

Community Safety Advisory Committee

2 Minute Briefing

Issue 4, 24th March 2013

Quick snapshot of the priority issues and actions worked through at the most recent Joint Committee meeting between CFA and VFBV. (Meeting held 24/03/2013)

PLANNED BURNING SURVEY 2013

Given significant community, government and agency interest in increasing the amount of burning conducted throughout Victoria since the Bushfires Royal Commission, VFBV are working with CFA to finalise a survey which will shortly be sent to Brigades, that will ask brigades to indicate their level of interest and capability/capacity to be involved in future burns. VFBV is advocating stronger support for brigades who wish to participate in more of these activities, as well as access to sufficient resources and training opportunities for brigades seeking greater involvement. The opportunity to remove administrative and bureaucratic barriers and disincentives is also being scoped, as well as a recognition of the importance of burns on not only public land, but private land, including road and rail corridors.

Recognising there are significant limitations on how much planned burning volunteer fire brigades can do and that planned burning is a high risk activity requiring trained and experienced fire fighters and resources, the survey asks questions about brigade participation, past, present and future.

ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS IN COMMUNITY SAFETY PROGRAMS

Delegates have long advocated more formal recognition not only on the role of community safety in brigades, but also access to formal support, resources, training and skills acquisition for brigade members wishing to be more involved in this aspect. Delegates are currently reviewing draft documentation arising from the Brigade Classification and Membership Project, which is now advocating a new BMT role called the "Brigade Community Safety Coordinator". This role is seen to be one of coordinating and overseeing brigade activities in the area of fire prevention and preparedness. It may also include activities which will build relationships which will help better understand community needs.

It is not seen to be the Coordinator's role to necessarily deliver these activities. The role may include coordinating brigade activities and overseeing brigade members' activities in the following areas: Vegetation Management (Fuel Reduction); Fire Prevention; Community Education and Information; and Community Engagement and Relations. Delivery of these activities will be influenced by brigade local risk and brigade structure and relevant training and resources would support the Brigade Community Safety Coordinator. The committee is also reviewing a draft resource kit which would be available for brigades.

RESIDENTIAL FIRE SAFETY CAMPAIGNS 2013

This year there are two residential awareness campaigns: **the Smoke Alarm Campaign** & the **Home Fire Safety Campaign**.

The **Smoke Alarm Campaign** now in its 13th consecutive year, is a national campaign in partnership with Duracell and Australian Fire Services. Its simple message with a single action "*Change Your Clock, Change Your Smoke Alarm*" is effective and each year a spike in battery sales indicates community response. The campaign aims to reduce fire fatalities by raising the awareness of the importance of working smoke alarms. Local brigade and regional engagement supports the effectiveness of the campaign launched April 5th.

The Home Fire Safety Campaign acknowledges the fact that house fires happen all year round. The campaign runs all year but will commence in May this year and is a joint MFB/CFA campaign. Campaign aim is to ensure all Victorians understand fire safety in their own home is their responsibility.