

# From The Chief Officer.....



Number 101

*"Our mission is to protect lives and property"*

23 December 2013

## VicEmergency Website:

The new VicEmergency website [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au) was launched last week. The website, developed by the Department of Justice and Fire Services Commissioner, is the primary site for fire and flood warnings, and shows emergency incidents in Victoria. The site includes bushfire incidents, as well as other emergencies such as storms, earthquakes, power outages and traffic incidents. Visitors can also access links to planning and recovery information on fire and flood providing a single all-emergencies website supports the Victorian Government's all hazards, all agencies approach to emergency management.

## Updated FireReady App:

An updated Fire Ready app (for smart phones) was also launched last week. The app provides fire warnings and information for smart phones. Built to withstand the high levels of demand expected during peak emergencies, it provides access to official warnings, information on planned burns and other types of incidents attended by CFA, SES, MFB and DEPI. Users will be able to see a live incident map for their current location. Info includes incidents, warnings, fire danger ratings and total fire bans. Users automatically receive push notifications for fire danger ratings of Severe, Extreme, Code Red days and days of Total Fire Ban.

## Community Preparedness:

The recent weather quickly brings our focus to the summer ahead. Along with our partners we have revisited our systems of work, refreshed our skills, checked and re-checked our equipment and introduced new tools and processes to help in our response to bush and grassfires. In a recent webinar Prof. Jim McLennan from the Bushfire CRC, reviewed his body of work involving interviewing those affected by fires in NSW and Tasmania. He found people with the least perception of risk were those who lived in "suburban type" settings on the bushland fringes of cities and towns. He observed that those with interests in farming and rural settings were generally more attuned to the risk because of the potential impact on livelihood. **There remains a high percentage of people whose approach continues to be "let's wait and see"**. These people are trapped between unattractive choices, neither wanting to stay and defend, nor wanting to leave early. This results in what Jim calls "**paralysis of action**". The challenge for fire services is to get the message across that: "Hoping it will be OK" is not a bushfire safety strategy. **I am seeking your support to ensure people living on fringe communities are aware of their personal risk and encouraged to plan to leave early especially if they currently have no plan.** A highly effective way to deliver this information is to knock on the front door and start a conversation. The Community Capability team have developed detailed address maps for the highest risk locations. We have copies of leave early plans and other simple actionable advice to give to residents to help them with their readiness. **If your brigade can support this effort please speak with your Manager Community Safety, Community Education Coordinator or contact Neil Munroe at HQ on (03) 9262 8501.**

## Merry Christmas:

I continue to see a high level of activity, with Brigades heavily involved in community engagement (and that includes Santa runs!). For some, especially in the north of the State, there have been early fires to attend. **I thank you for your hard work and your support during 2013.** May I take this opportunity, on behalf of the CFA Leadership Team, to **wish you, your families and all CFA members the best for this festive season and into 2014.** I hope that we all get a chance to spend some down time with those we love. 2014 will be a great year!

*"Family means no one gets left behind or forgotten."*

- Unknown