

"WATER OFF"

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



February 2020. Vol. 24 No.1
Inc/No: A16839F

BUSHFIRE PACKAGE OF \$40.00 PER DAY - GIPPSLAND SUFFERS TOURISM SLUMP - BUCHAN PAYS HIGH PRICE AS LOCALS WAIT FOR HELP -- THE 2009 BLACK SATURDAY FIRES SHOWED US THAT WHILE THE BUSH RECOVERS, MANY OF THE HUMAN SURVIVORS REMAINED PERMANENTLY DAMAGED - VOLUNTEERS: WHO GETS PAID WHAT! - SCOTT MORRISON HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WILL OPEN THE TREASURY SAFE TO SENSIBLE INITIATIVES FOR THE REBUILD. HERE IS A REAL OPPORTUNITY FOR THERE TO BE SOME GOOD FROM THE DARKNESS - MONEY ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH. VISITORS NEED TO COME & RETURN (WHEN SAFE) TO PLACES LIKE PAYNESVILLE, BRIGHT, CORRYONG AND BAIRNESDALE. THE BUSINESS OWNERS THERE DON'T WANT CHARITY, THEY JUST WANT CUSTOMERS

- STOCK AND PASTURE AND WILL TAKE YEARS RESPONSE TEAMS WERE GOVERNMENT AFTER RESCUE ANIMALS IN BUSHFIRES, HOWEVER MYSTERIOUSLY

NOW BEING WILDLIFE GROUPS MONEY TO THE NEED IT, NOT

THE MOMENT - TO BURY

OFFER DISASTER AID MONEY - CANGIVE CROSS - SALVATION GOVERNMENT HAS MILLION EMERGENCY SERVICES PACKAGE AREAS - FIRES SPARK ADANI & CLIMATE

OUR LIVES" FAMILY PREPARES TO WITHOUT THE PINA COLADAS - ALPINE REGION - SIKH GROUP COMES CURRIES IN THE FIRE-RAVAGED EASTERN

BEING TORN APART AMID AN ESCALATING IN MALLACOOTA SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO SAFETY ABOARD A NAVY SHIP AND MAKING THE DECISION TO STAY BEHIND AND DEFEND THEIR TOWN AGAINST TODAY'S LOOMING THREAT - RESPIRATORY EXPERT PROF. JOHN WILSON SAID A COMPREHENSIVE AND CO-ORDINATED PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE WAS NEEDED. WE DON'T KNOW YET WHAT THE IMPACT THIS PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO BUSHFIRE SMOKE IS GOING TO HAVE - VOLUNTEER & PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS WORKING TOGETHER WITH MANY OTHER ASSOCIATED AGENCIES.

Index

- 2 Annual General Meeting
- 3 President's & Secretary/
Treasurer's. Report
- 4 Minutes of AGM
- 5 CEO/CO update
- 6 Bushfire Statistics
- 7 MFB's longest server
- 8 Melbourne and beyond
- 9 Landfill hazards
- 10 Gone but not forgotten
- 12 Retirees holding cash?

HAVE BEEN DECIMATED TO RECOVER - RAPID SET UP BY THE STATE BLACK SATURDAY TO THE EVENT OF FUTURE THE SCHEME WAS SHELVED IN A MOVE SLAMMED BY

- LET'S GET THE PEOPLE WHO BECAUSE IT'S HAPPENING AT

ARMY CALLED IN LIVESTOCK - BANKS

- SPOTS STARS PLEDGE BUSHFIRE APPEAL - RED

ARMY - FEDERAL ANNOUNCED A \$76

MENTAL HEALTH FOR FIRE AFFECTED

WORLD WIDE ANGER ON CHANGE - "FIGHT OF

DEFEND HOME - CRUISE SHIP DEVASTATION MARCHES ACROSS

TO THE RESCUE WITH HUNDREDS OF FREE VICTORIA - VICTORIAN FAMILIES ARE

STATEWIDE BUSHFIRE CRISIS, WITH PARENTS

IN MALLACOOTA SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO SAFETY ABOARD A NAVY SHIP AND MAKING THE DECISION TO STAY BEHIND AND DEFEND THEIR TOWN AGAINST TODAY'S LOOMING THREAT - RESPIRATORY EXPERT PROF. JOHN WILSON SAID A COMPREHENSIVE AND CO-ORDINATED PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE WAS NEEDED. WE DON'T KNOW YET WHAT THE IMPACT THIS PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO BUSHFIRE SMOKE IS GOING TO HAVE - VOLUNTEER & PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS WORKING TOGETHER WITH MANY OTHER ASSOCIATED AGENCIES.

WORLD WIDE ANGER ON CHANGE - "FIGHT OF

DEFEND HOME - CRUISE SHIP DEVASTATION MARCHES ACROSS

“GENERAL MEETING”

Notice is hereby given that the next General Meeting will be held at the Burnley Complex 450
Burnley St. Richmond.

1030 Hours, Wednesday 19th February 2020

AGENDA ITEMS.

**Minutes of last General meeting
President’s Report
Secretary/Treasurer’s Report
Guest Speaker;
General Business**

**Allan Roberts
SECRETARY/TREASURER
Address all correspondence to:
Allan Roberts
Unit 158 Mernda Retirement Village
89 Galloway Drive
Mernda Vic 3754
Telephone: Mob: 0433 007 720
Email: rfavic1@gmail.com**

Please come along, bring your partner and have your say in the running of the Association. Join in the fellowship of your old friends and make new ones.

Lunch available.

