

More than \$1m raised by CFA on Good Friday

In what was CFA's 70th year of support for the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal, CFA brigades and members across the State were hard at work helping to raise \$1,028,328 for the 2021 Appeal.

The overall tally for the Good Friday Appeal's 90th year of giving for the kids was \$17,122,879.

After reverting to a Virtual Tin Shake last year, CFA volunteers were excited to return to in-person tin rattling at traffic lights and door knocking across their communities in a COVID Safe manner.

Many brigades showcased their adaptability, embracing QR codes and the Virtual Tin Shake to complement their in-person fundraising activi-

ties.

Brigades that registered their support using the Virtual Tin Shake raised a total of more than \$45,000 online.

Following the successful day of collecting Chief Officer Jason Heffernan presented the cheque for \$1,028,328 alongside CFA members from Berwick and Narre Warren Fire Brigades.

Chef Officer Heffernan gave congratulations to all members involved in this year's Appeal.

"It was an honour to present the cheque to the Royal Children's Hospital on behalf of the dedicated CFA members right across Victoria," said the Chief.

"CFA brigades have a long and rich history supporting the Appeal and this year was no exception.

"Congratulations to all of our CFA members involved in raising funds for the Royal Children's Hospital – it was a fantastic effort and you and your communities should be proud."

CO Heffernan said the Good Friday Appeal has become a staple of CFA's identity and it was encouraging to see members back in their yellows, fundraising in-person among their respective communities.

"CFA is proud to have maintained its support of the Good Friday Appeal over the last 70 years and hopes to continue raising money for the kids for another 70."

"This result is a testament to our members who not only put their communities first by protecting lives and property, but also raising much needed funds for this important cause.

Prior to this year's effort, CFA members have raised more than \$34 million for the Good Friday Appeal to help the Royal Children's Hospital provide world-class care to our kids.

The money raised for the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal will be used to buy medical equipment and ensure kids are provided with the best possible treatment and care.

Spectacle insert available for prescription glasses for BA wearers

Members with Breathing Apparatus (BA) competency who wear prescription glasses will benefit from a new spectacle insert, which will allow them to wear glasses without compromising the fit and seal of their BA mask.

More than 400 BA wearers across CFA expressed interest in being issued with a spectacle insert during the roll out of the MSA G1 Breathing Apparatus.

Each member who receives a spectacle insert will need to visit an approved optometrist to ensure the correct prescription lens is fitted.

This may differ from their current prescription as the focal length between the eye and the spectacle kit will be different to typical prescription glasses.

CFA is working to establish a relationship with a major optometry provider that will meet the needs of its members and has the technical knowledge to work with specially-modified MSA G1 face-masks.

Spectacle inserts and fitting kits are expected to be distributed to CFA districts by the end of April 2021.

Additional information will be shared on the process of CFA members who require the kits on how to access these together with a list of approved optometrists closer to this time.



CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan (right) was joined by Berwick Fire Brigade member Meg Le Miere and Narre Warren Fire Brigade member Dan Kraan for the cheque presentation.

Committed to the values and ethos of CFA

Comments by Chief Officer

Jason Heffernan

In my position as CFA Chief Officer, I am strongly committed to the ethos and values of CFA and upholding these basic principles across our organisation. I expect CFA members to hold me to account on this too.

Our CFA members place the community at the centre of everything they do. As Chief Officer, I will do all I can do to champion the needs of our members in their desire and need to protect their local communities.

Since starting in the role, I've travelled across the state to brigades, meeting their dedicated volunteers and listening to their views on what matters most to our members - the challenges, opportunities and areas for improvement within CFA.

There are some key common themes relating to Training, Resourcing, Equipment and Leadership. These are the areas we will be focusing on as a priority.

We will be undertaking a review of our training. I have requested the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Council (AFAC) to provide an independent peer review with a volunteer focus. We will also be asking our volunteers to provide their input into what's working and what needs to change. I encourage all CFA members to be part of that conversation and have their say. More information on the AFAC peer review will be forwarded to members in the coming weeks.

Notwithstanding the improvements that have been made recently to improve CFA's approach to culture and compliance, we clearly must do more to create and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for our volunteers and staff. We are implementing a number of actions across CFA to ensure we create the right environment for our people, which can be found in our statement on the CFA Intranet. While we recognise that many of our brigades and business units across CFA have and continue to provide the right environment, additional support will be made available.

