



# Annual Report

EMERALD FIRE BRIGADE

2022-23

OUR COMMUNITY - OUR CFA



## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Emerald Fire Brigade acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong lands on which we help protect from fire and other emergencies. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. Emerald Fire Brigade is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

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## Thanks

Thank you to everyone who has contributed photos and articles to this years Annual Report. These reports serve as an important historical record of the activities undertaken by Emerald Fire Brigade during the year. Digital copies of previous years reports can be found on the Brigade website. Special thanks to Snap Printing Ringwood.

# Foreword

## Welcome



Welcome to the 2023 edition of the Emerald Fire Brigade Annual Report. This document serves as a historical record of the Brigades activities over the year and provides details on any interesting incidents or events that occur during that time. Emerald Fire Brigade has Annual Reports going back to 1998/99 and copies of these can be found on the Brigades website. Documents like these are only as good as the information they contain. Some years are quieter than others as far as operational response and therefore the assumption is that there isn't much to report on, but this is not always the case. The Brigade usually will increase other engagements such as training or community education to attempt to retain member interest during these times. So when it comes time to put the report together, there is plenty of content to talk about. My sincere thanks to all the members who have put their hand up to produce a report in previous years, it's certainly a big task and requires plenty of time and effort. I hope this installment lives up to expectation and provides you with a good read and helps recall some great memories. I highly encourage newer members to tackle a task like

report coordination if they are interested. It's a great way to dig a little into the history of the Brigade, learn some new things and have the opportunity to contribute something that will last forever. The Annual Report is traditionally handed out at our presentation night so congratulations to all award recipients and I hope everyone enjoys their night.

**Ryan Lewis**



# Chairperson

Well, this report is a bit different to the last couple of years, where we have had the worry of Covid and lockdowns etc, but I can say that at least we are back into a near new normal. The last year has seen a fairly quiet time for the Brigade turn-out wise, which given everything that went on the previous year, it was a chance to take a breath and set our lives back to normal. Then the elections happened and congrats to our new Brigade Management Team.

Probably the biggest change in the Brigade was seeing our Captain Paul Yandle, decide not to stand again for the position and being replaced by Lt Klaus Brodeck. Congratulations to Klaus on his new position and wish him every success. Already we have seen some new directions for the Brigade which will head us into a new and bright future. Paul, on behalf of the Brigade I wish you well for your future and thank you for your service as Captain.

Over the past year a few members have moved out of area, and one of note is Richard Van Iersel who has gone to Officer brigade and will be a great asset to them and we will miss him and I thank him for his time and effort he put into our Brigade. Our new recruits are going well and can't wait to see them turning out once finished their GFF course. A very special mention to Greame Legge on obtaining the Member of the Order of Australia (AM), very well-deserved Graeme.

Again, a very big thank you to Tanya for preparing and running the Junior program with me and a special thank you for the wonderful caring person she is. Lastly a very special thank you to all members of our Brigade who make our Brigade what it is and to their families. Thank you for your support to them and our Brigade.

Stay safe everyone,

**Trevor Ireland**



# CFA Victoria

## Who we are

We respond to a range of hazards, support our communities to be fire ready and work as one with our emergency services partners. Our people's skills, experience and expertise in fire prevention, preparedness and response makes us unique in the emergency services sector. Building on our proud history in one of the world's most bushfire-prone environments, we know how to adapt to meet the challenges of a changing climate.

We are a dedicated and skilled team, performing roles beyond fire suppression – we also educate and engage the community to help them become more resilient. We're focused on increasing our diversity, our flexibility and our inclusiveness and providing a range of opportunities and skill development. CFA will continue to evolve, improve and innovate to provide a world-class fire and emergency service.

### CFA Vision



#### **Victorian communities are prepared for and safe from fire**

This is our ultimate end state, and our mission and strategy are how we will deliver on this vision. It reflects our broad reach across the state and our focus on empowering communities to understand and address their fire risk.

### CFA Mission



#### **To protect lives and property**

Our mission has been constant for decades. It drives how our members operate and it underpins all their work in fire prevention and preparedness activities and responding to fire and other emergencies.

### Our core strengths



We are a trusted authority because of our three core strengths:

**Fire safety** – Our people's experience and expertise across a range of landscapes makes us unique within the emergency sector. We are a centre of excellence for bushfire response, while responding to residential fires across Victoria where CFA is the lead agency. We also skilfully perform a wide range of roles from community engagement and education to hazard reduction and broader emergency response.

**Community connectedness** – Our members come from and serve Victoria's unique communities. Our brigades strengthen the social fabric of their communities and make a positive contribution beyond emergency response. Through strong local partnerships we empower communities to prepare for fire.

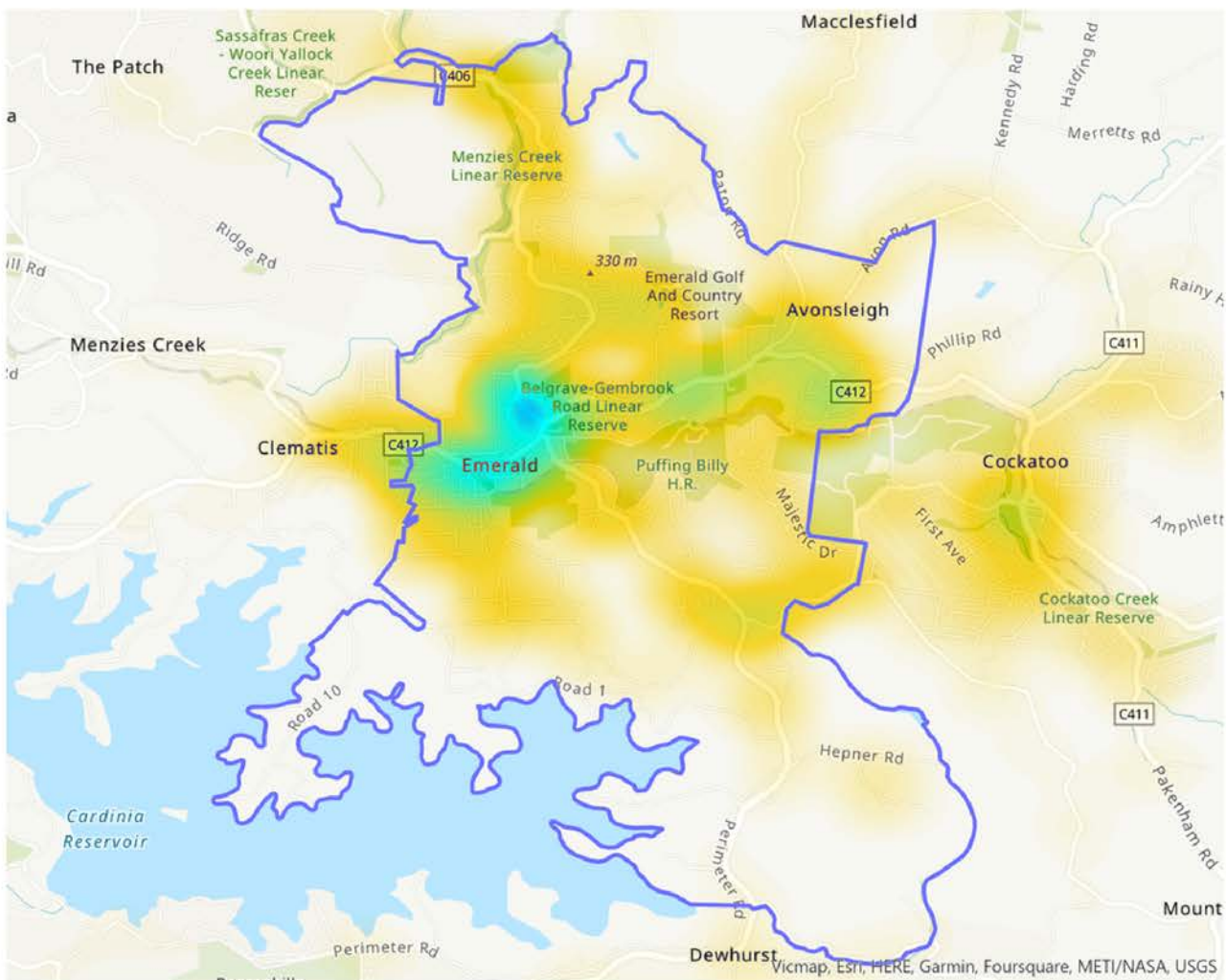
**Volunteering** – We are one of the world's largest volunteer fire services, ready and willing to mobilise quickly and in great numbers.

# Our Response Area

Emerald is a town in the Greater Melbourne area of Victoria, 44km south-east of Melbourne's Central Business District, located within the Shires of Cardinia and Yarra Ranges local government areas. Emerald Fire Brigade protects a population of 6734<sup>1</sup> and provides fire and emergency response over an area of 3282 hectares.

Our Brigade holds a Class 4 rating with a risk profile of Structural-Wildfire. This means that within our coverage area, there is a significant level of commercial development, several aged care facilities, education and childcare centres, supermarkets, service stations, critical community infrastructure (such as water treatment plants, sewage pumping stations, telecommunication facilities, electricity grid assets etc.) and high number of residential dwellings that sit within or close to high fuel loads. Emerald is part of CFA District 13, in the North-East Region.

Most of our response area is designated as Hazard Class 3 which sets our Service Delivery Standard target at 10 minutes from Brigade activation to arriving on scene. Within this time period, we must have our first truck on the road within 6 minutes. We continue to perform well across our SDS metrics with near-100% compliance across our targets over the last decade.



Heatmap of areas Emerald Fire Brigade have responded to between 01/01/2000-30/06/2023.

Blue areas indicate areas of higher average responses.

<sup>1</sup> ABS population data aggregated for our Brigade response boundary



Belgrave-Gembrook Road, Avonsleigh





AVONSLEIGH  
VETERINARY  
CLINIC

Halt Bus Here  
Route 695 Gembrook  
To Belgrove

# Captain

As I reflect over the last 12 months, it really has been an interesting year. Not only my first year as Captain, but it was a “reset” year particularly after the Covid lockdowns, restrictions, and other challenges we faced. The return to normality was refreshing and allowed us to continue building the brigade again. In June last year, I put out a Culture Survey to the brigade to get a grasp on where the brigade is at and where they see the opportunity to improve. This was a really good opportunity to get people’s thoughts and feelings and allowed me to set a direction that the team could jump onboard with. Some key findings of the survey were that only 62% of members felt valued, and 100% of the members said they would attend trainings and meetings more regularly if some of their suggestions were acted upon. So there was a clear message here and I outlined at a monthly meeting what our plans were for the next two years that addressed the key messages outlined from the survey. Pleasingly, we can sit back after 12 months and tick off most of those plans that are within our control as completed, and look forward to seeing the outcome of the new survey which has just been sent out again to members, one year on to see what results the changes have brought. Operationally, our number of calls dropped below 100 for the first time that I can find in our history. This is half of the number of calls we did in 2000/21, yet Emerald is still the busiest response area in the Dandenong Ranges Group area. There are a number of factors for this but as a goal for the fire services, this is a good outcome and is a reminder that our significant efforts in Community Safety and Education for so many years, is paying off. Heavily contributing though, for a third year in a row the country experienced a La Nina weather pattern meaning we faced increased rainfall around the country, particularly along the east coast. As a result, we saw significant flooding, even had two Emergency Warning sirens going off in Emerald in error due to the risk of the Yarra River flooding – which I think we are pretty safe from. Mick Hamilton worked alongside the SES on Strike Teams in NSW



and QLD to assist the flooding operation. This also meant we had a very short Fire Danger Period with very few burn offs out of control which we would usually experience for a prolonged period. The only activity we were able to contribute to was filling several Strike Team shifts at a bushfire around the Flowerdale area. One consequence of a quiet year operationally, culminating with average weather and a placid summer, is that the membership can lose motivation, morale drops and then numbers start to fall away for turnouts and training. Whilst we did experience some of this which is natural, we have been able to overcome this by continuing regular brigade interaction and increasing social activities, we also focus on building for the future with a number of initiatives. We held our traditional Anzac Day breakfast for the local emergency services, and more recently we decided where there are five Wednesdays in a month, the fifth one would be a Social night instead of training. These have been well attended and been quite fun. Everything from a Pool Competition to very competitive sessions of Bingo have been well received. Luckily Kelly Harris has played the role of “Gamesmaster” extremely well. We have also had two Trivia Nights recently which were also a lot of fun. One key event that we held was the 40th Anniversary of the Ash Wednesday fires. Instead of training we took the membership, our life members and some former members who were involved with the fires on Ash Wednesday down to the firefighter memorial in Upper Beaconsfield to

