

"WATER OFF"

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



Feb 2024 Vol 29 No 1
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RFA General Meeting
NOTE
Burnley Complex
Burnley
Wed 21st February 2024
at 10:30am

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“GENERAL MEETING”

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

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

**Please contact
Bryan Robertson
0418 129 252**

All Correspondence to:

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

Non financial Members

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

OFFICE BEARERS

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

General Committee:

Col Harris
Len Manning
Mike McCumisky
Ian Geddes
Kevin Hede

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

Valē

Arch McLachlan,
Millie Laverick,
James Harrison,
Terry Hitch (late notification),
John Toms,
Kevin Tait,
Ian McPherson.

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

Sick List * In Care Facility

Stan Cameron,
Geoff Cuzac,
Jack Etherington,
Ian Hookey,
*Gary Spicer,
John Williams,
Len Lette.

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

Diary Dates

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Hello all, welcome to the New Year. Where has the old one gone? As we grow older the years go very quickly and nothing seems to change. The world has gone crazy again with wars and people not getting on with each other and the weather hasn't been good of late.

Anyway, I hope you all had a great Christmas and New Year full of Family and Friends and I hope you still enjoy good health. We the Committee hope to see you at our meetings and more news on that will be forthcoming. I hope all members and families have a great year with lots of love and best wishes to all. To all of us who lost family and

friends during this time my thoughts and best wishes go out to you. I'm looking forward not backwards.

Alex Shepherd - President

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT



Hi all,

Well its been another exciting 3 months with Christmas and New Year over for 2023.

An issue has come up regarding the paying of dues into the GMCU Credit Union.

If you are paying dues into the bank for a member, please make sure the member's name is on the pay-in slip. Some people have been paying dues for a member into the credit union without putting the member's name on the pay-in slip. This makes it hard to balance the books.

Hope to see you at the next meeting. Let me know if you are coming for catering purposes.

Regards,
Phil Cleary RFA Secretary

Peer support is available to Retired Firefighters and Associated Members

FRV

Employee Assistance Coordinator

Irina Tchernitskaia – PH: 0407 665 174

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

Peer Coordinators

Chloe Henderson PH: 0417 538 289

Scott Darcy PH: 0429 771 849

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Retirees

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

Tony Branchflower Retired SSO MO: 0400 695 622

Peer Coordinator Trent Egan

PH: 0448 071 299

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

NOTICE

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

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

Any queries, contact:
Phil Cleary - Secretary

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

Yester - Year

Charity Bicentennial 200K Team Run

*A prize of 2 x bottles of wine for an R.F.A. member to name 5 members of the 2 combined M.F.B. teams.



This plaque was unveiled by The Honourable R. J. Hawke A.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Australia on Sunday, January 22 1989 to commemorate the participation of 100 teams of ten runners, which set out from this point on January 30-31, 1988, on an historic rely run around Port Phillip Bay to celebrate the Australian Bicentenary and to raise funds for registered charities. The accompanying plates (either side of the plaque above), record the teams who chose this unique event to express pride in their country, and whose combined efforts contributed more than \$650,000 to the community health, welfare and development projects of the organisations listed under their names. Each runner, in what was also known as the “TWO-TON RUN”, was awarded the endeavour medal – a facsimile of which appears below. The “TWO-TON RUN” was sponsored by FCL Interstate Transport Services, and was organised by DOXA Youth Welfare Foundation.

Patron In Chief Chairman—Robert De Castella M.B.E.
Chairman—John Landy M.B.E.
Patron—Sir Donald Trescowthick K.B.E.
Vice Chairman—Judy Patching A.O., O.B.E.

R.I.P. Kevin Tait

I didn't know him well
He was a big shot, one of the leaders
Kevin Tait knew his stuff
He was ahead of the pack
Knew where he was going
There was no denying that
He had a brother, John
A great SSO who knew his job
Both were northern men
Kevin still loved life when he departed
A man who was involved
In community, Scouts, Lions,
Cricket, Golf and Football
He loved life and always had a smile
For any of us, he would run a mile
Family was everything
A grandfather of many
A father of four + one
Kevin was a self-starter
A leader, a firefighter, a decision maker
He was a man on a mission
A smiling face, he would never hesitate
"Just get on with it son
let's get back to the station
have a pot of tea and a hot cross bun!"

R.I.P.

Kevin Tait – 86 years old.



