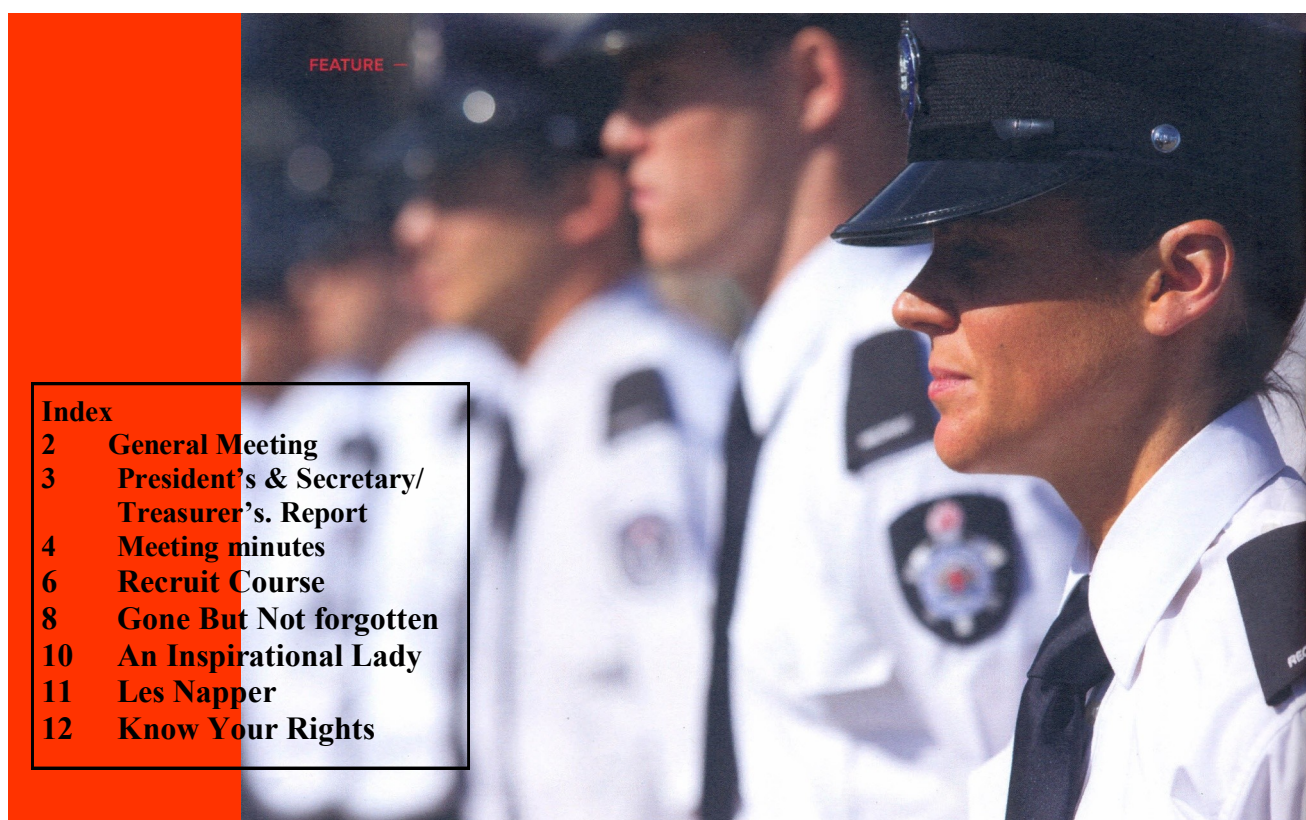


First combined Victorian Recruit Firefighter Courses graduate!

Since July 2017, CFA and MFB recruits have trained together as one, marking a huge milestone for the Victorian Fire Services with the first four Victorian Recruit Firefighter Courses (VRFCs) graduating throughout December. Out of a total of 121 graduates, 32 will commence with MFB as on shift Firefighters in the coming rosters, and will take the next step into the exciting, challenging and rewarding career that lies ahead of them in Victoria's fire services.

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“GENERAL MEETING”

**Notice is hereby given that the next General Meeting will be held at the Burnley Complex 450
Burnley Street Richmond
1030 Hours, Wednesday 21st February 2018**

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
Home: 9216 1658**

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!**

Non financial Members

Members be advised if your newsletter has an expiry date of 2/1/2017 that means you have not paid your subs since 2016 therefore if no remuneration is received by the 2/1/19 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: Colin Harris
Sec./Treasurer: Allan Roberts

General Committee:
Arthur (Sam) Capes
Mike McCumisky
Ian Geddes
Kevin Hede

Auditor:
Mike Enticott

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

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

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

Diary Dates 2018

**February 21, General Meeting
May 16, General Meeting
August 15, General Meeting (CFA Corio)
November , (Date to be Announced,)
Christmas Luncheon
Wed. 21st November; Annual General Meeting**

SICK LIST (* In Nursing Home)

John Bellis	Alan James*
Don Brennan*	Lindsay McCurdy
Bob Brunning	Archie McLachlan
Stan Cameron	Harry Mitchell
Huew Campbell*	Dick Prendergast
Harold Connell	Ron Shaw*
Stan Devlin	Gary Spicer
Ian Fowler	John Schintler
Barry Gavin	Alan Sugg
Jim Gibson	Bob Tottle
Eddie Gilbertson	Laurie Trewin
Bob Horgan	John Williams
Jack Hookey	Tom Williamson*

“Water Off” is edited by Colin Harris, 2 Gowar Avenue, Camberwell 3124. Phone 03 9889 6809. 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

Happy New Year to all our members and your families, I hope you are well and are looking forward to another great year of getting together with family and friends, value that time you have with them and try to give more time and

love to them. To our Members who lost family and friends during last year my thoughts are with you and I hope your loved one is close to your hearts always, I know my one is.