remember those that lost their lives there on that steep track. We then went on to Wright Forest and enjoyed an amazing experience to be able to stand where the bushfire that tore through Cockatoo started, with the Captain at the time (Graeme Legge), and have Ian Woodhouse and Tony Fairbridge tell us what they saw on that day and everything that happened, especially as they were on the first vehicle that arrived to the fire – 40 years on. Also hearing stories from former members Heather Maxwell and Pat Bendall, made the night very enjoyable and spending time with these former and current life members showed the bond between people that will never be broken when you go through experiences like this. Mid last year, we also held our Annual Presentation Night at the Puffing Billy Lakeside Visitor Centre. This was a special night as we honoured Life Member Graeme Legge for his 70-year medal, as well as recognised the significant effort Paul Yandle had put in as Captain for 22 years. Among many service and brigade awards presented on the night, several current and ex-members also received National Medals - Adrian Trimmell, Kat Cree, Nick Waldron, Jody Yandle, Kate Griffin, and Calum Bean, whilst Trevor Ireland received his National Medal 1st and 2nd Clasp and Paul Yandle received his National Medal 2nd Clasp. It was a tremendous night that we were able to share it with CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan and Commander Peter Nolan, whilst the venue and the food was fantastic. The brigade also suffered loss with former Captain Eric Donald passing away during the year. Many of the current members would not have known Eric including myself, yet Monbulk brigade put on a beautiful memorial service for Eric, his family and friends which was incredibly well attended. With everyone who got up and spoke about him, you could tell Eric was an astute man, highly respected everywhere he went. He will be missed by those who knew him best. Despite the lull, operationally we strengthened our performance versus the year before. Our Primary SDS, which is our key measure of getting on scene for primary jobs in under 10 minutes – we are at 100% and are booking on scene at an average time of 6:59. Helping this is our increased membership as our average turnout time is 4:40 – with under 6:00 being the goal. Our average number of members per call is increasing and the number of trucks we are responding is also on the improve. A terrific result for the year and is a credit to everyone's hard work they have put in. Like every brigade, member churn is something we have to grapple with.

This year a number of members left the brigade to move out of the area for various reasons. Whilst this is disappointing to lose members who have committed so much time and effort to become operational firefighters, we have welcomed more new recruits and they are currently working to complete their GFF. Bianca, Alicia, Jesse, Eliza, Kelsy, Dylan and Nathan have all joined us and are at various stages of completing GFF with the hope that they are on the back of a truck very soon. We have seen what was once a risk for the brigade – daytime response, has now become a strength. One positive from the pandemic is the “Work From Home” culture that thankfully has stuck, and our brigade and the community are the beneficiaries. There are a number of members now who have the flexibility in their employment to either work from the station or work from home on a regular basis. This allows us to not only respond with full crews, but get out the door quickly. It is not uncommon for us to respond to a primary call during the day now with 10 or more members and all three trucks. This is so pleasing and really shows our commitment to delivery and exceptional fire service to the community. One of the key areas I communicated to the brigade upon being elected as Captain was to force the issue with CFA to replace our aging fleet of appliances. Firstly our 25 year old Pumper – with Ryan's assistance, we submitted a comprehensive business proposal to the ACFO for our Pumper to be replaced with a new one as a matter of urgency. This was vital as our truck regularly experiences mechanical and electrical issues. Whilst the effort was appreciated, the budget for new trucks is not where it should be and whilst we are well placed on a replacement list for a Pumper, but still might be a few years away. Similarly, with our 23 year old Heavy Tanker, we are one of the very few brigades in the district that does not have a Crew Cab Tanker and it is high on district's agenda to replace when able. An area where we can take action is our brigade owned vehicle. The BMT put forward a case to the membership to vote on that we would submit for a VESEP grant to purchase a CFA Medium Tanker to replace our Brigade Owned Salvage. This was overwhelmingly supported by the brigade when voted on, and approval for change of typology was approved by Group, Response and Readiness Workgroup, and finally the ACFO.

A strong submission has been put forward to the relevant VESEP parties and we hope to have a positive outcome around October/November. If we are fortunate enough to be approved, there is still likely to be a greater than two years wait due to availability and other logistical issues. Fingers crossed on this one. Over the last few years, the BMT has flagged interest in purchasing a brigade owned Field Command Vehicle as an addition to our fleet to be housed behind the roller door in our fourth bay. The response has always been a “No”, but with little justification why and if that could change in the future. In bringing the topic up again, with a strong business case, the answer was very different with approval granted via Group, District, and all the way up to the Chief Officer. Using our own funds, Emerald’s new Ford Ranger FCV has been ordered and information currently is that there are no delays with these vehicles, and we could have it before the fire season. We have also put forward a request for CFA Land and Building to renovate the station (storeroom and day room) to make them suitable to house this vehicle by removing a wall and updating the roller door. Again this is in progress so our vehicle makeup and the station in 2023/24 will look different than it does today. This is a huge win for us to be able to add to our fleet and strengthen our ability to deliver for our community. The Junior brigade has enjoyed an influx of members to the point that we need to create a waiting list. Currently we have seventeen junior members and traditionally when they reach the ages of 16 and 17, it has always been difficult to keep these guys interested in joining the senior ranks. With greater involvement with senior members, I am confident we can transition more of the juniors into our senior ranks, build their confidence and provide them valuable life skills that they can use inside and outside the brigade. From a training perspective, again it has been a busy year. Chris will elaborate more in his report however we have been able to get a number of members through Low Structure, Structural Firefighting, Operate BA, Structural Thermal Imaging Camera, Low Voltage Fuse Removal and more recently, Safe Working from Heights meaning we now carry additional gear on the Pumper. This just further enhances the brigade’s capabilities when it previous years, it has been difficult getting members on to these courses. And with the General Firefighter Course theory component now being online, this has made life incredibly easier for the brigade and the recruits who can complete their modules at a time that is convenient to them.

A big thank you also to those senior members who assist the recruits with their brigade checklists to get them ready for their assessments. Community Safety and Education has also been incredibly busy running several community facing events and activities. Everything from the Live Gas Fire Prop demonstration, to the EDRA Volunteer Expo, New Member Information night, Community Fire Preparedness nights, providing welcome packs to the Real Estate agents and so much more. Lea has done a tremendous job and her efforts have not gone unnoticed and continue to drive our presence in the local community. In July, seven current and ex-members will be receiving their National Emergency Medals for their involvement in the 2019/20 Black Summer Fires. I wish to congratulate Tom Dawe, Amy Fontana, Mick Hamilton, Kelly Harris, Trevor Ireland, Adrian Trimnell, Mitch Buxton and Daniel Young for their efforts and the risks they put themselves in whilst helping at those fires in various locations across the country. They will be receiving their medals at an event in July. In working with the CFA and the Cardinia Shire Council, we have been successful in reverting Emerald’s Neighbourhood Place of Last Resort back to Worrell Reserve from where it had been at Pepi’s Land. We know this is where the towns people will go in an emergency and it makes sense, considering the amount of money that has been invested into that precinct over the years to make it an effective NSP. With a few minor boxes still to tick, I believe this will be up and running before this year’s fire season. Looking forward to 2023/24 and beyond, my prediction is that the brigade will continue to flourish. The hard work we have put in over the last 12 months will pay off. With El Nino alert now called from the Bureau of Meteorology, we know that we can expect a hotter and drier next 12 months. Whether that leads to increased activity remains to be seen, yet with the all the training our members have done, plus a new vehicle expected later in the year, terrific team spirit and dedication amongst the brigade, we have never been more ready.

**Klaus Brodeck**

# 1st Lieutenant

I do not love the report writing component of being a Lieutenant. It is hard to write a report as an individual when I feel that the BMT achieves as a team. This past year has been a year of trying to bring the brigade processes into the modern era. As quartermaster this has involved Ryan setting up a QR code and an ordering database to better enable us to order and track things that have been ordered. This has meant that for the most part we



are ordering and then following up those orders. We can track that they have arrived at station and that they have been given to members and finalised. This past year we introduced regular social nights on any Wednesday night that had a 5th Wednesday. So far we have had two nights the first being a Pizza and Pool night, which was a lot of fun and involved a round robin version of pool. The second night we played bingo and had fish and chips. Bingo involved a lot of sledging a little cheating and a huge amount of laughter. We have attended a couple of trivia nights, one hosted by the local bar The Railway Dog, as a fundraiser for the brigade. They raised approximately \$350, and the bar matched it. I was fortunate to travel on a strike team to assist in the grassfire attack at Flowerdale in February this year.



This was a day as a crew leader on the Mt Evelyn ultra-light. A memorable day due to the helicopter

attack method used, as a lot of the terrain was inaccessible to vehicles. There were 6-10 helicopters in operation during the day. Most of the day was spent either blacking out or monitoring the border of the fire. I also participated in the Linton Staff ride last year.



A staff ride is an experiential learning event which provides emergency management staff and volunteers the opportunity to walk in the shoes of people involved with a past incident, to learn lessons for the future. This was a huge learning experience that I recommend senior members to attend if the opportunity comes up. It is a tragic part of the CFA history that has had big and long-lasting change on the way we do things within the CFA. The information presented and the ability to walk the path that they took on the day was a momentous event in my learning and will always be an influence on my leadership at callouts.

## Kelly Harris



## 2nd Lieutenant

It's been a relatively busy year for me, so let's recap some of the more important bits. I think one of the biggest stories of my year was that I managed to land a job with CFA as an analyst in their Business Intelligence team. Business Intel covers a wide range of things but essentially it's transforming a huge range of data sources into useful products for Members to use to help make better decisions. My team looks after things like spatial boundaries, membership and incident analytics, road network modelling and a huge range of other products and services. Back at the Brigade, my portfolio as 2nd Lieutenant covers pre-plan management, map & key management, branding & public relations and member welfare. Beginning with pre-plans, I had an thought-provoking conversation with a Commander this year about how many times we actually have used them operationally, and more importantly, what information would we be specifically looking for if we were to pull one out. After thinking about it for a while, it started to become clear that it is highly likely that the Incident Controller would instinctively follow the standard RECEO methodology and it was more likely the pre-plan would be used to make a call to the property owner after things had settled down or other uses that are not time critical. The value of information contained within them, while detailed, is just not that likely to be used in the early stages of an incident. Therefore the question becomes, how many do we really need to keep and maintain? For now, we are not creating any new pre-plans and it is likely that some will be removed as they come up for review. Instead, our training programmes in the future will include more real-world scenarios involving these higher risk assets with the intention that our membership increases their skills in being able to dynamically adapt to the limitless possibilities that real events provide. Regarding maps and keys; we have no boundary changes to report across any of our maps. We continue to receive updated Spatial Vision VicMap books as well as the latest editions of Melways for our appliances and the LCF. The key cabinet has been refreshed with all operational keys now in



their own dedicated area, as well as new identification tags to help quickly find the right key during a turnout. The next steps in this refresh program are to field check the keys to ensure they are still current, as well as get the key tag numbers added to alarmed or special premises in CAD so they display on the pager message. Branding is becoming an important area for the Brigade to focus on. The CFA brand is synonymous with trust and professionalism within the Victorian community and each Brigade must ensure that the public perception of the organisation remains protected at all times. Members can do their part by ensuring they consider their behaviour whilst out in public wearing any form of uniform that associates them with CFA or the Brigade. Avoid wearing old, faded or damaged PPC, workwear or Brigade casualwear when in public and only wear uniforms or casualwear while on Brigade business. In the member welfare space it has been great to see CFA launch the behavioural standards framework across the State, ensuring that every member has a clear understanding of what the organisation expects when it comes to behaviour. We are fortunate at Emerald to have a good culture and not many big issues, but that said it doesn't take much to upset the balance so it's important we take it seriously. That's it from me, thanks for reading and stay safe.

