AUSSIE GEARS UP IN READINESS FOR SUMMER

(information supplied by Australian Pump Industries)

It is no secret that the climate change events of the northern hemisphere, Europe, the Mediterranean, the United States and Canada have given us a good indication of what is potentially coming this way this summer.

As Aussie Pumps' **Warwick Lorenz** puts this story together, parts of Wales in the United Kingdom are still burning, as are forests on the Belgian French border.

"We have already seen what happened in Europe. It would be foolish to think it can't happen here.

"No doubt Australia's leading fire emergency services departments will be moving into high gear now, to prepare for what could be a similar image to the northern hemisphere experience!"

Although Australian Pump got into the fire pump business in a serious way 35 years ago, today the company is a leader in terms of innovation, performance development and product quality. The Aussie Pump team works from a six-acre complex at Sydney's Norwest 'Silicon Valley' precinct. The company's engineers work tirelessly to improve product performance, reliability and value for money.

"When we saw how great old Australian pump brand manufacturers had been corporatised. We realised that to some extent they seemed to be losing their way", said Warwick Lorenz.

By that Warwick means that their decisions seem to be made based purely on commercial grounds, not products designed to perform in what can be the terrifying effects of an Australian bushfire season. The Aussie Fire Chief is designed to be significantly better than the old guard products.

"We would never put a plastic impeller in a firefighting pump, nor have a pump with a two-piece impeller held together with a text screw".

To Warwick, those apparent economies were not designed to help people fight fires but rather to provide dividends to company shareholders.

Although the Aussie Fire Chief now has a population in Australia of around 220,000 units, it has earned its way by virtue of the performance and the quality of components.

An example is the big seven-inch impeller that not only provides more flow at high pressure than other pumps but is also built in a robust manner. Out of all the pumps that are out there in the Australian market, the company only sells 40 impellers for spare parts during 12-month period.

GET READY

The Aussie Pump team is scrambling to catch up with production to meet what it anticipates as being a major demand for quality firefighting equipment.

"We know there's lots of third world product out there and you see lots of it turning into landfill," said Warwick.

"At Aussie Pumps we are quality fanatics and in fact our Chief Engineer **John Hales** has a sign on the wall of his office that says:*'WE DESIGN AND BUILD PRODUCTS AS IF WE'RE GOING TO USE THEM OURSELVES.'*

Aussie Pumps salute to the firies

Firefighters across the country know that the biggest single danger spot is those folks living in the urban interfaces, the capital cities and major regional centres. Many of them are not used to handling pumps and are totally unprepared for what could be a fire season as bad as the recent summer bushfires.

Aussie will do its bit to support the volunteers and will have special prices for their lightweight high pressure fire pumps, including the new models and special prices for brigades as part of the Brigades Buy Direct Program.

For further information contact **Craig Bridgement,** Fire Pump Product Manager at Australian Pump Industries in Sydney on 02 8865 3500.

Below: Aussie Pumps diesel fire pumps are high performing and safer to operate. Visit the Aussie's website at www.aussiepumps.com.au

CFA PROGRESS SINCE 2022

(by Woman on Fire)

CFA HQ has finally released the 2025 report of progress on the state of CFA against the goals set in 2022.

Has there been progress in a positive direction? The answer depends on who you ask, but the answer is yes in some areas and it's business as usual in others. The review raises some interesting issues and is worth reading to make your own mind up. Here are a few of my observations, and more are likely to follow.

The first matter that causes me concern is that the report speaks of volunteers as a "strength" of CFA as though they are an optional extra to a pre-existing entity that has acquired a special team. CFA is community based and volunteers from the community serve to protect those communities.

There would be no CFA without volunteers, they are not an addition. This is especially so since the paid workforce was split off the CFA. The mere existence of volunteers isn't the strength, nor is their community connectedness a strength, it is reality, and these are rather meaningless patronising concepts.

In an emergency I have never encountered an affected person pause to ask if the firefighter is a volunteer or a local before accepting help. CFA as a corporate organisation, is essentially the yin to the volunteer yang, an uneasy complementary arrangement.

The report also confirms their observations that the experience of being a member of CFA varies across the state.

In my experience this is to be expected from the community origin and embeddedness of volunteers. They reflect local conditions and expectations. Wide variation also arises from an almost complete absence of a unifying standard of performance for the volunteer workforce.

CFA didn't hesitate to have uniform expectations when it trained paid firefighters but only the vaguest professional expectations exist in brigades, and dynasties, tyranny, parochialism and attendant bullying and misogyny, have been not only overlooked but sometimes benignly encouraged. Much of the variation is attributed to the local brigade leadership, largely arising from the attitudes, expectations and professionalism, or lack thereof, of the Captain who may have a support team of cronies. This is not a new finding.

Since 2022 the Captain's Peer Mentoring program has involved 434 members including mentors and mentees. This is a low number across the state, however it could indicate a step in the right direction. The report identifies the importance of stable, sound leadership in brigades to ensure members can thrive and are not harmed by their involvement. But, unless the people doing the mentoring are themselves sound ethical practitioners, all they will be doing is helping perpetuate poor standards, even unwittingly. There is a common mistake made in organisations that a problem is deemed to be fixed by implementing some kind of intervention or training. They fail to properly identify the nature of the problem, and then they fail to properly evaluate any intervention they implement. This is likely to be another example.