**All wives and partners welcome
Please join us!**

Diary Dates 2020

**February 19 General Meeting
May 20 General Meeting
August 19 General Meeting
November 18 Annual General Meeting**

Non financial Members

Members be advised if your newsletter has an expiry date of 2/1/2019 that means you have not paid your subs since 2018 therefore if no remuneration is received by the 2/1/20 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: Allan Roberts

General Committee:

Arthur (Sam) Capes
Mike McCumisky
Len Manning
Ian Geddes
Kevin Hede
Colin Harris

**“Water Off”
Editorial Staff
Colin Harris
John Laverick**

Auditor:
Mike Enticott

SICK LIST (* In Nursing Home)

Graham Barcham	Alan James*
John Brown*	John Lake
Bob Brunning	Archie McLachlan
Bob Cameron	Harry Mitchell
Stan Cameron	Les Napper
Harold Connell	Michael Phelan
Stan Devlin	Dick Prendergast
Tom Driscoll	Trevor Reed
Jack Etherton*	Gary Spicer
Ian Fowler	John Schintler
Rudi Froeschle	Graeme Taylor
Eddie Gilbertson	Laurie Trewin
John Hancock*	Ray Wellard
John Hansford	John Whiteoak
Noel (Dutchy) Holland	John Williams
Bob Horgan	Tom Williamson*

We wish these members a speedy recovery

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

MFB /CFA Valě

Rex Baker
Dave Davies
Peter Driscoll
Bill Grant
Mick Hindmarsh
Lance Phillips
John Wright

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

**Don’t forget the RFA website
www.rfav.com.au**

“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)



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I've always looked forward to the Christmas and New Year's period to catch up with Family and Friends to reminisce about good times past and what may wait for us in the future.

I think about Friends who have passed during the year and hope their Families are OK. This year however is a little hard to comprehend for it seems Australia is burning down, we have lost Life, Property, Wildlife and heaps of great Bushland in all States. From September 2019 to now the fires are still burning and still threatening communities and we still don't know where it all will end.

The bravery of all Firefighters, Police, SES, Ambulance, Air crews and now Military personnel in trying to deal with this catastrophe is something to be very PROUD of. We The Retired Firefighters Association wish them the best of luck and good health in the days ahead. To their Families thank you for letting them help us to keep safe.

When it's all over lets honour them as HERO'S and great AUSTRALIANS.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Please give your family and friends details on contacting the RFA so we may be able to help you or your family members with support if required.

Special thanks to John Laverick, for his ongoing help to Col Harris with Water Off.

Thanks to Colin Harris, Kristina Starnawski and Mark Carter for helping out with Gone But Not Forgotten.

For your information Russell Hawthorn is looking after all bereavements for me and if you need anything special required for you please contact Russell on: 0409 187 945

Please make sure that your family knows how to get in touch with the RFA for any assistance.

New Members;

Shane Harding

David Mann

PLEASE NOTE: WHEN PAYING BY CHEQUE MAKE OUT TO RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION.

RFA BANK DETAILS PAYMENT.

**From Firefighters Credit Co. Op.
TO Account: Retired Firefighters Association.
Account: No: 91469S1**

In reference; put your name.

From another Bank:

BSB: 803-209.

Account: Retired Firefighters Association.

Account: No: 91469.

In reference; put your name.

**PLEASE MAKE CHEQUE'S PAYABLE
TO: RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS
ASSOCIATION.**

WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A BBQ MILL PARK DATE:

SATURDAY 7th MARCH 2020

On behalf of all members express we our thanks and gratitude for the support that MFB Burnley staff collectively provided to the RFA members at their BBQ's following all our Meetings.

TREASURERS REPORT.

Banked \$2,725.00 from the Bunnings BBQ.
Donated to: Kids With Cancer Foundation. \$500.00
Closing Balance: 10th January 2020
Running account S1 = \$3,645.39.
Fix Term 6 Months L1 Account: = \$7,332.90.

Allan Roberts Treasurer.

Please have a Safe and Happy New Year.

UFU FAMILY PICNIC DAY

The UFU Annual Picnic Family Day is one of the main days on the UFU social calendar and a great opportunity for members of our Union and their families and friends to come together and forge and strengthen strong bonds that our Union prides itself on.

WHEN: Sunday 16th February
WHERE: Moonee Valley Racecourse
TIME: 10am – 4pm

Please note NEW car parking details for 2020:
Complimentary car parking will be provided in the Centre Car Park, accessible via Dean Street – Gate 6 or Wilson Street – Gate 7

For catering purposes please RSVP to Ruby at reception@ufuVIC.asn.au or by phoning the UFU office on 9419 8811.

Minutes of RFA Annual General Meeting 20th November 2019

President, Alex Shepherd welcomed members and their partners to the meeting.

Attendance 35 – Apologies 12

One minute silence was observed for our MFB and CFA members who have passed away.

Secretary/Treasurer's report was tabled by Allan Roberts.

AGM Minutes from 2018 were read out to members.

Secretary Allan Roberts discussed the Corio General Meeting where it was raised that the Corio meeting be held in future at Burnley as there are only few members who live in that area. After some discussions with DCO Brown, a letter to be sent to the Chief fire Officer.

It was agreed that all RFA meetings as of 2020 to be held at Burnley. Moved Noel Pennell – Seconded Harry Floyd.

Phil Cleary's RFA website account to keep active cost \$311.00. It was agreed to pay this amount, and to discuss during 2020. Moved Dave Pricor – Seconded Russell Hawthorn.

At a recent Bunnings BBQ, \$1240.00 was raised Less Expenses for various charities.

Secretaries Report/Financial report: As of 16/11/19 General Account \$2,587.08. Term Deposit 7,332.90. Moved Harry Floyd – Seconded Ernie Paddon. Accepted.

At this time, it was time for President/Vice-President, Secretary and committee members to stand aside to elect new members for year 2020.

After discussion and no new persons nominated, the President, Vice-President, Secretary and committee (positions) remain the same as in 2019.

Greg Leach – MFB Acting Chief/CO, spoke about his intended departure (25th November 2019) from the MFB to take up a position as Commissioner for Queensland

Fire & Rescue. David Bruce will take over as Chief/CO for the remaining 7 months until June 2020. At this time the new Fire Rescue Victoria may be in place. Greg spoke about the need for Federal Governments to invest more funding into the fire agencies to deal with the impacts of climate change.

