

"WATER OFF"

NEWSLETTER OF THE
RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
(VICTORIAN BRANCH) INC.



August 2024 Vol 29 No 3
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Annual General Meeting
NOTE
Burnley Complex
Burnley
Wed 21st Aug 2024
at 10:30am

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Combination Ladder Drill at Eastern Hill in the 1970's

“ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING”

**Burnley Complex, Burnley
Wed 21st Aug, 2024 at 10:30am.**

Volunteers Required
The Fire Services Museum needs past fire service members to assist on an occasional basis at the Museum
Please contact
Bryan Robertson
0418 129 252

All Correspondence to:
Phil Cleary
RFAV Secretary
PO Box 93
Numurkah 3636
Phone 0419 778 161
or email at rfavic1@gmail.com

Non financial Members
Members be advised if your newsletter has an expiry date of 2/1/2020 that means you have not paid your subs since 2019 therefore if no remuneration is received by the 2/1/22 your name will be automatically removed from the mailing list. If, for whatever reason any member is unable to meet this request please do not hesitate to call the secretary, (confidentiality is assured)

OFFICE BEARERS

President: Alex Shepherd
Vice President: Sam Capes
Sec./Treasurer: Phil Cleary

General Committee:

Col Harris
Len Manning
Mike McCumisky
Ian Geddes
Kevin Hede

**“Water Off”
Editorial Staff**
Colin Harris
James Harris

Valē

Robert Condon, Len Lette,
Laurie Plummer, Neil Blair,
Ian Hookey, Ray Carr,
Doug Jensen, Victor Mazzini,
Ernest Paddon (2022).

We offer our condolences to the families of these members who have gone on to a higher duty.

Sick List * In Care Facility

Stan Cameron,
Geoff Cuzac,
Jack Etherington,
*Gary Spicer,
John Williams,
Bob Chiron,
John Danby,
Dick Cleary

Note: If you know of any member who may be ill please notify a committee member.

Diary Dates

“ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING”
Burnley Complex, Burnley
Wed 21st Aug 2024 at 10:30am.

“Water Off” is edited by Colin Harris, 2 Gowar Avenue, Camberwell 3124. Phone 0432 302 414. Email: retiredfirenews@gmail.com
All articles accepted for publication by the editor are done so in good faith and no responsibility is accepted for any inaccuracies that may occur.
Signed: Colin D. Harris (The views expressed by the editor of this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Victorian branch of the RFA and Fire Rescue Victoria.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Hello all,

It is that time of year again, our Annual General Meeting in August. It's where we the Committee really get to answer to you the members. It's been a good year where we have increased our membership and had varied attendances at our meetings for various reasons. Still it was great to welcome members and partners to the meetings. During the year we lost members, family and friends to ill health and have member's family and friends who are still battling ill health. I and the Committee offer our condolences and best wishes to all member's family and friends and hope all goes well with your all. To the Committee members, thanks for all your input and assistance throughout the year. Special thanks goes to our diligent working **Secretary**

Phil Cleary for all his hard work as Secretary and his other role as **Treasurer**. We wouldn't be where we are without him. Also Special thanks goes out to **Colin Harris** our **newsletter editor** who puts together the "Water Off". It's a great read and keeps us entertained and we look forward to each edition.

Fire Rescue Victoria have been particularly supportive to the Retired Firefighters Association this year in allowing us to have our meetings at the Burnley complex and putting on the BBQ lunch for our members. A big Thank You goes out to **Marthese Kavanagh** for her wonderful help and support in getting us back home again. We love you Marthese!! Also a big shout out to **Donna Jevric** for her support and best wishes for our RFA - Thanks Donna.

I thank you all for allowing me to represent you and the Association in our endeavours to keep all Members Family and Friends in contact with good Fellowship and Connections. As you know ALL positions on the Committee are open. If you think you can help and put your thoughts into keeping the Association ongoing and strong, please Put Your Hand UP.

