

From the Chief Officer

Number 132 - 21 January 2015



2013-14 Fire Season Compliance Report

The 2013-14 fire season in Victoria was one of significance, challenging both emergency management organisations and communities. Among 78 significant fires were the Goongerah-Deddick Trail and the Mt Ray-Boundary Track fires in East Gippsland. In response to community concerns and as part of established debriefing and observation collection processes, the Emergency Management Commissioner and the emergency management sector compiled or contributed to the following three reports related to the 2013-14 fire season:

- Post Season Operations Review Fire Danger Period 2013-14 (Post Season Operations Review)
- Goongerah-Deddick Trail Fire January-March 2014 Community Report
- Mt Ray-Boundary Track Fire January-March 2014 Community Report.

All three reports identified opportunities for improvement through specific actions for the emergency management sector. On 4 August 2014, government requested that the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) investigate and prepare a compliance report on the progress and implementation of identified actions from the 2013-14 fire season reports. The identified actions related to:

- road traffic management
- community involvement in fire preparedness, response and recovery
- initial attack and utilisation of resources
- cross border fire arrangements
- other systemic issues identified from the 2013-14 fire season reports.

As part of the process, agencies and organisations were requested to provide IGEM with evidence to substantiate progress made in implementing the actions. Relevant stakeholders within the sector and communities in East Gippsland were consulted prior to finalisation of the report. IGEM acknowledges the participation and assistance of agencies and the communities in East Gippsland. If you are yet to do so, I encourage you to familiarise yourself with the report which is available from www.igem.vic.gov.au, the recommendations have state-wide application.

Please also note that the IGEM, Tony Pearce, has flagged that his staff may be visiting key locations during emergencies. The purpose of these visits is part of the evaluation and assurance process of our continuous improvement occurring in the emergency management sector. The areas of focus relate to the Compliance Reports identified actions. Please afford staff from IGEM every courtesy and assistance in their important role. I am also advised that IGEM staff will, where appropriate, be trained and equipped when they may be required to attend locations where there may be some risk from the incident.

Fire & Emergency Management Design Consultation finishing soon

Thank you to everyone that has to date provided feedback on the proposed Fire and Emergency Management organisational design either through your manager, online survey or via email. I am pleased by the frank, constructive and honest responses provided to date. Please keep your feedback coming.

The design we are proposing will enable our frontline people to focus on delivering services to the community and support brigades to do their job; and ensures resources are organised to provide services closest to the point of service delivery. Information about the design is available on brigades online or the intranet by searching F&EM COFT.

As a reminder, consultation is scheduled to conclude on 1 February 2015, following that time the feedback will be collectively considered and analysed as a valuable input to a decision on a final design and subsequent implementation.

“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.”
- Benjamin Franklin