

What a great result for South West Region, with both first and third prize winners in VFBV's early affiliation payment competition, going to local brigades. All prizes were generously donated by GAAM Emergency Products, well renowned for its strong and long serving support of CFA brigades and volunteers.

Lyons Fire Brigade was declared first prize winner with Captain **Gregg Free** and Lieutenant **Lissa Free** personally accepting the prize. Lyons Fire Brigade selected a G Force Nozzle 38mm and a Gated Wye, with 65mm inlet

## VFBV EARLY AFFILIATION PRIZE WINNERS

and two 38mm outlets. These fantastic additions to the brigade's equipment inventory will be a valuable addition to tanker and put to great use during the upcoming fire season.

Lismore Group was announced as third prize winner, with Group Officer **Stephen Bignell** delighted to take the congratulatory

phone call and delivery.

As its prize the Group now has a set of Pelican 3415 Right Angle Lights (five pack) available for use. GO Stephen said that these torches will be an excellent additional resource for the Group's FOV. He also expressed his thanks to VFBV for the support and GAAM EP for the prize.



## CLASS A FOAM AND BUSHFIRES

When CFA brigades respond to bushfires, members don't always only use water in firefighting efforts. To make firefighting more effective, brigades sometimes use Class A Foam – a tool designed to control fires on Class A fuels like wood, grass, and other organic materials, and to assist in protecting life and property.

*What is Class A Foam?*

Class A Foam is a solution made from water and a small amount of concentrate. When air is added, it forms a foam that clings to fuels. This foam slowly releases water, keeping fuels wetter for longer than water alone.

It also reduces water's surface tension, allowing water to spread and penetrate fuels more effectively – improving cooling, reaching deep-seated fires, and reducing the total amount of water needed.

A blanket of Class A Foam also absorbs heat more efficiently than water and provides a barrier to oxygen, which is necessary to sustain combustion.

The foam:

- Absorbs heat more efficiently than water
- Smothers flames by reducing oxygen at the fuel surface
- Penetrates deep into fuels, reaching hidden hot spots
- Provides a temporary protective barrier for unburnt areas and structures

*Why use Class A Foam?*

Compared to plain water, Class A Foam:

- Puts fires out faster
- Reduces the risk of flare-ups
- Cuts down the amount of water required
- Helps protect property from further fire damage
- Saves time and resources for firefighters

The environment:

- CFA-approved Class A Foam is 100% biodegradable within 14–30 days
- When applied correctly, it has minimal impact on vegetation, soil, or land
- Care is always taken to avoid application near waterways, dams, or swamps

Safety first:

Firefighters use Class A Foam under strict CFA safety procedures, with protective equipment and environmental precautions in place. Physical contact with foam concentrate or the foam blanket without PPE should be avoided.

*What if Class A Foam is applied to your property?*

- Pastures and grasslands should be allowed to regrow
- Allow at least one rainfall to wash away any residue before grazing recommences
- Hay or stock feed tainted with Class A Foam may need to be disposed of
- Where Class A Foam enters a domestic water body, the water body should be flushed before re-use
- If Class A Foam is applied to a certified organic property, the owner should immediately contact their certification body to arrange suspension of the affected part of the property
- Where livestock has been exposed to Class A Foam, consult with Agriculture Victoria regarding stock withholding periods
- Organic and certified properties:
  - Class A Foam contains chemicals that may affect a property's organic certification status.
  - To help protect your certification:
    - Inform your local CFA brigade if you own or manage an organic or certified property
    - Install clear signage at property access points identifying your farm as organic/certified
    - Contact your certification body immediately if foam is applied – certification may be suspended until requirements

are met again

Every effort will be made by CFA to avoid the use of Class A Foam within organic and certified properties. However, the CFA Act empowers CFA to use Class A Foam whenever necessary to protect life and property. Crews always aim to minimise impacts while defending your land and community.

Bottom line – Class A Foam is a carefully used firefighting tool for Class A fuels that helps CFA save lives, protect homes, and control fires more effectively. If you see foam on your property, know it is used safely, strategically, and only when needed to control fires faster and to give your property the best chance of survival.

## VOLUNTEER SURVEY OPEN

This year's VFBV Vol Survey is now open. The survey is the largest of its kind, and provides an annual snapshot of volunteer opinion, using questions on issues chosen by volunteers.

