

# From the Chief Officer

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## Regional Radio Dispatch

The transition of District 5 to digital dispatch occurred on Sunday 10 August 2014. District 5 marks the completion of all 16 CFA regional districts which have transitioned to digital radio dispatch on the RRDS network. The completion of this transition means that CFA now has implemented a major upgrade to our state-wide radio dispatch capability. In effect, all CFA brigades can now operate as Cat 1 brigades. It is timely to acknowledge the collective effort of CFA many members, volunteer trainers, District staff, brigade management teams, ESTA, and our communications and RRDS project team. More information about the new service including refresher videos is available from Brigades Online. I do want to reinforce that Brigades, Groups and Level 3 incident management arrangements must still have a plan to revert back to local command and control when large or complex incidents occur, or when VicFire becomes busy with many dispatches. A key element of Local Command Facilities is the ability to assume radio communications and relieve VicFire of radio traffic as the incident grows. Groups and Local command facilities should establish clear triggers for assuming radio traffic and ensure that they have sufficient capability (including trained radio operators) to undertake this important role.

## Appointment Of Assistant Chief Officers

We recently announced the successful candidates for the five Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) positions. These AC/O's will play a critical role in the transition to 5 management Regions. The ACOs will be responsible for operational capability and service delivery at a Regional level to support CFA's 20 districts and integrated model of service delivery in an all hazards environment. I congratulate **Peter O'Keefe, Trevor Owen, Garry Cook, Bob Barry and Mike Wassing**. We expect the new ACOs to commence in early September.

## Transition From 8 Regions to 5

The commencement schedule for AC/O's will include a two week period of induction conducted centrally in early September. Each AC/O will then spend two weeks "meeting and greeting" in their respective Regions. Following this, in late September, there will be focussed discussions on structures in each Region. The plan would see that the AC/O's will formally assume the reigns of their new Regions by mid-October at the latest. At this point, CFA would formally move from 8 Regions to 5 and the current Regional Directors will formally hand management responsibility to each AC/O. Regional Directors will continue to work as part of a centrally coordinated transition team. We expect the process of transition from 8 Regions to 5 to extend over a period of several months, allowing that there is a summer season coming up.

## DC/O Joe Buffone Moving On

I also congratulate Deputy Chief Officer **Joe Buffone** on his appointment to the position of Director Risk and Resilience/Deputy Commissioner with Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) responsible for developing the State Risk and Mitigation Plan; the Integrated Emergency Management Planning Framework; EM research; and leading EM resilience, consequence management & volunteer development. On behalf of CFA's executive team I thank Joe for his leadership, vision and commitment. The DCO position will be advertised shortly.

## Joint Recruit Course

The first joint CFA/MFB recruit course commences on Monday 18 August. This is the first course to take place at the newly-opened Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre at Craigieburn. The design, development and delivery of this combined CFA/MFB Recruit Course is a significant initiative and a priority project in the Emergency Management Strategic Action Plan (Interim 14/15) and the State Training Framework. Importantly the current high standards and curriculum of both agencies have not been compromised in getting to this point. The realisation of a joint recruit course will progress greater interoperability of the fire services, both operationally and culturally. The course will be independently evaluated and the results used to inform the next phase of the program. I commend everyone involved in the achievement of this milestone.

*"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." - Henry Ford*