

Newsletter

Combined Newsletter of:

SEPTEMBER 2007



VFBV



VRFBA



VUFBA

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VFBV BOARD VACANCIES

Two vacancies arose on the VFBV Board as a consequence of the three year term of office of Peter Downes and Quentin Turner expiring. Both Peter and Quentin indicated they would seek re-appointment, however Peter was elected President of the VRFBA and as such is automatically a member of the Board.

The VUFBA has advised that Quentin Turner has been re-appointed whilst the VRFBA will conduct interviews to select its appointee shortly from its list of candidates.

VFBV & ASSOCIATION MEETING DATES 2007/08

VFBV and the Associations have agreed to the following meeting dates for 2007/08 and Regional Councils are encouraged to schedule their meetings to accord with the Joint Association Meetings:

Joint Associations Meeting	Sunday	25 th Nov 2007
Open Forum	Saturday	29 th March 2008
Joint Associations Meeting	Sunday	30 th March 2008
Joint Associations Meeting	Sunday	13 th June 2008

Meetings for the remainder of 2008 will be discussed later.

CFA ACT REVIEW

VFBV recently made a submission to Bruce Esplin Emergency Services Commissioner regarding possible changes to Emergency Services legislation and outlining VFBV's position on several matters. Our understanding is that changes likely to proceed satisfy the concerns raised in our submission and do not create an adverse impact for volunteers. Further advice will be issued once VFBV is formally advised of the outcome.

VFBV SUMMER CAMPAIGN REVIEW SUBMISSION TO CFA

In February 2007, VFBV formed a Working Party to provide a volunteer perspective of the key issues emerging from last summer's campaign fires. A report was finalised for issue to CFA and in August the Working Party briefed the Chief Officer on key issues of concern. The Working Party identified 26 issues requiring attention and suggested a number of priority issues to be given priority concern.

It is pleasing to note that the Chief Officer has already acted on some of the concerns raised by volunteers via a memo to all Operations Managers outlining some areas requiring attention before the forthcoming fire summer. Key issues already being followed up by Chief Officer include:

- Training, planning and role allocation to ensure effective involvement of volunteers in key incident management positions;
- Pre-planning and resource management to maintain volunteer involvement and achieve best workload/availability balance;
- Pre-summer training and exercising to suit optimal volunteer involvement;
- Managing workload on volunteers' use in Public Land firefighting.

VFBV will continue to work with the Chief Officer to progressively address other issues identified for improvement, as well as to ensure that many positive improvements already evident last summer are continued.

UNIFIED VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE BODY

The discussion paper outlining proposed changes to unite VFBV, VUFBA and VRFBA as a single unified body to represent all CFA volunteers, is currently being issued to all CFA Brigades, Groups and Association Regional Councils. The discussion paper is aimed to explain the changes, stimulate discussion and develop support for a future model. The discussion paper phase is a vital preliminary step before any final decision is made, with feedback to the discussion paper due by end December 2007, so that a final proposal can be developed for consideration at the April 2008 General Meetings of the VUFBA and VRFBA.

Brigades, Groups and Regional Councils are encouraged to consider the proposals outlined in the discussion paper and contribute actively to discussion by providing feedback directly to VFBV CEO or through discussion at Regional Council meetings.

REGIONAL VISITS

VFBV visits to Regional forums continued to be given high priority since our last Newsletter. VFBV Board members attended a number of Brigade dinners and CEO Andrew Ford has continued to meet with Regional Councils, with attendance at Regional Council meetings of Region 24 (urban), Region 16 (Joint), Region 11 (urban) and Region 5 (urban). VFBV Chairman Gary Lyttle, along with CEO and other VFBV Board members, also attended State Council meetings of both the Urban and Rural Associations.

The Regional visits are an important opportunity to hear first hand the issues of concern to volunteers locally and an opportunity to discuss the issues being addressed at VFBV State level. Strong face to face links with Regional Councils will continue to be given high priority by VFBV and the CEO will meet with Regional Councils in Region 13, Region 6 and Region 7 during the forthcoming months.