Guest Speaker Russell Hawthorn, spoke about funerals for deceased members and what they and their family's wishes were when the time came. It was a timely reminder for us all to convey our wishes to our family members. Russell spoke about the process and system in place when a member passes away. He also mentioned that if a member wishes no brigade involvement, that their wishes are respected.

Nancy Brennan at this time spoke to the members and partners about her husband Don's funeral and thanked the RFA, MFB and UFU for their support and a great send-off for Don. It was a wonderful celebration of Don's life Nancy said.

Graham Edwards spoke about the sudden degeneration of his wife's eyes recently. As a result of what happened that fateful day, Graham's wife lost the sight of one of her eyes.

Graham stressed that if you are having double vision, get an immediate appointment to see an optometrist and get your eyes checked.

ACFO Ken Brown attended our meeting and spoke about the progress of Fire Rescue Victoria meetings etc. The required stakeholders have regular meetings to discuss the transformation and changes etc required for CFA professional firefighters and MFB firefighters to come together as one professional group (Fire Rescue Victoria).

General Business: From Rod Knowles, that a letter be written from Secretary Allan Roberts to support a summit (meeting) with the government on the effects of climate change and how it will affect communities and firefighters in the future.

Meeting closed at 12.00 for BBQ and refreshments, generously supplied by MFB Burnley Complex personnel.

To the Staff the Retired Firefighters thank you very much.

To The Retired Firefighters Association.

Hi! Allan.

Further to your Bereavement Card from the committee and members of the RFA. Expressing your thoughts and Sympathy on the passing of my wife Muriel on the 14th August 2019.

As you knew she had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease, since being diagnosed in 2011.

She slipped away quietly in her sleep at 5am in her 90th year.

I had been Expecting her demise for some time, but it still comes as a shock when one realizes that once "Was is No More", How ever we did have 57 years of the

good life, in which I am grateful for.

I will take this opportunity to wish You and Bev and the Members a Merry Christmas and best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year 2020.

I am working on several factual short stories and other items of interest that may make for good copy for Water Off.

When finalized I will submit them for appraisal by your editorial staff.

Probably in two or three month's time.

Yours Sincerely,

Les Gray

Kinglake.

16/12/2019.

Fire Rescue Victoria Commissioner Appointed



Ken Block accepted an offer to become the Fire Commissioner of the new Fire Rescue Victoria.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Lisa Neville, announced “We're delivering a more modern fire service for all Victorians- and today's appointment of veteran Canadian firefighter Ken Block as FRV Commissioner is another step in getting this done.



COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY

CEO / CO Update



Hi everyone

Tragically, we have experienced the loss of a colleague from our emergency services sector in recent days, with the death of a Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) employee while on duty in the north of the state.

A ten-year firefighting veteran, Mat Kavanagh was killed in a two-car crash at Thornton, near Mansfield, having spent the previous hours extinguishing unattended campfires last Friday.

This tragedy reinforces the need for all of us to be mindful of our safety at all times as we head into more extreme fire conditions today and tomorrow.

Temperatures are expected to rise again significantly, placing communities and our members at risk, from a forecast wind change.

Now is the time for all of us to consider how prepared we are for these adverse conditions and to ensure we have a fire plan and know what to do in the event of an emergency.

In recent days, we have been able to rotate our strike teams in and out of East Gippsland and the Alpine areas, to enable them to gain some respite.

Those members who remain in active fire areas have been working hard to help communities plan and prepare for more potential impacts in the next 24 hours.

Sadly, some of our CFA volunteers have lost their own homes and livelihoods while they fought to protect the homes of neighbours and friends within their community in recent days. That they have continued to help others in the face of extreme adversity is truly remarkable and on behalf of CFA I want to express my deep admiration and respect for their commitment.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge not only our personnel who have spent a number of days in isolated areas over the past week, but the loved ones who have supported them behind the scenes, as they left behind family and work commitments to help others. I know this can be an extremely stressful time and I want to recognise their sacrifice also during this difficult fire season.

Please stay safe and continue to look out for yourselves and those around you.

Steve Warrington
CEO/CO

Australian bushfire current statistics (as of 15 January 2020)

Current Facts:

The World Wildlife Fund suggests around 10 million hectares being burnt.
Over 2500 homes lost.
29 people have currently died.

Fauna loss

An estimated 1.25 billion animals/wildlife killed in these fires (excluding insects & invertebrates).
The majority of wildlife killed including koalas, kangaroos, wallabies, wombats, echidnas, possums, birds, snakes, reptiles, etc.
50% of Kangaroo Island has been burnt.
Potential extinction amongst the rarest species.



Wildlife rescuers searched "apocalyptic" terrain on Kangaroo Island, but found few survivors. Photo: HSI

Major fauna impacts

Intense drought & temperatures leading up to the fire event.
The fire itself.
A lack of food, shelter and habitat for certain species.
An increase in predation towards certain species, including koalas, possums and rodents, etc.

The Aftermath:

Lives & livelihoods lost.
Homes & structures destroyed.
Major losses to both flora & fauna.
Potential for major water bodies to become contaminated during & following this event.
Major losses to tourism especially within areas containing high agricultural productivity & cultural significance.
Pristine locations such as Kangaroo Island severely damaged.
More people experiencing adverse health reactions to the toxic smoke, considered to be "the worst in the world at the moment".

Memories of Gordon Winch

On one occasion, Gordon was relieving on Switchboard Duties at Eastern Hill, when a call was received from Executive Officer TUENO, who wanted to be switched through to the Chief Officer. Gordon explained that the Chief Officer was busy via existing phone connection to a Senior Man at the Fire Station, who was confirming full details of gear being sent on to a serious fire at a Timber Yard in South Melbourne.