**Ryan Lewis**

# 3rd Lieutenant

It seems like only a moment ago that I was writing up last years report, but here we are. The last 12 months has been a tough one for firefighting, with weather conditions wetter than normal and above average rainfall across parts of the state. This has meant real time fireground experience and training has been limited, with planned burns cancelled due to less-than-ideal fuel moisture content. Despite all that, it hasn't stopped us from training, and training well with a variety of training exercises from crew leadership and incident management to basic wildfire training and everything in between. This has enabled a large base of the EFB membership to enhance knowledge and skill sets which greater enhances community safety, our sole purpose for being here. On a personal note, The past 12 months have provided me with my own personal challenge, balancing a pregnant wife and the birth of our first son, Henry, who I'm pleased to say is doing fantastically alongside my work and CFA activities. Though I have had limited chances to turn out, I have managed to get a GFF Course completed, as well as a Respond to Isolated Urban course and 4 Operate BA courses for the district, of which some of our members were a part of. As a brigade, Emerald CFA has completed over 200 courses in a mixture of face to face and online, at an average course length of 8 hours, that's 1600 hours of course work completed which is a great number to see. Training numbers have increased and the breadth of topics covered at our training nights has been varied to maintain skill sets and build interest in our capabilities for our newer members. I would also like to take a second to thank the BMT and the Senior members that stepped up and held training nights in my absence, your skills experience and desire to enhance the brigade is greatly appreciated. Looking forward for the next 12 months, we should start to see some new courses being released by CFA which will allow members to gain their Respond to Urban qualifications, increasing our internal firefighting capacity and putting our best foot forward for those who call upon us in their time of need. I look forward to being there for those members embarking upon that journey of their CFA volunteering career. So that's it from me for this year, but I would like to end this report on a quote that speaks to us as a



developing and transforming brigade from what was a completely bushfire brigade to a peri-urban fire brigade; "Practice is the hardest part of learning, and training is the essence of transformation."

Until next time, stay safe & train hard.

**Chris May**



## 4th Lieutenant

How fast the time goes by. Its hard to believe that it was a year ago that I was voted in as 4th Lieutenant to serve the brigade for the second time. It has been a pleasure to work with the new BMT and a joy to see the changes that have taken place, moving the brigade forward. The future looks exciting with the ordering of the new FCV, the change in typology of the salvage and the submission of the VESP grant for a new tanker. This will be a year that is hard to beat. Being responsible for both the portfolio of building maintenance and the apparatus officer, has meant I have been kept busy throughout the year in maintaining our brigade's operational capabilities. This has included the coordination of a hose repair plan with District 13, all the testing of hoses is up to date (with a lot of help from Lt May and the assistance of other brigade members), purchase of a new Stihl blower and batteries, responding and actioning numerous requests for building maintenance, fault reporting to the DMO's, organising the filling of any empty BA cylinders and coordinating the change-over of equipment. On a personal level I have been continuing to develop my knowledge and skills as a fire fighter where I have been able to travel around the state and meet members from other brigades. The courses completed have included Drive on Road (Roadcraft completed over a weekend at Sale), the revised Driving Policy and Legislation at Horsham, Crew Leadership in Wangaratta which has expanded my knowledge and skills on the fire ground, Navigate to an Incident completed over 2 weeks at District 13 HQ and Safe Work at Heights completed over a weekend at VEMTC Bangholme. I was fortunate to be nominated by the brigade for the Officer Development Program. This 5 month course is tailored to CFA leaders to further enhance their knowledge and develop their skills in the leadership capabilities required on the fire ground. With various guest speakers, I found it a very worthwhile course to participate in and strongly recommend it to any member wanting to develop their skills as a leader. Representing the brigade, I volunteered for the night shift at the Flowerdale



fires as was the nominated driver and crew leader on the Wonga Park Big Fill. My crew consisted of members from Belgrave and Silvan and we were set up for the night to draught water from a dam and fill appliances as needed. The bonus that was discovered was the hot water machine on the Big Fill that allowed us to provide hot drinks to crews through the cold hours of the night. The Eildon fires followed shortly after, where I started on the Macclesfield Tanker blacking out and was then re-tasked to setting up a draught to fill the other appliances of the strike team. As I had spent the previous deployment undertaking this task, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to accompany the Belgrave crew on their tanker. The Belgrave crew were extremely friendly and accommodating, not to mention that I already knew several members through previous deployments and courses. While the FFM were back burning down a hill, we were responsible in patrolling the fire line to ensure that the burn went to plan. As a member of the Planned Burn Taskforce, for the first time in the taskforce history, members were invited to assist in the preparation of a planned burn. This involved cutting-in several hundred metres of control line at the Scout Camp located in Upper Beaconsfield. This was a significant event as this year marked the 40th anniversary of the Ash Wednesday Fires that destroyed the newly completed buildings at the camp.

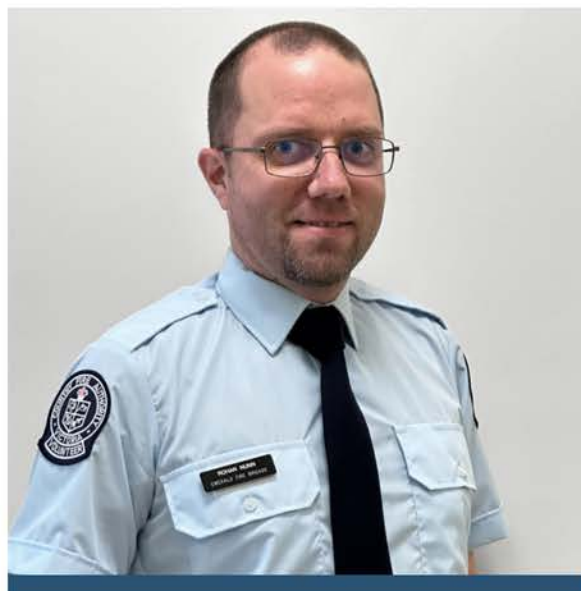
**Mick Hamilton**



# Communications

It's been a pleasure serving as Communications Officer at Emerald Brigade over most of the previous year. Personally as Comms, we helped developed the brigade's use of technology, with implementations of a new email system, growth on social media, as well as the installation of the Brigade Security System. The Brigade itself has grown immensely, with lots of new and energetic members, a motivated and committed BMT, and we're now starting to see the reward of this coming through the brigade with strong and consistently impressive operational response, trainings, and social events. It's genuinely something the whole brigade should be proud of. I unfortunately had to resign my position due to my (now) Fiancé and I purchasing our first home together down in the swamps of Bunyip in District 8, where I was also recently elected Comms Officer and Community Safety Coordinator. Apparently, I just cannot get enough of CFA! Rohan was my successor after my resignation, and he's been an absolute gun in taking over the role with short notice and is doing a ripping job. I'm still working up the mountain with Puffing Billy, so you may still see me at the occasional job and Training session. Don't be a stranger! The Brigade has a bright, bright future, especially compared to a lot of other brigades around CFA. Klaus and the team have done a fantastic job, with lots of excitement on the way. See you around!

## Mitch Fraser



Having been voted into the position of Comms Officer recently, I would firstly like to thank Mitch Fraser for the dedication and outstanding job he performed before me. My aim while in this role is to improve the communications throughout the brigade and enhance the systems and procedures in use, providing a better experience for all EFB members. To this aim I have started implementing a number of strategies one of which includes ensuring we are making the best use of the existing tools we have already such as BART. This key application used by EFB is a very powerful tool, but we only use components of it. One of my first tasks was to start putting all key events, training, truck runs etc into BART. I have been in contact with the developers in order to try and get some new features pushed into the application and looking to use BART to replace the Phone Tree currently in use should the paging network go offline. Another area I am reviewing are the different applications and software available to improve our truck checks with the purpose of streamlining the process performed weekly. At the time of writing I am in development of a number of electronic forms to manage this, automating the reporting of issues found to allow for quicker remediation times and quicker truck checks. I have acquired a portable TV stand for the brigade, with the aim of improving presentations, training and meetings. I am only a few months into the role but look forward to working with all members and welcome all feedback and suggestions.

## Rohan Nunn

# Treasurer

The 2022/23 financial year has seen a return to somewhat normal after the Covid19 Pandemic. Although we have not undertaken any specific fundraising activities during the year, we have still seen reasonable collections from our local donation tins. The Brigade would like to acknowledge the kindness of the local community who donate generously throughout the year. All the coins and notes put into our donation tins, and the donations via the Square on our website certainly add up and help significantly with the costs of running the Brigade. Once again we have seen significant donations from local community groups. Regular contributors to our brigade are the Pakenham Opportunity Shop, St Marks Opportunity Shop in Emerald, the Puffing Billy Association and Ritchies (Emerald IGA). We would like to thank these organisations for your ongoing support and faith in our brigade. A special mention to Tim and the staff at The Railway Dog who ran a trivia night to raise money for Emerald CFA, which resulted to a substantial donation from them after this event. Significant purchases throughout the year included new UHF radios to enable more effective communication at jobs and on the fireground,



as well as a Stihl blower and batteries to ensure volunteers' ease in keeping our station clean and safe. We've also had a new security system installed which allows for members to have fob entry to the station (as opposed to a code), as well as surveillance of the premises. It should be noted that the Thermal Imaging Camera purchased in the previous financial year was paid for in the 2023 financial year, therefore contributing to the equipment purchases cost.

**Amy Fontana**



# Financials

	<b>01/07/2022</b>	<b>30/06/2023</b>
<b>ACCOUNT BALANCES</b>	<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>Closing Balance</b>
Bendigo Bank (Main Account)	\$2,790.30	\$3,890.76
Bendigo Bank (Juniors Account)	\$3,718.70	\$2583.10
BankWest High Yield	\$228,220.96	\$214,994.79
Brigade Debit Card	\$32.75	\$266.75
<b>Total Balance</b>	<b>\$234,762.71</b>	<b>\$221,735.40</b>

## INCOMING

Donations	\$13,313.68
Bank Interest Received	\$1,795.56
Allowances/Reimbursements	\$4,401.63

## OUTGOING

Bank Fees	\$7.16
Brigade Functions	\$4,964.20
Brigade Welfare/Gifts	\$565.01
Building Maintenance	\$4,344.00
Catering	\$241.58
Consumables	\$440.44
Dues and Subscriptions	\$1,531.76
Equipment Purchases	\$14,247.08
Juniors Expenses	\$1,041.74
Printing/Postage/Office Supplies	\$1,946.59
Sundry Purchases	\$2,606.53
Telephone/Internet	\$671.05
Training	\$29.59
Uniform/PPE	\$368.71

# DEPLOYMENTS

## FLOWERDALE, VICTORIA

The Flowerdale fire began on 21/02/23 when a local farmer accidentally ignited his surrounds whilst using an angle grinder on a gate repair. The prevailing conditions caused the fire to quickly spread, and it managed to burn an area of 1000 hectares over four days before it was brought under control. Several strike teams were deployed over the four days with multiple requests for volunteers from D13 to manage control lines. I put my hand up for a nightshift crew alongside Amy, Rachel, Darcy & Mick. The last time I went on strike team was in 2009 when we were hurtled to Kinglake as the Black Saturday bushfires raged across Victoria and some of those memories were now coming back to me. It's the anticipation of the unknown experience and crew you will be tasked with that makes going on strike team somewhat suspenseful. We headed up by bus to the main staging area which happened to be the Yea Saleyards arriving around 1900hrs. At this point we needed to wait for the day crews to come in and activate the rotation. During this overlap we were surprised to be greeted by Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner, Andrew Crisp. He shook our hands and thanked us for all our challenging work. I had to laugh and told him we had only recently arrived and had just had a free feed – I thanked him! The day shift crews soon

rolled in, and not long after our night shift crew rolled out to the fire front. By this time, it was clear that the main fire was under control, so the task set for the night shift strike team was to patrol the perimeter of the fire and ensure containment lines remained under control. We spent the night putting out small fires, blacking out, star gazing, talking, driving, sleeping, laughing, exploring, and eating ration packs. It was a low-key nightshift! We sat on a hill and watched a magnificent sunrise in the morning. This was also our sign to head back to the staging area where we rotated with a new dayshift crew, and we jumped on a bus home. I have come to learn that there are many unknowns when you put your hand up for strike team deployment. However, joining with a positive and open mindset will always yield a memorable and teachable experience no matter what fireground you find yourself on.