Family day barbeque held in honour of retired Assistant Chief Fire Officer Kevin Tait in late 2023.

Fire Rescue Victoria

Reminder to never skip a beat on your health

All FRV employees are eligible for an annual health assessment. For Southern District 2 Infrastructure Commander Paul Caligari, this simple check was a life saver. When his cardiac result showed a small blip, Paul spoke to his GP.

“I thought it was going to be a waste of time conversation and one test would be the end of the matter, as I had absolutely no signs or symptoms of any heart issues,” Paul said.

“Unbeknown to me, there was a major problem brewing inside my chest.”

After receiving an early morning phone call from his GP telling him to cancel what he had on and come back to the clinic immediately, Paul knew there was more going on beneath the surface.

Paul had a calcium deposit build up in his heart of 590, which leads to the hardening of arteries, built up cholesterol and eventually, halted blood flow, which can be fatal.

“I ended up in the Monash Heart Hospital undergoing invasive treatment to clear a blocked left anterior descending artery,” he said.

“This is the major artery – if it gets fully blocked, you have very little chance of survival. Most people receive very little warning that they’re about to have what can be a fatal heart attack.

“Luckily, the blockage clearance was successful, so you will have to put up with me as commander for a bit longer, and my wife, daughters and grandson get to keep their husband, dad and Pa.”

Paul is sharing his story in the hope that more FRV employees will take advantage of the annual medical assessments available to them.

“If not for the FRV medical assessment, I would have been none the wiser,” he said.

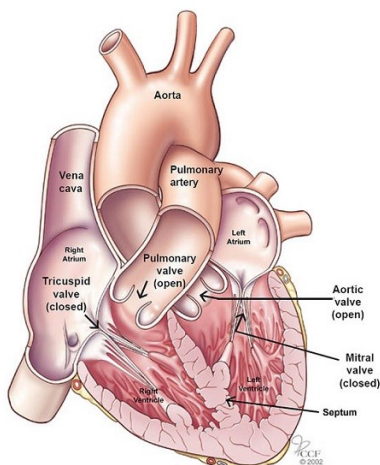
“I was literally on borrowed time with a time bomb ticking in my chest. While my lifestyle will have to change a bit, taking medication for the rest of my life, adhering to a stricter diet and more exercise, I’ll take that in preference to the other option.

“I urge you, please, if you have not undergone a heart health assessment or a calcium heart check, please consider doing so sooner rather than later.

“With a new year underway, take this opportunity to put your health at the very top of your list.”

The program is voluntary and confidential, and is designed to identify common health risks such as cardiovascular issues, diabetes, and prostate, bladder and bowel cancers.

To access the service, contact medicalservices@frv.vic.gov.au.



Love your heart!

Richard (Dick) Lawrence Cleary

Richard Lawrence Cleary, better known as “Dick”, joined the MFB on 30/6/1967 to start his training at No 10 Station Richmond.

After he finished recruit training, like most of us he went to No 1 Station - Eastern Hill, where he spent some years before moving around eastern district at various stations, including, Nunawading 27, Ringwood 22 and Croydon 26. The Tanker was at Croydon so that gave Dick a chance to be permanent at Croydon for the next 14 years.

“Along comes Hunter’s Wheel”

Because Dick was a boiler maker/welder by trade and Mr Hunter liked him, he was transferred to Carlton’s No.3 Rescue Van. People who new Dick would agree with me, that he was very good at his job and saved quite a number of people’s lives during that time on the rescue unit. However, he would be the only firefighter I know, who was charged for insubordination by a Superintendent and received a Chief Superintendent Commendation Award at the same job, which was on the 7th of May 1985. The Chief’s Commendation Award said, your actions during a particularly and difficult rescue operation involving massive injuries to the occupants of a motor car on Tuesday 7th of May 1985, bought great credit on yourself, your fellow team members and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade - signed Chief Superintendent Barry Watkins. The next day he had to front the Third Officer for the charge he was on where he received a kick in the a#?e for that!

After all that, Dick decided to have a change and transferred to Research and Development there he had a chance to design new tools and products for the new rescue vehicles. He designed a lot of the tools and special equipment for the vehicle fit out. This led to another job in the brigade. Somebody asked Dick did he know anything about boats, because the MFB are taking over the Melbourne Port Emergency Service and are building a new firefighting boat.