Shortly after this advice was given, Executive Officer TUENO arrived behind Gordon at the switchboard, and immediately pulled all connecting cords out of the switchboard, cutting off all phone calls.

Gordon became upset and annoyed that at least one very important call about a serious fire had been disconnected. Gordon swiftly vacated his position, walked out of the Switchboard Room and suggested that operation of the Switchboard was now Mr. TUENO'S responsibility.

Mr TUENO was subsequently hauled over the coals for his indiscretion, whilst ironically, in later years, Gordon WINCH was seconded to be TUENO's driver.

Regards,
JEFF PEIRCE
(Son-in-Law of Gordon WINCH).

MFB's Longest Serving Firefighter

Senior Station Officer Garry Cronin began his career at MFB on 4th September 1964, and with 55 years service under his belt, it's safe to say he is our longest serving firefighter.

Prior to joining the brigade, Garry was a fitter and turner and applied his skills in the textile trade.

Upon completion of his recruitment process, which in the 1960's was a 12 week course conducted in the rear yard at FS1 (Eastern Hill), Garry was stationed at various locations throughout both Central and Northern Districts.

During his career as a firefighter, Garry was always proactive about looking for opportunities for professional development. In 1974 he was promoted to the rank of Senior Firefighter and then went on to achieve the rank of Station Officer Grade 2 in 1975. Then in 1981, he gained the rank of Station Officer Grade 1, which today is a Senior Station Officer.

Over his 55 years service, Garry has responded to numerous major fires, road rescues, emergency medical calls and an unquantifiable number of false alarms.

The more significant fires he recalls are the Commonwealth Industrial Gases factory fire in Bell Street, Preston (1989), the Coode Island storage tanks fire (1991) and most recently the 8th alarm Campellfield factory fire in 2019.

In January 1981, Garry played a pivotal role in the rescue of a 12 year old boy from a fountain in Melbourne's city square. The boy was believed to have drowned after disappearing down the drainage outlet for 90 minutes. Garry and his firefighter colleague (John Rodda), located the boy who was clinging to a pipe and using a small air pocket in the tunnel to breath. Both Garry and John were awarded an Executive Officer commendation from the MFB for their role in the rescue, along with a Royal Humane Society award and a Queen's Commendation for Bravery for their efforts.

In 1981, he was also given the opportunity to travel



to the United States and experience working with the New York Fire Department. This secondment was a fantastic opportunity to benchmark MFB's systems of work against other international fire and rescue services.

Garry has been a member of the Branch Committee of Management with the United Firefighters Union (UFU) and was a member of numerous committees that campaigned to improve conditions and safety systems in the operational environment, including changes to vehicle design, breathing apparatus capability and also the POD system that we use today. As a result of his dedication and many years of service, he has been awarded life membership of the UFU.

Over his lengthy career, Garry recalls the change in firefighter working hours to the 10/14 shift system that the MFB has today. He also recalls the increase in primary appliance crewing numbers from two, to three, to four firefighters.

Garry has had a fantastic career with MFB so far and is looking forward to attending the final MFB Long and Good Service awards for his 55 years of service in June 2020.

Congratulations to Garry on a truly magnificent career!

Article from "MFB FIRECALL"

MFB Firefighters in action over Melbourne & beyond

Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade has been very busy over the past 3 weeks or more with the following MFB media comments and information via their Facebook page.

Our crews have been on the road with an ADF convoy from Orbost to Mallacoota (Jan 13th), assessing damage to residential, commercial buildings and critical infrastructure.

Along the way, they have stopped in at towns such as Club Terrace, Cann River, Chandlers Creek and Noorinbee. Some of these places have been difficult to access and the convoys have been the first face-to-face contact residents have had in more than a week. Crews have been able to alert Incident Control Centres about towns requiring welfare supplies and ensure relief has been provided to residents quickly. In other places, such as Hospital creek, crews were able to evaluate a bridge which is the community's only access point to the Princes Highway. This is critical work, and all agencies are working together to ensure that fire-affected areas can be made safe for residents to return home.

Last night (Jan 12th) MFB crews in Wodonga headed back to their accommodation after a day of Impact Assessment to find a fast moving fire had taken hold of the surrounding hills which were within a few kilometres of their position. Senior station Officer Tony Milczakowsky, Station Officer Colin Macarthur and Leading firefighters Mitch Reeves and Mick Whitty assisted with the evacuation of hotel guests to a safe area closer to town and ensured regular observation reports were fed back to the Incident control Centre. A favourable change in weather conditions and great work from responding CFA and Forest Management Victoria crews meant the fire was contained and under control by around 10.30pm

Three of MFB's specialist rescue technicians have joined a High Angle Rescue team today (Jan 10th) at the Orbost air base to provide aerial road crash rescue operations support from a firefighting aircraft. These firefighting helicopters have been staffed by a range of teams from across the Victorian Emergency sector, including MFB, CFA, SES – **"We Work as One"**

The State of Disaster has been extended to 11.50pm Saturday 11th January, 2020 for east Gippsland Shire, Mansfield Shire, Wellington Shire, Wangarratta Rural Shire, Towong Shire, Alpine Shire, together with Mount Buller, Mount Hotham, Falls Creek and Mount Stirling Alpine Resorts. The State of Disaster declaration, gives the Government the powers and resources it

needs to keep Victorians safe. People in these areas must follow advice from the emergency services.

MFB's specialist rapid impact assessment teams have been working on the front line with defence Australia, undertaking the painstaking task of assessing homes destroyed or damaged by the fires which have taken hold across Victoria. One of our Impact Assessment Teams was with ADF colleagues (Jan 9th) on board HMAS Choules, a vessel which has evacuated hundreds of people from Mallacoota.

MFB Strike Teams have been on the ground in Bright over the past four days from January 6th, to protect the town's assets and the surrounding townships and communities at risk of being impacted by bushfires. It's all hands on deck to bring these fires under control. MFB is committed to working alongside our emergency service partners providing resources wherever needed across Victoria.