Yours Fraternally,

Alex Shepherd
President

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT



Hi all,

We have had a busy quarter with funerals (sadly). There were 4 RFA members in this last quarter who passed away. I hope that is all for a while. Our membership is dropping and we need more members. If you know of anyone who would like to be a member of the RFAV, please get them to contact me. Its only \$15 a year - good value when you can have 4 free lunches and the "Water Off" delivered to your door four times a year.

At our next meeting there won't be a speaker as we have a lot to discuss. Also, we require a lot more members to turn up. There are very important matters to vote on and your attendance as a member is required (please) at the Burnley Complex.

Note: All positions on the committee will be vacated and new committee members voted in. New committee members would be made most welcome to secure our future.

Phil Cleary

**Any enquiries call the Secretary:
Mob. 0419 778 161 Email: rfavic1@gmail.com**

What's the Future of our R.F.A? (Editorial)

The RFA is in trouble! We have finances in the bank! We have 300+ members and yet very few members contribute! Sad, really sad! Phil and I have done our bit. He the Secretary/Treasurer, and me the 'Water Off' man & on the committee. Well, readers and others who are in attendance at the August, 2024 meeting, we have had enough! Hours upon hours of writing, phone calls, computer work, all in our own non-paid time with no thanks from most. Many members don't realise the crap we have to go through to keep our group afloat and to keep the tri-monthly magazine coming out time after time! As the editor of Water Off, I do my bit and wait for articles, old stories, members memories and sadly, the in-box is often empty.

The financial contribution these days is from Fire Rescue Victoria, via Chief Commissioner Gavin Freeman, who wants the R.F.A. to continue to keep the history of the MFB from disappearing and finally dying a slow death! RFA member's contributions are \$15.00 per year.

We know time is precious, with doctor's appointments, dental appointments, and social - butterfly appointments and so on, however, the bottom line is, Phil and I want the RFA to exist and to exist into the future. John Berry and his MFB retired mates of the day, together with the assistance of the U.F.U., started this group with a view to have a social meeting every few months to stay connected - mates catching up with past MFB working mates. NO rank, just old retired firey mates getting together and keeping in contact. Yet today, with no input or help from our membership, we feel it's time to pull the plug! We've done our bit to keep it going.

I guess if we all had tons of time we could all attend many of the events other retired people organise and get to Lakes Entrance, Mulwala, Frankston, Sunbury and other places where we could all meet up and have a meal, a drink and socialise - yes, that's what it's all about! Well, with the RFA, we have occasional Guest Speakers, we have a structured meeting, we have a membership with 300+ members, we meet in Fire Services (FRV) premises, yet something magical is missing? What is it? Phil and I don't have the answer(s)? Maybe some of you who read this may have some answers? Why have meetings when 10 or 12 RFA members turn up?

I for one, don't want the RFA to wither away! I want it to be vibrant and to keep on going and be forever more. Yet, if our members don't step up, get involved, even if you are a young retired 65 year old, get involved! Phil's health is not getting any better and he would like someone to take over part of his role, either the secretary's or treasurer's role. Phil also organises to have "Water Off" printed, copies folded and put in envelopes and gets them posted.

Now, some of you old timers out there, can't always be having doctors' appointments, dental appointments, massage with the local physio? Surely you have a few hours on the 3rd Wednesday, four times a year to come along and have a catch-up with old mates on fire brigade property, an informal setting, rather than just a meal, a beer and then shoot through till the next pub outing occurs with no input, no responsibility, no commitment? Surely, you can do better than that! SURELY YOU (WE) CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT! Otherwise, the RFA Dies!

I remember the old MFB firefighters of having commitment! Be it at a fire, on station, hydrant indicating, building inspections, best service to the public, comradery and so on! What about a bit of commitment to the RFA to keep it going? – Col Harris – Committee and Editor of "Water Off" 06/08/2024. Note: "Water Off" may cease to exist as well!

