

## Please advise of any Brigade/Group election changes

With elections having taken place at many groups and brigades, *Fire Wise* is looking to hear from you with any changes to your Captain or Secretary, Group Officer or Group Secretary positions. This will help to keep our database up-to-date.

As we send a complimentary copy of *Fire Wise* each edition to the Brigade Captain and Brigade Secretary, as well as Group Officer and Group Secretary, this will continue to be sent to the same persons unless your Brigade or Group notifies our office of any change.

The details we require of a person newly elected to any of these positions would be name, full address and email, as well as the title of office

they have been elected to.

If your brigade or group uses a direct email rather than personal, it would be a preference to have this in future.

Please help *Fire Wise* continue its distribution to the right people by informing us of these changes as soon as possible.

All changes should be communicated by email to [gordon@fire-wise.com.au](mailto:gordon@fire-wise.com.au) or by telephone to 0402 051 412.

The distribution of *Fire Wise* is 12 monthly editions, of which four are printed (March, June, September and December) with the other eight sent electronically (January, February, April, May, July, August, October and November).

Your brigade or group is always encouraged to advise of items for publication, including photographs. Please advise the Editor by email or telephone.

## WOMEN'S CHALLENGE CAMPS

Some of CFA's female volunteers from all over the state have attended their respective Region's Women's Challenge Camps recently to break down barriers and push themselves out of their comfort zones.

The camps are run over one weekend in each CFA Region to provide the women in that area with the opportunity to face physical and mental challenges together while delving into personal development, leadership, team building and networking sessions.

The South East Region is the trail blazer of the Women's Challenge Camp, celebrating its seventh annual camp this year on the weekend of 2 to 4 May in Allambie.

Participant and District 9 Headquarters Brigade member **Amy Dalrymple** said that the camp was hugely beneficial to her.

"I left challenge camp feeling reinvigorated, inspired and empowered to be a more confident and driven version of myself, and to trust in my values and keep them at the forefront of my thoughts and choices," Amy said.

"The networking and relationships I was able to build were amazing, not only for CFA but for my professional development too."

In the North East Region, women gathered at the Ovens Valley Homestead on the same weekend to enjoy their inaugural Women's Challenge Camp.

Organiser and member of the Volunteer Sustainability Team in the region, **Tanya Lumley**, said it was important to create spaces like these for women within CFA so they can learn and feel supported.

"The goal is to have more people learn about themselves in a space where there are no barriers, real or perceived, where they can speak up and really step into them-



selves.

"The camp is a chance for women to be further supported and encouraged, where they can step into new spaces and new conversations with 50 other like-minded people around to catch them."

Participants enjoyed a panel discussion from pioneering women within CFA who spoke about challenging stereotypes and building your own self-confidence and pushed their bodies to complete outdoor challenge activities. The women also had the opportunity to ask questions of the Deputy Chief Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

The west of the state kicked off the camps this year across the weekend of 25-27 April, and Halls Gap firefighter and participant **Nicki Van Veen** said the women particularly enjoyed listening to each other's stories.

"It was an extraordinary weekend with incredible women. I am blown away by how much fun I had, how much I learned, and how much I laughed."

The North West Region's Women's Challenge Camp was held at Kyneton on 17-18 May and the South West Region's Women's Challenge Camp was also held last month with both being a great success.

## ANGERED BY ESVF

– from front page

*crisis saying 'you can afford to pay.' They feel aggrieved for our primary producers and the affect this will have on them; they are desperate to send a message on behalf of their respective communities.*

*"The rebate will benefit firefighters but I'd argue that a volunteer paying for the very fire service they are providing is immoral in the first place."*

The new law requires that 95% of CFA funding, 95% of SES funding and 90% of FRV funding come from ESVF. Annual reports will detail how funds are collected and spent.

According to the State Government the new tax will also be used to fund a \$40 million program to replace FRV's fleet, joining an existing scheme to upgrade CFA and SES fleets.

The funds will also be used to finance operations of several other Government departments which were formally financed by the Government.

Numerous CFA members, particularly those in rural and regional Victoria, have expressed their resentment at this new tax. One 30 year volunteer, also a farmer, said: "I've got to pay \$14,000, and

I'm expected to get out of bed in the middle of the night, jump in an old fire truck and put out fires. It's stupid."

Another quipped: "As CFA members we don't get paid for fighting fires, and we don't expect to, but this level is unjust and volunteers are now being asked to foot the bill for the privilege of fighting fires!"

A third described ESVF as unfair for all, not just farmers as there would be an impact on all regional residents as costs were passed on. "Directly or indirectly, everyone is going to have to pay."

As per comments in editorials by VFBV CEO **Adam Barnett** in recent editions of *Fire Wise* (prior to the legislation being passed): "... for every \$1 of new extra tax collected, only 7 cents will flow to emergency service volunteer agencies. So where does the other 93% of the new money collected go? According to the government's own media releases, the extra money will go to funding up to 95% of seven government departments, public servants and other entities including - EMV, Emergency Recovery Victoria, Triple Zero and Forest Fire Management Victoria and the support functions within the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

"Given each of these are already funded through consolidated revenue, and with no commitment that government is not reducing its current contributions to agencies and departments - the government will be able to pocket this money as 'savings' from its consolidated revenue, to redirect to its other budget black holes. There is certainly no other new output spending for emergency services identified in the budget papers which makes a mockery of the government's statements about supporting emergency services.

"Which takes us to the sustainability promise. We are told that this new levy will make emergency service funding sustainable. Well, that is exactly what was promised from the current Fire Services Property Levy that has been in place since 2013 and is only

potentially severe 2025-26 fire season.

