

Newsletter

Combined Newsletter of:

JUNE 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/

AUSTRALIAN FIRE SERVICE MEDALS

Congratulations are extended to the recent recipients of the Australian Fire Service Medal awarded in the Queen's Birthday 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:

- Ex Captain Ken Deveraux AFSM (Kangaroo Flat)
- William Millar AFSM (Lake Goldsmith)
- Ex Captain John Nihill AFSM (Ouyen)
- Rod Roberts AFSM (Maiden Gully)



VFBV

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

C.E.O. POSITION

The Board has agreed to advertise the position of CEO. This position has been filled jointly by Peter Davis and Bob MacDonald acting as joint Executive Officers since the resignation of Allan Woodward in 2004. Whilst this arrangement has proven to be very successful, the Board believes it is time to look for a person to take up the position of CEO.

An advertisement for the VFBV CEO is included in this month's edition of The Fireman and an advertisement will also be placed in The Age.

Position descriptions are available from either Association or the VFBV Webpage. It is considered that the position could be filled on a part-time basis initially, leading to a full-time appointment as the amalgamation of the two Associations continues to occur.

VACANCIES ON VFBV BOARD

The terms of office of Board Members Gary Lyttle (VRFBA) and Mick Taylor (VUFBA), are to expire at the next Annual Meeting of VFBV.

Both members are eligible for re-appointment, however, any member of a financial brigade of their Association, is eligible to apply to fill the vacancies.

An advertisement included in The Fireman newspaper, carries details of the vacancies, or details can be obtained from your respective Association.

VFBV – THE NEXT STAGE

Meetings of the Executive Committees of both the VRFBA and the VUFBA with the VFBV Board, have recently been held to make recommendations for the continued development of VFBV and the eventual amalgamation of the two Associations. These meetings have developed recommendations on a future system of representation of an amalgamated Association, the selection process for Association delegates, meetings and committees, size of VFBV Board and how appointed, relationship between Board and a State body, affiliations and general funds, the raising of issues.

These recommendations will be considered by both Associations before any further action is taken.

REGIONAL VISITS

The Board has held meetings at several regional locations over the past months. Following the Board meetings, the members have held meetings with representatives from brigades within the region and adjoining regions. Information on current initiatives by VFBV is provided to the brigades at these meetings, and the brigades have the opportunity to raise any issue or concern impacting on them or their volunteers. Meetings have already been held at Warrnambool, Eaglehawk and Warragul. Further meetings are planned for Wangaratta (28th July) and Ouyen (29th September).

CFA UNIFORMS

The Board has developed a Uniform Policy for all CFA volunteers and this has been forwarded to the CFA for consideration. We have also made the offer to work with the CFA to achieve a satisfactory outcome for our volunteers.

CFA SERVICE AWARD

VFBV is surveying all brigades as to their preference for the ribbon on a proposed new CFA Service Award. This Award, in the form of a medal suspended from a ribbon, would be available for members after 10 years CFA service, with service bars awarded for each 5 years thereafter.

This Award will replace the existing Service Awards. As well as a medal, the award will also include a smaller badge for wearing with non uniform clothing and a ribbon bar.

VOLUNTEER CHARTER

It is now over 4 years since the Volunteer Charter was signed by the State Government, CFA and the Associations. VFBV is in the process of reviewing the Charter and is to re-convene the original Working Party for this purpose. The first meeting is scheduled for 21st July.

MEETING WITH COMMISSIONER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Board has arranged to meet with Bruce Esplin, Commissioner for Emergency Services, to discuss a range of issues which impact on the fire services and our volunteers. This is part of our ongoing liaison with Commissioner Esplin.

INTEGRATED MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROJECT (IMFMP)

Recently a Position Paper containing some 22 recommendations was released for comment by the IMFMP Project Team. VFBV has made a submission to the Project Team addressing the recommendations and drawing attention to a lack of reference to volunteer input at the Regional and Municipal levels.



