

Supplementary Alerting Service: Release three out now

Release three of EMV's Supplementary Alerting Service app is now available to download from the Apple and Android app stores.

This is final of two releases planned for 2020, with release three including platform improvements, further improvements to vibration functionality for Android users, reporting improvements and general bug fixes.

More than 9,000 CFA members have downloaded the SAS since its release, with the app available free to all CFA, SES and Ambulance Victoria members.

CFA worked with EMV, SES, Ambulance Victoria and ESTA on the development of the SAS which works with EAS Paging to provide members with increased functionality and enhanced communication during fire and incident response.

With the SAS app members can:

- Set availability for turnouts and indicate if they are responding to an event
- See who from their brigade is responding and view their ETA
- View responding-member qualifications and competencies
- Chat with fellow brigade members
- Experience one-touch navigation to their station or the incident

Additional features include access to pager message history and robust privacy protection measures.

Brigade Management Teams and CFA support staff can use the application's dash-

board functionality to manage a brigade's pager groups, create reports and add new users, including brigade members who do not have an EAS pager.

EAS and pagers remain the primary means of receiving alerting and other important messages due their reliability and extensive coverage across Victoria, and CFA members are expected to continue to use and carry their pagers.

For more information on the SAS including the SAS User Guide, training videos, FAQs and more, visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au/sas

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FIRE INVESTIGATORS

Volunteer Fire Investigators are still reporting little to no progress on removing the arbitrary impediments that have been introduced by FRV that limit the use of volunteer fire investigators.

After strong representations by VFBV over the last couple of months, CFA has reported that a 'status quo' arrangement is finally in place and volunteer fire investigators can and must be engaged to ensure service delivery is maintained. VFBV continues to point out that volunteer fire investigators undertake

the same training and skills maintenance as their FRV counterparts, so there is no legitimate reason why they cannot continue to undertake investigations, and not doing so is clearly discriminating against volunteers.

VFBV will continue to pursue an outcome and will monitor progress.

COMMANDER VACANCIES

VFBV continues to raise concerns with the large number of operational positions

left vacant through the CFA/FRV secondment arrangements.

VFBV District Councils and Brigades continue to highlight the large gaps in the ability to fill key commander positions, with some districts working through another fire season with commander vacancies and in some instances no commanders at all. This places an unreasonable burden on Brigades and Groups as well as District Offices.

PROJECT TO PROVIDE INVALUABLE DATA

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operations in the short and long term.

He said the project was a huge priority as the data could assist CFA greatly in becoming much more effective in everything from its planning to responses and resourcing.

It will also help CFA to reconstruct and analyse the response or training purposes with a new insight into how different fires spread across the landscape, along with how firefighters work to suppress it.

"It will build a picture so that we can then look across the entire State and figure out how we can improve."

The data acquired will also assist in determining how CFA invests in equipment in the future. For instance is money better spent on buying a second tanker for a brigade or whether a water truck with a larger capacity would be more suitable.



VFBV INFORMATION: continued

EMPOWER AND CHAMPION YOUR NEEDS

Comments by Chief Officer Jason Heffernan

The start of a new year can be a time to reflect on the year that's been, and what a difference 12 months can make.

In January 2020, Victoria was trying to come to terms with the devastating results of many years of hot and dry weather. Now, significant rainfall through the winter and spring sees firefighters managing the challenges of grassfires.

A year ago there was no pandemic in Australia, no restrictions on our brigades and firefighters.

And this time last year, I was working with the NSW Rural Fire Service.

It's now been just over a month since I had the honour of being appointed to the position of CFA Chief Officer. During that time, a priority for me as been hitting the road and meeting our dedicated volunteers, as they truly are the heart and soul of this organisation.

I started my regional tour in mid-December, visiting brigades and district headquarters throughout the North West. I spoke with many volunteers over the four days.

In Ouyen, I had afternoon tea with captains from several brigades and listened to the challenges of fire service delivery in remote and rural communities. In Bendigo, I met with members at the pub for dinner. And at Echuca I heard from some of our younger volunteers and upcoming leaders who had recently completed the CFA Mentoring Program.

My travels to the West

Region were also particularly beneficial, allowing me to hear in-depth from our members from numerous brigades including Willaura, St Arnaud, and the three District headquarters.

From Melton and Mildura in the North West, and Daylesford to Dimboola in the West, it was a pleasure to meet some of our incredible members and to receive a warm welcome to our organisation.

I'll be visiting all regions over the coming weeks and am greatly looking forward to hearing from our volunteers and district staff. The passion and commitment of CFA volunteers in particular are second to none, and I believe it's crucial to hear their thoughts on the organisation's challenges, opportunities and areas for improvement.

In addition to meeting our members, my first month has also included the passing of a significant milestone for CFA and Victorian communities.

The campaign fires last year lasted for many months, but it was the during the New Year period that we saw some of the most devastating runs. It's been 12 months since we saw the apocalyptic red skies as the fires raced into at Malla-coota, and since fires from New South Wales crossed the border and combined with existing blazes to affect communities through the Upper Murray region.

But the resilience of those communities throughout East Gippsland and North East Victoria has shone throughout the last year. It's still raw and emotional for many, and the strength and leadership shown by our members during this time has been extraordinary.

Finally, since commencing in late November, I have been

using to raise the concern that FRV are not meeting their legislated obligations to ensure CFA capability and volunteer support is maintained.

While CFA has agreed with these concerns, there has been little evidence of progress being made to rectify it. VFBV will continue to pursue.



reflecting on the feedback and comments I have received from members to date, and with the assistance of the Deputy Chief Officers, have developed a Command Philosophy for the CFA. This philosophy outlines my expectations, in particular to the operational leaders, volunteers or career staff, including those seconded to us from Fire Rescue Victoria.

That philosophy is that every Officer, from Lieutenant to Chief, including those who are seconded to us from Fire Rescue Victoria, must serve to place the community at the centre of everything they do. We must prepare our Members, Brigades, Groups, Districts, Regions and State functions to the highest operational and professional standards. We must always be in a ready state to respond to fire and other emergencies and deliver on our mission to protect lives and property.

Our success as CFA Officers will be through focusing on the guiding principles of Lead, Develop, Deliver and Exemplify.

So from meeting our volunteers, to marking challenging milestones, and ensuring our leaders at every level have a clear understanding of our high expectations, it's been a busy first month and has shown me why our organisation is such a trusted and respected one. While January can be a time to reflect on the incredibly challenging year that's been, I am looking to the future. The future of Victoria's fire services; the future of our volunteers; the future of CFA.




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