This comes as many of you are already doing it tough, with drought impacting most of those on the land - many who haven't seen conditions like this in their lifetime.

I also want to acknowledge the high level of anger in parts of our community about the potential impacts of the Victorian Government's Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund. Our volunteers are members of the communities they serve and we respect their rights to be involved in issues that affect them.

Please be assured we hear you and understand that we have advocated for you and will continue to do so. Ultimately though, this is a government decision and we will do what we can to support you in claiming the rebate.

As an organisation, we need to uphold our mission to protect lives and property - we know that however angry some members might be, we trust that the commitment to serve your community and turn out to help others in their time of need will continue.

Recently it was National Volunteer Week so I want to take a moment to celebrate and thank our 52,000 members for what they do each and every day to keep Victoria safe. The theme 'Connecting Communities' rings true to CFA and what it represents.

Like any volunteer organi-

## D10 three commission new tankers

Three brigades in District 10 have officially welcomed brand new tankers to their fleets. The communities and districts serviced by Maffra, Rosedale and Perry Bridge fire brigades will continue to receive a high level of fire protection in the future with these state-of-the-art appliances.

Maffra and Rosedale brigades officially received their new heavy tankers at an event on 24 May, while Perry Bridge Brigade commissioned an ultra-heavy tanker at the same event.

The heavy tanker features capacity 4,000 litres of water, automatic transmission, four-wheel drive and crew cab to provide firefighters with greater on and off-road capability, safety and comfort.

The impressive heavy tanker also features improved firefighter operator interface and features to reduce fatigue and improve safety and ergonomics, including crew protection systems, electronic monitors, and electric rewind

intended to fund CFA and FRV. Last year the government collected an extra \$186M in fire levies by hiking the primary producer rate up 70%, and still reduced its grant to CFA!

"And while we appreciate the sentiment behind the volunteer rebate, State Council has formally passed a motion of censure against the government's lack of consultation on the design and development of the proposed levy changes prior to the government forming its position, which is a statutory obligation under the Volunteer Charter."

At 29 May 2025 the wording from the Department of Treasury and Finance website site reads: from 1 July 2025, eligible CFA and VICSES volunteers and life members will be entitled to a rebate on the ESVF on their principal place of residence or farm, which will be administered by the State Government through the Department of Government Services.



sation, we always need more great people to help us continue in our mission to protect lives and property across the state. CFA's volunteers are the backbone of Victoria's emergency response and I am always impressed by the diverse range of skills and backgrounds of our members - CFA is lucky to have you. With 1,200 brigades across the state, there is a place for everyone in every corner of Victoria.

Recently I have had the pleasure of personally presenting the Chief Officer's Commendation for Courage to the Jeffcott Fire Brigade Captain Brad Burke for risking his life to rescue a truck driver from a burning vehicle in late 2023. I also awarded the distinguished Unit Citation for Service to firefighters from Bacchus Marsh, Ballan and Merton fire brigade for their response to a serious school bus crash in 2022 in the Pentland Hills. Congratulations to you all, well deserved and thank you for your incredible service to CFA and your local communities.

hose reels.

The ultra-heavy tanker is a new type of appliance and arrived at CFA in July 2024, it is an important addition especially to regional locations with lots of open grassland in the area it provides fire protection to.

The ultra heavy tankers have the capacity to carry 10,000 litres of water. The tankers have seating for three crew and include a bulbar-mounted remote-control monitor which can be operated from inside the cabin to distribute up to 450 litres of water per minute.

District 10 Assistant Chief Fire Officer **Kade Dowie** said all three tankers will be well utilised in their new homes.

"Each brigade and their communities will benefit greatly from this upgrade in their trucks," he said.

"The ultra heavy tankers can be used in an urban environment, but they are primarily designed for use in grass and general firefighting where there is limited access to reticulated water or large open water supplies. The heavy tankers are also a vital part of CFA's fleet.

Keys to each tanker were accepted by Captain **Brendan King** (Maffra), Captain **Brendan Northway** (Rosedale) and Captain **David Read** (Perry Bridge).

Captain King (Maffra Brigade) said the new heavy tanker would have a huge positive impact on their response capability.

"It gives us better pumping, more water, all in the luxury of the most up to date vehicle.

"It is fantastic to have the investment into new trucks that really allows the community to benefit."



## VFBV BOARD VACANCIES

### Invitation to ALL CFA Volunteers to apply

Closing date for written applications is 1 September 2025

VFBV advances the interests of all Victorian fire brigade volunteers

Vacancies on VFBV Board will arise when the terms of four VFBV Board members expire on 1 October 2025. Of the four members whose terms are expiring, all are eligible for reappointment. VFBV invites applications from any CFA volunteer who is motivated by the prospect of making a difference and believes they have the skills to contribute to the VFBV Board.

The role of a board member involves contributing to VFBV direction, policy determination and monitoring the performance and governance of the Association. This includes actively contributing to policy discussion, consulting with CFA volunteers and contributing to the identification and management of strategic issues.

VFBV is seeking applications from gender and culturally diverse candidates in addition to a diverse range of skills and experience including applications from diverse brigade types and classifications.

Members should familiarise themselves with the VFBV Board member role statement and key selection criteria available from the VFBV website or via the office at (03) 9886 1141.

Applications close on Monday 1 September 2025 and must be lodged to VFBV, 9/24 Lakeside Drive, Burwood East 3151; email [k.bishop@vfbv.com.au](mailto:k.bishop@vfbv.com.au); telephone 9886 1141; fax: 9886 1618.