While the past fire season was vastly different to the devastating 2019/20 season, we experienced significant challenges with the COVID restrictions. I'm proud of how our brigades have been able to continue to respond to emergencies, undertake training and engage with their communities throughout this period.

We are now reviewing the past season and engaging with our district leaders and senior staff to identify what we can do to prepare ourselves for the next season, and more importantly, set CFA up for a successful future, following several years of changing leadership.

Over recent weekends, I've



been part of the VFBV/CFA State Championships and I was incredibly impressed by the level of commitment, skill and determination displayed by our junior and senior, rural and urban brigade teams. Congratulations to all those who competed.

Both weekends were a fantastic display of CFA at its best. The new approach combined these events over two weekends for the first time, supported by corporate displays highlighting new volunteer-support initiatives, appliances, infrastructure and innovation.

I have only been with the CFA for five months and in that time, I have witnessed the passion and dedication which volunteers bring to their roles in support of their communities - and I am proud to be leading this organisation.

CFA WORKWEAR DESIGN FINALISED

The design of the CFA workwear has been finalised following consultation with more than 3,000 volunteers and other stakeholders. The workwear will be rolled out later this year.

The workwear collection consists of long and short sleeve shirts and blouses, cargo trousers, straight leg trousers, cargo shorts, jacket, epaulettes, cap, wide brim hat and a belt.

It features a distinctive colour blue called Patriot Blue which is unique in emergency services in Victoria. The design provides a clear and distinctive identity for CFA members when they are undertaking duties in the community and as part of their brigade roles. It features a red checker stripe as well as the Victorian State Badge (Crown and shield containing the Southern Cross).

While the workwear gives some additional opportunities, it doesn't replace existing dress uniform items or personal protective clothing (the 'yellows' or structural ensemble) which is used for operational purposes. But it does provide a comfortable and distinctive alternative for volunteers when they are carrying out their important role of engaging with members of the community. Volunteers can also wear it for brigade meetings, incident management, site inspections and fundraising.

The Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officers and other eligible staff will also wear this workwear, where appropriate, to highlight that all are part of CFA – one organisation with a com-

mon purpose of serving the community together. Regardless of their role, all members will wear the same shoulder patch, as shown in the photo, above right. In a survey of members, there was overwhelming support for this one shoulder patch for all.

The workwear will begin production when the current tender process concludes around the middle of the year, and the first sets should be delivered around July or August 2021. CFA will fund the initial rollout of workwear to volunteers, which will be about 9,000 sets statewide. Based on the advice of brigades, the distribution to those members with critical community-facing roles will be prioritised.

The intention is to make the workwear available more broadly across the organisation and CFA is seeking additional funding to achieve this. After the initial rollout it's planned for the workwear to be a regularly stocked item available for purchase at cost from CFA's State Logistics Centre.

Following the rollout it is planned to review current workwear, uniform, corporate apparel and other items of apparel.

Appreciation is extended to the CFA/VFBV working party for all its assistance during this process.



VFBV BOARD VACANCIES

Invitation to ALL CFA Volunteers to apply

Closing date for written applications is 30 July 2021

VFBV advances the interests of all Victorian fire brigade volunteers and advocates on their behalf to CFA and other key stakeholders. The VFBV Board drives policy development based on volunteer input and is involved in management of issues of central importance to all CFA volunteers.

Vacancies for four Board Members will arise when the terms of Samantha Rothman, Libby Hay, Jan Cleary and David Sidebottom expire on 1 October 2021; all members are eligible for re-appointment.

The term of appointment will be to 1 October 2023 (two years) and applications are invited from interested volunteers to be considered for these vacancies.

The role of a VFBV Board Member involves contributing to VFBV direction, policy determination and monitoring the performance and governance of the Association. Also actively contributing to policy discussion at Board Meetings, networking with others about policies and issues management, and not only making decisions but being prepared to actively advocate for the benefit of all CFA volunteers and ultimately the Victorian community.

A Board Member Role Statement including the key selection criteria is available from the VFBV office or from the VFBV website.

This is an honorary position; no honorarium is paid.

If you are motivated by the prospect of making a difference for CFA volunteers, then send your written application addressing the key selection criteria in the role statement, plus an outline of your CFA/VFBV activity including the names of two referees.

Applications must be lodged with VFBV by Friday 30 July 2021 to:

VFBV, 9/24 Lakeside Drive, Burwood East 3151

Tel: 9886 1141; Fax: 9886 1618

Email: vfbv@vfbv.com.au