It has been amazing to see the number of community groups and agencies come together and support emergency service partners across Victoria. People were well fed yesterday thanks to the efforts of the Australian Islamic Centre and Human Appeal International – Australia.

MFB's Multicultural Liaison Officers were on deck today as they escorted a five-truck convoy of relief supplies into Gippsland this afternoon. Members from the Australian Islamic Centre (Newport mosque), Human Appeal International – Australia and the Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation served food and delivered much needed supplies to emergency service personnel and community members at relief centres in Johnsonville, Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale.

Due to the current smoke conditions in Melbourne, MFB is calling on Building managers to review their air handing systems and where possible, change settings so that air is re-cycled in the building, rather than being drawn from the air outside. Current smoky air quality may trigger the systems fire indicator alarms. You can stay updated on the air quality around Melbourne through the Environmental Protection Authority Air Watch page.

On December 30th in Melbourne, 20 MFB and CFA crews including a water bombing aircraft were on scene tackling an ongoing grass and spot fires on Clovemont Way, Bundoora. Three houses were impacted by the fire with minor damage sustained to these structures. After 4 hours, the fire was deemed under control. The cause of the fire is not known and Victoria Police are investigating.



MFB alongside Australian Defence Force personnel on the road in convoy from Orbost to Mallacoota, assessing damage to residential, commercial buildings and critical infrastructure.

(photos MFB Media—Facebook)

Fire Hazards Loom in Landfill Sites

While East Gippsland struggles to cope with weeks of horrendous and heartbreaking bushfires, the local council is also dealing with a hidden fire danger that lurks in hundreds of landfill sites across the state. East Gippsland Shire has issued a request for quotes for emergency response plans for all the landfill sites, waste transfer stations and works depots within its 31,740 square kilometre area.

A key report commissioned by the Australian department of the Environment warns that landfill fires, often caused by the spontaneous combustion of organic waste, “remain a dangerous threat to people”. Part of East Gippsland Shire’s monumental battle in dealing with the bushfire crisis is disposing of huge amounts of food spoiled during power outages, or left behind by thousands of tourists fleeing disaster areas.

The Mallacoota waste transfer station was one of several closed by the bushfires, along with landfill sites at Omeo, Swifts Creek and Buchan. Mallacoota residents were using trailers for domestic waste left at the caravan park. A bushfire emergency message on Tuesday 7th January, from East Gippsland mayor, John White, mentions the waste problem.

“Emergency and service delivery in impacted areas is a priority. However, some of our other services, such as waste collection, are reduced in the immediate future.”

The council is calling for emergency response plans for 18 landfill and waste transfer sites, along with costings for their implementation. Where applicable, bushfire emergency plans will also need to be considered.

A notice from the EPA that it is responding to an underground “hotspot” at the Kealba landfill in Melbourne’s west illustrates the potential danger. In past weeks, local newspapers have reported nearby residents feeling ill from a “toxic, smokey chemical” smell. Although the EPA says air monitoring around Kealba indicates no health danger, emissions from other landfill fires can be potentially deadly.

Hotspots from decaying landfill waste can ignite when in contact with methane – a highly flammable and potentially explosive gas created by organic decomposition.

“Of particular concern is the potential release of dioxins... exposure at high levels have been linked to cancer, liver damage, skin rashes as well as reproductive and development disorders,” the Department of the Environment report says. The report points to spontaneous combustion as the primary known cause of waste fires and warns such fires can occur when waste has been stored for only a short period of time. It also warns of hazardous chemicals leaching into underground aquifers & surrounding waterways.

Source: The Age -11/01/20

Gone But Not Forgotten

Dave Davies

Born in Melbourne in 1950, Dave was a trade technician with the 'Repco' group of companies before joining MFB in January 1976 at 26 years of age.



Dave began his fire fighting career at FS1 (Eastern Hill). Over the next three decades, he was stationed at FS01, FS02 (West Melbourne), FS10 (Richmond), FS18 (Hawthorn), FS22 (Ringwood), FS24 (Glen Iris), FS25 (Oakleigh), FS27 (Nunawading), FS35 (Windsor) and FS39 (Port Melbourne).

During his career, Dave gained the following qualifications: breathing apparatus, snorkel, ultra large hale pump, turntable ladder, motor rescue, Senior Firefighter and SO2 qualifying course, Mark 3 Pumper.

Dave was highly respected and commended for his energy, diligence and commitment and was progressively promoted through the ranks; SO2 1982, SO1 in 1986 and District Officer in 1990 (now referred to as Commander) working in operations and various other departments. Dave was also instrumental in introducing corporate governance into workplace emergency management.

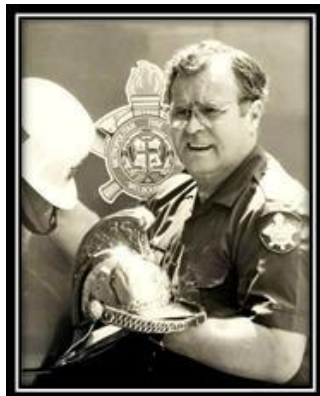
Dave was known for his friendliness and love of the outdoors, particularly four-wheel driving. He resigned from MFB in July 2010 as Commander, Community Education following 34 years of service.

Dave is survived by his wife and two daughters.

Bill Grant

Born in 1928, Bill was a dairy farmer before joining MFB on 24 April 1950 at 22 years of age.

Bill began his firefighting career at FS01 (Eastern Hill) and over the next three decades was stationed at FS44 (Sunshine) and FS45 (Spotswood) where he served Melbourne's growing western suburbs.



In 1970, Bill was one of the first responders to the tragic West Gate Bridge collapse during which 35 workers sadly lost their lives.