**Sam Nichols**







Community members enjoying a visit to the Station



Rachel and Lea fundraising for the Good Friday Appeal



Jody engaging with the community.



# Community Education



The year kicked off with the development and endorsement of our Brigade and Community Engagement Plan and I am pleased to say we met what we set out to do. The brigade had the fortune of being invited to participate in a range of community events and programs that resulted in members dedicating over 140 volunteer hours towards educating our community on fire safety. Our full calendar of community events allowed us to continue to promote the importance of fire safety in the home through to preparing properties for summer and having a plan to leave early. Through the following community events we were able to successfully engage over 500 people.

- Bushfire preparedness info session
- Santa run pop-up at Puffing Billy Park
- Fire Safety Demonstration Day
- Emerald Plant Society's market
- Emerald Community House fire Safety Information Session

Our year concluded with a large event in May, where we were one of 25 community groups invited to the Community Group Expo hosted by Eastern Dandenong Ranges Business & Tourism at the Emerald Hub. The expo celebrated National Volunteering Week that showcased the incredible work that our local community organisations achieve for the local community. In addition to our community events, our program extended to monthly articles in the Emerald Village Association, Facebook posts having a reach of over 50,000 and 150 new residents kits being delivered. Having experienced the passion and enthusiasm our members have for our community, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Emerald CFA members for supporting our brigade's community education program because without you it would not exist.

**Leanne Johnson**



# Fire Safe Kids

Our commitment to fire safety for children has been steadily increasing in the aftermath of the pandemic. Over the past year, we have implemented various initiatives to engage with young minds and educate them about fire safety. One of our key strategies has been to utilize the school oval as a space for introducing kindergarten kids to our organization and its mission. At Emerald Primary School, we have been actively involved in conducting prep sessions, both in the previous year and recently, for the incoming preps. The school has a dedicated section in its curriculum that focuses on volunteers and their role in the community. As part of this program, they arrange visits from different emergency services, which we use as an excellent opportunity to teach the students about our contribution to community safety. One advantage we have at Emerald Primary School is the presence of a siren on the water tower located just across the road from the school. This siren has become a familiar sound to the children, acting as a constant reminder of our presence and the importance of fire safety. The familiarity of the siren has sparked curiosity among the students, making them more receptive and eager to learn from us. During our visits, we follow



a structured approach. We begin with an informative talk, discussing the fundamentals of fire safety, the role of firefighters, and the importance of emergency preparedness. We strive to present the information in a child-friendly manner, using interactive props and visuals to make it engaging and memorable. However, we understand that children learn best through experiential learning. Therefore, we ensure that our visits also include



hands-on activities and demonstrations. The highlight of these demonstrations is the opportunity for the students to explore and interact with our fire trucks. This "show and tell" session allows them to witness firsthand the equipment and tools we use, instilling a sense of awe and fascination. Moreover, the interaction with the firefighters themselves plays a crucial role in inspiring the children. They can ask questions, seek clarification, and even try on the gear, fostering a connection and admiration for those who serve the community. By conducting these visits, we aim to plant the seeds of fire safety awareness and preparedness in the minds of these young children. We hope that this early exposure will not only equip them with valuable knowledge but also inspire them to become responsible members of the community.

**Kelly Harris**  
**Ryan Lewis**



Kelly and Mitch at Emerald Primary School

# INCIDENTS

## MACCLESFIELD PONY CLUB

At around 6:30am on the 17th June, Emerald was paged as part of a 'Make Tankers 5' request from Macclesfield, who were dealing with a structure fire at the Pony Club on Tschampions Road. Once we arrived on scene, our water was immediately transferred to a waiting tanker forming part of a relay. It didn't take long for us to empty and the truck was then off to refill at Macclesfield station. This process would be done several times during the course of the incident. While the truck was gone we deployed two BA wearers, Firefighters Buxton and Nunn, for close range firefighting and blacking out operations. It was determined fairly early that this building was likely to have contained asbestos, so the Incident Controller implemented HAZMAT protocols including a decontamination station. CFA takes health protection of its Firefighters seriously and as such has developed a detailed but easy to follow hazardous materials decontamination process. Firefighter Gledhill and a member from Cockatoo suited up in the white protective suits and operated the HAZMAT de-con/warm zone to ensure firefighters heading to the rehab station for health monitoring were clean and safe.





Rohan blacking out



Members train with one of CFAs mobile gas props

# INCIDENTS

## WOOLWORTHS WHITE POWDER

On the 13th of September, we received a strange pager message requesting our attendance to Woolworths for a suspicious white powder. On my way up to the station I initially thought this might have been paged to the Brigade in error, but nevertheless I jumped into the Pumper and gave my turnout message, requesting the further information. I was told that staff had discovered a bag of white powder in the store, sandwiched between two blocks of chocolate. Thinking that it was likely to be some kind of illicit drug but without a confirmation, we needed to perform two tasks, assess the container for leaks and keep it safe until police arrived. I met with the store manager who explained that a couple of staff had now handled the bag and moved it to the staff break room. Both of which were less than ideal, as my primary focus was to keep whatever it was contained and undisturbed. I sent Mitch and Rohan in under BA to take some images of the bag to pass on to police when they arrived which they did. Their report back was that it seemed to be still contained to the bag and there wasn't spills or leaks between where it was found and its final location. We had requested Hazmat 88 from FRV Hallam to assist with potential cleanup operations, however until we could determine what it was, they were great source of information as to how to manage these kinds of events. When VicPol finally arrived, they performed a test to confirm what substance it was and it came back as methamphetamine. Overall, like most Hazmat jobs, it was slow and methodical and fortunately ended without incident.

**Ryan Lewis**





Tom working on his rope skills



# TRAINING

## RESPOND TO ISOLATED STRUCTURE

After completing General Firefighter in August 2022 and beginning to turn out to calls with the new group of recruits, the natural progression for our training and development was to complete the Low Structures Course. Fortunately, a group of Emerald Brigade's new recruits and I were able to be selected for the course held in March 2023 at Belgrave Fire Station. A large commitment is required for this course with training sessions during the week and spanning multiple weekends, each of us had to build up brownie points and the approval of our partners and families (especially those with young children). First and foremost, this was one of the most exciting, practical and engaging training courses I'd completed since becoming a CFA firefighter. The course consolidates a vast array of skills we'd been exposed to during turn outs and to the credit of Emerald CFA's BMT and trainers we had been trained on a large portion of the course curriculum at our weekly training nights. Key items/course content including size ups, utilising the RECEO process and technical fire fighting skills assisted in rounding out my previous learnings and skill sets. The balance of theory and practical training sessions kept the enthusiasm and interest of the cohort over the 3 weeks, highlights being the final consolidation practical where each firefighter was tasked as the crew leader for a particular low structure fire scenario. Firefighters from the Dandenong Ranges group worked well together and assisted with brigade knowledge of their own appliances. It was impressive to see Kalorama's heavy tanker with push button pump operation.



My key take away from this course was appreciating how dangerous a structural fire can be to people and property, common hazardous materials found in most households and sheds were a risk that is now front of mind for me, in addition the speed at which a structural fire can get out of control and spread. Highlighting the usefulness of RECEO. The Low Structure Course has given me more confidence in being able to assist with turn outs that are more fitting to Emerald CFA, covering MVA, varied low structures built with numerous construction materials/methods that could pose hazardous situations and materials. It has been difficult to secure a place for BA but when the opportunity arises, I definitely wish to complete BA and then onto the new Full Structural Course. Other benefits include being on the wait list for structural PPC, this will be welcomed during the winter months!

**Tom Beale**





Members training with a cordless demolition saw that was purchased this year.



My name is Lucas. I am 12 years old and I am a Junior at the Emerald Fire Brigade. My passion for the CFA started back when I was 3 years old and I went to my first open day where I met Simon Arnold, my hero! Ever since then, I have gone to as many open days, prop displays and any CFA events as I possibly could. I couldn't wait for the day that I was able to finally join the Juniors. Every Tuesday night I learn something different and get to spend it with people who have the same interest as me. I was apart of the group who helped lay the poppies around Emerald. I can't wait to join the crew when I turn 16 and to be able to give back to the community.

# SERVICE MILESTONES

## TONY FAIRBRIDGE - 45 YEAR SERVICE

Meg and I moved to Emerald in 1976. Meg was teaching at the primary school and I worked in the city as a computer engineer. Initially we lived in the old school house, long gone now, while we built our house and in early 1977 we moved into the house where we still live. During this time I frequently heard the siren and watched the brigade heading off somewhere. We spent Christmas 76 with friends on a farm at Navarre, in the Western district. On Christmas eve a house burned down in the township and I was involved in fighting the fire. Unsuccessfully, I might add. The house burned down. This gave me an idea of what the fire service was about. Prior to coming to Australia in 1969 I had served in the R.A.F. and had experienced the camaraderie that comes from serving together in difficult circumstances. I found that this was one of the things that I missed, and it occurred to me that I might find it, or something like it, in the local brigade. I have always believed that if you live in a community you have an obligation to contribute to it, and this seemed like a way to do so. I joined the brigade during late 1977 and my first evening was spent burning off the roadside edges of Nobelius St. Brigade training at that time was less formal than today and comprised "on the job training and a series of tasks and exercises that had to be carried out at specified intervals and ticked off in your record sheet. The Captain at the time was Graeme Legge, and under his tutelage I became, in time, trained in the mysteries of firefighting, BA, First aid and the care and maintenance of equipment. After several years I became Communications Officer, and then served in various lieutenant positions over the next few years. As Communications Officer I prepared information packages to be handed out to incoming brigades in the event of major bushfire incidents in the local area. These contained a local map and an information sheet giving locations of filling points, radio frequencies and channels and useful local information. These proved useful when Ash Wednesday swept over us. The incidents that stick in my mind are my first major fire, which was the loss of a newly built house in Phillip Road. Not long after this was the loss of the kiosk at Emerald Lake and the loss of the Catholic Church where the Emerald Evergreens now stands. I remember turning out to a scrub fire at the scout camp at Gilwell Park. As we approached the left turn into Ewen Road the driver, Terry Payne looked at me

and said "Hold on, no brakes". Yellingbo tanker was coming the other way and were astonished when we swept past them at high speed and vanished in the direction of Yellingbo, from where they had just come. We had torn a brake line driving through scrub at a previous fire the same day. Ash Wednesday will always be "The big one" for me. There have been huge fires since, but that was the one that most affected me. I had been in London during December 82 and January 83, and we arrived back just in time for Ash Wednesday. The details of it have been told many times so I won't go over them again. Suffice it to say that it made a lasting impression on me that has remained with me to this day. There were major fires in the hills during January 1997, the "Black Tuesday" fires. These were in their way similar to the Ash Wednesday fire, although not as widespread and fewer casualties. The brigade was heavily involved in these and one crew did a spectacular job of saving the houses in Glassford Avenue, Upper Ferntree Gully. After that, the rest of my service seemed fairly mundane. There were always fires, and at that time there seemed to be more of them than are experienced today. In part this is because with the establishment of the SES and the Ambulance Service many of the calls we handled have been passed on to these services. At that time the CFA was the service called to almost any emergency. Towards the end of my active service I had some health issues that affected my mobility. I have always held the view that if you are not fully mobile you should not be on the fire ground, and in late 2003 I found myself in that position. It was with the utmost regret that I stood down from active firefighting. It was my intention to continue to serve in an ICC role, but the Regional Officer at the time decreed that to do this I had to be fully fit, up to date with minimum skills and have full PPE, so at that point I declared myself non-operational. I've always had a fear of becoming one of those old farts who won't go away when their time is over, so I've had little to do with the brigade since, although I follow its progress with great interest.

