

From The Chief Officer.....



Number 97

“Our mission is to protect lives and property”

15 November 2013

It's Mid November:

Time seems to be rushing by. In recent visits to the northern parts of the state, I can vouch for the dryness in Loddon Mallee and north of the Divide in Hume Region. Fire restrictions have commenced and we have already experienced a number of header fires in Districts 18 and 20. We even had a Total Fire Ban last week. So, the key here is to be prepared. The summer season is almost on us. Recent rain has resulted in a lot of soil moisture, and when the sun comes out it will grow – hard and fast. My sense is that we may see very rapid drying and a rapid onset to the fire season. BE READY!

Chief Officer's Intent for the Summer Season

I recently delivered an intent for the summer season to CFA Operations Managers and Operations Officers. This will soon be circulated more widely. However, I want to reinforce a number of points in the Execution part of that Intent Statement: Due consideration shall be given to the following factors:

- **The primacy of life.** This includes the lives of emergency responders.
- **Lead your team** in a way that ensures **everyone comes home safe.**
- **Take care** of yourself and your team.
- **We work as one** (with our emergency management partners).
- Give **priority to issuing warnings** to people about risks.
- **Hit new fires hard and fast.**
- Greater **use of aircraft.**
- Invest in **prior planning and preparation.**
- **We work with citizens** to **protect what is important to them.**
- Exercise **foresight.**
- **Understand your leader's intent** (2 levels up) and **ensure your intent is understood** (2 levels down).
- We **do our best**, but we recognise that **everyone can always do better.**

Take Care of Yourselves; Take Care of Others:

I recently took a call from a member of my team, who was simply asking the question: **“How are you travelling?”** Everyone is working hard on a range of important programs and projects at the moment. There is a lot of expectation and a lot of change. In a recent Bushfire CRC article, researchers **Christine Owen, Karen Bosomworth & Ben Brooks** highlighted a number of strategic challenges in the emergency management sector. These include increased uncertainty, complexity & convergence; increased expectations of community; the impact of social media; the increased nexus between the political and the operational; and the challenge of developing capability in times of scarce resources. Remember to **take time out to look after yourself.** Schedule at least 30 minutes of the day for exercise, reflection and self-management. This should not be considered a privilege – it should be an obligation. You have an obligation to your family, your workmates and your CFA team to be the best you can be and to continuously improve. Keeping fit and healthy is a foundation to all that we do. Oh, and before someone asks: when I took the call I was at home, having a few hours of “down” time and re-charging my batteries. So, **“How are you travelling?.....”**

“We are all apprentices in a craft where no one becomes a master.”

- Ernest Hemmingway