

FIRE SEASON ENDS

In a summer fire season dominated by grassfires and intermittent rainfall, the final fire restrictions in Victoria were lifted on 24 April, marking the end of Victoria's fire season.

The fire season was similar to last year's season not just in nature but by the numbers as well.

CFA responded to more than 12,800 incidents, including false alarms, between December and March in both the 2021-22 fire season and the 2022-23 season.

However, small vegetation fires were down more than 25 per cent this fire season at around 990, while brigades responded to approximately 1360 during the 2021-22 season.

Vegetation and other outside fires were steady across both seasons, with 275 in 2021-22 and around 260 in 2022-23, and a slight increase in the number of vehicle, extrication and rescue incidents this season, with 1423, compared to 1347 last season.

CFA Chief Officer **Jason Heffernan** thanked every CFA volunteer for their continued commitment to protecting the communities in which they live for another fire season.

"As the 2022-23 fire season draws to a close, I want to

express my gratitude to the more than 52,000 volunteers across the state who have supported Victoria through another summer," he said.

"CFA crews have been pivotal in protecting communities through significant grass and bushfires this year such as incidents seen in Flowerdale, Northwood, Glenmore, Maintongoon and Boisdale.

"Our members continue to work seamlessly with our emergency service agency partners including VICSES, FRV, FFMVic, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria and others all year round."

He acknowledged the wide range of incidents CFA members attend, which was best highlighted this season by CFA's response to the Victorian flood emergency late last year.

More than 3080 individual CFA members played a part in the response to the floods across the state.

"CFA volunteers don't stop their valued work now that fire season is over – we know that the colder months brings a new set of challenges, with a

focus on responding to fires inside the home and supporting landowners with private burn-offs."

The area within Mornington Peninsula Shire was the final municipality in Victoria to end the Fire Danger Period at 1.00am on 24 April.

The end of the Fire Danger Period (FDP) will be an opportunity for some landowners to burn-off again, however it's important that residents check the conditions are safe and register their burn before undertaking these activities.

Residents must also contact their local council directly for advice before lighting up, as burn-offs outside the FDP may still be subject to local council laws.

"Registering your burn-off ensures that if smoke or fire is reported, the incident is cross-checked with our register, which prevents firefighters from unnecessarily responding."

Landowners can register their burn-off online at www.firepermits.vic.gov.au or call 1800 668 511.

A thank you to CFA members for supporting communities

by CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan

The Victorian fire season has drawn to a close as the final Fire Danger Periods were lifted in recent weeks.

This year's fire season was dominated by grass and bushfires, particularly across central and western parts of the state.

Crews have been diligent in their duty to protect lives and property across the state, perhaps best demonstrated by their prolonged work at large incidents this season in Flowerdale, Northwood, Glenmore, Maintongoon and Boisdale, to name a few.

I want to extend my thanks to all CFA members for supporting Victoria through another fire season and for working seamlessly and cooperatively with our emergency service agency partners at all incidents.

Our members were kept busy, responding to more than 12,800 incidents across the state this season.

Our CFA volunteer contingent is highly skilled, knowledgeable, and professional and our members have showcased these attributes once again this fire season. Our people attend a wide range of emergencies and this was best highlighted by the strong agency response to the Victorian flood emergency.

More than 3080 individual CFA members played a part in the response to the floods across the state.

We know our work continues year-round and our focus will shift in the cooler months to house fires and supporting landowners with private burn-offs, so again, I thank our members for their continued dedication and commitment to their communities.

Attending the Good Friday Appeal cheque presentation,

alongside members from Hoppers Crossing Fire Brigade earlier this month was cause for reflection on the outstanding generosity our members embody every day.

I'm so proud of the thousands of CFA volunteers who worked tirelessly again this year to collectively raise a record-breaking \$1.6 million for the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal 2023.

Our members were seen in the thick of their local townships, standing at popular intersections or doorknocking, all while rattling their Good Friday Appeal tins to raise money for sick kids.

CFA's partnership with Good Friday Appeal is now 72 years old and it's a testament to the community-mindedness and collective organising of our fantastic members across Victoria.

I look forward to seeing the contribution our members make next year.

Last month, I joined the Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes to announce the upcoming rollout of up to 29,000 sets of the new wildfire Personal Protective Clothing (PPC).

It was announced that the \$10.8 million contract with local manufacturer, Stewart & Heaton Clothing, will deliver new gear to all CFA operational firefighters.

The design of the new set boasts a slew of improved features such as lighter weight materials, better design functionality and ergonomic performance to ensure our people are comfortable and safe on the fireground.

The large-scale rollout will commence in the coming months and when it's made



available, I encourage all operational members to liaise with their Districts to get sized up as soon as conveniently possible.

I was pleased to recently announce that as part of our annual mid-year budget review, we identified \$1.4 million in savings that will be invested in initiatives that will give a direct boost to the operational capacity of our brigades.

The six service delivery initiatives include a breathing apparatus (BA) mask fitting set for each District, a BA Fill Station and Compressor for District 9, accelerated replacement of remaining Positive Pressure Ventilation fans, procurement of more than 2000 operational tabards, procurement of an additional CFA workwear shirt for volunteer Instructors and Assessors, and BACO tabards to ensure identification of the BA Controller during BA operations.

While the high-risk fire season has finished up, I want each of our members to continue showing support to those around them. Please look out for each other and help ensure everyone makes it home safely to their families and loved ones.



