

Newsletter

Combined Newsletter of:

JUNE 2008



VFBV

VRFBA

VUFBA

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AUSTRALIAN FIRE SERVICE MEDALS

Congratulations are extended to the recipients of the Australian Fire Service Medal awarded in June's Queens 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:

- Lieutenant Barry Bennett AFSM (Lancefield)
- Firefighter Pat Bigham AFSM (Gruyere)
- Firefighter Rick Williams AFSM (Ballarat City).

VUFBA SECRETARY RETIRES

After more than 15 years as Association Secretary, Peter Davis retired from the position on 4th July. The VUFBA is currently in the process of selecting another Secretary who will also act as one of the Executive Officers of VFBV. Peter has agreed to stay on with the Association until the new Secretary has been appointed and has had the opportunity to spend some time with Peter at the Association office.

VACANCIES ON VFBV BOARD

The terms of office of Board Members Tom Brodie (VRFBA) and Hans van Hamond (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 the VFBV webpage.

RETIREMENTS & APPOINTMENTS

The Joint VRFBA and VUFBA meeting 15th June, was the first meeting for two new delegates;

- Ex Lieutenant Barrie Sanders replaces retired VUFBA member for Region 23, Secretary Ron Schultz AFSM;

Ron Schultz's contribution of over 18 years on the VUFBA Governing Body was acknowledged at the meeting,

- Gerry Neyenhuis replaces VRFBA delegate for Region 7, Kelvin Round who has resigned. Gerry

has also replaced Eon Cook on the State Championships Committee.

Kelvin and Eon were both fine contributors to the Association over a number of years and their service has been greatly appreciated.

WELFARE FUND

In the State Budget, the Government provided funding which will see \$2M available for the creation of a Welfare Fund to be administered by VFBV and available to all CFA volunteers who are members of brigades affiliating with VFBV and the Fund.

The funding is a one-off capital injection and the Fund must be self sustaining. Brigades affiliating with the Fund will need to pay an annual affiliation fee to ensure that its capital value is maintained. It is anticipated that the Fund will commence operation once VFBV is formally established as the Association to represent all CFA volunteers – this should occur this coming October.

The VUFBA has agreed that its existing Welfare Fund, which has been in existence since 1913, will be amalgamated into the new Fund when it becomes operational.

In the last financial year, the VUFBA Welfare Fund paid out \$37,651.00 to urban volunteers experiencing serious financial difficulties.

POSITION PAPER & CONSTITUTION

All brigade Secretaries have been sent a copy of the Position Paper in regards to the two Volunteer Associations amalgamating under the VFBV umbrella. The position paper was accompanied by the new proposed Constitution for VFBV which provides for a structure of a Board, State Council and Regional Councils.

Within the State Council there will be an Urban Executive Committee and a Rural Executive Committee who will deal with matters specific to each group.

In the case of VRFBA, resolutions will be put to the AGM and a Special General Meeting in mid August to agree to

a Deed of Agreement between VRFBA and VFBV, adoption of a revised constitution and transfer of the assets to VFBV. VUFBA will consider the same resolutions at their AGM in September.

It is proposed, that subject to the resolutions being agreed to by both volunteer bodies, a meeting of VFBV will be held on 4th October to sign the Deeds of Agreement and adopt the proposed constitution.

VFBV Board members and staff have agreed to make themselves available to attend any Regional Council meeting which is being held between now and the Association AGM's.

Members are encouraged to borrow a copy of the Position Paper and Constitution from your brigade Secretary and take the time to read them. Both documents are available from the VFBV website.

MEETING BETWEEN CFA AND VFBV BOARDS

In our last Newsletter we reported on the outcomes from the meeting in March between the CFA Board and the VFBV Board to address volunteer concerns and the level of commitment of CFA to protecting volunteer rights and protecting the future of CFA as a volunteer based organisation.

One of the outcomes was regular meetings between the two Boards and the first of these meetings took place on 26th May.