In looking forward I'd like to look back to 2017, we had some good times together not the least the UFU Christmas luncheon held at docklands, It was very well conducted and well received by all who attended. We have a lot to look forward to and to live up to.

Let's make 2018 a year when we make an effort to make

new friends reconnect with family members and just have a bloody good time.

Alex Shepherd

Retraction/Apology

It was reported in the last issue of Water Off that Neville Van Every was suffering dementia.

This was incorrect information reported at an earlier RFA meeting.

The correct information is Neville is in a nursing home and is in good health and not suffering dementia.

We wish Mr Van Every our best wishes and apologise for the previous incorrect information.

Editor

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.

We have organised the fund raiser BBQ at Bunnings MILL PARK on the 4th AUGUST 2018.

A total of 121 MFB and CFA recruits have now completed the new Victorian Recruit Firefighter Course, with the course's last 30 recruits graduating 19th December 2017.

The 20 week course for both MFB and CFA firefighters commenced in July this year, bringing together recruits from the two fire services.

The new course will further enable the state's fire services to work together more closely.

It ensures new firefighters across the state have the same skills and knowledge, and can respond to emergencies in both urban and rural contexts. "The new course is a fantastic example of Victoria's fire services working together to provide world-class fire and emergency services to the community," said MFB Acting Chief Officer Greg Leach.

"It will mean that recruits have the same capability across the state, which will help our fire services to work even more cohesively and consistently."

"The recruits have completed a rigorous program that gives them the ideal preparation to fulfil their critical duty of protecting lives and property," said CFA Chief Officer Steve Warrington.

"They have been trained in traditional hose drills, hot fire training, responding to rescues and the management of hazardous materials. They have also completed the first half of their training in Emergency Medical Response.

"While highly trained for emergency response they are also well-prepared to engage and work with the communities they serve – an equally important skill." Graduates put on a fire display where the new firefighters showcased their skills.

The firefighters will be working at fire stations across Victoria and continue their training on-shift.

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**.

Secretary of the Retired Firefighters Association, Allan Roberts, on behalf of all members express 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.

EVERYONE HAVE A VERY HAPPY AND SAFE NEW YEAR.

Allan Roberts Secretary

TRESURERS REPORT.

Closing Balance: 31st DECEMBER 2017 Running account S1 = \$4,234.30.

Fix Term 6 Months L1 Account: = \$7,029.33.

Allan Roberts Treasurer.

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

Minutes General Meeting November 2017

Minutes of RFA Meeting, 15th November 2017 at Burnley

Meeting at 10.30am

President Alex Shepherd opened the November 2017 meeting and welcomed all.

One minute silence for the fallen members over the past 12 months – we remember them.

Allan Roberts spoke about the financial report for the past 12 months.

Motion passed Harry Floyd -Seconded Ian Munro.

Secretary Allan Roberts mentioned the Bunnings BBQ and the money raised.

Don Brennan is now in a nursing home and is going ok.

The Ozaman House BBQ luncheon did not go ahead this year as Oz House could not accommodate the RFA to a suitable date this year to cook for their clients.

Secretary thanked John Laverick and Col Harris for producing “Water Off” magazine.

Allan Roberts also thanked the management and staff of Burnley Complex for the continued support of the RFA and for the luncheons they put on each time we meet.

Treasurer’s Report: Report produced for all to view.

Moved Len Manning -Seconded Ernie Padden.

New members this 2017 year amounted to 17.

Letters were sent to prospective retired MFB personnel encouraging them to register as RFA members.

Correspondence: Various cards were received by the secretary thanking the RFA for various positive actions taken over the year. Moved John Howe -Seconded Doug Overton.

Merchandise: Various quantities of fire rings, tie bar sets etc in reserve for members to buy.

Secretary Roberts then called for any nominations from persons seeking to be on the committee (all positions vacant). No nominations were received, therefore the current committee and those allocated positions are duly re-elected to those positions for the next 12 months.. Moved Don Brennan - Seconded Ian Munro

The UFU – RMD nominated representative for the RFA for 2017 is Leon Trembath. Leon was re-elected for another year. Moved Len Manning - Seconded Sammy Capes.

General Business: Retired RFA member Phil Cleary, spoke about the RFA website and the various special deals that Phil can achieve for our members by talking to various business owners. Phil encouraged all members to check into the website to view these deals on line.

John Howe talked about “Peer Support” and the 15 contacts were made in the past year from RFA members and their families to John and the MFB peer support group.

Nancy Brennan Thanked John Berry & John Howe for

the continued support she and husband Don has received from these two gentlemen since Don has been in respite care.

