

From The Chief Officer.....



Number 95

"Our mission is to protect lives and property"

1 November 2013

Victorian Support to NSW

CFA's first resources were deployed to NSW on Thursday 17 October in response to a request for assistance from the NSW Rural Fire Service. Hundreds of Victorian firefighters from CFA, DEPI, Parks Victoria and MFB worked shoulder to shoulder on the frontline to protect communities around Lithgow/Mt Victoria and Blue Mountains areas at the height of the fire threat. I thank everyone that supported our NSW colleagues on the frontline and in support roles. I also extend my thanks to families and employers, without their support these deployments are not possible. The total area burnt to date by these fires is more than 128,000 hectares with a total fire perimeter reported as more than 1600 kilometres. 208 homes have been destroyed. Whilst the current NSW threat is easing and Victorian resources have returned home, it is fair to say that the extreme risk of bushfire across NSW will not change for some weeks. The Victorian forecast indicates a serious risk of bushfire for our state during the summer.

Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission Implementation Monitor Annual Report

The Victorian Bushfire Implementation Monitor Annual Report was released on 31 July 2013. The Implementation Monitor says significant progress implementing the recommendations of the VBRC has been made over the past 12 months and is generally satisfied that progress has been positive. The report states that the State has major challenges in securing the involvement and commitment of Victorians to meet their responsibility to take appropriate measures to reduce the risk associated with bushfires and that many Victorians are likely to overestimate their level of planning and preparation. The report is able to be downloaded from www.bushfiremonitor.vic.gov.au. In a localised context shared responsibility explains what a CFA brigade does for the community and what they expect in return. The State's current approach to emergency management rests on shared responsibility for emergency preparedness. I encourage innovative ways to get the message across. Be Ready Warrandyte offers one such approach <http://warrandyte.org.au/be-ready/video-living-with-bushfire-risk/> based on humour where conventional messages had failed.

Households on the Perimeter of at Risk Communities.

This summer priority will be given to communities with 'Extreme Risk' ratings. Research has emerged that 80% of houses lost in bushfire in Australia were within 150 metres of the hazard and evidence from the 2013 fires in Victoria, NSW and Tasmania indicated that most people on the perimeters of communities lived in houses that could not be defended, were 'blind to the risk' and most had no plan. The Victorian Risk Register has mapped properties within a 150 metre perimeter from the hazard. (i.e. forest, bushland). A workforce is gearing up to doorknock these properties. Approximately 70,000 properties are in the first target group

Specialist Appliances

Of the eight specialist appliances in various stages of commissioning I am pleased to report that one of the four new Heavy Hazmat vehicles was commissioned for operational use on Monday 21 October in Shepparton. The minimum staffing profile at Shepparton has been amended as a result. Bringing a specialist appliance to an operational setting is complex. It relies on sound design, expert build, consultation with a wide range of parties and quality operators - career or volunteer - who have undertaken extensive training. This represents a significant achievement.

The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But... the good Samaritan reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'

- ***Martin Luther King, Jnr***