**Tony Fairbridge**

# RECRUITS

Firstly, what a fantastic group of people. I have found my people. You have all made me feel so comfortable, valued and part of the brigade - thank you.

I've been asked to share some stories from my first year. Well I guess I need to start with the fact that I got Covid when I was supposed to complete my GFF assessment. But thanks to Chris M, Chris B and Darcy I was able to get it done seven days later. This year there have been some great moments, training nights where Chris M has done things like blinded us by taping over our goggles and we had to complete a search and rescue. Or dressing up in a gas suit and looking like we are from "Among us". Opportunities to go and complete courses to get extra qualifications. But the biggest bonus for me is about giving back. Having the opportunity to not only help our community but also communities further afar.

I had the opportunity to go with Amy, Darcy and Sam to go to Flowerdale as part of a strike team. Whilst we didn't do a whole lot (and struggled to stay awake overnight), we were able to contribute a little by helping to black out. So thank you Emerald FB, thanks for welcoming me into the fold.

**Rachel Edwards**



I finally joined!! This has been a long time coming for me.

Joining the CFA as a volunteer has been something I've wanted to do for such a long time now. I really love working in a team and learning so much from the operational members who have all been so welcoming. I am a mum of 2 (10yr + 12yr) and now that they are a bit older, I feel I can do a little something for me. I wasn't usually the one to jump outside the comfort zone but the last few years I have been drawn to do something different and challenging.

I look forward to wed night training as I continue to learn so much at each session. So here I am about to give this a red hot go and can't wait to join the crew as an operational firefighter and help serve and protect the community.

I also look forward to the day my 12 year old son (who has joined Emerald juniors) turns 16 and can turn out with his mum one day.

**Bianca Walker**

Well its been a year since we finished GFF and 'thankfully' its been very quiet in the number of calls. It's been a nice soft landing really which has meant I have been able to focus on getting some key training courses completed like Structural, HAZMAT and First Aid. Unfortunately the dates didn't line up for BA so I'll try and do that this summer which gives me more time to come to terms with shaving the beard. It's been good this year having a few social nights and its been great seeing another batch of recruits coming through and completing their GFF. Fingers crossed there are some nice easy jobs this summer to boost that experience. From all reports we are in for hot one.

**John Evans**



Rohan demonstrating foam equipment

# Juniors

The Junior Fire Brigade is open to young people of all abilities aged 11 to 16 who live locally to Emerald. Junior training is held on Tuesday nights from 1900 to 2030 during school terms at Emerald Fire Station. Our curriculum and training plans are based on General Firefighter competencies, local events and community activities. This year we are grateful to have been able to return to 'normal' in-station Juniors training. As Junior Leaders we have continued to put in many hours of planning and preparation prior to each training session, all the time trying to keep the Juniors program fun, informative and most importantly, trying to keep our Juniors feeling welcome, safe and keep them wanting to be part of CFA. Trev and I both attended the Junior Leader Forum in September 22 held at RACV Goldfields in Creswick. We met other Junior Leaders, met the CFA youth team, learned more about CFA's Child Safe requirements and the Child Safety Standards, about Heartwood and the importance of youth involvement. We also participated in personal development sessions and ideas and sharing workshops. We have re-visited some training topics and have also added some new ideas to this years' curriculum, which has been great for the Junior members who've been around for a few years and are keen for new learning opportunities. Our training sessions have included a strong focus on member safety including PPE/C and the use of dynamic risk assessments, hose rolling and bowling, excursions to Emerald SES and Cockatoo CFA, mapping and navigation exercises and fire science topics. Excursions to Emerald SES, Cockatoo Fire Station and Ash Wednesday Bushfire Education Centre are always excellent sessions and are ever popular with the Juniors. A nerve-wracking session for some people, the Reptile Show incursion was an idea from the Junior Leader Forum. It was hands-on and very informative, we learned about which reptiles are in our area, what they might do in a bushfire situation – and what we should do if we encounter them on the fireground. We discussed and practised ways of remaining calm and in-control, making decisions in tricky



situations, and using appropriate words and ways of communicating. Overall, the reptile session was an excellent segway into entrapment where we might also feel panicked and flustered. Our membership in July 2022 was 8 young people, our membership in June 2023 is 17 young people, including Trelise and Eliza who have both recently turned 16. That's lots of smiling, happy faces we look forward to seeing each week! Our Junior Captain through the 'Covid years' to present has been Eliza Owen. Eliza has led by example with excellent attendance, well thought out contributions to theory and practical sessions, and a great sense of humour. Trev and I thank Eliza for her commitment and leadership. Moving forward, our Junior Captain for the period beginning July 2023, as voted by the Junior membership is Alice Mattille, and our Junior 1st Lieutenant is Brendon Wood. Congratulations Alice and Brendon, thank you both for stepping into your new leadership roles. We held our combined Junior Presentation Night and end of year celebration in December at the station. Ex-Captain Graeme Legge OAM was our distinguished guest speaker. Graeme spoke about the history of our Junior Brigade and kindly helped with presenting Years of Service Certificates and the Annual Report. The Junior Firefighter of the Year was awarded to Alice Mattille, and the Runner-up Junior Fire Fighter of the Year was awarded to Brendon Wood. The Trevor Ireland Merit Award, which recognises consistent participation, effort and ongoing dedication within the Junior membership and was

awarded to Eliza Owen. Following the formalities, the Juniors put on a practical demonstration for the audience of families. The Juniors excellently showed off their skills in the Turn-out Race (overalls on, then into the trucks) and the Target Race (hose bowling, pumping, communication, branch use, water patterns, hose rolling). A great night! Trev and I thank the parents, guardians and families of our Juniors for supporting them, and us, over the last 12 months. Every single one of our Juniors is important to us - we admire all their individual strengths and positive attitudes, we appreciate the laughs and silly jokes, and we look forward to continuing building the skills and camaraderie of our Juniors team. Well done Juniors - you are all awesome! Thank you to Junior Leader Trevor Ireland, you are an integral part of our Juniors team, we appreciate your continued service and your many experiences. Some people appreciate your passion for Star Wars too.

**Tanya Jogan**  
**Trevor Ireland**



Hudson: Joining CFA Juniors is a wonderful experience. You walk in the doors to be greeted with many happy faces. We learn many interesting subjects based on how to help the community. I feel so privileged to have joined such a great program. Thank you Tanya and Trevor.

Cienna: I love to come to Juniors because I get to see friends and get to learn more about CFA. I joined 1 year ago and it runs in my family, my Dad did CFA. ♡

Ethan: I came to CFA because my Dad joined, also I was interested in learning fire safety and how to save lives.  
Jean: One of my favourite parts of CFA Juniors would have to be all of the amazing excursions and incursions where I have learnt so many new things and experiences.

Alex: I have only been at Juniors for a year and I have already learned a lot. I am looking forward to the years to come and I hope more people join.

Alice: Juniors this year has been great, Tanya and Trevor teach us so much and make learning fun. The activities we do are informative and enjoyable.

Eliza: I joined Juniors four years ago. My Dad had heard about it and recommended it to me due to my wish to be a SES volunteer. Now four years later, after just turning sixteen, it will be very hard leaving the Juniors Program due to all the laughs, jokes, information we have learnt over these years. The program is run extremely well and I highly recommend it to so many people.

Brendon: This year at Juniors I enjoyed learning all the tools and science of fire fighting and the conversations we had.

Trelise: Juniors has really allowed me to get an insight on Seniors and has really made me want to continue to help the community.

Raff: I joined Juniors because I wanted to learn to be a firefighter and other skills.

Tarkyn: This is why I joined CFA – one is I want to learn about fire safety and come to get over my fear of bushfires.

Kaelan: I come to Juniors so I can learn to become a fireman.

Angus: I joined Juniors because I wanted something to do on a weekday and learn about firefighting in Victoria, my favourite experience was learning about the trucks and a burnover.

Lucas: I've been looking forward to CFA since I was 3 years old. The 2 people that inspired me for CFA were FF Simon Arnold and FF Amy.

Liam: I came to CFA to get experience.

Saira: I love CFA Juniors. It's guaranteed fun. I also love the jokes everyone makes. CFA Juniors is my safe place.





# SERVICE MILESTONES

## ADRIAN TRIMNELL - 25 YEAR SERVICE

I can't believe that I've been a member of CFA for over 25 years. Below are a few memories and info of the last 25 years. Initially joined because I needed to do some community service for a high school program. My dad suggested CFA as he was a member many years ago. I was living close to Upper Beaconsfield, so I rang the Upper Beaconsfield captain and started training that week, and I was hooked. There was no official minimum skills training back then, it was up to the brigade to decide on what training new members needed.



I have held various roles over the years including various Lieutenant positions, brigade training officer, and I used to train new members on the use of the breathing apparatus and off-road driving. I have attended a few memorable jobs over the years some good some bad. My most difficult job was a triple fatality in Avonsleigh a few years ago. The scene was very destructive and confronting to say the least. Unfortunately, two young women were killed on impact, I assisted AV to get the driver out of the car but sadly he passed away in the ambulance. Amazingly the front passenger survived the crash with barely a scratch. I can still remember the scene as if it was yesterday. Forever etched into my mind. Participating in multiple shifts during the Black Saturday and Black Friday campaigns was definitely a highlight. Black Saturday involved night shifts in and around Healesville and Yarra Glen performing general fireground jobs and providing coverage for the local brigades. I distinctly remember looking for some fire on one night shift just so we could cook

our marshmallows that were in our ration packs. My Black Friday deployment down to Mallacoota was via a RAAF Spartan plane after a very hilarious dinner at the Sale RAAF base. We mainly provided community support to the devastated community. We carted supplies to the small town of Genoa and the smiles on the kids' faces when they saw us was priceless. To top off the experience was an overnight trip back on the HMAS Choules to HMAS Cerberus base. Not all strike team deployments are fighting fires, sometimes community support is what is required. Some items that I received permission and sometimes funding to acquire over the years include our station generator, additional BA sets and cylinders and our gas detector. I have remained a member of CFA because I enjoy helping people and having a purpose in our community. I have made some lifelong friends during my journey which just adds icing to the cake. Family requirements over the last few years have limited my time at the brigade, but hopefully I will get up to the station more in the future.

**Adrian Trimnell**



# routine procedure.

A short story based on real events written by Graeme Legge

*Routine procedure it was.*

*Wait until the fire reached the roadside, extinguish it there so as to use as little water as possible and at the same time to guard against sparks causing 'spot' fires in the grass paddock over the road. Then move on to more fire, extinguish it and...*

*Each fire-fighter knew his job. No orders were given, but none was required. The fire-tanker designated 'OJ 27' for radio communication purposes, had pulled up on the bitumen road to Kangaroo Ground as the middle vehicle of the three vehicle task-force ordered to halt the fire at this road-break.*

*There had been no rush to this location where the hill fell away on both sides of the road. The leading 'tongue' of the fire was more than a hundred yards away and was quietly burning through bush on the left, (north side) and there was a great, dry, grass paddock of many acres on the right. Some of the crew had leisurely walked up a driveway even to the point of being behind the fire they were to halt, to an old house. They inspected the house in its setting and pronounced its certain fate timed to occur when the fire reached it, and returned to their truck, still with plenty of time to prepare for action on the fire at the roadside. With the fire now fifty yards away,*



*captain-driver Fred checked the position of his stationery vehicle. Further back would have been too close to the tanker at the rear; further ahead would have created a gap behind them through which the fire might have escaped. Four wheels on the bitumen. He confirmed his earlier decision that the truck was best in its present position. Independently, first lieutenant Graeme had arrived at the same conclusion. He thought of what he would have done if he'd been in charge - as he sometimes was in Fred's absence. He was on a hose-branch at the end of sixty feet of rubber hose now, and he laid it carefully from the pump on the back of the truck and then beyond it. The plan allowed flexibility of movement. This hose could cover at least one hundred feet of fire-front, and its cut-off branch allowed for economical use of water - water 'on' when wanted, 'off' while waiting, besides giving the alternative of a direct jet or any of a variety of sprays.*

