

Newsletter

Combined Newsletter of:

SEPTEMBER 2006



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VFBV

Executive Officer Peter Davis – 0407 334 685

Executive Officer Bob MacDonald

– 0418 322 680

ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

The negotiations for the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement for the career firefighters continue to drag on. Recently the CFA Board and the Government agreed to pay the wage rise to the career firefighters. VFBV has always indicated that our campaign to ensure a fair go for the volunteers, was not aimed at interfering in the wages or conditions of the career firefighters and that we supported their wage claims. Despite months of negotiating we are advised that there have been virtually no concessions by the UFU on the clauses disadvantaging volunteers. This is indeed disappointing in our service where volunteers and career firefighters work side by side on the fireground and at integrated brigades. VFBV will continue its campaign to inform the general public and the Government of the unfairness of parts of the EBA on CFA's 58,000 volunteers.

VFBV BOARD VACANCIES

Two vacancies arose on the VFBV Board as a consequence of the three year term of office of Gary Lyttle and Mick Taylor expiring. Both Gary and Mick indicated they would seek re-appointment.

At the September Board meeting, it was advised that Gary Lyttle and Mick Taylor have both been re-appointed by their respective Association.

DRAFT AGRICULTURAL FIRE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

As mentioned in previous newsletters, CFA is currently developing fire management guidelines for landowners and managers.

A draft document, titled 'On the Land', is currently available for public consultation until 4 December 2006.

This draft document provides:

- Guidelines to provide a framework for considering fire management on private land;

- An overview of fire behaviour and fire management;
- General fire management advice for those in the cropping, plantation timber and grazing industries and people on smaller rural lifestyle properties;
- Reference to more detailed fire management information, where it is available.

It is intended that different parts of this document will be useful to different end users. For example, the overview of fire behaviour may be useful to those that are new to fire management issues, but the references to more detailed information may be useful to both new and experienced rural land owners and managers.

Copies of 'On the Land' have recently been distributed to all brigade captains to encourage consideration of this draft document. CFA is seeking comment from individuals, groups and organisations.

More information on this project, electronic copies of this draft document and submission form are available from website www.cfa.vic.gov.au/business/farms/agriculture.htm Copies of these documents are also available from Jill Allen on (03) 92628403, j.allen@cfa.vic.gov.au

For more information on this project please contact Linda Brownstein, CFA Program Manager, on 0400 616 152, l.brownstein@cfa.vic.gov.au

Eureka Group invites members of Auxiliaries to the Third **AUXILIARY STATE CONFERENCE**

Saturday 14th October 2006
at Wendouree Fire Station, Learmonth Road, Wendouree
10.00am start with a light lunch for \$6
There will be guest speakers

The aim of the conference is to have an informative and social day with an opportunity to meet other auxiliary members from across the State and exchange ideas of mutual interest. It is hoped that this conference will become an Annual event in the Auxiliary diary

Two members per Brigade
Barbeque tea for those staying overnight (small cost)
Please organise own accommodation

Contact: Shirley Jones (Wendouree) A/H 5338 7805
Rachael Jones (Wendouree) 5338 2575

OFFER TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER APPLICANT

The Board of VFBV has offered the position to one of the applicants for the position, and at the time of going to print, was awaiting a response.

The appointment of a CEO has been raised with the Board at a number of regional meetings and the Board has progressed this matter to the point it is hopeful having a person take up the appointment early in 2007.

VFBV STRUCTURE OPTIONS

Following meetings between the VFBV Board and Senior representatives of both VUFBA and VRFBA, the Consultant John Wooles together with the Chairman and the two joint Executive Officers, have developed a number of options of possible structures for VFBV.

The options will now be referred to the two Associations for their consideration.

VOLUNTEER TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

VFBV has raised with the CFA, inconsistencies across the State for reimbursing volunteers for any travel required to attend CFA meetings etc. The CFA has requested further details and VFBV is currently providing examples of the inconsistent practices between Regions.



VUFBA

Secretary Peter Davis – 0407 334 685

The Association's Annual Report which includes the audited statement of receipts and payments and balance sheets for the Association and the Welfare Fund for the year 2005/2006 has been distributed to all urban brigades.

ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

At the Association's Annual General Meeting held Sunday 10th September 2006, Ex Captain Rob Waterson (Cohuna) and Captain Peter White (Casterton) were elected President and Vice President respectively, for the year 2006/2007.

Outgoing President Hans van Hamond was thanked for his considerable contribution and leadership of the Association over the past two years in his role as President.