The Library Wizard

Jo Todd, has been around for years! She's always there when you're looking for a book, an article, a fire journal or some fire information and you don't know where to look. Jo along with Leanne and Lisa (manager) rule the F.R.V. Library with an iron fist! You can't pull the wool over their clever heads. The rules are strict when you want to borrow a book or magazine.

Young Jo started with the MFB back in 1990 when the library was in Victoria Street, Abbotsford Training College, now, a high rise apartment block with a lovely view of the Yarra. The young Jo grew up in Springvale and during high school, worked part time at a hair salon. Growing up, Jo played, coached and umpired netball and played basketball. She followed the local Springvale football teams and is an avid Demons supporter. Jo spends most weekends supporting her Melbourne Football Club, even on these chilly days.

Later, Jo became an experienced security officer specialising in event management and guest services at Melbourne and Olympic Park.

So, I asked Jo how did she get to join the M.F.B. Well, she saw an advertisement in the "Age" for a librarian technician with our fire service. She considered applying for the job, although it was stated that the library may move to Laverton to a new training college in the future. Jo decided to apply anyway and the job was hers. The Laverton proposed building did not happen.

Now, it's almost 34 years that Jo has been in the job. During this time, she met her husband Colin Gurney (she fell in love with his cheeky smile!), has met 100's of firefighters during her career and many, many friends. (Robyn Cahill, comes to mind).

Jo has assisted on 81 Recruit Courses and many promotional courses and specialist courses. I asked Jo about travelling to places far and wide and some of her favourite destinations are in Australia. One of her favourite places to holiday is Kangaroo Island. Overseas, it's Vietnam. Jo loves cooking and reading. She also loves looking after her two younger grandchildren and supporting and watching her nieces, nephew and six grandchildren in their various activities.



Jo, Leanne and Lisa are there at Fire Rescue Victoria (Burnley Complex) to assist all employees at any time. They'll search high and low for information which people may require for a lecture, training course or general information or history on our and other fire services. If you haven't been there for a while, the staff would be happy to see you. Retired fire related personnel are always welcome.

Note: Jo plans to be around for a few more years! Thanks, Jo! – Col Harris (Editor)

Jo Todd & Leanne Potgieter

He's Still Out There for His Community Retired D.C.F.O. (Director) Dave Nicholson Reg: 2696

It's a cold July morning when I contact Dave Nicholson, and I'm in the mood to interview. He's not too busy today and I've a free day, after spending six weeks painting my 92 y.o. house. I needed a rest after climbing scaffolding, ladders and the like and I sorely needed a well - earned rest. We met at the "Pancake Parlour" in Warrigal Rd, Chadstone thinking an hour should do the trick. Well, 140 minutes later we finally concluded the interview and hear it is!

We got down to business and out came a book of Dave's history and copious photos from the past. Dave lived in sunny Sunshine, and so did I. He started MFB recruits in 1973 and so did I. He was always intrigued by the fire brigade after first sighting a La France ladder appliance outside the Ballarat City Fire Brigade when he was a young fella. Ballarat born and bred, he stayed there until he was 17 years of age. He became a Bulldog supporter and supports them to this day.

Dave left the family nest and moved to Melbourne with his older brother and found a job at Fisherman's Bend as an administration assistant at the Aeronautical Research Laboratories. He shared a flat in Footscray with his brother and then bought a house in Hertford Road, Sunshine, just down the road from the old Sunshine Fire Stn (44). The administrative job didn't suit him all that well, so he tried a few other jobs and finally started working with a landscaper, planting small trees along the South Eastern, Tullamarine Freeways and the re-built Newport Power Station. It was here that he met a couple of firemen (yes, they were called firemen – then!). Peter Adamson and John Orange were the young fellas working "caz" on their days off from fire brigade shift work. A word or two in Dave's ear and shortly afterwards, he was selected to become a junior fireman starting recruits on January 26th 1973. His registered number was 2696 and his recruit course was the first at the new Training College, Abbotsford. Frank Tueno was the CFO at this time. Fireman Dave, remembers some of his recruit mates back in 1973. Some of those were, John Watkins, Rob Horne, Keith Adamson, Brett Hume, John McFayden, Peter Egan and Steve Short. There were 23 on his course.

