOARD APPOINTMENT

Captain Peter Marke has been advised by the Department of Justice of his re-appointment to the Board for a further term of 3 years. The Association congratulates Peter on his re-appointment.

CFA LONG SERVICE AWARD

The Association is to advise the VFBV Awards Working Party of the rejection by the majority of brigades at the Open Forum of the medal ribbon for a proposed new CFA Long Service Award being in the checker board design and of its wish for an alternative ribbon to be designed.

BRIGADE KEY CABINETS

The Association is to advise the CFA that there should be a consistent system of protecting the integrity of brigade key cabinets and suggesting where brigades were allocated pagers, that a pager message is automatically activated when the key cabinet is opened by unauthorised persons, together with an alarm being activated at Country CAD. If a brigade has not been issued with pagers, the siren to be activated.

JOINT MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

A joint meeting of the VFBV Board, VRFBA Executive Committee and the VUFBA Policy Committee is to be held at Bendigo on Saturday 27th May 2006 to discuss some of the issues involved in the next stage of the development of VFBV. Some of these issues include Constitution, size of Board, method of raising issues, system of representation and elections.

STRUCTURAL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

The Association is to raise with the CFA the inconsistency across the State in the issue of structural protective clothing once members have attained their minimum skills. This matter appears to be a particular problem in the Wildfire with Low Structure brigades, however, some brigades in other risk classifications are also having difficulty in having structural protective clothing issued. (A similar issue was raised at the Open Forum).

Items Raised with the CFA on Behalf of Regional Councils etc.:

- clarification on how auxiliary accounts should be treated as part of brigade overall funds;
- the need for Regions to co-ordinate and follow up the Observation Reports;
- the re-convening of the Joint Training Committee;
- details of how brigades will participate in future on Municipal Fire Prevention Committees;
- suggestions to manage the issue of Brigade Key Cabinets;
- recommendation that service awards be presented by Area Managers, Operational Officers or at a Brigade's discretion, its senior Brigade Officer;
- future use of the current structural jackets;
- current information be accessible to volunteers via Brigades On Line;
- clarification of directive to not allow brigades to visit kindergartens for fire prevention training;
- delays in processing membership applications;
- improvement of radio channel 202;
- an alternative hat to the peak cap;
- possibility of portable fridges being included in future tanker design;
- a policy on the life expectancy and testing regime for urban and rural helmets;
- concerns at the secondment of BASO's;
- structural gear for new firefighters once they receive low structural accreditation and the lack of consistency across the State;
- investigate alternative cheaper suppliers of uniform trousers;
- supply single fly ladders with the NSW type pumper;
- agreed list of modifications for the Heavy (mid mounted) Pumper and review costs involved;
- Championship issues: Pumps and service hydrants being provided for Pumper Event; incorrect information in CFA Circular regarding Discipline Contest judging point 9; request magnetic event signs be replaced with LED screens and include teams with the fastest time; witches hats at start of Torchlight Procession; liaison with CFA regarding OH & S issues at Championships.

CFA has Responded to the Association in Respect of the Following Matters:

- action to improve the allocation of appropriate PPE within CFA;

- CFA's decision not to continue to keep brigades informed of the progress of Emergency Alerting System (EAS) project;
- current Recruiting Program;
- future use of current structural jacket;
- a database of CFA approved equipment;
- method of reviewing the draft C.O. SOP's;
- procedures in the event of a terrorism incident;
- identification of crew leaders;
- the Ladder Risk Assessment Working Party;
- Class A Foam system;
- improvement of radio channel 202;
- indexation of Brigade Allowances and payment on a standard date each year;
- absence of training being provided in respect of O H & S 3.01.

CHAMPIONSHIP ITEMS:

NEW EVENT

The new event trialled at this years Senior State Championship is to be introduced into the 2007 Championships. The event will be a 5 competitor event using a Pumper, water drawn from a hydrant, two 38mm hose lines with one line being carried up a ladder to strike the disc at the top of the ladder staging. A ladder harness will be used to carry the hose up the ladder. The rules for the event are currently being prepared.

ELEVATION AND RELEGATION

Following the 2006 State Senior Championships, the Association has approved of the following elevation and relegation of brigades for the 2007 Senior Championships:

Elevated from B Section to A Section:

Euroa, Morwell, Pyramid Hill.

Elevated from C Section to B Section:

Golden Square B, Kyabram, Sorrento.

Relegated from A Section to B Section:

Kooweerup, Swan Hill, Traralgon.

Relegated from B Section to C Section:

Bacchus Marsh/Gisborne, Ballarat, Warracknabeal.