*Also, two hundred feet of rubber-lined canvas hose was unrolled from the five hundred feet carried on the truck's reel. Fire-fighter Alan took this second hose along the right hand side of the truck and up the white-line in the centre of the road in order to reach further ahead. Ready to deal with the fire front at the roadside he was, or to pounce onto any 'spot' fire if any should occur in the grass on the other side. Radio operator John saw Alan leaning and pulling against the weight of the hose. The man needed help. All other crew members were busy, so John closed his passenger-side window, and exceptionally but temporarily, left his cabin seat and grasped the hose twelve feet behind Alan. Soon, this hose, too, was ready with its cut-off branch.*

*Fire-fighter Phillip already had the pump going. Its noisy motor (over which one had to shout) had been re-filled with petrol a little earlier and Phillip's eyes checked the pump and motor now to see that everything was just right, and that the pump would be able to give whatever he asked of it. He reminded himself that the 'branch-men' MUST have water, and that he, Phillip, had to see that they got it.*

*Fire-fighter Owen had efficiently and smoothly assisted in numerous positions. He helped take hose from the reel and connect it to the pump and he helped lay it out. He removed kinks from it and then helped to move the canvas hose forward. The fact of general readiness was largely due to his usefulness.*

*Smoke was beginning to blow about the men now, but the men and equipment were ready. Everyone was aware that this particular job would be hard, as each re-checked his equipment and location, and planned his attack against that time.*

*Thirty yards to go before the fire reached the road edge. Just a little longer to wait. Hold the water yet. Crouch. Wait.*

*Captain Fred, a nurseryman, drove to the fire station after the telephone message; so had first lieutenant Graeme, a school teacher on holiday. Sailor Jack home 'on leave' and retired caterer, Owen had all responded in like fashion. Radio operator John, a teacher, too, had been picked up at home, and painter-decorator Philip was waved down when he drove past. Alan had joined them at the fire.*

*Warrandyte township needed help. Emerald Fire Brigade and others were called. Emerald and others came. Thus far, Emerald had saved a couple of houses, assisted other Brigades in a few places, shared a few cups of cordial and had a fair share of fire and heat and smoke.*

*Fire was all around them. Instantaneously. Explosion-like. Phillip's helmet was blown from his head by the strong wind. In the middle of the fire they were now. It had raced the remaining thirty yards and was blazing furiously in-depth, besides burning from root-level to tree-top. Everything was burning all at once - even the other side of the road, and now, even the next hill... The wind! The heat! The smoke! The roaring! The men! The wind! Blowing at about sixty knots, the greatly heated air with acrid, hard, harsh smoke and blazing leaves and bark.*

*Hearing the roar, John looked back from ahead to see the fire apparently 'explode' at OJ 27's site and completely envelop it.*

*The pump was running flat out. Graeme's jet of water was slicing, stabbing thrusting and sweeping back and forth. To absolutely no effect! Wet handkerchiefs around faces dried in seconds. Men breathed smoke. Visibility was now six feet. Coughing. Heads well down for helmets to protect bare skin on faces. The mighty roaring. Wind heaving at clothing.*

*Attack became defence. Graeme had never been so hot and sprang for protection beside the bonnet. The spray from his branch became defensive. Directing it into the wind he attempted to create a barrier against the heat, and then the spray could blow back onto the truck and men. They didn't feel it! It didn't reach them. Complete evaporation! Phillip, too, was temporarily driven from his pump to the leeward side of the truck. But then it was back to his pump.*

Owen dumped the canvas hose from a little ahead and returned to the truck. From ahead, the fire seemed to reach the road in successive twenty yard strips. The truck was quite invisible. Alan and John were forced from the road across the nature strip and into the grass paddock. Spot fires! Many! Growing. Water 'on'.

Fred had been midway between OJ 27 and the tanker behind and he could see the predicament his truck and crew were in. They needed assistance so he beckoned the rear tanker towards his own. It reversed so that its powerful monitor branch could direct its great jet toward OJ 27. Back and forth over truck and fire it played and temporarily quietened some of the fire at the rear of OJ 27. Phillip was drenched but Graeme at the front was quite untouched by it, unaware of it. Owen was dampened. Back and forth went the monitor. It cooled; it even drenched. But this partial relief soon brought thoughts of despair for water short-circuited the four-stroke pump motor.

Oblivious to this, the third tanker drove off to save a house on the south side of the road. There was just the wind and the fire now to the accompaniment of smoke and flames, crackles and sparks, and men's thoughts...

Alan and John had scarcely started to work on the spot fires whose numbers rapidly increased and whose size quickly spread so that soon they merged, when suddenly there was no more water.

"Water on!" shouted Alan. "Water on!" relayed John. The message was never heard. Alan observed that this was the second time at this fire that the water supply had been cut off - the first time was with another crew and had cost a house. The unspoken thought that now... Perhaps their hose had burned through and no more water could be expected... With neither protection nor shelter, and now no water except for the dribble draining from the down-hill hose, but with smoke and heat, wind and racing flames, self-protection became necessary.

They ran. They ran diagonally up hill. They panted with the effort and gulped smoke. The heat from their running, the heat of the summer day, and now the heat of the fire made the sweat pour out. The barbed - wire fence was reached and crossed. There is no recollection of how this was done. But now the heat of the main fire on the other side of the road prevented their reaching the road so they raced along the nature strip to get ahead of the fire and out into the open and so have safety and relief. The main fire seemed to keep pace with them as it continued to burst out in sections. John thought that if it kept going like this, then he just wouldn't make it. Suddenly he saw a small patch of green paspalum grass. Green among the brown. He dropped down into it for a few seconds, then he was onto his feet again and more running. More running that finally carried him into the clear. And Alan was behind.

Ahead on the road and coming toward them was the Menzies Creel truck and they joined it, for here were fellow men and equipment and radio and water. But then came their worst moment. The others' fate at the truck. They just didn't know...

Meanwhile Philip was trying to re-start his pump. Three pulls on the starter rope on the pump - still no spark. Water in the petrol? But with the fourth pull it started, and out again went the life-giving water through the arteries of hose. Philip could see none of the crew, let alone any of his branch-men. The remaining water was disappearing fast. Graeme doused the truck and crew before being relieved by Fred, and the canvas hose was guzzling water, too. No-one knew that it wasn't being used but never would water be deliberately cut off if there were any possibility of men being on the branch.

Water off again. But this time for keeps. The tank was dry. No more spraying for coolness. No more the heartbeat sound of the pump. Fire roaring. Men coughing - stomach muscles pulled in and upwards as coughs became retching. Shallow breaths so as not to swallow too much smoke - postponing the time for a deep breath. But there is no fresh air so the gasp carries hard smoke down the throat to the lungs again. More coughing. Plunge to the ground as hot and as smoky as ever. Thrust your head onto the space between the tank and tray of the truck. No pocket of fresh air whatever.

Fred accounted for all his men except Alan and John. He tugged on the canvas hose but there was no response. He made two attempts to move along the hose to his men there, but twice failed before he'd gone ten feet. Heat, smoke, lack of visibility, all drove him back. He tried to enter the cabin to use the radio but the heat there was impenetrable and drove him out - it seemed that the cabin itself could have ignited. The door was left open and a few minutes later Fred tried again; he reached in, grasped the microphone and came out again.

"Check 27." "Come in 27." "Location in middle of fire on Kangaroo Ground Road, four miles from Warrandyte. Two men missing. Am out of water." "Missing men." It was the first time in Graeme's sixteen years of fire-fighting that ever such a message had come from the Emerald Fire Brigade.

Fellow Emerald Firefighter Jack had earlier, but temporarily, joined the Menzies Creek truck which now was approaching the fire from the east. A group officer had decided to make a stand there. As this truck swung around the last corner Jack noticed the smoke all over the road. Yet such was the force of the wind that the smoke was not more than treetop height. It was no surprise to him to learn later that a house in that vicinity had been unroofed and that in one aluminium-piece.

Alan and John had just emerged from the smoke when the Menzies Creek truck arrived. They told Jack that OJ 27 was in the middle of it all. It was quite impossible to drive through the scene ahead, and besides there was a house to save. Work. But then the Menzies Creek radio operator intercepted a radio message, "Menzies Creek to OJ 27. Missing men are with me." He relayed the news to the Emerald three, and they knew that there were survivors at OJ 27.

At OJ 27 word was shared around that Alan and John had escaped and were safe. All thoughts were centred on the four in the fire. Re-moisten dry handkerchiefs by draining water from hose. Try breathing beneath one's coat. Seek fresh air but fail to find it. Sweat burning, stinging sparks on bare skin. Throats getting drier and sorer. Stomach muscles heaving inwards and upwards. No panic. No signs of it, but each was on the alert for it. The situation was far from comfortable but was improving. The wind began to slacken, the smoke began to rise and visibility increased - a truck's length, thirty yards... It could be seen that the old house was now burning. Phillip retrieved his helmet twenty-five yards away at the base of a fence post.

A yellow, council street-washing truck with a full square tank of water came slowly along the white line - directed in to OJ 27 by radio. The separated Emerald three leaped on board and were soon, once more, linked up with their comrades. No orders were given, but none was necessary. The lid was lifted off the tank. The filling-hose went in. Tank full. "Thankyou." Test the canvas hose - both lengths had holes burnt in them and were quite unserviceable. Pack up. Move on. Find more fire, extinguish it...

Routine procedure.



Emerald-Beaconsfield Road



Wong Hee Road

Training at Worrell Reserve



Emerald members supporting Monbulk at a structure fire

# AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

## PAUL YANDLE - EMERALD CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Following decades of service to the Emerald community, Ex-Captain Paul Yandle was announced as the 2022 Emerald Citizen of the Year late last year by the Emerald Village Association Inc. This honour was presented to Paul for 37 years of community service through Emerald Fire Brigade, the Emerald Emergency Planning Group, where he was a founding member, and Help the Hills Dandenong Ranges Task Force, a support team Paul initiated and coordinated in response to the significant storms of June 2021. In this most recent initiative, Help the Hills – Dandenong Ranges Task Force was a community volunteer-led response to the storm damage needs of under-resourced and overwhelmed community members. Paul recruited and managed a team of volunteers, managed logistics, allocated resources and liaised with other local service groups and corporate suppliers. With the support of a small, skilled team, he recruited and promoted the Task Force via social media and developed a streamlined process for accepting and addressing requests for assistance. He also partnered with a small number of external organisations that provided further expertise and equipment. Whilst a significant amount of work was completed for residents, the Task Force was prematurely cut short due to COVID-19 lockdowns. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from both volunteers and recipients of assistance, which again demonstrated the incredible resilience of our community and its willingness to help neighbours in need. Congratulations, Paul.



**Jody Yandle**



# CADETS



The Juniors Cadet Pilot Program Camp for 16 and 17 year olds, was one of the greatest experiences I have ever had with CFA. It started on a Friday night when 50 cadets came together from all around the state, we got to meet everyone and find out a bit more about each other. We heard some of the cadet's greatest achievements during their time at CFA and in general learnt about how other brigades worked and functioned. On Saturday, bright and early, we travelled to VEMTC (Victorian Emergency Management Training Center) where the cadets got to use the gas pads and play with live fire in different scenarios, these scenarios included: BBQs, trucks, a plane, a car, and a gas container, these were all props that were controlled by someone in a tower to ensure the safety of the cadets but also allowed the fire to become more extreme if needed. We also used BA which was a real eye-opener, giving a lot of us an insight as to what the course could involve if we wanted to continue with using BA when operational. We also used the TIC and in a smoke room where we practised looking for items and then went exploring some brand new trucks and FCV's. The cadets came from all around Victoria, from small towns to bigger suburban areas. I found this interesting as some of the Cadets came from very small brigades with only a few members. I found it a great experience as you get to meet some like-minded teenagers who were truly passionate about CFA. It was nice to be able to connect with people of the same age and meet people whom you could learn from even though they are the same age. On the last day at the camp, we got to play a few games like dodgeball and mapping games, as well going on a giant swing. It was a great way to get closer to the people and build stronger friendships. The whole experience helped to push us all out of our comfort zone and allowed us to work together as a team and gain knowledge and experience of working in the CFA. This camp is one of the greatest experiences and I am very grateful to have been part of the camp. I highly recommend it if you are eligible to go to the camp as it is something I will never forget.