VRFBA

Executive Officer Bob MacDonald
- 0418 322 680

VALE

Members of the Association were extremely saddened by the passing of Elwyn Pearson wife of our State President Bernie in mid June.

The Uniting Church in Romsey and its adjacent hall were filled to overflowing on Saturday 24 June for the funeral service to mark Elwyn's passing and the crowd included a virtual who's who of CFA staff and volunteers alike.

At the end of the service CFA members followed the placing of green leaves on the coffin with a guard of honour which stretched for many metres down the adjacent street to the church.

The Association again expresses its condolences to Bernie and family in their time of sadness.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS MOST SUCCESSFUL

The State Championships held at Cobram on 1 and 2 April were an outstanding success with the programme of events running very smoothly.

Minister for Emergency Services Tim Holding officially opened the championships on the Saturday morning and the weather this year was kinder than last year.

The results of the events appear elsewhere in the Fireman and congratulations go to all those who were successful.

Special mention should be made of the Hall Rural Fire Brigade who travelled all the way from the ACT and have indicated their intention to participate again next year.

The Host Committee from Region 22 did an outstanding job under the stewardship of Chairman Wayne Geisler and they are to be congratulated on their endeavours.

Major winners were:

Seniors:

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

Juniors:

- 11-13 years Aggregate – Greta A
- 11-15 years Aggregate – Mandurang
- Champion Brigade – Greta

MEETING WITH PREMIER AND MINISTER

Representatives of the Association in President Bernie Pearson, Vice President Peter Downes and Executive Officer Bob MacDonald have met with both the Premier and the Minister for Police & Emergency Services in the past two months.

The meetings have also involved VFBV and the VUFBA and have been part of the process in explaining to government the issues currently in CFA/UFU Enterprise Bargaining Agreement that affect volunteers in some way.

Our volunteer charter has been most useful to us in the government recognizing its commitment in the Charter to consult with us.

2007 CHAMPIONSHIPS VENUE

The Region 15 Host Committee has advised that the 2007 State Championships will be held on the 31 March and 1 April at the City Oval, Ballarat. City Oval is centrally located in Ballarat and was the venue of the 1999 State Championships.

The Host Committee has appointed sub committees to deal with trophies, grounds, finance, sponsorship and catering at this stage.

TANKER CONFORMANCE TO WEIGHT SPECIFICATION

In response to a letter from this Association in regard to a number of tankers in the CFA fleet being found to be overweight the CFA replied as follows:

"CFA takes very seriously its obligations to conform to legislation with regard to vehicular weight limits. The recent incidence of over-weight trucks highlighted the need for additional measures to identify problem vehicles whenever they may be in CFA's fleet.

CFA has now invested in two sets of electronic weighing scales to be used in the DMO workshop network as part of the state-wide truck inspection program. Each year a proportion of the truck fleet will be weighed on a random basis to ensure on-going compliance.

Our expectation is that this measure will, over time, identify any vehicles in CFA's fleet that may still be overweight and allow this to be rectified.

There were a large number of causal factors contributing to the recent production problems in light tankers. In order to ensure no repeat of this problem, CFA has implemented changes to its production checking process:

1. CFA manufacturing technical specifications now require the body manufacturer to obtain a weighbridge certificate of the bare cab chassis before the build program commences.

2. The manufacturer is now required under contract to certify that the finished appliance under load complies with manufacturer's and VicRoads' requirements.
3. On future appliance programs, the first appliance will be weighbridge certificated to demonstrate compliance with the certified design. The first appliance will be fully loaded for all options under the contract."

STOCKPILING OF TYRES

Raywood Fire Brigade in Region 2E raised the issue of stockpiling of tyres with State Council and as a consequence the Association raised the matter with CFA.

CFA replied as follows:

"The matter raised by the brigade is one that ought to be considered as part of the review of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* and the related documentation that complements the Act. Our preliminary reaction is that stockpiles of tyres might not necessarily be a specific issue in the new Act, reference to it could be incorporated as part of the overall approach to addressing fire risk, either in the Act, regulations, guidelines or codes of practice.