MEETING WITH MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

In July, VFBV and Association representatives met with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Mr Bob Cameron, and Mr Bruce Esplin, Emergency Services Commissioner.

The meeting provided an opportunity to represent volunteer views on several important issues, including:

- Volunteer concerns for the need for a Statewide incident command channel and the workload, safety and service efficiency impacts currently being experienced;
- Our desire to establish a volunteer welfare fund for all volunteers, expanding from the existing urban fire brigades welfare fund managed by the VUFBA .
- Frustration that EBA matters remain unresolved, and a reinforcement to the Minister regarding volunteer concerns about any impact a future EBA would have on CFA's ability to manage consultation and decision making on matters impacting on CFA volunteers;
- Concerns about the lack of progress in resolving discussions about a 40km speed limit at incidents;
- Issues raised in VFBV's submission to the ENRC Inquiry into Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires; and
- The importance of appropriate involvement of volunteers at Incident Management Team level and leadership roles generally.

MEETING WITH EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMISSIONER

VFBV and Association representatives met with Bruce Esplin, Emergency Services Commissioner, early in October to discuss progress with the CFA Act changes and also any changes to the Emergency Management Act that could impact on volunteers.

We have been advised that changes being proposed for the Emergency Management Act do not impact on volunteers.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss issues raised in the VFBV submission to the ENRC Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires in Victoria; VFBV Summer Campaign review findings; Volunteer Charter; progressing the establishment of a VFBV Welfare Fund for all CFA volunteers; and work underway within the OESC looking at Victoria's future Emergency Service Delivery Strategy.

VFBV representatives also raised concern about recent suggestions that the practice of replacing private water supplies used for firefighting last summer, may not be continued in the next fire season. From the discussion with OESC we are hopeful that this matter will be resolved quickly.

BRIGADE ABN'S

VFBV has supported the CFA's active encouragement of brigades to surrender their ABN's and to operate under the CFA ABN. This support has been on the basis of the final decision resting with the brigades.

At the VUFBA meeting in September, it was agreed to reiterate to the brigades that this was a decision for them to make.

At its June and August meetings, the CFA Board ratified their intention to have one ABN for the CFA and to seek the Association's views. There was no consultation with the Associations prior to these decisions being taken.

VFBV will be seeking a meeting with the CFA to further discuss this matter, however, at this stage, VFBV's position remains unchanged ie. the final decision rests with the brigades.

A letter has been forwarded to all CFA brigades outlining VFBV's position.

ISSUE OF STRUCTURAL TURNOUT COATS AND STRUCTURAL HELMETS

At the VUFBA meeting on 9th September, an item raised by Regional Council No 2 regarding the criteria in Region 2 for the issuing of structural turnout coats and helmets was discussed.

From the comments of Association Members, it was obvious that different criteria is being applied in different Regions for the issue of structural protective clothing/equipment. The meeting agreed to raise this inconsistent approach with the CFA and seek a uniform approach across the State.

BRIGADE SKILLS MAINTENANCE RECORDING PROCESS

The VUFBA has viewed a draft copy of the proposed process to record volunteers' Skills Maintenance details. The Association is to recommend to the CFA that a simplified format be developed and that consideration should also be given to developing a system which could also capture skills maintenance details from FIRS reports which would include actual hands on experience.

CHIEF OFFICER'S DISCUSSION PAPER ON BRIGADE AND MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS

At its meeting on 8th September 2007, the VUFBA gave some initial consideration to the Chief Officer's Discussion Paper on Brigade and Membership Classifications. The Association Members agreed on some preliminary positions on some of the aspects of the paper and will further consider the issues later in the year.

Brigades are encouraged to provide feedback to the Chief Officer as the results of the project will determine the future model and composition of our brigades.

VFBV understands that the Chief Officer has extended the closing date for receipt of feedback from brigades etc. to the 30th November 2007, however, feedback received after that date will still receive consideration.