**Trelise Nunn**

# AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

## NICK WALDRON - NATIONAL MEDAL

How many have walked through the station doors over the years since I joined in 2000 is incredible. The earliest Annual Report I have goes back to 1999/2000. Looking at the membership of the brigade at that time, including myself, only 7 remain in the Brigade (2 Life members included). So many great people and firefighters have come and gone. Does affect the brigade family when one of our current or past members passes away. Members that come into my mind are the incredible Marg Johnson, David Davidson Little (Doc) who trained me in the art of driving and my dear friend Simon Arnold. Miss ya big guy !!! Why did I join the Brigade? Arrived in Australia in April 1999. In August of that year, myself and then partner purchased a house in Emerald. It needed a lot of work to renovate and wanted an extension built. Just so happens that the builder we approached to do the work, Dave Cleator, was Captain of the Brigade. He told me about the brigade and was looking for daytime responders. As I was home for the foreseeable future because of Immigration Rules, decided to pop down to the station on a Wednesday evening to see what it was all about. That evening I joined the brigade. The rest is history. Long-serving firefighters and brigade members have many experiences throughout their service in the CFA. Some good. Some are not so good. There are many events and happenings that come into my mind. Have great memories whilst being the Brigade Community Safety Coordinator. From 2 years of a successful Community Safety Expos, attending Fireguard Group meetings in the community, being part of the CFA Reference group organising the State Community Forum from its inception to Street Corner meetings, community meetings at the station and attending events giving advice on fire safety in the home and summer. After many years in this position, felt it was time to pass the baton on to someone with just as much passion for community safety. Obviously, that guy was Simon Arnold. Simon did a brilliant job up until his sad and untimely passing. Over the years, have been on a few Strike Teams at various locations throughout the State. Obviously, the 2009 Black Saturday comes to mind immediately. Did two-night shifts around the Kinglake area. On the Monday and Thursday after Black Saturday. What I saw, especially at Strathewen and the whole area, was so distressing for me and I feel sure all other

firefighters. One piece of happy news that came out of the destruction. Returning to 2006, our tanker (I was driving) was up at Kinglake on Strike Team and helped successfully protect a house with the owner during a bushfire. Moving forward to 2009, on the Monday night, myself and driver Callum Bean who was on the crew in 2006 decided we would go up Power Street to see if the house had survived and find out about Marcus and his family. Unfortunately, we were kept so busy with fire outbreaks we didn't get there. On Thursday night, much quieter. So, we decided to go to Power Road on one of our patrols. All the houses at the top of the road that survived the 2006 fire did not survive this one. This really worried me as far as Marcus and his family were concerned. We managed to reach the location. The house was still standing. Most of the surrounding sheds and bush were destroyed. But the house survived. Then we saw Marcus walk out of the house. He was so happy to see me and Callum. Marcus told us how they survived the fire. Just!!! Marcus and his family moved to Gippsland a while after the fires. The other couple of incidents that do come to mind is the second bushfire up at Stewart Road and the structure fire at the then Café Marte fire in Main Street. These were the two major incidents I was Incident Controller. During my years as a member, a good few changes have occurred within the brigade. Change of vehicles with the arrival of a pumper, tanker and over recent years, a new brigade-owned Salvage vehicle. Forward to today. The salvage will, fingers crossed, be replaced by a medium tanker via the VESEP grant and the brigade has purchased a FCV vehicle. Both vehicles, in my view, should have been in place long ago and all thanks to Klaus for his determination and the support of the brigade in carrying through these purchases for the brigade into the future. We all know the climate is changing and we will get longer, hotter summers. The medium tanker will help in protecting assets in the town as a water-carrying vehicle. The other great event of note is the building of a new station which was long overdue. Must admit, it was a proud moment for me and feel sure for all the brigade members marching from the old station to the new one with many community members watching. A great moment in the brigade's history. There have been some downsides in my years in the brigade. One incident was where one of our firefighters



Gael Collins was hit by a falling, burning tree, and injured. At the time I was on the pump as was the driver of our tanker and did not see what happened. All members of the crew rushed down to help Gael and eventually, she was carried out to a waiting ambulance. What was really concerning is that a few minutes later after Gael was removed and crews had cleared the area another burning tree fell right where they were. In all brigades, politics and division occur. This causes morale issues, resentment, and mistrust among members. Brigades lose excellent firefighters because of personal issues with member/s. Hopefully, under Klaus's capable hands, none of the above starts rearing its head. If Brigade members have an issue or problem with another member or even an Officer, talk to Klaus. If it is not dealt with early, things can get out of hand. Believe me, it has happened in other brigades where minor issues have become major. This should not happen in this brigade. Have confidence in your Officers and other members. You don't and feel sure you won't like every member that joins the brigade. I certainly can testify to that. But, when the siren goes off, at a job or on Strike Team, respect them as a fellow firefighter. You have to work as a team to get the job done. It is encouraging to see strong recruitment taking place. Seems that there are new faces at every Brigade monthly meeting. Remember when I was responsible for recruitment. Plenty of potential recruits especially after big fires in the State. Then they gradually drop out for various reasons and was and still is difficult to retain members. In closing, it is always good to get recognition for the hard work and service over the years. Most recently being awarded the National Medal. I was honoured to receive from the Chief Officer. Once I was accused by a certain member of this brigade of working my butt off to make me look good and feather my own nest so to speak. Well. For the record. I can't help how this member felt. My thought was and always will be to serve the brigade and the community to the best of my ability as we all do when we join the CFA. Finally, what am I going to do regarding the Brigade and CFA? Still have a year left until the Group elections. Whether I run for another term as Group Secretary, I have not decided yet. Maybe most don't know, I live down in Mornington. Hence you only see me at Brigade meetings. We shall be moving probably to Pakenham next year at some stage but is not certain about that plan. Would like to think I could stay in the brigade for a few more years and maybe

help when I can with my experiences and knowledge. But will have to wait and see. The CFA is a family. Once you join, it is in your blood, and you can't get rid of it however much you try. You must be at training, stop eating your dinner or watching your favourite tv programme when the pager goes off. Middle of the night. The pager goes off. You are needed by somebody in your community. We all have a commitment, even though this is a volunteer service. Do not ignore the pager. You may or may not get on the truck. Just one of those things. Next time you may get lucky or get chosen. Most important. Attend training regularly and be happy.

### **Nick Waldron**



# FUNDRAISING

## MELBOURNE FIREFIGHTER STAIR CLIMB

Chris May had been a member at Emerald for a little while by this point. I had heard and watched some of his enormous fundraising efforts before and always wanted to do something similar. So when he asked one meeting night if there was anyone interested in doing the Stair Climb event with him in September, I put my hand up along with Mick Hamilton. This whole situation reminded me of when Simon asked for suckers to do Oxfam with him, surely I wouldn't make the same mistake twice. Anyway, I always knew I would get to the top, it was just a case of whether I could do it in a respectable time or not. So I started looking for ways to walk up stairs wherever I could. I discovered that the new Falcone building has a long and steep staircase leading from the main road down to the carpark so I tackled that as often as I could. I would always wonder if people were watching me walk up and down and up and down. Surely I must have looked a bit suss. Mick was a little luckier in the fact he had to walk up a long staircase to get to his workplace multiple times a day so he got plenty of practice in. The next step was to get used to doing my little routine at Falcones with structural gear and a BA set. I did that a few times and got a few worried looks from passers by. But it proved to be a great way to get the message out about why we were doing this in the first place. I'm pretty sure I made a couple of bucks out of those conversations so it was worth it. After a few more social media posts, Mick and I had reached our fundraising goals and were ready to go. We arrived at Crown Metropol early in the morning to get ready with hundreds and hundreds of other participants from all over the place. This event attracts people from all over the world and was great to see the support for such an important cause. We put on our bib numbers and headed towards the starting area. I chose to do my climb while using BA and Mick chose to wear but not donned so we had different starting times. Chris had completed his climb quite early and had taken up announcer duties at the start line. When it was my turn to go, I masked up, hit the demand valve and began my ascent. The first 10 steps to the first landing were easy and I remember thinking, 'this is going to be a walk in the park'. That turned out to be false with the next 15 minutes being very challenging indeed. The staff stationed within the stairwell were great, encouraging me and the other participants up to the next landing and really

cheering us on. About half way up, I was struggling. I was sucking in air quite hard and it was drying my mouth out. That meant that swallowing became difficult and my airway was getting irritated. I stopped at an landing and pulled off to the side. I looked down at my bib which had the name and picture of a FDNY firefighter that had died on 9/11. I was climbing in his honour. As cliché as it sounds, it grounded me in that moment and gave me a little extra boost to keep going. From then on, it was one foot in front of the other until I could hear cheering from the top landing. Walking out of the stairwell and into the top floor was such a great feeling. I was probably another 5 minutes away from my low air whistle so somehow had conserved my air supply fairly well. Again, the crew at the top were fantastic. They helped remove the BA set and take my jacket off, while getting me a bottle of water and a place to sit for a moment. I'd managed to cross the line in just under 16 minutes which I thought was a good first attempt. Who knows, I might try and beat that one day. Big thanks to Chris and Mick for participating with me and a huge thanks to the organisers for such an amazing event.

**Ryan Lewis**



# Santa Run!



Dear CFA

'tis the season  
Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year

Thank you for all you  
do for our community!  
Wishing you all a safe  
and Merry Christmas and  
a Happy and Healthy New Year.

All the best,  
the Stewart family 😊

# Strike Team Leader Group Exercise

📍 Woods Point, VIC

During November, the Dandenong Ranges Group organised their annual Strike Team Leader's exercise up to Woods Point. This exercise is over a weekend and aimed at current or future Strike Team Leaders to work on convoy driving, navigation and leadership. With everyone's pillow and sleeping bag in tow, a group of FCV's and the Commander's Prado towing a CFA trailer headed up to Woods Point. Following instructions from the Group Officer, crews would have travel in convoy, alternate vehicles frequently, and navigate to various destination points without losing anyone, whilst considering and discussing numerous scenarios along the way. Without giving away too many details, it was a great opportunity to test your driving and navigation skills, but also your crew leader/incident controller knowledge. After a long day of driving over the north-east region, we finally made it to Woods Point fire station and we were greeted by their Captain, and former Emerald 1st Lieutenant, Andrew Merlo. Andrew, Toots and support crew were terrific hosts as we were all well feed at the RSL. The crews bunkered down for the night - your choice of the heated concrete slab floor at the fire station or the hard wooden floor at the RSL with an outdoor dunny. Day two headed off on our adventures again and finally made it back to Silvan station that late afternoon where we departed for home. A great learning experience, but also the opportunity to meet new people from other District 13 brigades was rewarding. If you are interested in becoming a Strike Team Leader in the future, this exercise is something I'd strongly recommend.