He was among the first to be trained to operate the Cranvel and Simon Snorkel platforms.

Known for his kind and gracious manner, Bill was highly regarded during his time at MFB.

He resigned from MFB on 29 January 1987 as Senior Firefighter (formerly Fireman) following 37 years' of service.

He is survived by his son and two daughters.

Rex George Baker

Registered Number 1050

We were saddened to hear of the passing of former MFB Firefighter Rex George Baker last week. Rex was born in 1928 and was a cabinet maker before applying to join MFB, commencing his MFB career as a 4th Class Firefighter at Eastern Hill (FS01) in April 1954. Later that year, Rex was transferred to FS27, which was the station number for Windsor until 1959. Rex was promoted to Station Officer (2), equivalent to today's Station Officers, in March 1967. He went on to be Station Officer (2) at the previous FS38 (in Cecil Street, South Melbourne), FS36 (Sandringham, now closed), FS37 (St Kilda, now closed) and FS34 Moorabbin (now Highett), on A platoon upon his retirement from FS34 in 1988, Rex received a letter from the Board in recognition of his 33 years of service.

Rex is survived by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren

Peter Driscoll

Unfortunately the Family has lost most of info on Peter in recent fires.

Peter joined the Brigade on the 27/6/1969 and was pensioned out in the 70's.



Peer support is available to Retired Firefighters and Associated Members

Fairlie Morgan— Employee Assistance Coordinator— fmorgan@mfb.vic.gov.au
0407 665 174

Chloe Henderson — Peer Coordinator
0417 538 289

Scott Darcy – Peer Coordinator –
sdarcy@mfb.vic.gov.au – **0429 771 849**

John Howe — Retirees
9729 0984

A note received from Garry Grant:

To Russell, Allan, and the Retired Firefighters Association.

Thank you so much for arranging the Brigades involvement in Dad's Funeral.

Plus the flowers and Facebook Postings.

It meant the world to mum to see Spotswood Pumper there and have it lead the procession out of Le Pines.

Everything ran seamlessly.

Again many thanks.

Garry and the Grant Family.

Funerals.

What are your thoughts, your wishes, your expectations? Not only for yourself but that of your spouse or partner. These are matters that should be discussed with your family, including what role they will play on the day.

I pose these questions to you and your partner to stimulate a very important conversation as part of your life. It may be the end as we all know it. However, it is a day that we come together to celebrate your life.

Last year, I was involved in over thirty funerals for retired Fire Fighters and their wives or partners. I have done this not only as the RMD rep, but mainly as a retired Fire Fighter. Graeme Scorrige as Brigade Chaplain has been a valuable support at these times.

It has become apparent to many, that what we want varies so much. In some cases, we have as much “fan-fare” as possible and in others none. Some retired Fire fighters have told me that they do not want a funeral at all, just a private family event.

Others on the other hand, have contacted me to ask, what are the procedures and what they would

like to happen on the day. They do this to lighten the burden on the family at a very sad time in their life.

For many families, this is the first time they have to organise a funeral. It is for that reason we offer you some assistance; not to take over and run the entire funeral. Sometimes the simple things like putting a notice in the paper. The UFU or Brigade cannot place a notice in the daily papers until the family does - did you know that! The Brigade was and will always be a big part of your life.

Therefore, if we can assist your family at this time in your life it would be an honour to celebrate your service and life.

As a footnote, here are a few things we can offer your families!

Brigade Chaplain to officiate or assist with service.
The 8 Pump to convey coffin to or from service.
Brigade or Union flag on coffin along with Brass Helmet. And of course, the Firefighters’ Prayer.

Please have this conversation with your family.

RUSSELL HAWTHORN – RFA & RMD.

Celebrating it’s 32nd Year

SOUTHPORT YACHT CLUB

THURSDAY JULY—30TH 2020

Drive, fly, bus or train—be here on the day to catch up with your old mates and friends who you worked with over the years!

Have a lovely lunch, couple of drinks and lot’s of talking

Reminders’ (yes I will nag you!) will be sent out throughout the year and although it’s early, NOW is the time to start thinking about coming up to sunny Queensland.

I need names early for the club to feed and seat us and also to get all the name tags completed!

A phone call or email will do the trick (No SMS please!)

Contact Details:

Home phone: 07 5522 4321

Gail: 0431 485141

Ian: 0417 382935

Email: fagernes@bigpond.com

How Much Cash Should Retirees Hold?

In recent months, the RBA has reduced the cash rate to unprecedented historical low of .75 per cent. This reduction affects many ordinary Australians. The RBA cash rate influences the banks' cost of funds. Therefore, the cash rate has an impact on the rates that the banks charge for mortgage loans. The cash rate also affects the interest that banks are prepared to pay depositors. So, both mortgage interest rates and the interest credited to "at call" accounts have fallen markedly. These changes raise the issue of the proportion of retirees' financial assets that they hold as cash - their 'cash investment allocation'.

Deeming rates

At the same time, there has been a furore over the 'deeming rates' used by the Australian government for the purposes of the Age Pension income test. For the purposes of the income test, the government uses 'deemed' income from financial assets rather than the actual income. The 'deemed' rates are one per cent for the first \$51,800 of financial assets (for a single pensioner) and three per cent for additional financial assets. The threshold for a couple is \$86,200. Seniors groups are not happy, correctly pointing out that retirees can no longer earn three per cent on their money if they invest in 'at call' bank accounts or term deposits.

But the point of this article is not so much to argue the rights and wrongs of the deeming rates. Rather, I query why so many retirees want to hold a very high cash investment allocation.

Cash as an asset class

We all know that cash is the asset class that yields the lowest investment return. Any other investment (bonds, hybrids, shares, property) is likely to produce better returns than cash in the long run. Yet the fuss over deeming rates suggests that many retirees do have significant cash deposits. And I have been surprised to find, in recent discussions with half a dozen acquaintances, friends and relatives, that even some well-informed investors are holding large allocations to cash.