John Schintler thanked John Howe and John Berry for their continued support for John as his wife’s sole carer.

Sammy Capes showed the membership an old black and white photo of an exploded acetylene cylinder at a fire at the “Allen’s” confectionery factory in South Melbourne about 30 years ago.

Guest Speaker: President Alex Shepherd introduced Brenda McAuley – Hines (Program Manager, Dementia Australia) as the guest speaker for the RFA Annual General Meeting.

Brenda spoke about the 150 types of dementia that people can get. Dementia is not an age - related disease. Brenda said that 7 out of 8 elderly people do not get dementia.

Brenda discussed the various programs available for people with dementia.

Many questions from the audience were answered by Brenda and overall this was a very interesting talk from a well-informed speaker.

At the end of the talk, Alex Shepherd thanked Brenda and presented a \$500.00 cheque as a donation to assist people with dementia via programs the organisation provides.

Ian Fowler (Almoners Report) had little to report, however, from the floor we heard that the following people were unwell – Peter Driscoll (sick), Fred Kerr (sore back).

Ernie Padden had DVD’s on the History of the Fire Service which he kindly offered to the group.

Meeting closed at 12.05 pm and all adjourned to the courtyard at Burnley Complex for a BBQ lunch which was supplied by the MFB and cooked by willing employees and we thank them all for their generosity.

Minutes by Colin Harris

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

DEMENTIA — THE TIME BOMB (for some of us!)

At our November 2017 RFA meeting, the guest speaker was Brenda McAuley-Hines, Program Manager – Dementia Australia.

Brenda gave our group an informative talk about dementia. Information handouts also.

The following is a summary of the talk with members who asked many questions where Brenda answered sympathetically and with many years of experience under her belt.

What is dementia?

Dementia is the term used to describe the symptoms of a large group of illnesses which cause a progressive decline in a person's functioning. It is a broad term which describes a loss of memory, intellect, social skills and what would be considered normal emotional reactions. For a long time, the person may look healthy, but on the inside their brain is not working properly.

There are a number of different forms of dementia. The best known is Alzheimer's disease which is also the most common. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disease that damages the brain and affects how it functions. Other forms of dementia include Lewy body disease, vascular dementia and frontotemporal dementia, as well as other rare conditions.

Most of these conditions begin gradually and the person's abilities deteriorate over time. They may experience early changes that are not severe enough to be called dementia. This is called "mild cognitive impairment". Sometimes, changes in memory and thinking can occur for other reasons, so not everyone with mild cognitive impairment goes on to develop dementia.

Memory loss:

One of the main symptoms of Alzheimer's disease is memory loss. We all forget things from time to time, but the loss of memory with Alzheimer's dementia is different. It is persistent and progressive, not occasional. It may affect the ability to continue to work, or carry out familiar tasks. It may mean having difficulty finding the way home. Eventually it may mean forgetting how to dress or bathe.

Who gets dementia?

Dementia can happen to anybody, however the risk increases with age. Most people with dementia are older than 65, **but it is important to remember that most older people do not get dementia.**

Can dementia be inherited?

There are a few very rare forms of inherited dementia. People with a family history of dementia do have a slightly increased risk of developing the disease themselves.

Progression of dementia:

The situation for every person with dementia is unique. Their abilities may change from day to day, or within the same day. What is certain though, is that the person's abilities will deteriorate sometimes rapidly and in other cases more slowly over a number of years.

What can be done to help?

At present, there is no cure for dementia. However, medications have been found to help some of the symptoms for some people. Your doctor will be able to provide advice about these medications. Support is available for the person with dementia and their family, friends and carers. This support can make a positive difference to managing dementia.

WARNING SIGNS:

Memory loss that affects day-to-day function

Difficulty performing familiar tasks

Confusion about time and place

Problems with language

Problems with abstract thinking

Poor or decreased judgement

Problems misplacing things

Changes in personality or behaviour

A loss of initiative

Practical education programs for families and carers:

A range of information and support workshops are available for families and carers which provide useful information and practical suggestions for caring. These programs are delivered by professionals with experience in dementia care. They are held regularly across Victoria and are free of charge. Information about dates and times of programs can be obtained by contacting the **National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500 or by visiting fightdementia.org.au/vic**

Memory Lane Cafes:

Alzheimer's Australia Vic has been successfully running Memory Lane Cafes for more than 10 years. The café events provide an opportunity for people with dementia and their family members to enjoy time together in the company of people in a similar situation to themselves.

The cafes are a great place to meet other people, share experiences, learn about a range of services that can provide support and have a good time in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

Our café programs are available in 8 locations around Victoria.

Source; Dementia Australia



(From page 1)

Combined Recruit Course Graduation

Once on shift, the recruits will consolidate the skills they have learned over their course and gain practical experience on the fireground and at stations. Over their first year as Level One Firefighters, they will continue to undertake learning and development as part of their continuation and retention training development program.

The new Victorian Recruit Firefighter Course competencies align with the Certificate II of Public Safety (Firefighting and Emergency Operations). These students have covered agency specific elements from both MFB and CFA, providing a greater understanding of each.