This would be Dick’s dream job in the brigade, playing with boats and testing them in Port Phillip Bay and putting the odd line or two out there as well. This sounded great until he saw the boat. It was an over sized “PUNT!” You wouldn’t be game to leave the Victoria Harbour as you would sink. You all know what happened to that idea so Dick decided to go back on shift at Nunawading on Rescue 27.

After a few years at Nunawading Dick decided to retire, He finished up on the second of April 2003 and he hasn’t had a shave since. His love of horses has kept him busy over the years, and moving to Woodside he could do both - horses and fishing.

After a Few years at Woodside he decided to sell up and go fishing around Australia, so he bought a new boat - a 7 metre “Stabicraft” and off he went for 5 years. His favourite spot was Port Smith Caravan Park in Western Australia, 120 km south of Broome. He booked in for 1 night and stayed for 3 years. The fishing was fantastic!!

After being away for 5 years he decided to come home and move back to Woodside area so he could retire again and still go fishing. (Photos on page 15).

By: Brother Phil Cleary.

How to make Small Talk (Conversation) – Anywhere!

An article from the Saturday AGE by Angus Holland – 30/12/23

I write poetry, I write articles and I'm the editor of "Water Off". I've been fascinated with the word "conversation" for many years. After being in "the job" for over 40 years, I had many conversations with many and varied people. Some people are great conversationalists, some are good, some are OK, some are boring and some are painful and, some don't pass the pub test. The people who irritate me, are the ones who constantly talk about themselves. The ones who want to tell you about their monetary worth. The ones who have tickets on themselves and want to just keep talking about themselves during a one on one conversation with me or you. It could also be in a group conversation. Those people may ask you a question (ie one question!) and even then, they really don't want to listen to the answer. Then, they rabbit on about themselves, their latest acquisition, it could be their children and then, don't tell me, their darling grandchildren! In short, the conversation ain't equal. (Oh, sorry, isn't equal!). You get my drift! I hope you get my drift? To have a worthwhile and relaxed conversation, each party needs to have equal input, equal time to have their say without being interrupted, argued against, just for the sake of having an argument & them wanting to be always right! I know many people who are like this! Their voice rises when they don't agree with you. They have to be always right and, the centre of attention. As far as I'm concerned they can have it! I'll just have to excuse myself & tell them, its loo time or I have to bring a drink to so and so. In short, it's time to go and let that person go to find another sucker to bleed their woes & fortunes on. (Editor).

OK, let's get on with the article by Angus Holland.

Angus starts off with the following words. "How do you keep the conversation flowing at a party or other gathering and maybe make a new friend or engage a new colleague?"

When did we first start to talk about how we talk?

Over the centuries, some of our greatest thinkers have puzzled over the art – or science of making successful conversation, with varying results. "What can be more delightful," asked the Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero, "than to have someone to whom you can say everything with the absolute confidence as yourself?"

The stoic philosopher Epictetus came up with some unsurprising austere suggestions – "let silence be your general rule"- and warned against segueing lazily into what were, apparently, that era's "common subjects", among them gladiators, horse races, athletes and food and drink (although through today's lens, they sound pretty compelling).

Phillip Stanhope, the fourth Earl of Chesterfield – he of sofa fame – is generally credited with coining the phrase "small talk" sometime around 1751 in a letter of advice to his son. "Study to acquire that fashionable kind of small talk or chit chat, which prevails in all polite assemblies, and which, trifling as it is, is of use in mixed companies and at table," he drawled.

In 1961, the British tastemaker Constance Spry advised, in *Hostess*, "Beware of talking too much of yourself and of what you think and do, avoid boring repetition, loud laughter, senseless giggles, affectation and interruption."

Now, if you're retired, or still in "the job", Dale Carnegie wrote a book many years ago. The book is called, "How to win friends, and influence people." First published in 1936 and updated multiple times, including after Carnegie's death in 1955, selling more than 30 million copies to date. Carnegie interviewed the inventors Marconi and Edison. "The rules we have set down here, are not mere theories or guesswork," he writes. "They work like magic." You'd best read his book if you want his actual advice.

Why are some people better at conversation than others?

“A good conversation starts with wanting to learn from the other person – asking questions, keeping it light and being interested in what you can learn from the other person.... Just as a bad conversation is, essentially, a lecture which is ignoring the other person’s views.”
Can you train yourself to be a better conversationalist?