As a "Westie", Dave was to be stationed at 47. First day on shift was 47 Stn "A" platoon. Not long after starting his first shift, the bells came on it was a full sprinkler call to "Brad mills" in Yarraville. Stn's 45, 47 and DO Laurie Lavelle responded. On arrival, Dave was confronted with a deceased male cleaner, who had poured a flammable liquid onto the factory floor to do some polishing. The cleaner started the machine, a spark was generated and what followed was a massive explosion and fire. After the fire was extinguished, Dave was tasked with placing a tarpaulin over the deceased cleaner. (Great start to this new job as a fireman!). Dave remembers S.O. Kevin Roderick coming over to him and placing his arm around his shoulders and asking if he, Dave, was OK. (R.I.P. Kevin Roderick – great person, friend, fine officer and firefighter).

This job as a firefighter was a real awakening to the young Dave Nicholson. Dave remembers a few of his old work mates from those days. Ken Heddle, Kevin Hede, Peter Adamson and Jack Cockburn. He later switched to "D" platoon and worked with Noel Ewer, Brian Thompson, Jack Harbrow, Bob Undy and a few others (See photo).

After a few years as a "firie" having lots of turnouts, fires, false alarms, and fun at Stn 47, it was time to think about the future, not forgetting his wife and young family, a promotion to officer rank beckoned. Time to open the books and get studying. A Station Officers Course was held in 1979 and Dave was accepted and passed the course with flying colours. Note: As an F/f and Officer at 47, Dave learnt a great deal from experienced F/f's & Officers. In 1983, Dave followed on and completed the SSO's course. A few of the fellow candidates on his course were Ron Darby, Brett Hume, John Perry and Peter Maloney.

As time went on, the 1973 Recruit Course Reunion was held at Café Alma, on Victoria St, Abbotsford. Many turned up (15) and lots of reminiscing went on for the duration of the evening.

Dave moved steadily up the MFB ranks and passed the District Officers course in 1985 and found himself back at Footscray Fire Station as the District Officer. His officers were SSO Alex Shepherd & S.O. Noel Ewer – both great officers! Dave remembers some of those men out west who gave him good advice along the way: They were Jack Harbrow and John Cannon.

Now, a move sideways to the MFB Communications Centre. Dave was responsible for the 4 x shifts on duty as well as being the focal point for communications to the media & tabloids in regard to fire and other emergencies during his time there as the officer in charge.

One of the large fires which occurred in Melbourne during his time as an Assistant Chief Fire Officer, was being responded to the St. Kilda Town Hall on the corner of Brighton Road. It was a “red, red, red! He remembers the front of the town hall was unscathed, however at the rear was a massive fire ball of flame which was rapidly taking hold. This was back in 1991. A large bushfire fire he and a task force were sent to, was the N.S.W. bushfires of 1994.

When Dave was appointed as Director of Community Safety, he was tasked with leading a group from the Structural Fire Safety Dep’t including Dexter Hayes & Christine Ilioskos, who were tasked with ensuring the MFB standards for the City Link Project were met. This was an integral role in world’s best practice. He credits former CFO Geoff Godfredson with setting a high standard of fire protection including the use of a fire drenching (water), smoke extraction, fire hydrants and evacuation systems to ensure safe tunnels egress for all users. Note: There have been over the years, a few major fires and incidents, where the safety systems have been automatically implemented and worked perfectly without a hitch, thus saving life and property.

A few other names which Dave credits his successful firefighting career are the following: Alan Richards, Maurie Foster, Shane wright & Joff Manders.