**Klaus Brodeck**





Paternoster Road, Emerald



# Presentation Night

Simon Arnold Firefighter of the Year  
Best First Year Firefighter  
Officer of the Year  
Captains Appreciation Award

Vance Nichols  
Rohan Nunn  
Chris May  
Leanne Johnson



# Fire Calls 2022-23

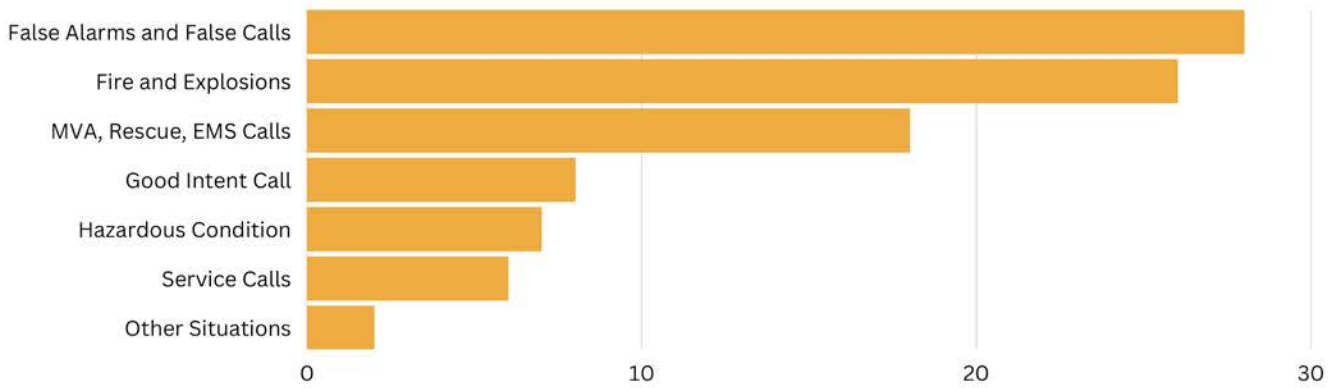
Date	Call Type	Brigade Role
5/07/2022	False Alarm	Primary
8/07/2022	False Alarm	Primary
21/07/2022	False Alarm	Primary
22/07/2022	Vehicle Fire	Primary
25/07/2022	Assist Other Agency	Primary
25/07/2022	False Alarm	Support
29/07/2022	High Angle Rescue	Primary
3/08/2022	Grass and Scrub Fire	Primary
3/08/2022	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
8/08/2022	False Alarm	Support
9/08/2022	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
12/08/2022	Non Structure Fire	Primary
14/08/2022	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
15/08/2022	False Alarm	Primary
15/08/2022	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
22/08/2022	False Alarm	Primary
22/08/2022	Grass and Scrub Fire	Primary
25/08/2022	False Alarm	Primary
25/08/2022	Gas Leak	Support
27/08/2022	Other Fire	Primary
6/09/2022	Grass and Scrub Fire	Primary
13/09/2022	HAZMAT Incident	Primary
18/09/2022	Structure Fire	Support
18/09/2022	Other Fire	Primary
19/09/2022	False Alarm	Support
22/09/2022	Other Fire	Primary
5/10/2022	False Alarm	Primary
16/10/2022	Motor Vehicle Accident	Support
18/10/2022	Burnoff Out of Control	Primary
23/10/2022	False Alarm	Primary
26/10/2022	False Alarm	Support
26/10/2022	False Alarm	Primary
28/10/2022	Service Call	Primary
3/11/2022	False Alarm	Primary
12/11/2022	False Alarm	Support
12/11/2022	False Alarm	Support
14/11/2022	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
14/11/2022	Washaway	Support
14/11/2022	Washaway	Primary
14/11/2022	Chimney Fire	Support
20/11/2022	False Alarm	Primary
3/12/2022	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
3/12/2022	Wildfire	Primary
5/12/2022	Washaway	Primary
6/12/2022	Motor Vehicle Accident	Support
13/12/2022	False Alarm	Primary
13/12/2022	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
19/12/2022	Structure Fire	Support
19/12/2022	Grass and Scrub Fire	Support
29/12/2022	Assist SES	Primary
30/12/2022	Burnoff Out of Control	Support
31/12/2022	False Alarm	Support
2/01/2023	Grass and Scrub Fire	Support
4/01/2023	Motor Vehicle Accident	Support
6/01/2023	Other Fire	Support
10/01/2023	False Alarm	Support
14/01/2023	Structure Fire	Primary
15/01/2023	False Alarm	Primary
15/01/2023	Burnoff Out of Control	Support
17/01/2023	Grass and Scrub Fire	Support
18/01/2023	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
23/01/2023	Wildfire	Support
24/01/2023	False Alarm	Support
25/01/2023	False Alarm	Support

Date	Call Type	Brigade Role
25/01/2023	Grass and Scrub Fire	Support
3/02/2023	False Alarm	Primary
4/02/2023	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
4/02/2023	False Alarm	Primary
6/02/2023	Illegal Burnoff	Primary
7/02/2023	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
9/02/2023	Assist Other Agency	Primary
17/02/2023	Grass and Scrub Fire	Support
25/02/2023	Illegal Burnoff	Primary
28/02/2023	False Alarm	Primary
14/03/2023	Motor Vehicle Accident	Primary
18/03/2023	Grass and Scrub Fire	Primary
18/03/2023	Smoke Sighting	Primary
24/03/2023	Other Fire	Primary
31/03/2023	Washaway	Primary
1/04/2023	False Alarm	Primary
3/04/2023	False Alarm	Primary
6/04/2023	False Alarm	Primary
9/04/2023	Wildfire	Primary
22/04/2023	Child Locked in Car	Primary
22/04/2023	Child Locked in Car	Primary
26/04/2023	Smoke Sighting	Primary
1/05/2023	False Alarm	Primary
9/05/2023	Animal Rescue	Primary
12/05/2023	Smoke Sighting	Primary
18/05/2023	Vehicle Fire	Primary
23/05/2023	Structure Fire	Primary
24/05/2023	Non Structure Fire	Primary
16/06/2023	Gas Leak	Primary
17/06/2023	Structure Fire	Support
28/06/2023	Structure Fire	Support

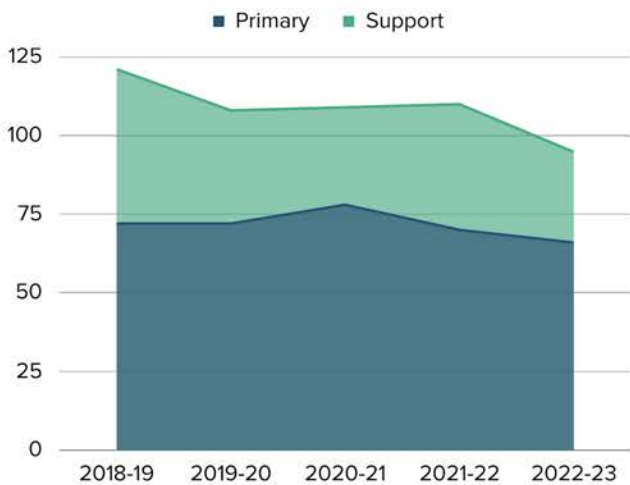


# Performance

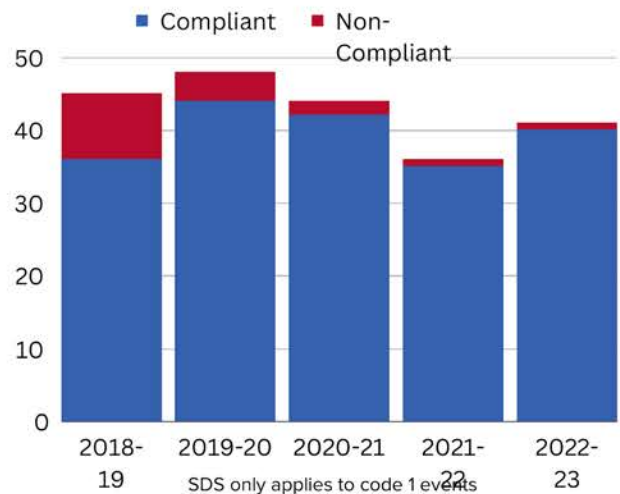
### Incidents by Type



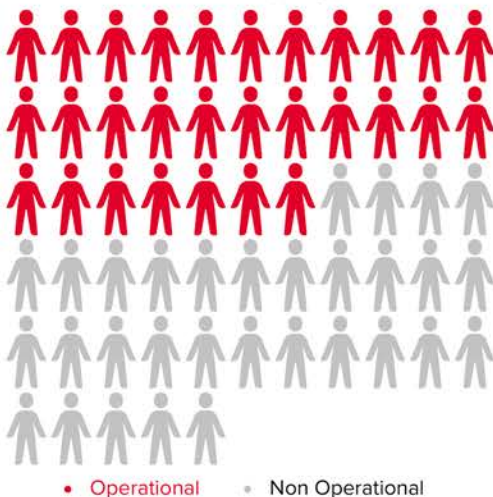
### Incidents by Response



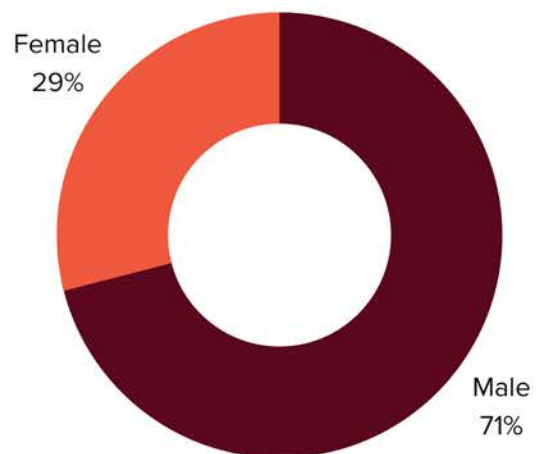
### SDS Compliance



### Membership Type



### Membership by Gender



# Membership

<b>Alicia Adams</b>	Recruit	<b>Eliza Roma</b>	Brigade Member
<b>Nathan Agius</b>	Recruit	<b>Jesse Roma</b>	Recruit
<b>Christopher Ballard</b>	Firefighter	<b>Darcy Roma</b>	Firefighter
<b>Tom Beale</b>	Firefighter	<b>Adrian Trimnell</b>	Firefighter
<b>Tarkyn Bower</b>	Junior	<b>Nicholas Waldron</b>	Brigade Member
<b>Klaus Brodeck</b>	Captain	<b>Bianca Walker</b>	Recruit
<b>Mitch Buxton</b>	Firefighter	<b>Craig Ward</b>	Firefighter
<b>Alex Cree</b>	Junior	<b>Ethan Weinberg</b>	Junior
<b>Angus Cunnane</b>	Junior	<b>Carl Weinberg</b>	Firefighter
<b>Chris Davey-White</b>	Brigade Member	<b>Brendon Wood</b>	Junior
<b>Thomas Dawe</b>	Brigade Member	<b>Ian Woodhouse<sup>1</sup></b>	Firefighter
<b>Rachel Edwards</b>	Firefighter	<b>Jody Yandle</b>	Brigade Member
<b>John Evans</b>	Firefighter	<b>Paul Yandle<sup>1</sup></b>	Firefighter
<b>Anthony Fairbridge<sup>1</sup></b>	Brigade Member		
<b>Lucas Farr</b>	Junior		
<b>Jean Fidel</b>	Junior		
<b>Amy Fontana</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Braidyn Fontana</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Mitch Fraser</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Russell Gledhill</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Kate Griffin</b>	Secretary		
<b>Michael Hamilton</b>	4th Lt		
<b>Kelsy Harris</b>	Brigade Member		
<b>Tyler Harris</b>	Junior		
<b>Kelly Harris</b>	1st Lt		
<b>Saira Hirschfeld</b>	Junior		
<b>Trevor Ireland</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Tanya Jogan</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Leanne Johnson</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Liam Keane</b>	Junior		
<b>Kaelan Kruzicevic-King</b>	Junior		
<b>Dylan Kurtz</b>	Brigade Member		
<b>Graeme Legge<sup>1</sup></b>	Brigade Member		
<b>Ryan Lewis</b>	2nd Lt		
<b>Cienna Maizey</b>	Junior		
<b>Alice Mattille</b>	Junior		
<b>Christopher May</b>	3rd Lt		
<b>Amber Mcdonald</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Shane Merrett</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Nha Nguyen</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Sam Nichols</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Vance Nichols</b>	Firefighter		
<b>Hudson Nunn</b>	Junior		
<b>Trelise Nunn</b>	Recruit		
<b>Rohan Nunn</b>	Comms Off		
<b>Eliza Owen</b>	Junior		
<b>Raff Richards</b>	Junior		

<sup>1</sup> Life Member

# Brigade Management Team



**Captain Klaus Brodeck**



**Lieutenant Kelly Harris**



**Lieutenant Ryan Lewis**



**Lieutenant Chris May**



**Lieutenant Mick Hamilton**



**Comms Officer Rohan Nunn**



**Treasurer Amy Fontana**



**Secretary Kate Griffin**

## Financial Support

The Brigade wishes to express their sincere thanks and gratitude to the following organisations for their ongoing financial support: Richies IGA Supermarket, Emerald Village Meats, Emerald Fruit Barn, Pakenham Opportunity Shop, St Marks Opportunity Shop and the greater community of Emerald.



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