

Newsletter

Combined Newsletter of:

December 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

NEW CEO APPOINTED

After an exhaustive interview process the Board has appointed Andrew Ford as the new CEO of VFBV and Andrew will take up the position in February next year.

Many of our volunteers will know Andrew as he was previously the General Manager of CFA's Westernport Area and brings to the role a vast experience with both volunteers and CFA.

Andrew has a clear understanding of where VFBV wants to position itself in the future and has committed himself to achieving that target.

The Board looks forward to working with Andrew to achieve our aims over the next few years.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Board has set up a working party to look at the key issues for VFBV that were identified at the Strategic Planning meeting held on the day prior to the November Board meeting.

Quentin Turner (Chairman), Peter Marke, Bernie Pearson, Hans van Hamond and Max Maher have been appointed to the working party with power to co-opt other members.

The group has a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience at its disposal with four of the group being past Association Presidents and two of them current CFA Board members.

VFBV is also keen to develop a register of interested volunteers who could be available and bring specialist skills as members of future working parties of the organisation.

DOES YOUR BRIGADE WANT A COMPUTER?

CFA has a number of surplus computers which can be made available to brigades. The computers are in

working order and have a basic Word program loaded onto them. Normal maintenance will be the responsibility of the brigade. There will be a \$10.00 administrative fee payable to CFA. VFBV will co-ordinate brigade requests. If your brigade is interested, please contact VFBV or either Association.

VOLUNTEER HEALTH & WELLBEING PROJECT

Following confirmation of funding from the Valuing Volunteers Project CFA will undertake a Volunteer Health and Well Being Project which will include SES, Coastguard and Life Saving volunteers as well.

VFBV was invited to nominate a representative to the Management User Group and six representatives to the User Group.

Chairman Gary Lyttle has been appointed to the Management Group whilst the two Associations will be invited to nominate up to three persons each to sit on the user Group.

BRIGADE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The Brigade Financial Management Project is well advanced with over 1,120 brigades and groups already visited. CFA has met with representatives of the Auditor General's Department and discussed the enormity of the task, however, the Auditor General's requirements have not changed and brigade financial data must be included in CFA's 2006/07 financial accounts. Early in 2007, CFA will communicate with all brigades explaining what will be required.

CATERING & ACCOMMODATION PROJECT

VFBV is represented on a CFA Catering and Accommodation Working Group by Bernie Pearson and Tom Brodie both of whom have had significant experience in leading strike teams to various parts of the state.

The working group has already met on two occasions and at the last meeting inspected specialist catering vehicles and facilities developed by DSE and the Salvation Army.

Shortly a questionnaire will be distributed to enable the working group to gather the thoughts and ideas of volunteers around the state.

VFBV TO HOST ASSOCIATIONS' MEETING

On the weekend of 14 & 15 April 2007, VFBV will host a combined meeting of the two Associations as well as an Open Forum to which all brigades are invited to attend.

Further details of the Open Forum will be circulated separately to all brigades, however it is imperative that those wishing to attend, advise us to ensure that adequate facilities are available to accommodate the numbers attending.

The combined meeting of the two Associations is another step along the way to the eventual amalgamation of the two bodies and the creation of a new organisation to represent all volunteers. It is interesting to note that there are now a significant number of regions where the urban and rural members are meeting as one group.

ROAD AND RAIL FIRE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

In support of brigades involved with roadside and railway corridor fire management, CFA has recently commenced the Road and Rail Fire Management Project.

The project recognises a need for a consistent and integrated approach to fire prevention activities on roadsides and railway corridors and acknowledges brigades must adhere to legislative requirements and work practice standards. Seven Road and Rail Field Facilitators have been appointed and will work closely with areas and brigades to assist with the implementation of the project at a local level.

For more information about the Road and Rail Fire Management Project, contact your Manager Community Safety, or Project Manager Rachael Thompson (03) 9262 8337.



VRFBA

Executive Officer Bob MacDonald
- 0418 322 680

VALE RICK HILL

The State Council of the Association along with so many other volunteers were saddened to learn of the passing of Rick Hill after a period of illness.

Rick represented Region 11 on State Council from 1987 until his death and at that time was the second longest serving member on Council. In 2001 Rick was elected as a Vice President of the Association and he resigned this position when appointed to the Board of CFA in 2003.

Earlier this year the Association saw fit to confer the honour of life member on Rick. Life membership is not given lightly or often in the Association.

As well as his contribution to the Association Rick worked tirelessly for Region 11 and was always a strong advocate for the way things were done in that Region. Up until his death Rick was the first and only RPC Chairman Region 11 had. In all his CFA work and other interests Rick had a strong supporter in his wife Marilyn and we pass on our sympathy to her and the other members of the family.

The Uniting Church in Bairnsdale was full to overflowing for Rick's funeral and a fine tribute to his life.

MAP BOOKS

The Association continues to work with CFA to overcome the problems of accuracy being identified in recent issues of the area map books.

