



VOLUNTEER FIRE
BRIGADES VICTORIA

Newsletter

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VFBV OFFICIALLY FORMED AS THE SINGLE AND UNIFIED BODY REPRESENTING ALL CFA VOLUNTEERS

Motions have now been overwhelmingly supported at the Annual General Meetings (AGM's) of the VRFBA (14th August 2008), VUFBA (14th September 2008) and VFBV (4th October 2008) to officially bring the VUFBA and VRFBA together as a single and unified body, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, to represent all CFA volunteers. The support for the unified body is the culmination of more than eight years of planning, discussion and negotiation involving discussion with every Regional Council and opportunities for brigades and groups to input directly to the discussions and final outcome. The changes approved at the respective AGM's reflect the detail described in the VFBV Unified Body Position Paper issued to all Brigades and Groups last June.

The formation of VFBV was started by the Urban and Rural Associations in 2002, recognising the degree of issues common to both Associations; the potential to improve volunteer representation by coming together to achieve a stronger and higher profile volunteer voice; and the opportunities to combine our efforts, knowledge and resources to have a stronger presence and improved ability to influence decision making on matters affecting volunteers.

This is definitely an exciting new era for the Association and for CFA volunteers. The creation of a strong, proactive and high profile volunteer voice will have a better chance of influencing decision makers to ensure all issues affecting the welfare and efficiency of volunteers are addressed. But we also remember that VUFBA and VRFBA have served volunteers extremely well for many years and the input of these Associations, at all levels, has been fundamental to the success of CFA as a volunteer based organisation. The traditions and foundations that have made the Associations successful in the past will continue to drive the focus and approach of VFBV. VFBV will represent all CFA volunteers. The new VFBV structure will operate as a single and unified body but at the same time will ensure full representation on all issues, whether they affect all volunteers, rural areas only or urban areas only. This will be achieved by retaining rural and urban representation at each level of the new organisation and processes to allow due focus on issues affecting only a portion of the membership, whether this be an issue of interest to urban brigades, rural brigades or a specific part of the State.

At the historic VFBV AGM, Gary Lyttle was elected VFBV President, and Mick Taylor was elected VFBV Vice President.

VOLUNTEER CHARTER – COMMITMENTS RE-AFFIRMED

Following the VFBV AGM on 4th October, over 200 guests gathered at a function to recognise the contribution of the two Associations to date, to officially launch the formation of VFBV, and to witness the re-affirmation and signing of the Volunteer Charter. The Premier of Victoria, Hon John Brumby, Minister of Police and Emergency Services, Hon Bob Cameron, CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy and VFBV President Gary Lyttle addressed the gathering before re-signing this important agreement. The Charter guarantees the rights of CFA volunteers, through VFBV, to be part of the decision making process.

Many present at the occasion commented that this had been one of the most significant days for CFA volunteers in recent CFA history. Premier John Brumby spoke of the enormous contribution and sacrifice made by CFA volunteers, sincerely thanking each and every volunteer for the services given to their communities; "you are the backbone of our communities", "you are absolutely fundamental to emergency services in Victoria" he said.

The Premier recognised the vital role performed by VFBV in representing CFA volunteers and described his commitment to the Volunteer Charter "our Government will listen to your united voice" he said. Minister Cameron and CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy expressed similar sentiments and also confirmed their commitment to the Volunteer Charter and the need for volunteers to be actively engaged in discussion about all decisions that affect their future. VFBV President Gary Lyttle and VFBV CEO Andrew Ford also addressed the gathering. Gary Lyttle presented the new VFBV logo, a symbol depicting a modern, vibrant and professional body representing all CFA volunteers.

FINAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS OF VRFBA & VUFBA

At the final Annual General Meetings of the VRFBA 14th August 2008 and the VUFBA 14th September 2008, each Association approved:

- in principle, a draft Deed of Agreement between VFBV and the CFA for the support and implementation of the Volunteer Charter;
- to enter into a Deed of Agreement with Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria on 4th October 2008 or any other such date as determined;
- revised Association Rules subject to final approval by Consumer Affairs Victoria;
- the proposed unified VFBV Constitution (subject to final approval by Consumer Affairs Victoria);
- the transfer of Association funds to VFBV on or after the 4th October 2008 subject to the Deed of Agreement being signed by all parties.