These enhancements, whilst delivered in a different way than on previous MFB and CFA recruit courses, allow interoperability opportunities for both agencies.

It is important that crews are aware of the changes and expectations of Level One Firefighters as they transition into their roles.

Enhanced course components to be aware of.

Pump operations

Victorian Recruit Firefighter Course (VRFC) recruits learnt pumping principles on both CFA Heavy Pumpers and MFB Mk V Pumpers. Recruits will continue to reinforce their understanding of hydraulics and operation of pumps and consolidate those skills on agency specific heavy pumpers as part of the new combined continuation and retention training program.

Structural Firefighting and Compartmental Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT)

VRFC recruits learnt:

- > Theory and intermediate and advanced practical drills and cell burns, including; fire science, signs of extreme fire behaviour, ventilation, and fuel controlled fires.
- > Structural firefighting techniques including; gas cooling, methods of attack, hot door entry, and ventilation control.

This package has been rolled out at MFB over the last three years, and CFA is now considering an implementation plan for training remaining firefighters.

Enhanced safety training

VRFC recruits have developed competencies in:

- > Asbestos, including agency specific procedures
- > Safe Working Around Water, including the correct use of Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs)
- > Safe Working at Heights, a falls prevention and work positioning system utilised when working with a risk of a fall greater than two metres.



Continuation Training and Driver Education

The VRFC recruits will be the first group of firefighters to undertake their continuation training programs in a single combined format for both agencies. This means they will be issued with a Certificate III in Public Safety (Firefighting and Emergency Operations), a nationally recognised qualification.

During the first 52 weeks as Level One Firefighters at stations, they will complete a number of theory modules and practical drills. These components will need to be completed before they return to complete their two week continuation training. All recruits have been issued a Continuation Training Skills Passport Booklet, which outlines all of the course requirements and other important information to be documented before they commence the continuation of training program.

The Continuation Training Program will still include the completion of an EMR training course. As with existing practices, Level One Firefighters who have completed this week-long component will return to their stations as qualified EMR responders.

The second week of the course focuses on a range of firefighting assessments, and the completion of units that align with the Certificate III of Public Safety (Firefighting and Emergency Operations). This includes



completion of the 'Operate Pumps' assessment, after which they will gain CFA Heavy Pumper increment or MFB Mk V pumper and other Pumper qualifications.

Level One Firefighters will also undertake a single combined format driver training program. Through the Victorian Recruit Firefighter Course, recruits have already completed two days of driver training including driving light fleet vehicles.

Congratulations to all of the new Firefighters and welcome to a very rewarding career in the fire services.

Article MFB “Fire Call”
Images; Blair Dellemijn
Courtesy MFB Media and Comms.



Tea or Coffee???

Depending on whom you listen to and which papers you read there are many conflicting reports on the health benefits of coffee and tea. Some reports talk about the negative consequences of caffeine while others look at the benefits. On balance, there seem to be more reports suggesting that both coffee and tea provide significant health benefits.

The positives

Among other things, researchers have discovered that coffee has the ability to reduce the incidence of dementia and Alzheimer's and type two diabetes. Caffeine has also been shown to relieve constricting blood vessels in the brain, reducing migraines. Tea has been shown to contain powerful antioxidants and cancer-fighting properties and can also help reduce hardening of blood vessels.

Tea drinkers have a significantly lower risk of stroke and heart disease, and the beverage is known to boost brain health. One health study of older adults found that those who drank less than three cups of green tea a week had a higher risk of age-related declines in memory than those who drank more than two cups. Tea drinkers also have a higher bone density levels and slower rates of bone loss, plus their cells have a younger biological age than non-drinkers.

The negatives

Coffee is more acidic, so if you have stomach issues or digestive problems, tea is going to cause you fewer issues. Also counting in tea's favour is the fact that coffee is believed to negatively affect bone density and its increased caffeine content is not great if you have high blood pressure.

Tea is not without its negative impacts. Some studies have shown that drinking tea can reduce the iron absorbed from plant-based sources. Then there is the more cosmetic issue of teeth discolouration, which results from drinking either beverage.

Our verdict

Regardless of whether you are a tea or coffee drinker, it is the additives that risk doing you the most damage. Adding sugar, sweeteners, cream or milk to either hot drink could significantly reduce the health benefit or either. If you take your cuppa with a sweetener, you will derive a significantly better health outcome from cutting it out than you will from switching drinks.

Given you have most likely built up a strong connection with your drink of choice, most people are unlikely to switch. On balance, drinking tea is the healthier option because it helps with bone density, while coffee does the reverse.

Source; Your Life Choices

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Gone but Not Forgotten

Sadly, there were many of our comrades and friends who passed away last year. Here we acknowledge them and record their names for posterity as emergency service personnel, often putting their lives on the line while providing active service to the community saving life and property.