In an endeavour to make the publications as accurate as is humanly possible we are of the view that it is imperative a degree of ground proofing at a local level should take place before any more map books are produced

It is also our view that the eight Regional officers to be appointed under the Integrated Fire Management Planning Project could play a useful co-ordination role in this area.

WILD FIRE HELMET LIGHT

CFA has responded to our request for an investigation into the fitting of lights to wildfire helmets for night use.

They have agreed to consider the matter and will discuss with manufacturers who at the present time do not have one consistent approach, however there are some treatments to provide lighting to helmets.

BASO REVIEW

The Association understands CFA is to undertake a review of the role of Brigade Administrative Support Officers and accordingly we have approached CFA requesting that there be some volunteer involvement in such a review. It is understood the Urban Association has made a similar request.

As the primary role of BASOs is to assist volunteer fire brigades it is our contention that brigade management teams are in the best position to identify their needs. Further we would not like to see the BASO role focussed into other areas.

ADMISSION TO NATIONAL PARKS

Following a request from Region 14 State Council wrote to CFA asking them to approach Parks Victoria to implement a policy of waiving National Park fees for volunteers.

A similar agreement was reached in 2002 between the Rural Fire Service of NSW and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service in recognition of the ongoing support of volunteer firefighters in protecting NSW National Parks from bushfires.

CFA approached the Secretary of DSE and his approach has been positive by asking his staff to liaise with Parks Victoria to develop a proposal.

It is pleasing to note that the newly elected Government had this concept as part of its pre-election commitments.

PREPARATIONS FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS PROGRESSING

The Region 15 Host Committee is progressing very well in organising the 2007 State Championships at the City Oval, Ballarat on 31st March and 1st April.

Given the low rainfall over recent years and the resultant water restrictions in Ballarat there was some concern over the availability of water and as a consequence the Committee has made contingency plans.

Trophies at the 2007 Championships will be a distinctive medallion for individual team members whilst station trophies will be unique gold pans kindly sponsored by Sovereign Hill.

Teams intending to compete in 2007 are encouraged to make early arrangements for accommodation as there are other activities in Ballarat that weekend and accommodation will be at a premium.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS

Junior Ladder Events

The State Championship Committee has agreed to amend the rules for junior ladder events.

In future juniors will only be required to climb part way up the ladder before striking the target with a stream of water. A bar will be fixed to the ladder at a pre-determined height and juniors will only be required to direct their stream of water over that bar.

Election of Office Bearers

Colin Squires has been re-elected unopposed as Chairman of the State Championships Committee with John Kennedy also elected unopposed as his deputy.

LIGHTING ON TANKERS

Following a request from Region 9 the Association pursued the issue of under tray lighting on tankers for better night time operation with CFA.

In response CFA has advised that the provision of submerged lighting fitted under the tray is a requirement of the current medium tanker tender specification. If this is successful it is proposed that the feature become standard for future tankers.

CFA did point out that in the existing fleet each tanker is fitted with side marker lights which provide night time illumination, as required by the Australian Design Rules.

TESTING OF ELECTRICAL GLOVES

Region 13 has raised with the State Council the matter of electrical gloves not being replaced whilst they are away for routine testing. This means that brigades are left with no capacity to deal with electrical issues.

The Region recommends a simple exchange basis similar to that which applies to the testing of BA equipment and urged the Association to approach CFA to remedy the situation and we have done so.

RAILWAY LAND FIRE PREVENTION

In September the Association wrote to CFA asking what steps had been put in place for Railway Land Fire Prevention whilst the Road and Rail Corridor Fire Project is being undertaken.

CFA in response advised that each year the Dept of Infrastructure publishes the *Public Transport Industry Tram, Train and Bus Emergency/Incident/Counter Terrorism management Response Plan Guide*. The document in its *Fire Management Extract* outlines the legislative and contractual framework for railway fire prevention, and outlines the responsibilities of rail companies and authorities.

The Rail companies also send copies of their annual fire prevention plans to the Dept of Infrastructure who in turn supply them to CFA.

Should any brigade need any information on this matter it is available from your CFA Manager Community Safety or the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer.

STATE COUNCIL BUSINESS

Matters State Council has dealt with since the last Newsletter:-

- Availability of water for Regional Championships
- Provision of light tanker dual cabs or single cabs
- Option of 19mm hose live reels on tankers
- Over the border paging facility on SA/Vic border
- Electrical glove changeover capacity
- Competency/proficiency requirements for level 3 ICC personnel
- Supply of 19mm and 25mm lay flat hose
- Air bags for jacking tankers
- Railway fire prevention details
- Accuracy of Map books
- Standard design for "big fills"
- Removal of sirens from stations
- Provision of adequate experienced operational staff
- Under tray lighting on tankers
- Vegetation under Bass Link cable
- On site fire fighting facilities in gas plants



VUFBA

Secretary Peter Davis – 0407 334 685

CFA BOARD VACANCY

The term of office of Michael Tudball, one of the representatives of urban volunteers on the CFA Board expires on 30th June 2007. Michael is eligible for re-appointment and has indicated he will re-apply. The Association must submit a panel of four names to the Minister for selection of the successful applicant. Any urban volunteer is eligible to apply and information has been forwarded to all urban brigades. Applications must be lodged with the Association by Wednesday 28th February 2007.