Valid reasons to hold cash

Let me say before proceeding that there are good reasons why you may want to hold cash. First, many financial advisers recommend (and I agree) that it is appropriate to hold some cash as an 'emergency fund'.

The amount in your emergency fund might be between three months' and one year's worth of living expenses. The idea is that you have immediate access to your emergency fund if something goes wrong. For example, you may lose your job or incur a major unexpected expense. It makes sense to hold your emergency fund in cash where you have immediate access to it without any risk of decline in value. A great place for your emergency fund is in your mortgage offset account, if you have a mortgage.

Or maybe you are 88 and in failing health. You want to ensure that your care needs can be met professionally in an aged care facility of your choice. You are concerned

that you will soon need to find a Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD). It would be reasonable to hold cash or short-term deposits up to the amount of the anticipated RAD.

But what about retirement savings?

What I'm really talking about is people who are holding large amounts of cash to fund their retirement income needs, without any short-term need for large amounts of liquidity. In this situation, it's hard to see a strong rationale for holding much more than five to 10 per cent of your financial assets in cash. So why do people do it?

Not-so-valid reasons for holding a lot of cash

I suspect that there are many not-so-good reasons for a high cash investment allocation. Such reasons include laziness, procrastination, lack of financial literacy and excessive anxiety about the potential for market values to fall. People remember that Australian shares fell by more than 50 per cent during the GFC and think to themselves, "I can't afford to lose half my wealth".

But this fearful approach ignores some very important points. First, you can invest in a wide variety of 'growth assets', it doesn't have to be Australian shares alone. A typical Australian superannuation fund invests in infrastructure, overseas equities, property and fixed interest securities as well as Australian shares. And when some parts of a diversified portfolio perform poorly, other components will do well. For example, government bonds will tend to do well when shares are performing poorly. Usually when 'boom' turns to 'bust' in share markets, interest rates fall, causing bond prices to rise.

What if the market falls?

Even if the market value of your investments falls significantly, that doesn't necessarily have implications for your long-term future spending ability. After every market correction comes a recovery, sometimes very quickly. As long as you don't need to spend much more than the investment income, it doesn't matter much what market values do in the meantime.

Retiree investment timeframes

Even a retiree like me (I'm 63) has a potential investment timeframe of three decades. What happens to market values today, or this week, or this month, or next year, is almost irrelevant to the future flow of investment income from my portfolio for the next three decades.

Super fund performance

As a demonstration of how a diversified, growth-oriented fund can perform, I reviewed the long-term performance of the nation's largest superannuation fund, Australian Super, over the last 33 years. Their 'balanced' investment option had a negative return in only three of those 33 years! And two of those negative returns were single digit (less than 10 per cent). True, investors in the Aussie Super Balanced fund experienced an investment return of negative 13.3 per cent in the 12 months to June 2009, in the midst of the

GFC. But that was more than compensated for in the few years preceding the GFC and the few years after. Over the long term, Aussie Super (and some other well-performing super funds) have achieved between nine per cent and 10 per cent per annum average returns. You can't get that by holding cash!

Conclusion

When you're investing for a long period, you will almost certainly be better off in a diversified fund with a 60-80 per cent exposure to growth assets than you will be if you have a very high cash investment allocation. Earning

nine per cent per annum over a long investment timeframe will produce a much better lifestyle than earning two per cent! Strategy 45 of my book *Slow and Steady: 100 wealth-building strategies for all ages* shows a simple way for investors with quite different risk profiles to invest and achieve much better rates of return than cash.

Do you try to hold an emergency fund in the bank even though interest rates are very low?

Source; YourlifeChoices

THREE RESOLUTIONS FOR A NEW DECADE

A few simple changes could improve your quality of life in retirement.

A couple of weeks into the new year – and new decade – chances are, some of your goals for 2020 are flagging. That time when a year draws to a close and we rule an imaginary line beneath it always seems the right time to make plans. To start afresh. To try something new. To give something up.

According to finder.com, 79 per cent of Australians commit to a new year's resolution. This year's top five are:

- 1.Lose weight/improve fitness
- 2.Eat better
- 3.Travel more
- 4.Improve finances, get out of debt
- 5.Sleep more.

One of the secrets to making new year's resolutions that count is to think about the bigger picture. What changes could you make to improve your quality of life in retirement?

1. Physical fitness

Physical activity is important. It could be a regular walk, swimming or attending age-appropriate exercise classes run by your local council or gym. Exercise can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing several diseases, including type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The Victorian government, website betterhealth.vic.gov, states that physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits and, ultimately, improve your quality of life. A minimum of 30 minutes' activity each day can help you to:

- reduce your risk of heart attack
- better manage your weight
- lower your blood pressure and cholesterol level
- reduce the risk of falls
- recover better from periods of hospitalisation or bed rest
- have more energy and a better mood, feel more relaxed and sleep better.

2. Mental fitness

Beyond Blue says around 10 to 15 per cent of older Australians experience depression and 10 per cent experience anxiety. According to Queensland Health, finding purpose, looking after your physical health, making connections, feeling safe and accessing support are key elements to look after your mental wellbeing.

3. Financial fitness

Financial health is closely linked to mental health; a sound financial position can bring security and peace of mind. It can enable you to afford and enjoy your leisure time and

have a positive effect on your wellbeing.

If you haven't already, the new year is the ideal time to set up a budget. As a starting point, ASIC's [Track My Spend app](#) is a great way to monitor your spending. It provides a quick snapshot of your regular fixed expenses as well as discretionary spending.

If you hoped that 2020 would be the year you remodelled your kitchen or renovated your bathroom but can't make it work with your budget, have you considered using some of the savings in your home?

Using your home equity to complement super and the Age Pension can help you achieve a more comfortable lifestyle and enjoy greater wellbeing. It can provide a lump sum for home renovations, a new car or simply 'just in case'.