All responses are confidential, with only de-identified results going straight to decision makers. The results are studied by the CFA Executive, the Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Fire Services Implementation Monitor, and the Victorian Government. Issues highlighted by volunteer feedback and responses drive further initiatives and investment to try and improve the things that volunteers raise as priority issues.

Now in its 14th year, the survey is the oldest, most credible and robust analysis of emergency service volunteer opinion in Victoria.

The survey measures volunteer opinions on what is important to them, and how well CFA is performing



## FOCUS ON READINESS, RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION

by CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan

As we move deeper into spring and edge closer to the 2025/26 fire season, we continue to focus on readiness, resilience, and community connection.

Across the state, our brigades and communities are stepping up to ensure we're all prepared for what lies ahead.

October saw the successful kick off of our new 'Get Fire Ready' Initiative which saw more than 530 brigades open their doors to their communities to get them prepared.

Whether it was talking to families about creating a bushfire plan, getting people to clear their gutters, conducting a PAVS visit, or pointing out risk areas on a map everyone who participated should feel proud of what has been achieved.

The campaign has been a roaring success, and we know Victorians took valuable lessons away from every interaction with our members.

We're proud to announce the official openings of three new fire stations which will further strengthen the local response from those brigades.

Golden Square Fire Station, a modern facility that enhances response capabilities in the Bendigo region, Natta Yallock Fire Station, providing upgraded infrastructure for our dedicated volunteers in the Central Goldfields, and Pyalong Fire Station, a welcome addition that strengthens emergency response in the Mitchell Shire.

These stations are more than buildings, they're hubs of community safety and volunteer pride.

Across the state, CFA Groups are continuing their rigorous pre-season training exercises.

From live burn simulations to cross-agency drills, these sessions ensure our members are sharp, confident, and ready for the challenges of the season ahead.

Fire Danger Periods (FDPs) have started to be announced across Victoria. These declarations are based on local conditions and mark a critical shift in fire risk. We urge all residents to stay informed via the CFA website and VicEmergency app, and to understand what restrictions apply in their area.

Our summer safety messaging is rolling out across radio, social media, and community channels.

From property preparation advice to tips on safe hay storage, these messages are designed to keep fire safety top of mind. Please share them widely and help spread the word.

Finally, a reminder that as the season intensifies, so too can the physical and emotional toll.

Whether you're on the fire-



ground, supporting from behind the scenes, or preparing at home, it's vital to look after your health.

Stay hydrated, rest when you can, and check in with your mates. Mental health is just as important as physical safety and support is always available if you need it.

Together, we are stronger, safer, and more prepared. Let's keep looking out for one another and stay fire ready.

## TICs donated by Community Bank

Community Bank and Dandenong Ranges Group Chair Deb Weber, are pleased to announce that 15 local fire brigades will receive Thermal Imaging Cameras (TICs) which are used extensively by brigades in many emergency situations.

"In 2013 our company provided TICs to 14 brigades and we are so pleased that these units have been, and are still are, being used by our local volunteers," Ms Weber said.

"We know that these units are instrumental in assisting members with search and rescue as well as backing out operations and assessing active fire situations.

"The additional new state of the art units being delivered to our local brigades will be well received. The additional TICs will allow

Community Bank Business Development Manager Andrew Gardiner and Dandenong Ranges Group Chair/Community Bank Board Member Deb Weber with the TICs.

brigades to have them on multiple vehicles ensuring they have the equipment needed to help keep the community safe regardless of which vehicle responds to an incident. Teams on multiple vehicles will be able to assess a larger area at any incident, whether it's a bush fire, building fire or a search and rescue operation.

"Thanks to our customers we have been able to support community projects such as this for the last 27 years. \$6.8 million has been distributed for worthy projects and we are proud that we are able to continue to assist volunteer groups in a meaningful way."

The Bank will present these to brigades individually.



## Election changes

Please contact Fire Wise if you are receiving this edition and no longer hold Captain or Secretary, Group Officer or Group Secretary positions. This will help to keep our database up-to-date when distributing the publication.

As we send a complimentary copy of Fire Wise each edition to the Brigade Captain and Brigade Secretary, as well as Group Officer and Group Secretary, this will continue to be sent to the same persons unless advise of any change.

The details required of a person newly elected to any of these position are name,

full address and email, as well as the title of office they hold.

Please help Fire Wise continue its distribution to the right people by informing us of these changes as soon as possible.

All changes should be communicated by email to gordon@fire-wise.com.au or by telephone to 0402 051 412.