The Boards agreed to some fundamental principles that will guide the further development of a vision for volunteers and volunteerism in CFA, acknowledging the fundamental importance of CFA's community and volunteer based foundations as the core of CFA's service philosophy, approach and benefits. The two Boards committed to the principle that building volunteer and community capability will always be the priority approach to addressing community service needs.

Also discussed was a framework and guiding principles to improve consultation and engagement within CFA and the core role that volunteers and the Associations contribute to CFA leadership and management.

Ideas about how VFBV and CFA can strengthen the way CFA Board and staff work together with volunteers at all levels were discussed and commitment was made to implement several tangible actions.

CFA has also committed to developing a legal framework to enshrine volunteer rights consistent with the Volunteer Charter and VFBV has proposed an approach to implement this. Further meetings are planned.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

The Board of VFBV has continued its policy of holding some of its Board meetings at Regional locations and meeting with volunteers from the surrounding area following the meeting of the Board.

The Board held its meeting on 2nd May at the Kerang Fire Station and its meeting on 30th May at the Benalla Fire Station.

On Friday 25th July, the Board will hold its meeting at the Wodonga Fire Station and invitations have been forwarded to all Brigades in Region 24 inviting their volunteers to meet with the Board following the Board meeting.

MEETING WITH THE PREMIER

The VFBV Board are scheduled to meet with the Premier, Mr Brumby on 31st July. Matters on the agenda will include:

1. Volunteer & employer recognition.
2. Volunteer Charter.
3. The proposed unified volunteer body.
4. The vision of volunteerism and the future.

The Board will meet with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Bob Cameron prior to their meeting with the Premier.

COMMUNITY SAFETY FRAMEWORK 2025

The Community Safety Directorate is to develop a framework to identify and address the key challenges the Directorate may face up to the year 2025 and is seeking volunteer input into the development of this framework. The framework aims to identify the key challenges facing the Directorate; outline directions to address the challenges and identify outcomes and principles.

A Workshop is to be conducted by CFA to assist in the development of the framework.. CFA is to contact each Regional Planning Committee to nominate a volunteer from each Region to attend and participate in the Workshop. The Associations are also to nominate a volunteer from each Region.

Volunteers can provide input into how the Framework can cater for issues which arise at the local level and are of significance to brigades, how volunteers can become more involved in program and policy development and what tools could be developed to better support volunteers.

The Associations have approached each Regional Council to nominate a volunteer to attend the Workshop which will be held on 10th August 2008 at the Quest Hotel Knox, 137 Mountain Highway, Wantirna.

CLASS A FOAM

Representatives from VFBV, the VRFBA and the VUFBA have been part of a Working Party involved in the selection of new Class A Foam for the CFA. Three products have been accepted by the CFA and are currently being analysed in regard to OH & S compliance. In early June, the three products were subjected to a series of operational tests at Fiskville. It is anticipated that recommendations for a new Class A foam product will be developed shortly. The Associations have also drawn to the attention of the CFA the need for the new foam product to be compatible with the foam used by DSE.

YOUTH FORUM

The VFBV/CFA Youth Forum, which is scheduled to be held at Fiskville on the weekend of 9th and 10th August, is seeking young CFA members between the ages of 18 and 24 years to attend. It is anticipated there will be 100 participants made up of 60 young people, 20 volunteer Association representatives and 20 CFA personnel.

The majority of the forum will be spent in small groups from 5 to 20 who will discuss pre determined topics and will come up with views and suggestions as to the actions that need to be taken to solve the issues of the topics. Hopefully the forum will deliver outcomes that will contribute to a youth strategy for CFA.

CROSS BORDER MEETING

On 19th May, representatives of VFBV and VRFBA met with representatives of CFSVA from South Australia at the Little Desert Lodge south of Nhill. This meeting has become an annual event and rotates between the two States.

Prior to discussing matters of mutual interest the meeting was addressed by Rob Sandford, Assistant Chief Officer, CFS and Geoff Conway, Deputy Chief Officer, CFA.