Bob Wright – MFB, Colin Tait – MFB, David Louis Berthet – MFB, Mick Chadwick – Airport Emergency Service & MFB, Brian Charles – MFB, Francis Schultz MFB, Valentine Davey – MFB, William Pinnell – MFB, Jim Hunter – MFB, Claude Selby – MFB, Keith Farmer – MFB (Workshops), Raymond Farrow – MFB, Fred Goldsmith – MFB, Roy Huggins – MFB, David Da Fonte – MFB, Peter Kennedy – MFB, Kenneth Hopper – MFB, Keith Dumas – MFB, Alan Stirling – MFB, John (Jack) Moore – MFB, Jack MacGregor – MFB, Cameron Watson – MFB, Kevin Clarke – MFB, Albert Deans – MFB, John (Jack) Neville – MFB, Murray Jelleff – MFB, Philip Mosel –

MFB, Alan Ball – MFB, Arthur Rogers – MFB, James Hopkins – MFB, Andrew Gaston – MFB, George Fisher – MFB, Geoffrey Tangey – MFB, Brian Trembath – MFB, Albert Burt – MFB, Gordon Winch – MFB, Bernard Smallwood – MFB, Robert Templeton – MFB, Ian Hunter – MFB, Uwe Oeser – MFB, Ronald Hetherington – MFB, Kevin Lynch – MFB, Duncan (Jock) Campbell – MFB, William Guthrie – MFB, Ernest Lucas – MFB, Ronald Sewell – MFB, Gordon William Lynch – MFB. Egryn “Bert” Stevens — MFB. George Slade — MFB.

John Cotter – CFA, Andrew Gaston – CFA, Nathan Shanahan – CFA, Giovanni (John) Salvucci – CFA (Communications), Victor Pilgrim – CFA, Sophie Cann – CFA, Ivan Younghusband – CFA, Peter Schmidt – CFA, Robert Armstrong – CFA.

We also fondly remember Jeanette Geddes (wife of Ian Geddes – RFA ex-committee member) and Mary Cowling (mother of SSO Tony Cowling and grandmother of SSO Rachel Cowling)
We will remember them!

A reminder to us all of the important work our emergency workers carry out on a daily basis and how an emergency could impact any one of us at any time!

Below is an email sent from Commander Bruce Pickthall to the crews who responded to an EMR call.

From: PICKTHALL, Bruce
Sent: Wednesday, 10 January 2018 11:31 AM
To: Eastern District - A Shift; Eastern District - B Shift; Eastern District - C Shift; Eastern District - D Shift; HUNTER, Terry; LANIGAN, Robert; MORRIS, Craig; PICKTHALL, Bruce; ROGASCH, Brian
Subject: EMR call involving former ACFO Bob Wright

Greetings All.

On Wednesday morning December 13 last year, the A shift crew on PT27 received an EMR call. I was working with A shift that day.

The call was for a walker who had been discovered collapsed on a track in Yarran Dheran reserve in Mitcham. The large hilly reserve is crisscrossed by walking and bike trails. It would later emerge that the walker was in the adjoining Schwerkolt Cottage reserve. On arrival, an accurate location was still not available to responders. It was established he was on the sealed bike trail. This helped, but how far away remained unknown. Thankfully, on this shift PT27's crew was four, not its normal three. Two of the crew jogged quickly ahead with the defibrillator, the others carried in the heavier equipment. A number of ambulance crews were also attending trying to find the walker (I believe some were advancing with PT27's crew)

Listening to what was unfolding I attended and gained access to the bike track at Schwerkolt (from the opposite direction) and was able to drive in along the track to

where 11 dedicated professionals were working hard to save the man. Our firefighters and multiple AV crews, hauling everything they could carry, in hot conditions, had travelled some 1.5 km on foot from various access points to find him. Rescue 27 attended making equipment available on site should a carry out be required; the equipment was not needed. MFB drove out AV crew so the MICA van (about 2km by car) could be driven in. Despite extended efforts the man did not respond to treatment, he could not be revived.

The walker had no means to be identified. By chance, via retired Station Officer Trevor Bristow (B shift), at a B platoon Christmas function the following night, I learnt that the man, a very close friend of Trevor's was former MFB Assistant Chief Fire Officer Bob Wright (back then ACFO was equivalent to our current Deputy Chief Officer rank), I was a bit stunned at learning this. Trevor told me Bob was 73 years of age. I did not recognise Mr Wright, who I had met only a few times early in my career. I clearly recall he was well regarded by his generation of MFB colleagues and shift mates. Speaking with Trevor, as I explained the response effort of our firefighters, ambulance colleagues and passers-by it was plain to see that the knowledge provided him a measure of relief and comfort that everything possible was done for his great mate.

In the time that has passed Bob's wife Liddy has learnt of the effort to assist Bob and is very thank full to all who answered the call for help. Below, Bruce and his team...

is AV, VicPol, passers by doing CPR while trying to identify their location and MFB firefighters.

Hello everyone, I just want to thank you for your support. The presence of the truck with Bob's name on it at the memorial service meant a lot particularly to our daughters. It is wonderful that even after so many years the MFB still supports its former employees. I intended to thank the crew that manned the truck but did not manage to do this. Would you please pass our appreciation on to them. Also a big thank you to Bruce and his team.

*Regards,
Liddy*

It reminds me, yet again, that in so many ways, what we do matters! It matters to and helps people we come into contact with and many we will never meet; the extended



family and friends in so many cases like this one.

Mine and Trevor's thanks to the crew at 27A and our AV paramedic colleagues for demonstrating once more how we never give up when assistance is urgently needed and the circumstances are difficult. Thanks also to our VKN8 operators who were constantly trying to provide an accurate location.