NEW APPOINTMENT

The Association's Annual General Meeting was the first meeting for new delegate Ex Captain Fred Grove (Lara) who replaces Captain Bob Smith (Ocean Grove) as one of Region 7's two delegates on the Association's Executive Committee. The meeting noted and has forwarded on its thanks to Bob for his contribution over his five years of service to the Association.

RE-APPOINTMENT TO VFBV BOARD

Brigades were advised of an impending vacancy on the Board of VFBV due to Mick Taylor's term expiring in September 2006. The only application received was from Mick Taylor, and the Association at its Annual General Meeting, resolved to re-appoint Mick for a term of three years.

MEDIUM TYPE 3 PUMPER

The Association has recommended to the CFA that a single stage ladder be fitted to the Medium Type 3 Pumpers as part of standard stowage.

FIRS

At its meeting in September, the Association received a presentation from Chris Cowley on the operation of the Fire and Incident Reporting System (FIRS). Chris is prepared to visit any Regional Council wishing to receive such a presentation.

STRUCTURAL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AT TRAINING GROUNDS

Some time ago, the Association raised with the CFA the need for sets of structural protective clothing to be available at all training grounds for those volunteers who had not been issued with structural PPC. Region 13 brigades had also been active in advocating this requirement.

At its meeting in September, the Association supported the position adopted by CFA which would provide a consistent approach across the State, would provide for appropriate stocks of structural jackets to be held at training grounds and would ensure that appropriate PPC was worn for the task being undertaken.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

The Association received an update on the impact on CFA of the Government's Working With Children Check legislation. To comply with the legislation, brigades with Junior Members must have at least 2 members nominated as Junior Leaders. These Junior Leaders must have a Working With Children Check (WWCC) and be issued with a WWCC Card.

CFA is holding briefing sessions for all Junior Leaders at various locations. Information kits are being sent to all brigades within the next month. If brigades need additional information, they should contact Sherri McKerley 9262 8670.

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

- additional funding for modifications to Heavy Duty Mid-Mount pumper;
- provision of single stage ladders on Type 3 Pumpers as part of standard stowage;
- clarification of the criteria for the implementation and allocation of the new PPC;
- administrative messaging function of the new paging system;
- clarification of the auditing requirements of brigades;
- volunteers working in non ventilated stations being exposed to toxins from diesel exhausts;
- recruitment statistics of integrated brigades and fully volunteer brigades;
- amendments to the exemptions under the Working With Children Check;
- CFA's on-going alliance with the Bendigo Bank and the benefits to brigades;
- volunteers applying for positions with the CFA and a lack of any response to their application;
- issuing of and application for National Medals;
- provision of operational training and manuals upon delivery of new vehicles;

- maintenance of Fiskville's memorial wall and pond;
- meeting of the Child Protection Steering Committee;
- a light beam type finishing system as part of the upgrade of the Championship timing equipment.



VRFBA

Executive Officer Bob MacDonald
- 0418 322 680

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

- CFA utilising the one database;
- identification of Crew Leaders on the fireground;
- provision of single stage ladders on Type 3 Pumpers;
- criteria for the implementation and allocation of the new PPC;
- information contained in Brigades On Line;
- legal protection for CFA volunteers;
- FIRS information;
- brigade visits to kindergartens;
- discounted petrol for volunteers for inclusion in the Memberlink scheme;
- a standard size and format of notification for days of Total Fire Ban by all media;
- brigades recommending on whether or not to charge for false alarms;
- the appointment of a BASO to assist brigades in and round the Sunraysia district;
- removal of coats and provision of water during the State Championships Opening Ceremony in extreme weather conditions.

ASSOCIATION MEETING DATES 2007

The Association has agreed to the following meeting dates for 2007. Regional Councils are encouraged to schedule their meetings to accord with the Association's General Meetings.

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|--------------------------------|
| General Meeting | Sun | 3 rd December 2006 |
| Open Forum | Sat | 14 th April 2007 |
| General Meeting | Sun | 15 th April 2007 |
| General Meeting | Sun | 17 th June 2007 |
| Integrated Brigades | Sun | 1 st July 2007 |
| A.G.M. | Sun | 9 th September 2007 |
| General Meeting | Sun | 2 nd December 2007 |

CHAMPIONSHIP ITEMS:

NEW PUMPER AND LADDER EVENT

The Association has approved amendments to the Rules for the Pumper and Ladder event. The amended rules have been forwarded to all urban brigades. Alternative options were discussed for including the new event in the Championship program, and the Association resolved that one Section of the new event will be conducted each day immediately after the Ladder 8 or Ladder 5 events.

