

From The Chief Officer.....



Number 110

"Our mission is to protect lives and property"

5th March 2014

Women and CFA

With women making up only about 20 per cent of CFA's membership, we need to encourage more women to participate to have a more representative volunteer and career workforce. In the past, CFA members have attended a myriad of events to recognise women, but we haven't had an opportunity to focus on recognition of our own 12000+ female members around the State. Following a statewide survey conducted in November 2013, a key outcome was for CFA to focus on recognition of female members. This year on Friday 7 March, to coincide with International Women's Day, CFA is hosting a luncheon for 150 CFA women. International Women's Day celebrates the social, political and economic achievements of women while focusing world attention on areas requiring further action. This special luncheon will bring CFA members and partner organisations together to celebrate the contributions of women to CFA. I'm honoured to be speaking at the event as are Mr Ken Lay, Chief Commissioner of Police, Mary Crooks AO, Executive Director, Victorian Women's Trust and The Hon Heidi Victoria, Minister for Women's Affairs

Advancing the participation and involvement of women within CFA now and into the future remains a shared responsibility. Whilst International Women's Day is about recognising the achievements of women it is also about looking to the future, challenging the status quo for women's equality and inspiring positive change. There are no females above Senior Station Officer in the career ranks. This must change. CFA is inherently conservative but committed to a significant and sustainable improvement in women in leadership roles and values their different communication styles, decision making, skills and experience. CFA will challenge our existing processes, culture and biases to make this happen. Words are important but actions will demonstrate commitment.

At the luncheon, the Minister of Women's Affairs, will launch the CFA booklet 'Celebrating CFA Women'. The booklet features 20 concise stories about individual women and groups of women from across the State, celebrates their acts of courage and determination and the extraordinary role they play in their communities. The stories represent the wide-ranging contributions of all CFA women, both on the fireground and behind the scenes. This booklet will be a valuable tool to support CFA brigades to recruit more women. Following the launch the booklet will be available from your district headquarters. An animated version will also be published to Brigades Online. More info is available from Debra Salvagno at d.salvagno@cfa.vic.gov.au. In May, a forum will be held to capture members' ideas around how to make CFA a more representative workforce, demonstrating our commitment to action.

I also take this opportunity to encourage Directorates and Regions to consider nominating a delegate (male or female) to the upcoming "Women in Emergency Services, Enforcement and Defence Leadership Summit" in Melbourne on 28 & 29 April. The Summit explores the under representation of women at senior levels of leadership and the hurdles that still exist that make it challenging for women to access and acquire senior level leadership positions. The event focuses on delivering practical strategies and solutions to both existing and emerging female leaders to optimise their leadership effectiveness in order to meet their career goals. Inspiring stories from accomplished Defence Force, Police Force, Emergency Services and Enforcement leaders will provide delegates with a range of strategies and tools to enhance their leadership effectiveness. Enquires can be directed to Deb Parkin at d.parkin@cfa.vic.gov.au who is co-ordinating CFA's attendees.

- Happy International Women's Day!

"The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me"

- Ayn Rand Novelist/Philosopher