



# Newsletter

## October

### 2011

**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Andrew Ford** 0407 681 416

**Executive Officer:**  
**Adam Barnett**  
0403 711 911  
E-mail: [a.barnett@vfbv.com.au](mailto:a.barnett@vfbv.com.au)

**Executive Officer:**  
**Allan Monti**  
0407 334 685  
E-mail: [a.monti@vfbv.com.au](mailto:a.monti@vfbv.com.au)

**Postal address:**  
P O Box 453  
Mt Waverley Vic 3149

9/24 Lakeside Drive, Burwood East  
Tel: 03 9886 1141  
Fax: 03 9886 1618  
E-mail: [vfbv@vfbv.com.au](mailto:vfbv@vfbv.com.au)  
Web: [www.vfbv.com.au](http://www.vfbv.com.au)

To receive this Newsletter via  
email, subscribe via our website

## READ THE GREEN PAPER NOW

By Andrew Ford, VFBV Chief Executive Officer

The State Government has released a Green Paper to prompt public discussion of major reforms to emergency management, and VFBV is moving to provide easy access for CFA volunteers to get involved. The Green Paper will lead to a White Paper containing the Government's preferred options.

Along with the Royal Commission, Jones Inquiry and Flood Review, it will shape Victoria's emergency services for generations to come.

VFBV is determined to place volunteers' input at the forefront of the Government's considerations. I encourage all volunteers to see the Green Paper at [www.vfbv.com.au](http://www.vfbv.com.au) and complete the 12 questions in our questionnaire to add your input to VFBV's submission.

On a pleasing note the Green Paper reaffirms the Government's commitment to volunteers, stating that "*Government seeks to enhance the volunteer experience and volunteers' capacity to contribute to community safety. Whatever changes may be implemented volunteers will remain a critical part of Victoria's emergency management arrangements.*"

This, coupled with the changes to the CFA Act, positions volunteers well to work with Government on the reforms, but we must act now and your input is essential. VFBV is working with CFA and will give volunteers every opportunity to have their say. We will be at the workshops, District Councils will have discussions locally, volunteers can talk to the VFBV office and we'll use the feedback to build the VFBV submission and provide volunteer input to CFA's submission. Time is limited, submissions close on 14 November 2011.

The value of volunteer knowledge and experience has already been demonstrated with the Jones Inquiry. VFBV took an active role and with the final report now with the Minister, we are ready to work with Government on planning and implementing the results of its findings.

By responding to the Green Paper with the same dedication, we can have a similar influence on the far wider stage of the entire emergency services, to the benefit of volunteering and the communities we serve.

### STALWART RETIRES AFTER 31 YEARS



President Hans van Hamond AFSM is pictured (right) presenting Mick Taylor AFSM with a VFBV plaque, in honour of his 31 years of service to the Association, 23 years on State Council and nine years on the VFBV Board.

## VFBV BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Three members have been re-appointed to the VFBV Board as from 1 October 2011 for a term of 2 years: Tom Brodie AFSM, Gary Lyttle AFSM and Hans van Hamond AFSM.

The new addition to the VFBV Board is Dave Ackland, also appointed from 1 October for a term of 2 years. Dave is well known to VFBV as a former District 12 State Councillor for 7 years.

At the AGM and September VFBV Board meeting, the significant contribution of retiring Board Member Mick Taylor AFSM was acknowledged. Mick was presented with a VFBV plaque in recognition of his 31 years' service to CFA volunteers through VFBV – 9 years as a VFBV Board member and 23 years on State Council.

## AGM & STATE COUNCIL 17 & 18 SEPTEMBER

The VFBV Annual General Meeting was attended by over 90 people, including VFBV and CFA Board members, State Councillors, Life Members, guests and members of various Brigades, Groups and Districts. The AGM opening address by Chief Officer Euan Ferguson AFSM was appreciated by all in attendance, as was the opening address of the State Council meeting by the Government's VBRC Implementation Monitor, Neil Comrie AO APM.

## ELECTIONS

State Council re-elected Bruce Vine as Vice President Rural and Bill Maltby as Vice President Urban for the year 2011/2012.

Elected at the AGM for the year 2011/2012 were: Hans van Hamond AFSM re-elected President; Bruce Vine re-elected Vice President; and VFBV Board Member Frank Zeigler elected Treasurer.

## NEW STATE COUNCILLOR

State Council welcomed Maurice Dumesny as a new delegate for District 17. Maurice replaces Ian Walter AFSM who retired as a District 17 delegate. At the State Council meeting, President Hans van Hamond acknowledged Ian Walter's service and contribution as a State Councillor for the past 8 years, presenting him with a Certificate of Appreciation

## LIFE MEMBERSHIP

VFBV's newest Life Member is Bruce Vine, awarded this honour at the September State Council meeting.

## NOMINATIONS FOR AFSMs

CFA is seeking nominations of potential recipients of the Australian Fire Services Medal (AFSM).