Sometimes the lessons are simple. Remember being a child living the many little routines and habits of home, accepting them as normal until you went to visit another friend's home, encountering what felt like a foreign country? Yet, step outside and we all obey the same road rules set by people who have never set foot in your town.

Brigades in CFA are a bit like that.

BETWEEN CALLS CONTINUES TO GROW

What started as a simple idea to capture the stories behind the uniforms has grown into one of CFA's most authentic volunteer storytelling platforms.

Between Calls, hosted by **Steve O'Shea** (District Mechanical Officer Manager, Bairnsdale, and member of Stratford Brigade) and **Kylie Findley** (Volunteer Sustainability Team, District 11, and member of Orbost Brigade), has now reached an exciting milestone of 30 episodes, with many more already recorded or in production.

The podcast was created with a simple vision: to create real conversations that celebrate the grit, passion and humanity of our CFA people, keeping our crews connected, supported and inspired by telling their stories.

Since launching, *Between Calls* has featured guests from every corner of the organisation. From frontline volunteers and brigade leaders to Board members and senior leaders, each episode explores the experiences, challenges and motivations of the people who make CFA what it is.

Rather than focusing on incidents alone, the conversations delve into leadership, resilience, family, teamwork, personal growth and the lessons learnt through years of service. Listeners hear the stories behind the role—the moments of humour, hardship, pride and purpose that don't always make it into operational reports but are often the stories that resonate the most.

The response from members has been overwhelmingly positive, with listeners regularly commenting that the podcast helps them feel more connected to the wider CFA family and provides valuable insights into the diverse experiences of volunteers across Victoria.

With an exciting lineup of future guests already scheduled, *Between Calls* will continue shining a light on the people who make CFA such a remarkable organisation.

Episodes are available on YouTube and Spotify. Whether you're on the road, at the station or relaxing at home, tune in and hear the conversations that happen… *Between Calls.*

Eddy's big week

The week started with Geelong West Fire Brigade annual dinner on 8 August.

At the event Eddy was presented with the VFBV Gold Star by VFBV State Councillor **Tony Winsall.** He was also the recipient of CFA Life Membership and a 30 year service medal.

During the event Eddy was also awarded the NSW Premier's Flood Citation 2022-2023 for his response and efforts during the NSW major flood events.

Forward to 12 August and at the VFBV District 7 AGM, Eddy was elected as the new President. Prior to being elected President he had done an amazing job as Secretary/Treasurer since 2012.

District 7 VFBV looks forwarding to Eddy taking the reins as its new President. Other election results were: **Phil Stewart** (Vice President); **Karen Woodhart** (Secretary/Treasurer); **Rod Taylor, Tony Winsall, James Mullins** (State Councillors) and **Kevin Chaffey** and **Brad Coulter** (Executive).

Earlier in the evening **Gerry Neyenhuis** (President) and **Robert Clark** (State Councillor) both announced that they would not be standing for their respective roles. Their enormous contributions were acknowledged by VFBV State President **Samantha Collins.**

Eddy Rees (right) is presented with a VFBV Gold Star by State Councillor Tony Winsall.

Celebrating service and achievement

Hallam Fire Brigade celebrated another successful year of service at its recent annual dinner, surrounded by family, friends and fellow CFA members.

CFA Commander **Glenn Philp,** assisted by Captain **Michele Lovett,** presented a number of awards recognising the outstanding service and commitment of members.

Four members reached significant service milestones. **Ashley Lovett** being recognised for an impressive 35 years of service, along with CFA Life Membership, **Nicole Miles** her 20-year service medal, **Shayne Marks** a 15-year service medal with **Zachary Bennett** receiving his 10-year service medal. Lieutenant **Brett Dows** received the National Medal and **Dennis Vlug** was awarded his National Medal 2nd Clasp.

The brigade also introduced the Captain's Encouragement Award, with **Caitlin Kechichian** named as its inaugural recipient. The award recognises a member who demonstrates the values of CFA through a positive attitude, dedication to developing new skills and a willingness to contribute to the brigade.

Mario Leone was recognised as Firefighter of the Year for his outstanding commitment throughout the year. Described as a true "quiet achiever", Mario is always willing to step up and get the job done, contributing to the brigade without hesitation

He was also presented with the brigade's highest honour, the Matthews-Merritt Award, recognising his continued dedication, knowledge, leadership and positive "can-do" attitude.

The evening also provided an opportunity to recognise the remarkable contribution of former Lieutenant **Graham Lovett,** who was recently named the 2026 City of Casey Senior Citizen of the Year.

Graham was presented with a plaque acknowledging his nearly six decades of dedicated service to CFA and his ongoing commitment to the Doveton and Hallam communities. His generosity, leadership and commitment to mentoring generations of volunteers have made a lasting impact on the brigade and the wider community.