W.A. JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Western Australian Volunteer Association advises all Victorian brigades that the W.A. Junior Championships will be held in Bunbury as part of its 100 year celebrations on the 25th & 26th November 2006.

WATER FOR COMPETITIONS

Having regard to the situation with water resources throughout the State, the Association recommends that all competition associations and Brigades conducting competitions, use appropriate signage to ensure the public is aware of the use of re-cycled water etc., or look at conducting their competitions in other appropriate areas.

CFA/DSE CONFERENCE

President Bernie Pearson and Vice President Peter Downes are attending 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 includes:

- 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.

VACANCY ON VFBV BOARD

Gary Lyttle has been re-elected to the VFBV Board for a further three year term. Gary is currently Chairman of the Board of VFBV.

SAME LEADERS ELECTED

At the Annual Meeting of the Association held in August at Fiskville all the current office bearers were re-elected with Bernie Pearson (R14) continuing as President, Peter Downes (R2) as Senior Vice President and Bruce Vine (R24) as Junior Vice President.

Bob Horner (R13) continues as Treasurer with Bruce Conboy (R8), Ian Walter (R17) and Tom Brodie (R22) elected as the three additional members of the Executive.

Max Maher (R17) and David Gibbs (R8) as CFA Board members representing Rural brigades are also on the State Executive.

MEMBERSHIP INCREASE

The numbers of brigades and groups that affiliated with the Association in 2005/2006 was 45 more than the previous year which was a pleasing result.

In light of this strong increase, affiliation fees for this financial year have been maintained at the same level as the past three years of \$66 including GST.

WILDFIRE BRIGADES PROTECTIVE COATS

The Association for some time being pressuring CFA to pass on to wildfire brigades the structural coats that are to be replaced with the new personal protective ensembles.

It was our view that these coats could be identified in some way as not suitable any more for structural firefighting, but could be used by rural fire fighters when travelling on the back of tankers at night or at motor vehicle accidents in poor conditions.

CFA CEO Neil Bibby is more of the view that a properly designed coat for braving the elements should be sourced for rural fire fighters and has made a commitment to pursue this.

STATE COUNCIL MOTIONS

The State Council in August carried a significant number of resolutions for sending to CFA for their consideration.

Two of the issues that are concerning members is the availability of 19 and 25 mm hose and the jacking systems of tankers.

It was agreed to request CFA to supply 19mm and 25 mm lay flat hose for blacking out purposes throughout the State this year. We also requested the use of air bags be investigated as a safer means of jacking Tankers.

MAP BOOKS

State Councillors raised serious concerns over the accuracy of the current map books being produced and this matter is being addressed as a matter of urgency with CFA.

STATE COUNCIL MEETING MATTERS

A range of motions have been received from the Regions for discussion at the next State Council meeting and these include:

- Investigation of a suitable helmet light for night operations;
- Seeking exemptions in the Road Management Act 2004 regarding fire prevention and traffic management issues;
- Reduction in response time by electricity distribution companies;
- Clearance of vegetation under power lines;
- Provision of under tray lighting on tankers;
- Speedy repair and or replacement of fire damaged telephone cables;
- Strike team leaders courses include module presented by experienced strike team leader;
- Recommendation that no extended leave be permitted for operational staff during FDP in normal circumstances;
- Concern over release of private addresses of volunteers to UFU;
- Concern over inability to reactivate a siren following muting;
- Free admission for volunteers to National Parks in Victoria;
- Provision of recognised standard of notification of Total Fire Bans.

STATE COUNCILLORS APPOINTED TO REFERENCE GROUP

CFA has established a reference group to advise and support a Roadside and Rail Corridor Fire Management Program and has invited the Association to be represented. State Council has appointed Bruce Conboy to the reference group with Owen O'Keefe as our alternate representative.

FREE ACCESS TO PARKS FOR VOLUNTEERS

In the preceding list of issues raised at State Council there was an item on free admission to National Parks for volunteers.

Professor Lyndsay Neilson, Secretary, Department of Sustainability and Environment has advised he has requested his staff to consult with Parks Victoria to develop a proposal for consideration.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS

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 recognised 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.

Aide Memoire Updated

In 1994 the State Championships Committee developed an aide memoire to assist Host Committees of State Championships in their planning and preparation for the event. The aide memoire has recently been updated and will be available to future host committees.

Rules Book Reprint

The development of a new event and the changes to some parts of the existing rules book has necessitated the production of a new rules book for Championships. An updated version will be on the VRFBA website shortly whilst a booklet form will be available later in the year.

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.

Hose Rolling Bin

The Committee is currently modifying a hose rolling bin for the purposes of storing hoses rolled on the bight.