I am now also aware of how ACFO Wright was identified. Some of the things our Police colleagues need to deal with, with no notice, on the spot... very difficult. Hat's off to them too.

Be safe and never forget how important the things we do as firefighters with our AV and VicPol colleagues are.

Regards. Bruce P.

Bruce Pickthall | Commander - Eastern District Operations 'C' Platoon Metropolitan Fire Brigade
100 Atherton Road, Oakleigh, VIC, 3166.

Image; Barbara McCumisky

FRIENDS of DON **BRENNAN—A message from the** **UFU**

Retired District Officer Don Brennan is unwell. His family have asked if his friends and colleagues he has worked with over the years would like to visit him they would be welcomed.

Rather than having many lovely people turning up all at once, his family have asked for some help in setting up a visitor's roster.

If you are able to visit Don and want to check the visitor's roster, then please contact Laura Campanaro at the UFU office on 9419 8811.

Don is currently at : St. Vincent's Care Services Werribee, 40 Old Sneydes Road, Werribee, Victoria, 3030 (behind Mercy Hospital).

Update and note from Angela Potter - 3rd January 2018:

As many members would know, Don was a foundation committee member and president of the RFA for 18 years and was instrumental in many of the activities and fundraising for the RFA.

Angela is Don's daughter. She is asking for assistance of RFA members if possible to try and arrange for some help in relation to setting up a roster for people to come and visit her father. Angela is back at work as is her husband and are finding it difficult for them to



support Don's wife Nancy in relation to looking after and keeping Don company whilst in care. As per information above, please contact the UFU office on 9419 8811 and put your name on a roster to visit Don.

An Inspirational Lady!

November 30th 2017, I met up with Mandy Gosetti and Robyn Bell in Carlton. It was a stinker of a day, 36 degrees as we come into our summer months. I made the interview on time and there they were waiting in all their finery for the old commander.

Now this interview came about from a phone call, two weeks earlier, when Mandy phoned me about a concept which she has already put into action whereby handymen help others to help themselves in regard to fixing, checking things in the house when their loved one has passed away or is very ill and cannot fix things around their home.

Let's go back a few steps!

Lauro (Laurie) Gosetti was Mandy's husband for 21 years, a firefighter for the MFB for 28 years and passed away 3 years ago from a rare cancer which was detected too late. I was a commander in Western District for a few years and had contact with Laurie and his crew at 41 Station (St. Albans) each month when I visited for the usual chat, catch-up and pot of tea. (I wonder if the new commanders carry out this old tradition of getting to know their crews?). Laurie was on "D" shift, his officer was Kevin Doble and his offsider was Ian Cobble. They were a gun crew and worked well as a team and we always had a good laugh and catch-up when we got together.

Laurie unfortunately was found to have this cancer (liposarcoma) and after many months of treatment, back to work and inevitable suffering for both Laurie, his wife and family, Laurie passed away on the 15th February, 2014. Laurie was only 55 years old.

As a result of Laurie's passing, Mandy found that she couldn't do the things around the house that Laurie always did. Things like, changing a tap washer, replacing a broken tile, plugging up a hole in the wall, using a battery-operated drill, preparing and painting a wall, starting the lawn mower and maintaining it etc. Resourceful Mandy decided to do something about this, as she knew there were many other people in the same boat as she was. Can you imagine contacting a plumber to come to your home and change a tap washer and then being presented with an \$80.00 invoice - for 10 minutes work! Well yes! Probably happens somewhere in Melbourne every day of the week.

So, this is where the concept/idea of **"I'm Still Learning"** came from.

Mandy started this program with no funds and then some help from the local council and a few businesses and suppliers in the Oak Park area.

Groups of 10 people per class are taught over a 2 x hour session with the help of volunteers (often volunteers from the Men's Sheds and others) to show, assist and teach the participants how to complete tasks that their partners did without blinking. The group have had professional props made up to assist the participants in the workshop.

Partners just assumed that their "husbands/partners" did the maintenance around the house, while the "home maker" did what she or he did best -cook, clean, iron, feed the kids, do the shopping etc etc. (Well that's how it was when I was growing up!).



Meeting with Mandy Gosetti and Robyn Bell

Mandy's program is continuing in 2018 in the northern suburbs of Melbourne and she needs some additional help! Mandy requires a few more volunteers from our retired MFB/CFA people to come and assist, teach and help others in need of learning some of the skills which most of us (men) can do.

If you can assist once or twice per year for 3 hours, this program will continue to assist those people in our community who need assistance and need to learn some basic skills.

The feed-back from some of the participants is inspiring and brings a smile to Mandy's face.

Mandy does not get any remuneration for her inspirational work and hopes to continue with the program for many years to come.

The program could be rolled out to other municipalities and she and Robyn Bell (Frank Churchill's daughter) are positive this could be a reality in the future.

The positives of the program are that people who have lost a partner and do not have the skills to help themselves with basic home maintenance, have the chance to positively change their situation when they can fix a leaking tap or fill that crack in the wall and don't have to rely on a neighbour or relation who could be busy and may turn up days later to help that person.

Another positive of the program, is that friendships are made with fellow group participants.