Vale Quentin Turner: volunteers benefit from his work

The many fire service friends and colleagues of volunteer advocate, VFBV Life Member and Creswick Fire Brigade Life Member Quentin Turner, were deeply saddened to learn of his recent passing on 31 March 2023. Quentin was highly respected by all who knew him both as a person, a leader and a person who left no stone unturned in his efforts to get better equipment and conditions for CFA volunteers.

His CFA involvement commenced in 1961 when he joined Creswick Fire Brigade. Even in these early years his leadership qualities were recognised by his peers and he was soon an officer within the brigade, firstly elected to office as Apparatus Officer (1965-69), then Secretary (1969-75) before taking on the role of Captain (1975-99).

During his 24 years as Captain of Creswick Brigade Quentin provided strong but fair leadership and the brigade developed and grew under his guidance into a very strong, unified position. He became renowned as a strong leader not only within the Group, but within the District and also wider afield.

He was also Group Officer of Creswick Group for a 10 year period where he also provided great leadership.

In 1983 Quentin extended his passion for volunteerism to a statewide level when he became an Executive Member for District 15 to the Victorian Urban Fire Brigades Association (VUFBA). During his 20 plus years in this position he served two terms as Association Vice President (1986/87 and 1997/98) and three terms as Association President (1987/88, 1998/99 and 1999/20).

Quentin was an astute and well respected leader within this body and often called on



for his advice and expertise in many matters. His vast knowledge of fire service matters and in dealing with issues, both large and small, were of great benefit to both the Association and the volunteers of the day and even the volunteers of today.

He served terms on almost all VUFBA and CFA Joint Committees and was keenly involved in State senior and junior championships for many years. He also served on CFA Board from July 1989 to December 1993. He was obliged to relinquish his position on the Board at this time after being appointed to a senior position as an Industrial Relations Commissioner, principally in dispute resolution matters.

Quentin was one of the driving forces in bringing together both the Urban and

Rural Associations as one unified body in 2008 – the new entity known as Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV). He was the inaugural Chair of VFBV (October 2002), serving in this capacity for two years and continued on as a VFBV Board Member until 2010.

His ability to set strategies and direction was highly regarded by fellow VFBV Board Members and his work helped set the path for VFBV.

Quentin also played key roles in the development of the Volunteer Charter and the Volunteer Code of Conduct in the early 2000s and was also a founding Trustee of the CFA & Brigades Donations Fund in 2004 and served as a Trustee for this Fund until 2019, including serving as Chair of the Trust for many years.

For his service to volunteers and CFA, Quentin was honoured with the Australian Fire Services Medal (AFSM), VUFBA Gold Star, VUFBA Life Membership, CFA Life Membership and a 60 year service medal.

Quentin is survived by wife Maisie – the pair being married for more than 60 years. Maisie herself is a former President of Creswick Fire Brigade Ladies' Auxiliary and gave tremendous support to Quentin in the various roles he played in CFA more than 60 years.

VFBV BOARD VACANCIES

Invitation to ALL CFA Volunteers to apply

Closing date for written applications is 28 August 2023

VFBV advances the interests of all Victorian fire brigade volunteers and VFBV BOARD POSITIONS

Vacancies on VFBV Board will arise when the terms of four VFBV Board members expire on 1 October 2023. Of the four members whose terms are expiring, two are eligible for reappointment. VFBV invites applications from any CFA volunteer who is motivated by the prospect of making a difference and believes they have the skills to contribute to the VFBV Board.

The role of a board member involves contributing to VFBV direction, policy determination and monitoring the performance and governance of the Association. This includes actively contributing to policy discussion, consulting with CFA volunteers and contributing to the identification and management of strategic issues.

VFBV is seeking applications from gender and culturally diverse candidates in addition to a diverse range of skills and experience including applications from diverse brigade types and classifications.

Members should familiarise themselves with the VFBV Board member role statement and key selection criteria available from the VFBV website or via the office at (03) 9886 1141.

Applications close on Monday 28 August 2023 and must be lodged to VFBV, 9/24 Lakeside Drive, Burwood East 3151; email vfbv@vfbv.com.au; telephone 9886 1141; fax: 9886 1618.

CFA BOARD POSITIONS



The CFA Act recognises that it is important that the CFA Board has strong volunteer expertise, knowledge and an understanding of CFA volunteers. To support this, four of the skills-based CFA Board members are appointed by the Minister for Emergency Services from a panel of names submitted by VFBV. This year, the terms of two volunteer nominees will expire in December 2023, with both members eligible for re-appointment. One is for a volunteer from brigades predominantly serving rural communities, and the other being for a volunteer from brigades predominantly serving urban communities.

CFA volunteers who believe they have the skills, experience and capacity to make a contribution to the Board of CFA are invited to apply. In addition to volunteer experience and knowledge, nomination will have regard to any of the following - knowledge of or experience in; commercial; technical; operational; legal or financial matters; expertise in fire or emergency management; land management; or any other field relevant to the performance of the functions of the CFA.

VFBV is seeking applications from gender and culturally diverse candidates in addition to a diverse range of skills and experience including applications from diverse brigade types and classifications.

Members should familiarise themselves with the CFA Board Charter and further information on the application process is available from the VFBV website or via the office at (03) 9886 1141.

Applications close on Monday 26th June 2023.