Rob spoke about the Deputy Coroner's 34 recommendations arising from the fires in S.A. of 2005, the fire behaviour experienced on Kangaroo Island and the review of the S.A. Fire and Emergency Services Act which has recently been completed and came up with some 49 recommendations of changes to the legislation.

Geoff addressed the gathering on the challenges facing CFA such as population growth, OH&S, radio systems, vehicle design, integrated fire management planning, demographic change and social change.

Following the two addresses the meeting had a wide ranging discussion on issues of mutual interest including:

- Emergency Services levy calculation differences
- Mapping
- Volunteer Charter
- CAD systems
- Vehicle design
- 40 kph speed limit at incidents (S.A. proceeding to 25 kph speed limit)
- Brigade viability
- Hub brigade principles
- Rural road numbering systems.

VFBV WEBSITE

The pilot project of developing regional web pages within the VFBV web site is progressing most satisfactorily. Regional Councils in Regions 8, 13 and 23 have been involved in the pilot and have had significant input into what information on a Regional web page is useful for members of that Region.

Currently the web pages are featuring regional newsletters, meeting dates, training dates and reports of meetings held locally.

The project will eventually incorporate all those Regions who wish to participate.

INTEGRATED FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The volunteer Associations are represented on the CFA Implementation Team by Hans van Hamond (VUFBA), Bruce Conboy (VRFBA) and Bob MacDonald (VFBV). Deputies are Ian Nash (VRFBA) and Bill Rodda (VUFBA).

A number of Municipalities from various parts of the State have been invited to participate in the first year implementation of IFMP with CFA.

It is proposed Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committees will start to meet this year and this is being supported by Fire Planning Network managers continuing to establish/maintain contact with regional stakeholders.

JOINT ASSOCIATIONS MEETING

The joint meeting of the VRFBA State Council and the VUFBA Governing Body on Sunday 15th June, resolved to raise the following issues with the CFA on behalf of Regional Councils and brigades:

- Class A Foam issues;
- retention of the current structural coats until suitable replacements are issued;
- availability of the new long service medal, plan and process to expedite its implementation;
- implementation of WIMS to replace TRAIN;
- RAR units responded at all times where persons are trapped in vehicle accidents;
- process and progress of the appointment of structural instructors;
- feedback on the CO Brigade and Membership Classification Position Paper - reinforce the position that all brigades have a Captain, and support for the Chief Officer's position in regard to Auxiliaries;
- training props at SETG and maintenance program;
- Slip on Units;
- provision of helmet lights for brigades that require them;
- adequate space provided on Brigades Online to include OH & S information, in particular chemical data sheets;
- absence of Standard Operating Procedures for the HINO 3.4C Tanker without a cabin door.

The joint meeting also resolved to refer the following issues to VFBV:

- method of funding special CFA projects ie. radios, in lieu of the FSL;
- Improving Local Debriefing discussion paper;
- submission to the Government's Green Paper on Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change, and its section on Using and Managing Fire;
- Federal Government's National Employment Standards Exposure Draft discussion paper.

The meeting also received reports from the volunteer representatives on the CFA Board and 16 other committees or Working Parties the Associations are represented on.

ISSUES RAISED AT OPEN FORUM

VFBV has received responses from the CFA in regard to several issues raised at the Open Forum on 29th March 2008. A copy of each response has been forwarded to the brigade raising the issue, and have been retained at VFBV for other interested brigades upon request. These replies relate to:

- CFA accommodation at Senior State Championships;
- OIC Melton;
- lack of volunteer involvement in IMT's;
- Brigade Financial Management Project in Region 14;
- cost of implementing Catchment Model and the impact on FSL;
- Direct Entry into FIRS.

VFBV LOGO COMPETITION

VFBV is giving consideration to a new logo for the Association and is inviting volunteers to submit their suggested designs for a new logo.

VFBV is also prepared to consider a new name for the new Association if a suitable alternative name is suggested.

Volunteers should submit their designs and any proposed names to the VUFBA office by 31st July 2008; contact details on the newsletter letterhead. Further details can be obtained from the VFBV webpage.

