

From The Chief Officer.....



Number 91

"Our mission is to protect lives and property"

12th September 2013

Fire Season Prognosis

Over the past 12 months, much of Victoria has experienced below average rainfall. The exception is the east, where average rainfall occurred. Forests are expected to be more flammable than normal due to the lingering effect of last summer's extreme dryness and heat, with dry underlying soil profiles and more abundant dead elevated, near-surface and bark fuels in these forests. Despite some chance of above average spring rains and reasonable winter rainfall, significant underlying dryness is likely to continue to be present in many western and central forests. These areas can expect above normal fire potential. Strong drying of soils and fuels has also commenced in East Gippsland, which may result in early bushfire activity if this trend continues. The exception to this is in coastal parts of the South West, Mallee and West and South Gippsland, where above average rainfall has occurred in the past few months. As a result of this rain, an average fire season is expected in these areas. Current expectations are for average to above average grass growth in western Victoria, and the north east of the state based on receiving average to above average rain during spring. The timing and severity of grass fires will depend strongly on rainfall patterns throughout spring.

Victorian Bushfire Handbook

Edition 3 of the Victorian Bushfire Handbook has just been released and summarises the operational management structures and systems used by CFA, DEPI and MFB for bushfire preparedness, readiness and response in Victoria. It reinforces agency specific procedures and common doctrine (e.g. State Command and Control Arrangements for Bushfire in Victoria). The purpose of the handbook is to provide emergency services personnel with a convenient ready reference to the key fire agency structures and systems of work. The handbook is targeted at Officers and Division Commanders and above, including members who have key incident management and leadership roles. Hard copies of the Handbooks are being distributed to all personnel who attend Regional Pre Season Briefings. The Handbook is also available on the IMT Toolbox > Agreements > Fire Agency Guidelines and Protocols > Victorian Bushfire Handbook.

Regional Radio Dispatch Service – Radio Reflash

In preparation for transition to CFA's new digital radio network, the RRDS Project Team has commenced scheduling Brigade visits to upgrade the software in CFA Tait radios. All CFA Tait radios must be updated with this new software to enable them to work on the digital network. Brigades in Districts 2, 12, 14 and 15 will be the first contacted to schedule visits, commencing 23 September 2013. In preparation for the reflash program, Brigade Captains are encouraged to contact their Members and advise them the reflashing is starting. Brigades in other Districts will be contacted progressively over coming weeks to schedule reflash visits. Completing the reflash is a requirement for each District to enable it to transition. Once radios are reflashed, they will operate in the same manner as at present. Changes to radio functionality will only occur once a District transitions to the new digital radio network. More information available from Brigades Online > Fire & Emergencies > Communications > Regional Radio Dispatch Service Project. Enquires to the RRDS project team on rds@cfa.vic.gov.au.

National Emergency Medals Future Nominations

To assist with planning and preparation for National Emergency Medal nominations, a guideline has been developed as an addendum to the CFA Honours and Awards Manual. Further information is available at: Brigades Online > Running a Brigade > Service History & Awards > About the Awards. Questions can be directed to cfa-awards@cfa.vic.gov.au or via phone on 1800 232 636.

"Miracles sometimes occur, but one has to work terribly hard for them"

- Chaim Weizmann (first President of the State of Israel)