

# From The Chief Officer.....



Number 68

*"Our mission is to protect lives and property"* 2nd January 2013

## Farewell 2Lt Peter Harry:

Last Week we farewelled 2Lt Peter Harry who died whilst on duty at a house fire about 2 weeks ago. Peter was a (nearly) 30 year member with the Gisborne fire brigade. He also was a member at Sunbury for a period. Peter's funeral was uplifting and dignified. We all saw an insight into a man who was a dearly loved family man, but who was also dearly loved by CFA mates and work mates. It would be remiss not to mention the fantastic efforts of the crews at the house fire that night who desperately tried to bring Peter back. Thank you to crew members from Gisborne, Sunbury and Riddell's Creek, and to the Ambulance and Victoria Police. **CEO Mick Bourke, Board Chair Claire Higgins** and I have been humbled by the outstanding support and leadership that has been shown by the **Group Officer Ian Hay** and **Brigade Captain Sam Strang** and his members. Peter's wife **Leanne** was emphatic in her praise of the brigade and of those who were involved in supporting her and the family at a very difficult time. To the team from the Loddon Mallee Region, (you know who you are): Thank you. We have lost a fine example of what it means to be a CFA volunteer. Farewell Peter, you will not be forgotten and your legacy will benefit many.

## Some Things To Reinforce For The Bushfire Season:

At pre-season briefings and exercises we reinforced the following key points:

- If there is a community impact then issue immediate community advice and warnings.
- Grassfires move fast: **"Hit Them Hard And Hit Them Fast"**.
- Keep information flowing.
- Ensure the intent is understood ("seniors: 2 levels up & subordinates: 2 levels down").
- Exercise foresight: you may not be able to change what is happening in the present, but through foresight, you can change the future.
- Always have a map (& make sure it's big enough). A "mud map" is better than no map at all.
- Log Everything: If it's worth a mental note, then it's worth a written note.
- Checklists are a great way of remembering what to do and what is expected of you.
- When under pressure, pay attention to your decision making process.

## 2013 – A New Year – A Renewed Enthusiasm For The Future:

As the festive season closes, it is appropriate to pause to reflect. CFA, like all organisations and emergency services, faces many challenges. I urge you to keep focussed on our mission. Remember who we are – a volunteer based fire and emergency service. Be inspired by the efforts of those around you – there is so much to be motivated by. **In all you do, strive to do your very best** (that way, you let neither yourself, nor others, down). **Take care of yourself** (a lesson we all need to dwell on more frequently and with commitment). Compassion is at the centre of everything we do. **Show compassion by taking care of others, including the team of people around you.** And finally, **stay positive.** Infuse an attitude of optimism, and a hope that, through our small (and seemingly insignificant) acts of good, we will collectively be stronger and better. What you do does make a difference. Together we will be able to make a future that is better for CFA and for all Victorians.

## New Year 2013 – A Busy Time:

CFA is strongly involved, with MFB, DSE, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water and the State Control Centre in supporting operations in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania. As a result, response to "normal business" may be a little slow. Have patience and bear with those who are working hard in the field and in the SCC. Looking back over the last 3 months rainfall, we see almost the whole of Victoria (indeed eastern Australia) has had below average or significantly below average rain. We are now in a 5 to 6 day cycle of fire weather, with next Thursday being the next day to challenge us. **Take care of yourselves and each other. This has the makings of a long and challenging fire season.**

***"Optimism is a strategy for making a better future. Because unless you can believe that the future can be better, it's unlikely you will step up and take responsibility for making it so. If you assume that there's no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there is an instinct for freedom, that there are opportunities to change things, there is a chance you may contribute to making a better world. The choice is yours."*** - Noam Chomsky