Each Association approved the winding up of the effective operations of their Association and the transfer of Association assets to Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria on or after 4th October 2008.

ASSOCIATIONS' PRESIDENTS & VICE PRESIDENTS

At the VRFBA Annual General Meeting held 14th August, President Peter Downes (Mandurang), Senior Vice President Bruce Vine (Tawonga) and Junior Vice President Ian Walter (Dooen) were re-elected for a second term for the year 2008/2009.

In September at the VUFBA Annual General Meeting, Peter White (Casterton) was elected as President for the next twelve months with Bill Maltby (Castlemaine) elected as Vice President.

The above newly elected Association Presidents will become the Vice President Rural and Vice President Urban respectively, of the new VFBV State Council for 2008/2009.

RETIREMENTS & APPOINTMENTS

New appointments to the VRFBA State Council are Gerry Neyenhuis (Region 7) and Robert Auchterlonie (Region 9). They replace Kelvin Round and Brian Barwick respectively.

The VUFBA Annual General Meeting was the first meeting for new delegate Lieutenant Graham Cocks, who replaces retired VUFBA member for Region 24, Ex Foreman Jeff McEachern. Jeff's service and contribution on the VUFBA Governing Body for the past 28 years was acknowledged at the meeting.

VALE BARRIE SANDERS

It is with regret, that VFBV President and the Board advise of the sudden passing of State Councillor (Region 23) and long serving President of Regional Council No 23, Ex Lieutenant Barrie Sanders on 12th October 2008.

CFA BOARD VACANCIES

The terms of office of David Gibbs and Peter Marke, who represent Rural and Urban volunteers respectively on the CFA Board, expire in April 2009.

Both members are eligible for re-appointment. VFBV must submit a panel of four names (representing Rural Brigades) and a panel of four names (representing Urban Brigades) to the Minister for selection of the successful applicants. All volunteers are eligible to apply and information has been forwarded separately to brigades. Applications must be lodged with VFBV by 12th November 2008.

A Board Member role statement including the key selection criteria is available from VFBV or from the VFBV website www.vfbv.com.au.

VFBV BOARD VACANCIES

Two vacancies arose on the VFBV Board as a consequence of the three year term of office of Tom Brodie and Hans van Hamond expiring. Both Tom and Hans indicated they would seek re-appointment. At the September Board meeting, it was advised that both been re-appointed by their respective Associations.

Two additional VFBV Board vacancies now arise as a result of VFBV being established as the single representative body for all CFA volunteers. In accordance with VFBV's new Constitution, the Board will move from 8 to 10 representatives, and one additional member to represent rural Brigades and one member to represent urban Brigades are now required. The terms of appointment will be for three years and applications are invited from interested rural and urban volunteers to be considered for these two vacancies.

Information has been forwarded separately to all brigades. A Board Member role statement including the key selection criteria is available from VFBV or from the VFBV website www.vfbv.com.au.

ANNUAL REPORTS

The 2008 VFBV Annual Report has been forwarded to all Regional Councils, and the VRFBA and the VUFBA Annual Reports have been forwarded to their respective Brigades, including the audited financial statements of the Associations for the year 2007/08.

CFA SERVICE AWARDS

Roll out of the new CFA Service Awards is expected to commence as of early December 2008. Final design decisions have been agreed, tender arrangements are close to being finalised as this newsletter goes to print and manufacture of the service awards should commence during October 2008.

CFA have advised VFBV that members with service anniversary dates falling after 13th October 2008 will be eligible to receive the new award. Further information will be posted to the VFBV website as soon as it is available.

VFBV VOLUNTEER PROMOTIONAL BROCHURE

VFBV wants to build greater awareness, respect and support for the work done by CFA volunteers and the vital contribution CFA volunteers make to Victorian communities. As a part of this campaign VFBV has developed a brochure describing what CFA volunteers do and reinforcing the importance of engaging volunteers in decision making on matters that affect them. Our intent is to issue the brochure far and wide to anybody who has an interest in CFA or has potential to contribute to decision making on matters that affect CFA and CFA volunteers.

Copies of the brochure will be issued by VFBV to members of Parliament, State and Local Government, media etc. Brochures have been provided to each Brigade and additional copies are available upon request for local distribution. Any brigade wanting additional copies of the brochure should contact Andrea Baker at the VFBV office by phoning 03 9886 1141 or email vfbv@vfbv.com.au.