If you'd sleep easier knowing you had a 'rainy day' fund to fall back on, [try this calculator](#) to see how a Household Transfer® could improve your retirement funding and help you to Live Well At Home.

Source; YourlifeChoices

A Seniors Prayer

Today Dear Lord I'm 80 and there is much I haven't done.
I hope Dear Lord you'll let me live till I'm 81,
Then 81 haven't finished all the things I want to do,
Perhaps you'll let me stay awhile till I'm 82.

Many places still to go, so very much to see,
I wonder if I've got the strength to get to 83,
The world is changing very fast, there is so much in store,
I'd like it very much to live until I'm 84.

I'm getting slow and very stiff, but if I'm still alive,
I think I'd really like to stay until I'm 85,
I still enjoy a game of bowls and going to the flicks.
So now I really don't see why I can't reach 86.

I know, Dear Lord, it's much to ask, (and it must be nice in heaven)

I'd really like to stay until I'm 87,
I know by then I won't be fast, and sometimes will be late,
But it would be very pleasant to be around at 88,

I've seen so many wonderful things and had a lovely time,
I'm sure I will be willing to leave at 89,
Then maybe, as I'm doing well, feeling pretty flighty,
I might continue till I reach a good age of 90.

The lightning finished, the rain fell down, the heavens loudly thundered,
Perhaps, Dear Lord, you'll call me home before I reach 100.

Author Unknown



FIRE RESCUE RINGS

As well as the Fire Rescue rings we now have sets of Tie Bars, Ear Rings and Cuff Links.

These are available in different combination sets or can be purchased as a single item.

They are available from the Secretary and will be on display at the next meeting.

If you would like to place an order now, give Allan Roberts a call.

Telephone: Mob: 0433 007 720
Home: 9216 1658

MEMBERS INTERESTED IN RECEIVING THEIR "WATER OFF" VIA EMAIL.

To those members with easy access to email and would like to have their copy sent by this system, please send your email address to John Laverick. "Water Off" will be sent out in a PDF format. John's address - - retfire@bigpond.net.au

Before you send your email, click on 'tools' at top and click on 'request receipt'. This will reply to you and verify both email addresses are working correctly.

Download the VicEmergency app

The new VicEmergency app was launched recently and will replace FireReady this summer. The VicEmergency app is now available to download from the App Store or Google Play and Victorians are encouraged to download it ahead of the summer season.

The VicEmergency website has also been upgraded and a new emergency hotline released. The Vic Emergency app and website will provide warning and incident notifications about floods, storms, fires, earthquakes tsunami, beach closures, shark sightings and more.

Volunteers Required

The Fire Services Museum needs past fire service members to assist on an occasional basis at the Museum

Please contact Mike McCumisky on: 9662 2907



Retirements

Brendan Clymo	MFB
Colin Nance	MFB
Bob Lindsay	CFA
John Russell	MFB

Copy deadline for Water Off Magazine for next edition is April 17 2020.



Charlie & Sage, from Mooroolbark

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Lin and Jan Bell,
 ex-MFB, exceptional
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 Pets can stay & sleep indoors, with a pet treat on arrival.

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- Modern kitchen, gas cooktop, electric oven, microwave, dishwasher, all cooking equipment supplied. Refreshments on arrival, BBQ and outdoor setting.
- Ducted gas heating throughout, reverse cycle air con.
- Living/dining area, new corner lounge, gas log fire, wide screen television, DVD/CD player.
- Modern bathroom - double walk-in shower, toilet.
- Three bedrooms - 2 queen, 2 singles, electric blankets, pillows, doonas supplied, linen/towels available or BYO.
- Laundry, outdoor line, indoor drying racks, **extra toilet.**
- Outdoor warm shower for dogs, fully fenced garden.
- Shopping centres, supermarkets, PO, banks, medical centres, shops, cafes and restaurants.
- Ocean Grove Hotel, Golf Club and Bowls Club for meals.

2019/20 nightly rates - up to 6 guests

Summer \$280, Autumn \$240, Winter \$200

All Public Holiday Weekends - \$280 per night, min stays apply.

Pets always stay **FREE!**

www.bellsbythebeach.com.au

info@bellsbythebeach.com.au

www.facebook.com/bellsbythebeachholidayhouse

Geelong Firey's Muster

C.F.A. – M.F.B. – VIVA - AVALON
Serving & Retired – Staff & Volunteers
Smorgasbord Lunch
On the 4th Tuesday of March & October
@ 1130 hrs

GATEWAY HOTEL
218-230 Princess Highway – CORIO
Members, Wives, Partners,
Family & Friends

Contact:
Peter Lang 5275 6039
To receive Mail out notification



Keep your burn-off safe and legal:

- Check fire restrictions with your local council and register your burn on 1800 668 511
- Check and monitor weather conditions – particularly wind
- To avoid unnecessary calls to emergency services, notify your neighbours beforehand
- Leave a three-metre fire break, free from flammable materials around the burn
- Have sufficient equipment and water to stop the fire spreading
- Never leave a burn-off unattended – stay for its entire duration
- If your burn-off gets out of control, call '000' immediately
- Make sure that the fire is completely extinguished before leaving; if it's cool to touch, it's safe to leave.

For more information about burning off, go to cfa.vic.gov.au/burnoff

Firefighter's Picnic



Sunday 16th February 2020

11am. till 4 pm.

**Venue; Moonee Valley Racecourse
(Enter from Dean St. Gate 6 or Wilson St Gate 7)**

RSVP to reception on 9419 8811

Retirees - Bring the Grandkids

Enjoy a catered lunch, live entertainment, kids rides, firefighters gift and much more.

PRINT POST No. 100002647

RFA Newsletter

If undelivered return to;

Allan Roberts.

Unit 158 Mernda Retirement Village

89 Galloway Drive

Mernda Vic 3754

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