These days, Dave is still active in promoting fire safety to seniors in the community. This is via FRV Seniors Fire Safety Program. Dave along with five other retired personnel give fire safety talks to senior citizen organisations, Probus groups and other like-minded senior groups.

Dave has 9 grandchildren. This keeps him very happy & busy. Travelling in the past, his favourite places were Greece, Mexico, Cuba where he travelled with his dear wife, Di.

Dave retired in February 2006 after 33 years in “the best job in the world”. He spent many years in Operations, Fire and Community Safety Departments as well as the Comm. Centre.

Come to the August meeting & catch up with Dave and some of your old mates.



L. Dave Nicholson today
 R. 1970's at 47 stn.
 B. SSO Course 1983.



RETIRED FIRIES LUNCHEON GOLD COAST CSi - CLUB SOUTHPORT 25TH JULY 2024



Apologies:

Fred Koolstra was holidaying in Vancouver.

Gary Wright selling his home – didn't want to miss a possible interested party.

Eddie McMullen holidaying at Port Douglas with his wife.

Ray Quirk unwell

Marcia Adamson having a hip replacement soon.

Please allow for errors in this report – all info came from Ian as I was home watching TV due to the fractured knee. This year only Ian was there waiting for the doors to open at 10.00am but he had 'helpers' arriving at the same time to give him a hand to set up for the day.

Ian organized the RFA, MFB and UFU flags. We're still waiting on a QLD flag!

This year Carmen (our co-coordinator at CSi) had set up tables for approximately 90 people but about 80 actually came. I received some last minute apologies due to ill health, work commitments, selling property, holidays and moving house. Life happens!

Allan Thompson handed the name badges so they all sat down to commence the day.

In our envelopes this year we had once again the \$1.00 scratchy, door prize ticket and thanks to Russell (RMD) a key ring for all. Only one person won \$3.00!!!!

Russell Hawthorn held our 1 minute silence. After this he then read the 'Fireman's Prayer'.

I spoke to Peter Coulson the day before to give him the numbers attending (on paper). He was pleased. He wanted to come and his daughter would accompany him however in the end he said it was just too much for him.

Cheryl Cobble won the "Life beyond the Bells" which she was very thrilled to receive. The book donated by RMD. Thank you. Winner of the food hamper was Deb Ward (enjoy!).

Cheryl Cobble sold the raffle tickets – thank you and we made \$200.00!

Also, I received monetary support from RFA - \$100 and the RMD - \$200. Thank you to both.

As you know I sent out 'A hoarders' wish list. The only 'water fairy' that brought along his gear was Steve Jameson. Well done. Your gift of \$25.00 for lunch will be given to you next year as Ian forgot to ask about it!

We also had a little gift for the ladies. Ian asked the girls who had been married the longest the final answering came to 63years. We had 2 winners for that year so the deciding answer came down the month of marriage, and it was March.

Ian delivered the mixed chocolate parcel with an appreciation certificate to Carmen who organises the seating for us.

Russell Hawthorn (with his 'sergeant majors' voice) introduced Col Harris RFA, Danny Ward UFU (Vice President), Tony Branchflower & John Howe (Peer Group Support) and identified to all at the luncheon what role they take. Col Harris asked if anyone could write up some stories please send to him.

We are all getting on in years but sometimes new things in life confuse us! Ian went to the little boy's room. Soaped up his hands but could not work out how to get water to wash off the suds. Not until another 'water fairy' explained that the system was activated by movement! Ian did see another firey walking out with soap son his hands - just thought that was odd!
I wonder if the Girls had the same problems?

Ian asked JH where was he staying with IG and KP - "Sofital" he thinks! God love him. Just as well the boys would look after him and take him to the right table.

Around 2.00 pm - 3.00 pm the Qld crew started to head off home.

Now next year (2025) we will be celebrating **38 years** what a great effort started by Pete Coulson. Thanks to all who sent texts to me and I was disappointed I couldn't get there although I don't think I was needed!!!!

More war stories were once again been told and laughter rang out from various tables.