BRIGADE PURCHASES OVER \$200

VFBV has been made aware of a trend in some Regions to insist on brigade purchases over \$200 being made through the Region. This is incorrect. Brigades can continue to purchase goods etc. independent of the Region and then claim the GST component back through the CFA if the brigade is operating under the CFA's ABN.

LAUNCH OF ON THE LAND BOOK

On Tuesday 2nd October, Emergency Services Commissioner Bruce Esplin launched the latest CFA publication "On the Land – Agricultural Fire Management Guidelines". The book has been developed by the CFA with the co-operation of volunteers, farmers, Victorian Farmers Federation, Department of Primary Industry, Department of Sustainability and Environment and the State Government.

The book provides practical advice for people living and working on farms, including small rural/urban interface properties. Copies of the book should be available from Regional Offices or the Community Safety Division at CFA Headquarters.

ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The VUFBA Annual Report which includes the audited statement of receipts and payments and balance sheets for the Association and the Welfare Fund for the year 2006/2007 has been distributed to all urban brigades.

In the case of the VRFBA, the Annual Report has been distributed to all brigades and groups in the Regions which have finalised their affiliation fee for 2007/08. The Association decided to maintain its affiliation fee at the same rate as the past four years.

ASSOCIATIONS' PRESIDENTS & VICE PRESIDENTS

In August the VRFBA State Council elected Peter Downes (Mandurang) as President for the next twelve months with Bruce Vine (Tawonga) as Senior Vice President and Ian Walter (Dooen) as Junior Vice President.

At the VUFBA Annual General Meeting held Sunday 9th September 2007, Lieutenant Rob Waterson (Cohuna) and Captain Peter White (Casterton) were re-elected for a second term as President and Vice President respectively, for the year 2007/2008.

RETIREMENTS & APPOINTMENTS

The VUFBA Annual General Meeting was the first meeting for new delegates Firefighter John Austin and Firefighter Ian Morrison, replacing Region 9 delegate Captain Bill Rodda and Region 6 delegate Firefighter Graeme Dare respectively. Bill and Graeme were both thanked for their contributions to the Association.

New appointments to the VRFBA State Council are Col Pomroy in Region 10 who replaces Maurie Killeen who did not seek re election, Ron Cole in Region 14 replacing the late Bernie Pearson and Keith Clough in Region 20 replacing the late Reg Harry.

Ian Nash from Region 16 is a new addition to the State Executive.

NEW VUFBA LIFE MEMBER

Regional Council No 17's nomination of Firefighter Shane O'Callaghan for Life Membership of the Association was approved at the Annual General Meeting. Shane will be presented with his Life Member Certificate at the State Championship at Swan Hill next year.

VRFBA Items Raised with the CFA or VFBV:

- Joint Meeting outcomes précis for circulation;
- Providing budget for the supply of group vehicles;
- Providing Maintenance and replacement costs for brigade and group owned vehicles;
- Drawing Vic Roads & MAV attention to the amount of windstorm timber on roadsides;
- Request to source cab chassis to carry nominal 1500 litre tank;
- Request to deal with St Arnaud Group 000 issue;
- Request to address maintenance, tyres and depreciation of brigade owned vehicles used 2006/07 fires;
- Request ESC to pursue higher level of emergency response by electrical supply companies;
- Request SES to accept assistance from volunteers in cutting up fallen timber;
- Response to VEAC report on Victorian Parks in north of the State;
- Request pressure filling of slip-ons through the draughting point;
- Request standards for light weight fridges for tanker cabs;
- Request automatic throttle pressure regulation on pumps;
- Review of suitability of personal hydration packs;
- Supply of PPC for new recruits with minimum skills;
- Action cross border meeting at Nhill.

VUFBA Items Raised with the CFA:

- Issues regarding funding for Satellite Stations;
- Suitability of the current Brigade Membership form;
- Response tables for rescue appliances;
- Suggested improvements to draft Brigade Skills Maintenance Recording document;
- PPC for new recruits once they have obtained Minimum Skills;
- Issues with the Recruit Graduation Parade;
- Follow up on alarms for brigade key cabinets;
- New Melton fire station;
- Repairs to turnout coats;
- EEO complaint response;

- Inability to obtain from VicFire information in regard to caller identification;
- Issuing of new uniforms in Region 12;
- Inconsistent application of the Uniform Policy across CFA Regions, and the issue of Coast Guard brigades being issued with CFA uniforms;
- Inconsistent issuing of structural turnout PPC across CFA Regions;
- Clarification of the policy of returning boots;
- Senior volunteers at Integrated brigades, be given the opportunity to sit on interview/selection panels for the appointment of career staff.