This program has won the Moreland City Council's Partnership and Collaboration Award.

There are many other positives gained by the people attending these self-help sessions including a fire safety segment by the MFB (either Fire-Ed or MFB firefighters volunteering their time off shift).

The next workshop is to be conducted on Tuesday, 6th February 2018 at 10am to 12 noon. Location: Sussex Neighbourhood House, 109 Cumberland Road, Pascoe Vale

If you can assist Mandy, she can be contacted via her email: info@imstilllearning.org

Mandy has turned a negative part of her life due to the death of her beloved husband Laurie, into a positive action which has already assisted many partners who have lost another.

Colin Harris (Editor)



Left and Below; Les & Geri Napper at "Napper Airfield" - Wedderburn, NSW. This airfield is named after Les's late brother Arthur Napper who passed away last year.

An Interview with gentleman Les Napper

I was stationed with Senior Fireman Les Napper when senior firemen ran the station and did a bloody good job of doing so. They took the new kid on the block under their wing and looked after them most of the time. They supervised the station work and in the days of running lots of two and a half inch hose at jobs, would ensure the hose was washed and hung up the hose tower to dry. Going into a house fire with a good senior fireman meant that you would come out alive, save the odd cough and splutter from the smokey atmosphere inside. We tended not to use BA all the time as we should have. Glad this has changed as safety is paramount these days in the fire services.

I met first Les when I was stationed at Eastern Hill in August 1973 as a 4th class fireman (firefighter). Les was one of the seniors along with firies John Rodda, Eddie Mc Mullen, George McLennan, Arthur Harlond, John Barrett and many others. I think the strength on "C" shift numbered 40 men and officers. Reg Carey was the DO and you could always hear him coming as the keys on his belt always gave him away. Those were the good old days!

Now, back to Les, who was born in Sale – Victoria, on the 11th January 1935.

Les grew up in Kew and went to primary schools in Kew and Camberwell. He attended Trinity Grammar School and upon leaving school became an apprentice machine operator working at Holeproof (hosiery) in Deepdene. Les later joined the Royal Australian Navy. for 10 years and had a wonderful travelling experience and set him up for another great career.

Les joined the MFB on 30th March 1962, after working in jobs which he considered boring. He was stationed at No.1, 37 (St. Kilda), reliever in Eastern District and

retired to station 24 (Malvern). His best memories were working with a great bunch of people and having lots of fun. Mr Aldridge was the CFO when he joined the job.

Some of the memorable work colleagues he remembers are the following: Bob McGillvrey, Dave

Farrell, Bill Hey, Dave Griffiths, John Rodda, Max McGraw, and Paul Sandilands.

Some of the large fires he remembers responding to are as follows: Coode Island, chemical factory in Clayton, plastic factory in Clayton, plastic factory in Cheltenham, St. Kilda Town Hall, Kew Cottages, Malvern Valley Primary School, Mt Waverley Secondary College and a hospital warehouse somewhere in Clayton.

Les retired from the MFB (24 Stn) on 30th March, 2005.

Les loves his tennis and he and his wife Geri have travelled the world to places like Canada, USA, UK, Europe and New Zealand.

One of the most memorable people Les remembers meeting, was Rocky Marciano (famous American boxer) at Eastern Hill as an experience you might want him to tell you about over a nice hot cup of tea one day at one of our RFA meeting days at the Burnley Complex.

Col Harris - Editor



39 per cent Increase in Consumer Guarantee Reports in 2017

More than 29,000 people reported consumer guarantee issues to the ACCC in 2017, with half noting problems getting remedies for faulty automotive, whitegoods or electronics products.

The ACCC is concerned by this growing trend, which shows a 39 per cent increase in reports about consumer guarantee issues when compared to the 21,000 received in 2016.

"It's disappointing to see that more and more people are having issues enforcing their consumer guarantee rights," ACCC Acting Chair Dr Michael Schaper said.

"We want shoppers across the country to be aware that they have automatic consumer guarantee rights under the Australian Consumer Law when they purchase a product or service. Businesses cannot ignore these rights under any circumstances."

Issues with faulty products and businesses being misleading about consumer rights are some of the most common reasons for people to contact the ACCC.

"Unfortunately a lot of people run into problems when trying to get a remedy for a faulty product. For example, they might be told the product is out of warranty and nothing can be done," Dr Schaper said.

"Many consumers often assume that the so-called warranties they are offered by a retailer are their only protection. This is not true, as consumer guarantee rights are separate to any warranty that comes with a product. The length of time these rights apply is also unrelated to the manufacturer's warranty period."

"For example, if you buy a new TV that breaks down after the manufacturer's warranty expires, you may

still be entitled to a remedy under your consumer guarantee rights, including a repair, replacement or refund," Dr Schaper said.

Another common issue is businesses telling consumers they need to take a faulty product back to the manufacturer.

"If you return a faulty product to the retailer you purchased it from, they must provide you with a remedy and cannot direct you to the manufacturer instead," Dr Schaper said.

"One common tip we recommend is saying the three magic words, Australian Consumer Law, to let retailers know you understand your rights. This can help resolve an issue quickly."