Applications close on 30 November 2011 for awards to be presented on the Queen's Birthday in 2012. Guidelines, nomination forms and other details are available from the VFBV office, call (03) 9886 1141 or email [j.laing@vfbv.com.au](mailto:j.laing@vfbv.com.au)

## CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Amendments to the VFBV Constitution, as advised in VFBV's letter to all Brigades dated 15 August 2011, were approved at the AGM.

These changes clarify that the President and Vice President are elected from members of the VFBV Board, clarify terms of office of Vice President Rural and Urban, amend terms of office of State Council Executive Committee members to one year and change the term 'Region Councils' to District Councils.

## VFBV MEETING DATES 2012

VFBV has set the following meeting dates for 2012 and District Councils are encouraged to schedule their meetings to align with these dates:

State Council	Sunday	4 December 2011
VFBV Board	Friday	17 February 2012
VFBV Board	Friday	23 March 2012
State Council	Sunday	22 April 2012
VFBV Board	Friday	27 April 2012
VFBV Board	Friday	25 May 2012
State Council	Sunday	24 June 2012
VFBV Board	Friday	29 June 2012
VFBV Board	Friday	27 July 2012
VFBV Board	Friday	31 August 2012
AGM & Open Forum	Saturday	15 September 2012
State Council	Sunday	16 September 2012
VFBV Board	Friday	28 September 2012
VFBV Board	Friday	26 October 2012
VFBV Board	Friday	23 November 2012
State Council	Sunday	2 December 2012
VFBV Board	Friday	14 December 2012

## ITEMS TO BE RAISED WITH THE CFA INCLUDE:

Issues raised at State Council for referral to the CFA or Joint CFA/VFBV Committees, include:

- safety concerns the Cardinia Group believes exist with their newly commissioned Nissan Patrol Ultra Light Tanker;
- the poor performance of new Tait radios, their installation and ongoing issues;
- a number of OH&S concerns eg. sun protectors; filling storage tanks during incidents; inappropriate seat belt configuration; night workplace safety; wet weather PPC; protective masks; additional PPC for Operational Firefighters; toilets.
- the number of call-outs to burn-offs that had not been registered on the 1800 number;
- CFA's policy for Level 1 maintenance for Brigade Owned Vehicles;
- roles of Crew Leader and Incident Controller;
- the design of PPE trousers and the distribution of PPE coat and trousers;
- delays in VicRoads response to emergency incidents where traffic control is required;
- difficulty in obtaining timely and accurate advice of road closures;
- removal of backup generators from vital infrastructure such as Telstra exchanges.

## **JONES POINTS TO A MORE EFFECTIVE CFA**

The Jones Inquiry's report points to the need for a step change in the leadership approach and culture of CFA, much greater transparency in decision making and consultation with volunteers – key ingredients for a more effective volunteer-based fire and emergency service.

The next step needed is a clear implementation plan for the required improvements, and VFBV wants to be involved in the development and monitoring of its progress. The independent inquiry's findings validate the major concerns that volunteers have raised repeatedly over recent years.

The report calls for more easily accessible training for CFA volunteers, proper transparency in CFA's decision making, genuine consultation and full utilisation of qualified, experienced volunteers, from the front line to instructors and specialist roles and the top level incident management roles. It also calls for recognition of the training and experience of volunteers when they apply for employment as full time firefighters or staff with CFA, and for the removal of barriers to administrative support to volunteer brigades.

The Jones Inquiry's findings are now with the State Government for its consideration. They offer a major step forward to a more effective, volunteer-based fire and emergency service.

## **FIRE SERVICES PROPERTY LEVY**

VFBV's response to the Victorian Government's Fire Services Property Levy Options Paper calls for an equitable levy that provides sufficient funding for modern emergency services, with the stability required to allow the agencies to plan ahead.

Consultation has now closed and the State Government plans to introduce legislation early next year then implement the new levy from 1 July 2013.

VFBV's submission calls for a levy that is;

- Fair to all concerned
- Designed not to erode volunteer numbers or contribution
- Entirely dedicated to funding fire services
- Stable and sufficient to fund modern emergency services
- Designed to encourage risk reduction by property owners
- An efficient method of collection

VFBV's submission calls for a small fee to be added to motor vehicle registration to cover the cost of road accidents, and advocates for a concession to be given to active emergency services volunteers.

## **AED POLICY APPROVED**

The Chief Officer has approved the new Automated External Defibrillators (AED) Policy, after close

consultation with VFBV. Brigades may now acquire at their own expense or via donation a CFA approved AED through their District.

The purchase must be approved by your Operations Manager - by centrally managing the purchase CFA has secured a significant discount and units come with a carry case and a training DVD. The approved model is the Laerdal HeartStart FRx (Phillips).

The new policy is a significant step forward, and provides a simple process to acquire and manage the units. Many brigades have been eagerly awaiting the new policy, and will be pleased they can now buy one of these life saving devices. The new Policy and Procedures are available via the VFBV website.