BENDIGO BANK ALLIANCE

The Association raised with the CFA the lack of current publicity in regard to the alliance between Bendigo Bank and CFA. Bendigo Bank has recently confirmed the benefits available to brigades and volunteers as a result of this arrangements with CFA. These benefits include no account service fees; a 3.75% interest rate on Firepower Brigade Cheque Accounts; donations to the brigade when volunteers open Saver, Home Loan or Personal Loan Accounts with Bendigo Bank; plus other discounts to volunteers. Details are to be provided to The Fireman for publication.

FEM – CENTRALISED PAYMENT SYSTEM

Brigades are reminded of the need to forward all FEM invoices to CFA for payment. Information Packs have been forwarded to all brigades outlining the procedure to

be followed. It appears that some brigades may be unsure of the procedure to be followed.

There are still 20 brigades which have not forwarded their Brigade Signatory Form for Verification of Accounts to the CFA. Any enquiries contact Deb Amos at CFA on 9262 8391.

MAP BOOKS

Both Associations are keen to ensure that new map books contain accurate data. It is essential that brigades complete the Error Report Form included in the map book to report any data inaccuracies. There is also an article on Map Books in the VRFBA Section.

The Association Discussed and/or Provided Input into:

- draft Roadside and Rail Corridor Fire Management Policies.
- Water Policy changes and Cabinet's decision on the replenishment of water for essential use.
- Memorandum of Understanding in regard to the purchase of new PPC/Structural Ensemble.
- CFA Protocols - 'Wearing of Medals and Ribbons' and 'Presentation of National Medals'.
- CFA Health and Wellbeing Implementation plan.
- Volunteer Recruitment Brochure.
- National Emergency Volunteer Support Fund.
- Strahan Research program.

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

- funding for the installation of recirculation systems for fire brigade training tracks;
- vehicle exhaust extraction systems in future fire stations;
- approval of single stage ladders for allocation to all Medium Pumpers;
- competency requirements for Level 3 ICC Personnel;
- testing of electrical gloves;
- increase of the Brigade Owned Vehicle allowance;
- Identification of Crew Leaders;
- Rosebud brigade returning to its new station as a fully volunteer brigade;
- guidelines in regard to the weight requirements on Brigade Owned Vehicles;
- distribution of the Brigade Membership and Classification Discussion Paper;
- distribution of Learning Manuals for Wildfire;
- evaluation of hydration back packs;
- update of the Brigade Management Manual;
- 3.4C Tanker issues including rack to stow hose and altered position of pump panel on deck;
- key cabinet alarms;
- reversing camera on new vehicles and automatic roll over alarms;
- volunteer input into interviews for Operations Officers and Operations Manager positions;
- forwarding of messages to the CAD Centre via computer etc.;
- design criteria for integrated fire stations and fully volunteer stations;
- availability of pager messages online by a private provider;
- ability to remotely activate automatic doors at stations;
- review of uniform hats.

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

- advice of CFA's auditing requirements for brigades;
- Relationship & Diversity Workshop;
- CFA's alliance with the Bendigo Bank and benefits to brigades of banking with Bendigo Bank;
- Child Protection Working Party and the parental exemption clause in the new Working with Children legislation;
- diesel exhaust emissions;
- BASO's having access to CFA's RMS system;
- Administration Messaging Function of the New Paging System;
- a regular maintenance program for the Memorial Wall and pond at Fiskville;
- single stage ladders being fitted to Medium Pumpers as part of standard stowage;
- additional funding for the modifications to Heavy (Mid Mounted) Pumper;
- training and operational manuals on delivery of new 3.4C Tankers;
- lack of a response from the CFA following applications by volunteers for positions within CFA.

CHAMPIONSHIP ITEMS:

Seventy Five teams are entered to compete at the 2007 Senior Championships at Bendigo including four interstate teams from Western Australia and Tasmania. Seventy Seven teams have entered the Junior Championships at Tatura, including Tasmanian brigades Hobart and Somerset.

WATER RESTRICTIONS

In October, the Association wrote to all competing brigades and competition associations enclosing a letter from the CFA in regard to the use of water for training and competitions. As the water situation has since deteriorated in most parts of the State, the Association has recommended to brigades and competition associations that stricter conditions now be observed.

COMPETITION EQUIPMENT

Non competing brigades are urged to make available to competing brigades or brigades planning to compete, competition equipment no longer being used, either for loan or sale. Advice of such competition equipment could be forwarded either to the Association or The Fireman.

WASHERS FOR HYDRANTS & COUPLINGS

The Association has purchased a supply of washers for hydrants and couplings. Samples will be available at the State Championships for sizing and testing on brigade equipment, and the Association will take brigade orders.



Seasons Greetings

*VFBV Chairman Gary Lyttle and Board Members,
VUFBA President Rob Waterson and
Executive Committee members,
VRFBA President Bernie Pearson and
State Council members and the staff,
wish you all a Merry Xmas
and a Safe and Happy New Year*