Items Raised by Associations with the CFA include:

- appropriate sunglasses being worn during the Discipline Contest at State Championships;
- the lack of instructors in Regions 12 and 22;
- the lack of qualified Low Structure and BA Trainers Region 12;
- suitability of Nomex cargo style trousers for use as Wildfire turnout gear;
- CFA's policy regarding heavy equipment hire in relation to hayshed fires where large bales are involved;
- removal of items and damage to ex CFA vehicles available to volunteers under the Volunteer First Choice program;
- welcome packs issued to new CFA members;
- including the Victorian Coat of Arms on the new Service Awards;
- power companies ensuring appropriate signage on houses with solar power;
- provision of cotton T shirts for wearing under structural PPC;
- upgrading the Memorial Wall at Fiskville prior to the 2009 Memorial Service;
- Production of a brochure showing all CFA's current vehicle fleet;
- Cost of volunteers travelling to training and meetings;
- Fitting of 64mm outlets to DSE tankers.

CFA has Responded in Respect of the Following Matters:

- issues raised at the Open Forum regarding Training;
- Map Books;
- Class A Foam;
- Compensation/Liability Cover for Private Equipment;
- financial support to brigades attending Australasian Championships;
- Lack of Instructors;
- Training Database;
- the availability of the new Service Awards;
- Gas Attack Prop at SETG;
- attendance at false alarms and CFA's policy;
- EAS Pager Tones;
- access to EAS Paging System and procedures to utilise Brigades OnLine facility to forward admin messages;

- following the Integrated Brigades meeting: the view to support a Captain as the Senior Volunteer Officer, and a Working Party to be formed to develop the criteria for the position of Captain;
- letter to the Good Friday Appeal in regard to collecting on Good Friday at uncontrolled intersections.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO CFA REGULATIONS

The main changes to the regulations are designed to reflect the current circumstances where brigades and groups are required to submit their financial statements for each financial year to CFA before the 1st August in each year or any other date prior to that determined by CFA.

This was instituted to comply with the Auditor General's requirements that the assets of brigades etc be reflected in the annual accounts of CFA. Previously brigades and groups could have their books close on 30th March or 30th June and did not have to submit them to CFA.

The only other change of any import is the removal of the need for brigades and groups to have their accounts audited annually. All other changes are largely cosmetic.

2008 AUXILIARY CONFERENCE

A successful Auxiliary Conference was held at Dromana Fire Station 16th August, attended by 105 members representing 16 Auxiliaries. VFBV congratulates the Dromana Brigade, and neighbouring Brigades who assisted with catering, for conducting and facilitating the Conference.

Speakers included DCO Warrington, Dr Beth Wilson State Health Services Commissioner; presentations by Dean Anderson 'Generation Y', Teenage Road Accident Group, Bendigo Community Bank, Jo Richards on the Catering Review Project; and an update on the Auxiliary Working Party by the Working Party Chairman, Hans van Hamond.

Minutes of the Conference are to be forwarded to the attending Auxiliaries and will be available on the VFBV website once finalised - www.vfbv.com.au.

VFBV MEETING DATES 2008/09

VFBV have agreed to the following meeting dates and Regional Councils are encouraged to schedule their meetings to accord with these Meetings:

<i>VFBV State Council</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>6th Dec 2008</i>
<i>Open Forum</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>28th March 2009</i>
<i>VFBV State Council</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>29th March 2009</i>
<i>VFBV State Council</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>20th June 2009</i>
<i>VFBV State Council</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>12th Sept 2009</i>
<i>VFBV State Council</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>5th Dec 2009</i>

VFBV / CFA DROUGHT RELIEF FUND

Following an approach to brigades around the State the VFBV/CFA Drought Relief Fund has collected over \$10,000 to date but more is needed.

Discussions were held with the General Managers of South West, Midlands-Wimmera and North West Areas and the Committee agreed the greatest need appeared to be in the Midlands-Wimmera Area. Projects were already running in North West area and rain in the South West had eased the situation there.

Angela Munn, a BASO based in Horsham, was approached and she was invited to put a proposal to the Committee for consideration.

