

From The Chief Officer.....



Number 82

“Our mission is to protect lives and property”

3rd June 2013

Winter Home Fire Safety:

CFA members are working hard to ensure every Victorian understands that they are responsible for fire safety in their home, as part of the home fire safety campaign. Sadly, the majority of fatal fires continue to occur at home. There were ten fatalities as a result of home fires last year in the CFA area and, on average, there are 12 home fires in Victoria every day. Last week's winter fire safety campaign launch was a success with celebrity chef **Tobie Puttock** leading a cooking demonstration for firefighters at MFB's Eastern Hill fire station, supported by **Sally Gerdan** and **Doug Summons from the Upper Beaconsfield brigade**. The strategy of getting our messages across through celebrity chefs will continue over winter – but what will make the most impact is the work of our brigades and members in their local communities. While educating the community about home fire prevention can feel like a never-ending task at times, collectively it makes a huge difference. It's one of the most important measures of our success and difficult to tally – the fires that don't start, the times the pager doesn't go off and the nights the truck stays in the station. It's something brigade members work for year in and year out, delivering outstanding community safety and awareness activities in their communities. There are now lots of materials and resources available to help you achieve big results in your community without too much time or planning:

- Contact your local newspaper following a preventable house fire to highlight safety messages;
- Put up posters or approach local businesses about putting up banners in their shop or reception area;
- Add a graphic to your brigade or business website;
- Put something in a community newsletter;
- Share posts from the CFA Facebook page on your brigade page;
- Visit a high school cooking class.

Thanks again to all CFA members working all year long to promote home fire safety in their community. I encourage everyone to look at the resources available in the Template Toolkit and share their initiatives on the CFA News and Media website and through their local media.

Community Led Planning:

CFA is conducting a number of pilots to test the capacity of communities to develop their own risk reduction plans that would be timely, informative and valued by local communities. The thinking is that communities, when supported, are in the best position to lead community engagement activities that result in the creation and ownership of disaster risk reduction plans. The ultimate outcome is an effective plan that has community ownership. The demonstration project is being implemented in 18 communities across Victoria. This project enables a community to lead the planning process and tailor its approach and outputs to meet the individual needs of their community. Whilst CFA is providing support through the engagement of a facilitator, CFA are not the decision making body for the project rather a supporter and provider of information. The approach is a 5 stage process: **Community profiling; Analysing the risk; Form of engagement & connecting with the community; Creating the plan; and Implementing actions and reviewing the plan.** The guiding principles include:

- **The community decides;** The community are the owners of the process.
- **Templates have no place;** The plan will be shaped through community consultation.
- **The facilitators role is to provide information and guidance;** Ultimately, their role transforms from facilitator into coach and mentor.
- **Community ownership of the process, plan and related actions are paramount;**
- **Common sense prevails;** The priority focus is on protecting life.
- **It's a community plan:** The process is a community owned plan designed to reduce the damage caused by a disaster at a community level. By reducing exposure to hazards, lessening vulnerability of people and property, and improving preparedness for adverse events a community will become more resilient to such events. This planning at the community level does not mitigate the need for community members to have their own individual's bushfire safety plans.

For more information, contact project manager **Raelene Williams**, or owner **Gwynne Brennan**.

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”

- Leonardo da Vinci