While we have not determined any specific process at this stage, we are proposing that the Act Review will recommence later in the year with a view to getting legislation into Parliament during 2007"

PAST PRESIDENT LEADS AAVFBA

Bruce Conboy, Immediate Past President of the Association has been appointed President of the Australasian Assembly of Volunteer Fire Brigades Association following the sudden resignation of Andrew Taylor of Tasmania.

Victoria will host the Annual Meeting of AAVFBA at Fiskville which will be held at the conclusion of the AFAC Conference in August.

NEW EVENT FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

The State Competition Committee has agreed to introduce a new event at the 2007 State Championships. The event will replace the Dry Hydrant and Tanker event and will be called a Hydrant and Tanker Event.

A particular feature of the event will be the need to bowl a length of NRL hose past a point 14.5 metres from the tanker line and the hose must stay within the bounds of the track.

REGIONAL AGGREGATE GOES

Following representation from two regions on the method used to judge the Regional Aggregate Award at the State Championships the State Competition Committee has decided to dispense with the award.

In future there will be a brigade aggregate award for each of the three divisions which will mean brigades in lower divisions being recognized for their efforts over the series of events.

LIGHTS TO DECIDE

At its meeting in May the State Championship Committee confirmed that where lights are fitted to targets then only when the light comes on will the target be deemed to have been struck.

TEAM NAMES COMPULSORY

Team members competing in championships are reminded it is compulsory to have the name of your brigade on the front of your competition shirt. This is necessary to assist recorders and other officials establish brigades on the start line.

The letters should be not less than 75mm in height.

SECOND LADDER TO BE CONSIDERED

The State Championship Committee will consider at its next meeting whether to introduce a 2nd Ladder and Catcher for Junior Ladder events at future Championships.

Region 8 has proposed the initiative as they have run junior ladder events successfully this way for some time.

CFA/DSE CONFERENCE

President Bernie Pearson and Vice President Peter Downes attended the DSE and CFA Annual Workshop on behalf of VFBV at the Yarra Valley Conference Centre, Dixons Creek.

The agenda for the two day workshop included:

- Culture
- Directions, challenges and synergies
- Strategic themes
- Incident management
- Integrated emergency planning
- Communicating and marketing successes and failures
- Sustainability of Community Information Systems
- IT and information flow
- DSE/CFA Co-operative Agreement.



VUFBA

Secretary Peter Davis – 0407 334 685

AFFILIATIONS

Affiliations for Brigade, Brigade Auxiliary, Junior Brigade and for the Urban Brigades' Welfare Fund are now due and payable for the year 2006/2007. The Association has been able to keep Brigade, Auxiliary and Junior Brigade affiliation fees at the same level as last year, however, due to a small deficit for the 2006/05 financial year, it has been necessary to increase the affiliation fee for the Welfare Fund by \$10.00.

FEM

CFA is moving to centralise the payment of FEM accounts and brigades have been advised of information sessions being conducted by CFA throughout the State, to inform brigades of the process to be introduced. The Association indicated to the CFA that it should ensure its current computerised system is operating correctly before embarking on this next step. The CFA has advised the Association that improvements to the computer system have overcome the difficulties that brigades have experienced in the past, and that any errors are occurring on an infrequent basis.

BRIGADE AUXILIARY FUNDS

In view of the variety of ways brigades and their Auxiliaries operate, the Association sought clarification from the CFA on the correct method of treating Auxiliary funds and bank

accounts. The CFA had advised that Auxiliary funds are a part of the brigade's funds and, as such, the Auxiliary financial activity should be reported at brigade meetings and audited as part of the brigade's financial audit. The Auxiliary bank account should be a "brigade special purpose account" and opened and operated in accordance with a resolution of the brigade as specified in Schedule 5, CFA Regulations 2004 – Brigade Model Rules.