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

- Items to be funded under CSESP;
- Design of the new Light Pumper;
- Joint safety inspections prior to the commencement of State Championships;
- Purpose and function of SMS Gateway;
- EEO complaint;
- Dust proofing of BA Lockers;
- Radios and radio communications;
- Battery holder for 3.4 Hino Tanker;
- Lap type seat belts in roll over protection;
- Radio communications between agencies;
- Brigades be kept informed of the IFMP process via the IFMP Update, Brigades OnLine and articles in Brigade and The Fireman;
- Funding for Satellite Stations.

ISSUES RAISED AT OPEN FORUM

VFBV has received responses from the CFA in regard to three further issues raised at the Open Forum in April. Copies of the responses have been retained at VFBV and are available to brigades upon request. These responses will be reported on at the 2008 Open Forum and are in respect of:

- Brigade assignment areas being changed without Captain or BMT's knowledge;
- Review of the definition of dependent for CFA compensation purposes;
- Volunteer input into a proposed CFA webmail project;
- PPC for female members.

CHAMPIONSHIP ITEMS:

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

- to request the CFA provide equal trophies to the aggregate winners of A, B and C Sections at Senior State Championships;
- the Victoria Police competing in the Discipline Contest;
- Euroa and Maryvale brigades entering 2 teams for the 2008 Senior Championships;
- Rule 13 (f) Fastest Losing Teams, being amended to include the 5 and 3 fastest losing teams into the second round and final respectively, in the Hydrant Race, Ladder Race and Champion Four events;
- Guidelines for Trackmasters.

The **VRFBA** discussed the following at its Championship meeting in September:

- Congratulated Yarrambat on the production of a training video which will be circulated to all regions;
- Changes to the Priming & Pumping event deferred until 2009;

- In 2009 the Low Down Pump & Ladder event will feature threaded couplings and the competitor fitting own branch;
- All target lights will be fitted with red LEDs;
- All lights will remain illuminated for 5 to 10 seconds;
- The time clocks will be situated behind and above the start line;
- All targets will display the time they were struck after the start in the scorers caravan.

STATE URBAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2010 – 2012

Expressions of Interest have been forwarded to Urban brigades seeking applications to host a Junior or Senior VUFBA State Championship during the years 2010 to 2012.

NATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS CHAMPIONSHIP – LAKES ENTRANCE OCTOBER 20TH & 21ST

The National Firefighters Championship hosted by the CFA, is to take place over the weekend of October 20th and 21st. 28 teams from around Australia and new Zealand will compete in 10 events to decide the National Champion team. Victoria has 8 teams competing – Bairnsdale/Lakes Entrance, Dandenong, Echuca, Euroa, Melton, Ocean Grove, Sale and Swan Hill.

Five of the events involve the use of CFA Pumpers, while other events utilise hoses laid out or bowled out, on the competition track. A Ladder Race is also included. Social events include a Welcome Function on the Friday night, a Dinner on Saturday night and a Farewell Function after the completion of the events on Sunday.

On Friday 19th October, events will be demonstrated to the competitors and briefings will be conducted for officials and team captains.

Further details about the National Championship can be found at <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/nationals2007/index.htm>

BRASS TORCHES FOR SALE

The Geelong City Fire Brigade, as a fundraising exercise, are manufacturing brass torches. Any funds raised will contribute towards the change over of the Brigade's Rescue Support Vehicle.

Brass Torches For Sale

Authentic early 1900s replica

Geelong City Fire Brigade
READY AND WILLING

CFA

Bulk orders welcome
Refurbishing service available
Orders & Enquiries contact:
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