## **DISPATCH PROJECT GETS GREEN LIGHT**

The Government has given the much anticipated Regional Radio Dispatch Project the go ahead.

Members will be aware that for more than 800 brigades, computerised dispatch is only a concept, with Groups and Brigades still reliant on Group and Brigade Base Operators providing vital voice communications.

The project will take us to a digital network complementary to the Tait radios being rolled out. New features available will include Status buttons, AVL and enhanced clarity and signal strength, and reduction or elimination of radio blackspots.

## **LISTENING SET/SCANNER WORKING PARTY**

The Regional Radio Dispatch Project rollout gives CFA the significant challenge of addressing the obsolescence of thousands of analogue scanners and listening sets used by brigades and volunteers.

CFA has asked VFBV to form a working party to identify options and opportunities to meet the needs of CFA, volunteers and members of the community that rely on scanners and listening sets.

VFBV's survey of brigades showed listening sets and scanners are in wide use by brigades, volunteers and rural communities. CFA and VFBV will work to validate the operational, social and community needs for the development of a replacement scheme.

## **RADIO BLACKSPOT NEWS**

The Joint Communications meeting with CFA has produced good news - approval for up to 14 new or upgraded sites in 2011/12 to reduce or eliminate radio blackspots.

CFA advises that 52 sites have been identified and are part of forward planning and cost allocations over the coming 3 years. As part of the strategy CFA will build 4 to 6 new Mobile Repeater Trailers - digital ready to assist in locations where a permanent solution is difficult to achieve.

## **GOLD STAR & BRIGADE LIFE MEMBER JEWEL**

VFBV has approved a re-design of the VFBV Gold Star and Brigade Life Member Jewel to enable these awards to conform with national specifications. With a shortened ribbon, the new 'court mounted' style ensures CFA and VFBV awards are the same length when worn in the correct position above the pocket.

The new style awards came into effect on 1 September - photos can be viewed on the website.

At a cost of \$20 each, plus postage, members who have the former style Gold Star or Brigade Life Member Jewel, can have it re-mounted by contacting or sending their award via registered mail to:

*David Presgrave LTCOL (Ret)  
Vic Medals & More  
15 Stirling Crescent, Glen Waverley 3150  
Tel 9590 0052; Email: vmedals@bigpond.net.au*

Awards should be mailed with appropriate directions and a return address and phone number. Medals will be returned by registered post with invoice for \$20 each (includes GST) plus postage.

For members who have the Gold Star, Brigade Life Member Jewel and CFA Service Award, also available from David at Vic Medals & More is a triple mounted style at a cost of \$60 (\$20 per medal).

## **DO YOU NEED A PAGER?**

All operational members should have access to an alert pager, in line with the State Government's response to the Royal Commission recommendations.



The Government has provided CFA with an additional 4000 pagers of which over 2500 still sit in stores awaiting requests from brigades. If you do not have a pager and need one to perform your community service work, ask your BMT to apply.

Applications are coordinated through District Operations Managers.

## **VOLUNTEER ID PROJECT AT PILOT STAGE**

One of the recommendations from the Bushfires Royal Commission was a widespread volunteer identification system to assist in validation and identity recognition plus the important ability of members to pass quickly through road closures and traffic management points at large incidents.

This project is well advanced with a trial underway to test a system designed to make it easy for volunteers to request and receive proper identification, including traffic management point windscreen stickers and personalised identity cards.

The project is on track to deliver this initiative to all members this year.

## **NEW WELFARE SERVICES AWARENESS PACKAGE**

Keep an eye out for a new interactive package able to be delivered to brigades. It assists in understanding the body's physiological responses that contribute to a person's emotional and psychological reaction to stress and trauma.

This is an excellent program, one of which CFA can be proud, and we congratulate the Headquarters Welfare Services staff members who developed it. To book a session for your Brigade, contact your Region Human Resources Manager or ask your Catchment Officer.

## **URBAN CHAMPIONSHIP ITEMS**

A circular was mailed to all Urban competing Brigades on 30 September. Items included:

- Invitation for one team/brigade to compete at the Tasmanian Championship 5 & 6 November 2011;
- Guidelines for Brigades once accommodation at State Championships is confirmed;
- Supplier contact details for:
  - the 2 approved Safety Helmets,
  - a new manufacturer of competition hydrants,
  - Duraline hose for Junior wet events.

A reminder that State Urban Championship entry forms have been forwarded; they are also available from the website. Closing date is 1 November 2011.

## **RURAL CHAMPIONSHIP ITEMS**

- The 2012 State Rural Championship will be at Colac, on 31 March & 1 April. Entry forms will be mailed later this year and are on the website.
- In lieu of a Judges School, VFBV will develop a video and information pack for distribution to districts and competing brigades.
- Rules 7.2 Eligibility, 2.16 Uniform/Dress and Junior Events 2 and 3 have been amended. These changes have been updated and highlighted in the Rule book on the website.