CHAMPIONSHIP ITEMS:

AUSTRALASIAN FIREFIGHTER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Six Victorian brigades have expressed their interest in competing in the Australasian Firefighter Championship to be held in Rotorua, New Zealand in October 2009. It is hoped that all six brigades will be accepted to compete.

A meeting of the Firefighter Championship Committee was held in June, at which the New Zealand members outlined their proposals for the events and formal functions. Two New Zealand events have been added with two ladder events have been removed.

The New Zealanders pointed out that persons intending to attend should book accommodation in Rotorua at least 6 months prior to the Championship as Rotorua is a popular tourist area.

The **VRFBA** State Championship Committee has agreed on a number of matters of interest :

- three current competitors will be invited to join the Rules Sub-Committee;
- a Judges School will be held at Fiskville on the 11th October with a State Championship Committee meeting on the afternoon of 10th;
- no changes to rules will be entertained after 1st December in the year preceding a State Championship;
- competitors must have both feet on ladder rungs and one other point of contact when activating a target;
- that all the equipment be placed on the replica tanker stands in the Tanker, Priming, Pumping and Ladder event;
- that there will be 15 teams in Division A in futures and the balance of entries will be divided evenly between Divisions B & C;
- that juniors may only compete in one age group only in any event at a Championship.

The **VUFBA** has agreed to the following:

- appointment of an official where required, to support Under 14 years branch competitors, and in Under 17 years events upon request;
- use of Examiners be dispensed with; a safety briefing card be distributed for signature and collection at the hydrant check; members of the Competition & Rules Committee to conduct spot checks of equipment;
- recommendation that brigades compete at a local competition prior to competing at a State Championship;
- ladder harnesses be modified;
- enforce Rule 8(h) throwing of couplings etc. in the pumper events;

- amend Rule 21 “that an approved bandit coupling must be used” and add wording to the effect that where 2 bandit tapes are used, there is no requirement for rivets;
- provide umbrellas for judges/pencillers of the Discipline Contest, and they be approved to wear the fur ringer hat.

VUFBA RULE BOOK

The CFA has agreed to fund a re-print of the VUFBA Competition Rule Book. The current Rule Book was printed in 2004, and all new rules and amendments since, will be included in the new book. Copies of the new Rule Book will be forwarded to all competing Urban Brigades with the next Newsletter.

VUFBA ELEVATION AND RELEGATION

Following requests from five brigades to review the elevation or relegation of their competition teams, the Association at its meeting 15th June, approved the following elevation and relegation for the 2009 VUFBA State Championships:

Elevated from C Section to B Section: Whittlesea & Patterson River.

Elevated from B Section to A Section: Corio.

Relegated from A Section to B Section: Tatura & Maldon.

Relegated from B Section to C Section: Mornington & Traralgon.

CFA/VCGA PARTNERSHIP

The CFA/VCGA Partnership Reference Group met at Safety Beach Coast Guard Brigade Headquarters on 28th June.

Project Officer, David Goldfinch, advised that three more Coast Guard Brigades will be registered this year in Marlo (late August), Lake Eppalock (September) and Lake Hume (October).

The labelling on the Personal Protective Clothing was approved and the clothing can now be produced. The clothing has been designed for use at sea and to be worn under personal flotation devices. It is tight fitting at the waist and carries the logos of CFA and Volunteer Coast Guard on the front with Coast Guard Brigade on the back.

A process sizing and supplying Coast Guard brigade members with their PPC and boots is currently being determined

A significant part of the meeting was taken up with communication matters including coverage along the Victorian Coast and inland waters as well as Coast Guard Brigades being mobilised through Vicfire.

Following the meeting members of the Committee witnessed a demonstration of a prototype fire pump which is being considered for fitting to coastguard vessels. Whilst the pump was heavier than the specification called for it was still considered capable of being moved by two persons.

A demonstration of an ejector pump used for extracting water from flood or part flooded vessels was also witnessed.