After discussions locally the proposal was that 500 essentials packs be produced and delivered to volunteer families in areas seriously affected by drought in Region 17. The committee agreed to the proposal and allocated \$9,000 to the project. CFA contributed a further \$500 to provide the bags to put the goods in. All goods were sourced in Horsham and Angela was able to obtain goods to the value of \$14,000. Goods in each pack included toilet tissue, facial tissue, soap, shampoo, conditioner and bandaids.

A member of the committee in Ian Walter distributed a lot of the packs to brigades and was able to see first hand the appreciation expressed by recipients. Angela has indicated there is a continuing need for similar projects in other parts of Region 17 and our advice is there are many areas in the North West in similar circumstances.

The fund is limited in where it can go from here without a healthy injection of funds from brigades who are in a position to help. Any brigades who are in a position to help and would like further information are invited to contact Bob MacDonald on 0418322 680.

Members of the current Committee are Peter Downes, Jeff McEachern and Ian Walter. They would also be happy to assist brigades with information.

YOUTH FORUM GREAT SUCCESS

Over 100 people participated in the Youth Forum held at Fiskville on the 9th and 10th August and they were made up of young CFA members aged 18 to 24 years, volunteer association representatives and CFA staff. The Youth Forum was part of the process of developing a youth strategy for CFA and was jointly fostered by CFA and VFBV.

In opening the forum CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy committed the CFA Board to seriously consider the recommendations that came out of the gathering and to bring a number to fruition if possible.

Much of the forum was spent in small groups considering such questions as what is good about CFA from a youth perspective, and what is not so good. Each group was made up of young people, volunteer association representatives and CFA staff. After each session the young groups would report back on their findings to the whole group. The final session required each group to put forward their recommendations on projects which they believed would make CFA a more youth focussed organisation into the future.

A large range of projects were suggested, all of which had merit, and it is likely that a number will be implemented in the short term with others to follow as funding is available. The success of the forum can be measured in that all the young people present indicated their willingness to be members of working groups to bring the recommendations into being for the benefit of other young people in CFA today and tomorrow.

The Youth Strategy Working Group, which is primarily made up of CFA staff and volunteer representatives, will

be looking at the outcomes of the Youth Forum and establishing the best way forward. The Youth Forum was certainly an important plank in CFA and VFBV connecting with its young members.

STATE URBAN CHAMPIONSHIP ITEMS:

CFA Public Affairs department have developed a CD video of the Urban State Championship Discipline Contest and is available on request from Public Affairs at CFA and on the VFBV website at www.vfbv.com.au.

The VUFBA has approved the following:

- combined Drouin/Bunyip senior and junior teams for the 2008/09 competition season;
- Kyneton (C Section) and Melton (A Section) entering two teams at the 2009 Senior State Championships – both B Teams to compete in C Section subject to the usual conditions.

State Urban Championships 2010 – 2012

Following inspection visits to venues applying to host State Championships for the years 2010 to 2012, the following venues were approved at the VUFBA AGM for the State Junior Championships:

2010	-	<i>Echuca</i>
2011	-	<i>Tatura</i>
2012	-	<i>Horsham</i>

Also approved at the VUFBA AGM is the 2012 Senior Championship, which is to be conducted at Mooroopna.

Following investigation of the venues for the Senior State Championships for the years 2010 and 2011, the 2010 is now approved to be conducted at Mildura. Investigations of the venue for the 2011 Senior Championship continue, and will be announced once approved.

New Urban Competition Rules Book

The Urban Competition Conditions and Rules book has been re-printed, and includes all rule changes since the previous copy printed in 2004. Copies of the new Rule book have been forwarded to all Urban competing brigades.

STATE RURAL CHAMPIONSHIP ITEMS:

Judges School 11th October

A most successful judges' school was held at Fiskville on Saturday 11th October with over 50 judges and officials from around the state attending.

As well as going through the rules governing each of the six events held at State Championships attendees had the opportunity to participate in a workshop looking at the future of Championships and what they might be called now that they are run by VFBV

Changes to Equipment & Rules

The replica trailer stands have had some minor modifications with a suction hose canister being fitted under the deck in a central position and a second hose bin being fitted on the opposite side of the trailer to that which exists.

Teams are reminded the updated rules will be available on the VFBV website by 1st December this year.