People having difficulties obtaining a remedy for a faulty product can use the ACCC's complaint letter tool to try and resolve the issue with the trader. If this is unsuccessful, they can contact their local consumer protection agency or report the issue to the ACCC.

Know your rights

If a product you purchased is faulty, your right to choose a remedy depends on whether the failure is major or minor.

If it's a major fault, the consumer can choose to get a refund, replacement or repair. If it's a minor fault, the business can choose which of these to offer you.

A product has a major fault when it:

- has a problem that would have stopped you from buying it if you'd known about it
- is unsafe
- is significantly different from the sample or description, and/or it doesn't do what the business said it would, or what you asked for, and it can't be easily fixed.

FROM THE PAST

SALAMI LOST IN FIRE

Gordon WINCH and Stan KREGAR were called to extinguish a fire in the kitchen of a home in Park Crescent, KEW.

On arrival at the home, they were greeted by an Italian woman, who was hysterically rattling off curses and complaints in her Native tongue.

Luckily, Stan was a talented multi-linguist and quickly ascertained the circumstances which led to the fire igniting.

The Italian lady explained that she was preparing to rub Methyated Spirits on a newly born baby to clean its navel. She had quickly surmised that the Metho was too cold to apply, so had emptied a quantity of the

Spirit into a saucepan to heat up on the stove.

The readily predictable outcome ensued with the kitchen being totally destroyed.

There had been many plastic fittings in the kitchen, including venetian blinds.

However the lady seemed to have great difficulty in coming to terms with an explanation to her husband when he came home - a number of his prime salami, which was hanging from the mantelpiece, had perished.

On a positive note, there was little other damage to the home and there were no casualties.

JEFF PEIRCE

(Son In Law of Gordon WINCH).

26th JULY 2018**SOUTHPORT YACHT CLUB***1 MACARTHUR PARADE SOUTHPORT*

Well you all know the drill!!!! It's time.

To all fire fighters where-ever you are!!!

Our get together this year is at the same place as usual.
Catch up with old mates and see how old they have got!!!!

Please arrive between 10.30am -11.00am because it takes
forever to get you to muster.

I will be sourcing out some accommodation so stay tuned
for my report!!! Hopefully, I might be able to get some
prices and photos for you all.

In the mean time please let us know if you are coming up
to enjoy the day with us.

Ian & Gail Fagernes contact details:

Ph 07 5522 4321 Mobile: 0431 485 141

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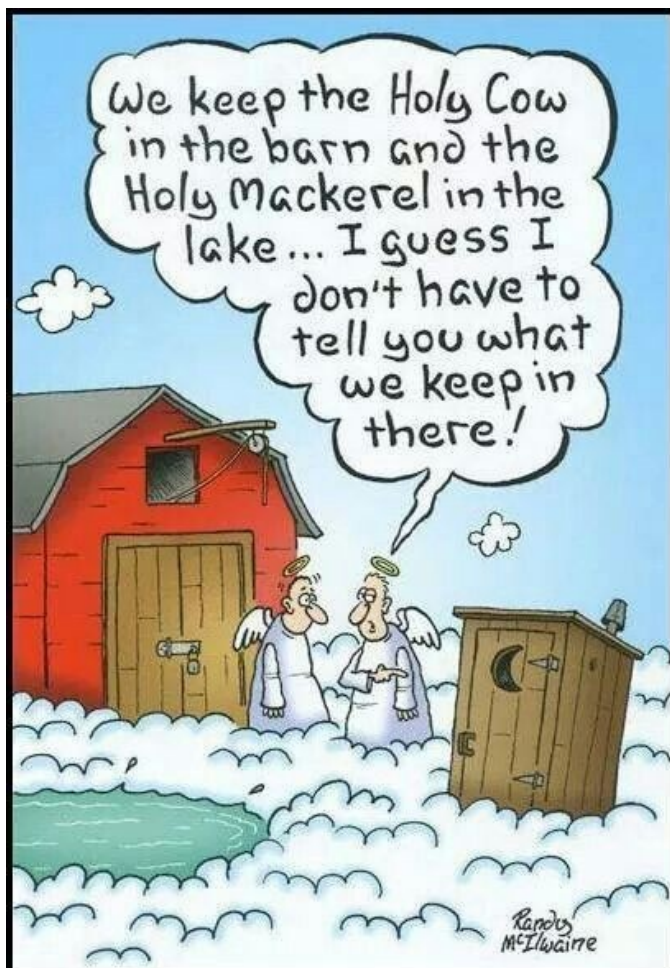
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Download the new VicEmergency app

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 VicEmergency app and website will provide warning and incident notifications about floods, storms, fires, earthquakes tsunami, beach closures, shark sightings and more.



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.

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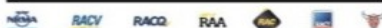
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**Copy deadline for Water Off Magazine
for May edition is April 20th 2018.**



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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.

Firefighter's Picnic

Sunday 18th February 2018

11am. till 4 pm.

**Venue; Moonee Valley Racecourse
(Enter from McPherson St.)**

Retirees - Bring the Grandkids

Note: For catering purposes, please ring the union office on 9419 8811 and let them know how many you are bringing along.

**BBQ sausages, hamburgers and drinks
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BYO salads, plates etc.
Rides, games and prizes.
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