Now **LADIES** we need to see more of you! I know it can be a little boring at times but come along and enjoy meeting up with other poor souls who had to put up shift work.

Folks I noticed a few new names on the sign in list so could you pleeeaaaase send to me your email address so I can put you in to receive further information regarding 2025 luncheon which will be held on the **31st July 2025**.

I also received a beautiful bouquet of flowers from 'The Boys and Girls'. I appreciated the kindness thank you.

Please be sure to log into our 'facebook' page under the heading of - RFA Queensland or RMD become a member and this will give you access to all the photos Russ & many others took on the day.

Cheers to all & look after yourselves! Thanks for coming! Gail: 0431485141 - Ian: 0417382935 - HOME: 07 55224321 - EMAIL: fagenes@bigpond.com



EVIE officially announced and first FRV livery photos released

It's official! FRV's first Electric Vehicle for Incident and Emergency (EVIE) will arrive in Victoria later this year.

EVIE combines the latest innovative firefighting equipment and technology in a high-performing zero emissions vehicle.

A first for FRV, and only the second fully electric appliance in Australia, EVIE will be a valuable addition to the state's firefighting fleet and allow the trial of this new technology.

Commissioner Gavin Freeman AFSM said: "We're extremely proud to introduce EVIE to FRV as part of the modernisation of our vehicle fleet."

"We'll be evaluating all aspects of the truck's performance to help inform future decisions about the integration of electric fire appliances into our service."

Commissioner Freeman said an expert FRV team, including representatives from the UFU and workshop personnel, has been involved in the design of the vehicle every step of the way to deliver the greatest benefit for firefighting crews and the Victorian community.

"We thank the project team and the UFU for their highly valued contribution," he said.

Expected to arrive in September, EVIE will be gradually introduced to service in early 2025.

For more information, read the news article on our website, and learn more about EVIE on the appliance's intranet page.



Victoria Police & Emergency Services Games

Sunday 20th October - Sunday 27th October 2024
For further information please email
info@emergencyservicesgames.org

Patient reunion



In June, Paul Diamandis, 53, went into cardiac arrest while at his son's football training at Donvale Football Club. Michael Wolff and Jamie Fabris were nearby coaching the under 15s football team and immediately jumped into action.

Michael called Triple Zero (000) before beginning CPR. He swapped with Jamie to continue compressions and raced to grab an automated external defibrillator (AED).

Michael and Jamie continued CPR and administering shocks from the AED while Nathan Close, Shane Bishop, Mark Sigmont and Cameron McGregor from FS27 Nunawading and Ambulance Victoria paramedics rushed to the scene.

On arrival, firefighters and paramedics worked together, continuing CPR to stabilise Paul.

Paul was transported to Box Hill Hospital and has recovered to make a return to his beloved local footy club. He reunited with Michael, Jamie and the firefighters and paramedics who helped save his life.

Michael and Jamie's quick use of CPR training and an AED, while quickly calling Triple Zero (000), played a major role in the successful outcome.

Peer support is available to Retired Firefighters and Associated Members

FRV

Employee Assistance Coordinator

Irina Tchernitskaia – PH: 0407 665 174

Email:- irina.tchernitskaia@frv.vic.gov.au

Peer Coordinators

Chloe Henderson PH: 0417 538 289

Scott Darcy PH: 0429 771 849

Email:- sdarcy@frv.vic.gov.au

Retirees

John Howe PH: 9729 0984—MO: 0417 112 993

Tony Branchflower Retired SSO MO: 0400 695 622

Peer Coordinator Trent Egan

PH: 0448 071 299

Email:- Careerpeercoordinator@frv.vic.gov.au

NOTICE

For all future RFA membership payments, electronic transfers, internet banking etc RFA new banking details are as follows:

**GOULBURN MURRAY
Credit Union
BSB 803 078 - Account No 37460**

**Any queries, contact:
Phil Cleary - Secretary**

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