Whilst the above is in accordance with the accepted system of elevation and relegation, the Association will review the grading of any team when requested.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Following the 2006 State Senior Championships, the Association has nominated as the '**Team of the Year**': Dominic Keating (Maryvale), Shane Flowers (Maryvale), Andy Waterson (Dandenong), Tom Waterson (Dandenong), Adrian Jones (Noble Park), Steve Ellis (Creswick), Mark van Hamond (Wendouree), Mark Foster (Pyramid Hill), Coach – Barry Doye (Golden Square).

COACHES SCHOOL

A Coaches School is to be held at Fiskville in September. The Association is encouraging all coaches to attend. This year the school will be conducted over one day only (Saturday 16th) but attendees will be invited to arrive on the Friday evening. The school will be "hands on" and experienced coaches will be on the coaching panel. The school will be for senior and junior coaches.

It is also intended to conduct a school over the same weekend, for First Aid officials who officiate or intend to officiate at competitions and Championships.



VRFBFA

Executive Officer Bob MacDonald
– 0418 322 680

CFA BOARD VACANCY FILLED

At the March meeting of State Council Rick Hill advised the meeting that he had not been reappointed as one of the two Associations CFA Board members and that David Gibbs had been appointed by the Minister.

State Council moved a vote of thanks to Rick for the excellent information flow he had provided to State Council whilst a member of the Board.

David Gibbs is a lawyer by profession and has conducted his own practice for the past 25 years on the Mornington Peninsula. A member of Somers Rural Fire Brigade for 34 years Mr Gibbs has been Westernport Group Officer for the past 24 years and is Chairman of the Region 8 RPC.

Further David is an accredited level 3 Incident Controller, Operations Officer, Planning Officer and Logistics Officer.

At Association level Mr Gibbs was a delegate to Central Council for a period of four years in the early 1980s. Mr Gibbs will bring a wealth of experience to the CFA Board and will be strong advocate for the interests of volunteers.

2006 STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

This year State Championships held at Cobram on 1 & 2 April were most successful and were a great credit to the Region 22 Host Committee.

The programme on both Saturday and Sunday ran with virtually not a hitch and the weather was ideal for such an event. Competitors and officials alike agreed the running surface was the best the Championships have enjoyed for quite some time. The reduction in the length of all events by 10 metres did not bring the rush of new records in the senior events expected however there were some outstanding performances in the juniors.

In the seniors Yarrambat A set a new record in the Wet Hose and Ladder of 14.510 secs. The previous best time was 15.05 secs. Yarrambat A also broke the record in the Tanker – Drawing Water from Tank with a time of 15.24 secs taking .130 secs off the old time.

Highlights of the junior events included Greta A breaking the record in the Wet Hose & Ladder (11-13 years) with a time of 15.480 secs.

The previous record stood at 17.817 secs. Mandurang B broke the record for the same event in the 11-15 year section running a time of 15.720 secs. In the Tanker – Priming Pumping & Ladder (11-13 years) Mandurang A eclipsed the previous best time with a 27.09 secs.

In the Tanker – Priming, Pumping & Ladder (11-15 years) Chiltern A set the new benchmark at 22.05 secs whilst in the Tanker – Drawing Water from Tank (11-15 years) Numurkah A beat the previous record with a time of 18.52 secs.

The Low Down Pump & Ladder (11-13 years) saw a new record of 17.31 secs set by Greta A beating the previous time 19.787 secs easily and in the 11-15 years section Heathmont A set a new time of 16.18 secs.

Major winners at the Championships were:

Seniors:

A Division Aggregate - Yarrambat A
B Division Aggregate – Moorooduc B
C Division Aggregate – Haddon A
Region Aggregate – Region 8

Juniors:

11-13 Years Aggregate - Greta
11-15 Years Aggregate - Mandurang
Champion Brigade – Greta

2007 STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Next years State Championships will be held at a venue in Ballarat on Saturday 31st March and Sunday 1st April. The region 15 Host Committee will be chaired by Viv Barry and the Secretary will be Marion Bennett with assistance from Sue Labbett.

STATE COUNCIL & EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

State Council met in March whilst State Executive met in February. Matters that came under consideration at those meetings included the following:

- Introduction of Joint Operations Committee
- Recommencement of CFA Act Review
- CFA Organisational Form
- Accuracy of Map Books
- Crew Leader Armbands
- CFA Budget provision for complimenting increased Govt funding
- Catering arrangements at fires
- Delays in introduction of country CAD pagers
- SOPs for handling incidents involving toxic waste
- Transportation of toxic waste by rail
- Replacement of fencing after fires
- Replacement of private water after fires
- Additional resources to support CIS peers
- 19 or 25mm lay flat hose a standard on tankers
- CFA/UFU EBA issues that affect volunteers
- Valuing volunteers program
- CSESP program
- Reimbursement of volunteers' brigade related phone calls
- Working party looking at use of private vehicles by volunteers
- Efficiency of staging areas
- Lack of aggressive fire attacks
- Procedures for clearing obstructions and hazards on roads
- Collection of data on January fires.