INTEGRATED MUNICIPAL FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING (IMFMP)

This Project which is an outcome from the Victorian Bushfire Inquiry, will have an impact on how fire brigades and State Agencies or Instrumentalities etc. relate with the Municipalities on fire prevention activities. In response to a Position Paper released by the Project Team which contained 22 recommendations, the Association has advised of its insistence on volunteer representation at the Municipal and Regional levels and also that the Program must be adequately resourced at no added cost to the CFA.

RELATIONSHIP AND DIVERSITY AWARENESS

The Association received a very interesting and topical presentation from CFA Manager Diversity, Angela Seach, on the feedback being received from the Relationship and Diversity Awareness Workshops which are being delivered within CFA.

There is a growing number of relationship and diversity issues arising within CFA and the Association encourages brigades to contact Angela and make arrangements for a Workshop to be conducted for their individual brigade. These Workshops can assist brigades to take steps to stop issues arising and provide tools to assist in issue resolution at an early stage. Angela can be contacted on 9262 8246.

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

- provision of single fly ladders on all type 3 medium pumpers at CFA's expense;
- CFA's OH & S Department be resourced to an appropriate level as a matter of urgency;
- identification for Crew Leaders;
- a yearly update Urban Growth Areas Maps in the new Centralised Map;
- inclusion under the Memberlink scheme of free admission to Victorian National Parks;
- a recognised standard notification of a day of Total Fire Ban by all types of media;
- brigade and member information included on one data base;
- the amount of information that FIRS are requesting when submitting fire reports; a current updated pro forma be made available for all brigades; ability for supporting brigades to lodge reports prior to the primary brigade lodging its report;
- appointment of a BASO to assist brigades in and around the Sunraysia district;
- litigation of members performing volunteer firefighting duties, and more specifically FEM servicing;
- charging for false alarms;
- a possible breach of the current privacy legislation by the UFU;

- criteria to be used for the issue of the new structural protective clothing;
- cheaper petrol for volunteer firefighters included in the Memberlink Program;
- rust issues in the chassis rails of Hino tankers;
- provision of adequate supplies of cold drinking water during the Opening Ceremony at State Championships; wearing of Dress Tunics in hot weather;
- provision of pumpers for the pumper event at local competitions.

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

- lack of consultation raised by the Wangaratta brigade;
- correct method of structuring brigade auxiliary financial accounts;
- difficulties with the FEM computerised system;
- inconsistent system of integrated brigades supporting volunteer brigades;
- Regions to co-ordinate the completion of Observation Reports and follow up on responses;
- reinstatement of CFA Regulation 55;
- delays being experienced with processing of membership allocations;
- a system to advise volunteers when Skills Maintenance is required;
- inclusion of hygiene and catering issues on the fireground in the debrief process;
- consistent process in regard to the allocation of Structural Protective Clothing;
- Brigade Key Cabinets and security systems;
- life expectancy or testing regime for Structural and Wildfire Helmets;
- future use of current Structural Jackets;
- clarification of the issue of Structural Turnout Coats;
- clarification whether a BASO can assist at Integrated Brigades;
- modifications to the Heavy Mid-mounted Pumper;
- purchase of uniform trousers at a lower cost and investigations of alternative suppliers and materials;
- use of the Uniform Peak Cap and investigations of alternatives;
- part-time nature of the Storeperson in Region 15;
- CFA Medical Forms/Restrictions;
- level of music at some locations for the Torchlight Procession, and provision of witches hats at the start of the Procession as a guide for the 10 paces between brigades;
- poor condition of Pumpers and service hydrants on arrival at the State Championships and the allocation of Pumpers for competitions.

CHAMPIONSHIP ITEMS:

NEW EVENT – PUMPER AND LADDER

The Association has forwarded to all brigades, a copy of the rules for this new event which will be introduced into the 2007 Senior State Championships.

BORROWING OF COMPETITORS

The use of a form to be used at the Senior State Championships when competitors are to be borrowed, is to be re-introduced for the 2007 Senior State Championships. Details have been forwarded to brigades.

