



December, 2017

MEDIA RELEASE

BRIGADES JOIN FORCES TO STOP LARGE GRASS FIRE

CFA strike teams from across the district have combined to stop a large grass fire at Mount Cottrell.

Volunteer and integrated brigades came together last Wednesday evening and were able to prevent the scrub and grass fire from causing any property damage.

A total of 36 appliances from Balliang, Bulla, Caroline Springs, Diggers Rest, Eynesbury, Hoppers Crossing, Lara, Little River, Melton, Mernda, Mount Cottrell, Parwan, Point Cook, Rockbank, Toolern Vale, Truganina, Werribee and Wyndham Vale brigades attended along with vehicles from MFB and aerial appliances.

Incident controller and Truganina Fire Brigade captain Colleen Goodfellow said it had been a good outcome in difficult conditions.

Crews were called at 5.30pm and had stopped the fire by 8.15pm. It burnt about 86 hectares.

“It was difficult with a wind change but we brought it under control without losing any farm sheds or structures,” Captain Goodfellow said.

There were two houses in the fire’s path at one stage but they were saved along with radio station 3AW signal towers.

“We had 10 appliances in the initial stage which was fantastic but when the wind changed we put in a request for 20 tankers,” Captain Goodfellow said.

“There was a huge volunteer turnout. At one point we had between 80 and 100 firefighters with a combination of career staff and volunteers.”

Mt Cottrell Group Officer and Werribee Fire Brigade Lieutenant Damien Milloy said it was a good result.

“From a group point of view, it’s always pleasing to see the response of fully volunteer brigades and integrated brigades working together,” Captain Milloy said.

“The professionalism shown was very pleasing to see,” he said.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria CEO Andrew Ford said the ability for CFA to mobilise huge numbers of highly trained and experienced volunteers to provide the surge capacity to deal with major incidents was well known and regarded as a vital element of Victoria’s emergency management capability.

“This incident is another demonstration of the importance of CFA being able to draw volunteer resources from far and wide, and a reason why the CFA volunteer based model as we know it is so important for Victoria,” Mr Ford said.

In 2015 689 volunteers from 109 brigades responded to a fire at Kyneton and 16 brigades and 1366 volunteers helped to extinguish a blaze at Lancefield.

“The response last week was another example of brigades having the capacity to service not only local demand but to join forces to help stop big fires from doing major damage,” Mr Ford said.

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