Rupert Wesson (Director at British coaching – Debrett’s says “the point of small talk is that it allows rapport to be built before more serious subjects are tackled. Small talk might seem trivial, unimportant to some, but it is a way of making a personal connection with someone before tackling something that might be complex or even controversial.”

Donna Henson, an associate professor at Bond University, steers us towards the “social penetration”. She says “if we want to escalate a relationship in any way, it’s really about talk, it’s about revealing ourselves.” Henson goes on to say, “A real conversation is a dialogue, almost without sides – that reciprocal give and take. Conversation is a skill that takes practice. It is something that you have to make an effort in. It doesn’t come naturally to everyone.”

In 2017, a team lead by Karen Huang from Harvard University identified “a robust and consistent relationship between question-asking and liking. “People spend most of their time during conversations talking about their own viewpoints and tend to self-promote when meeting people for the first time. In contrast, high-questions askers – those that probe for information from others – are perceived as more responsive and are better liked.”

How important is body language?

Fraser Lack (from TV show Survivor) says, “I definitely make a conscious effort with how I present myself, so in terms of using very positive, open and inviting, welcoming body language rather than being closed off. Negative stance, crossing your arms – these are things that I never do. Then there’s smiling. A couple of years ago, I realised I wasn’t a smiler. I realised I had quite a stern face. I actually had to make an effort to smile.”

Andrew Leigh (politician) says, “When you’re speaking with someone who disagrees with you, that’s a good thing. That’s what I remind myself when I’m chatting with a friend or a relative who disagrees with me. It’s about negotiating difference. Ask the person why they hold those views. Tell me how you came to have those views. If the conversation gets a bit too much, try a simple “I might leave that for another time.”

At a stand-up affair, party, gathering etc you can always employ the old standby: “Can I get you a drink?” And if you go off and never come back, remember, it’s a big room, you could get lost on the way back. It’s not rude. It’s understandable.” Also, you might need a pit stop!

From a Very Happy Mother!

FRV Media recently received a lovely message through our website feedback form about a positive experience at FS27 Nunawading:

I would like to put through a commendation for the Nunawading crew, and in particular Chris May. My son Ollie and I attended the station in December, and he was pretty excited to look through the window at the fire trucks.

You can only imagine how thrilled he was when the garage doors opened, and he was welcomed to have a look at the fire truck and meet some of the firefighters! Chris was so accommodating and generous with his time, and really went above and beyond showing Ollie the fire truck and even letting him respond to a job and hold a hose! A very big thank you to Chris and the team, you have made my little firefighters year!

Well done Nunawading C Platoon, it sounds like you’ve made a fan for life!

Not out of the woods with Covid by Hayley Gleeson – ABC NEWS

When Brendan Crabb finally caught COVID-19 for the first time late last year, it was because he had broken his own rule — he took a risk he says he shouldn't have. Since 2020, Professor Crabb, director and chief executive of the Burnet Institute, had been sticking to a rigorous anti-COVID routine, effectively using layers of protections to avoid getting the virus. And then in a moment of lapsed judgement, he joined a crowd of hundreds of people at an awards event in a small room in Sydney, without his portable air purifier and N95 mask. “The waiters couldn't even get to us to give us a drink,” he says — it was that tightly packed. “That's a situation I never get myself into ... and three days later, I tested positive.”

Fast-forward a couple of months and a similar story has been playing out for thousands of Australians as COVID-19 surges again. Partly it's because the highly mutated new subvariant JN.1 has driven a worldwide spike in infections, hospitalisations and deaths. But it's also probably because so many of the precautions we used to embrace — masking, testing and isolating, vaccination — have been abandoned, deemed unnecessary by those who think the danger has passed, or who misguidedly believe COVID-19 is “just a cold” or necessary to catch for immunity.

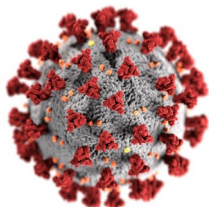
Some commentators have described this situation — the crashing of wave after wave of COVID-19, a steady drip, drip, drip of death and mounting chronic illness — as the “new normal”. But other experts insist it doesn't have to be, and that continuing on the current trajectory is unsustainable — especially in light of data showing that COVID has decreased life expectancy, will cost the global economy an estimated \$US13.8 trillion by 2024, and is decimating the lives of millions of people who have developed long COVID.

Meanwhile, studies continue to pile up showing COVID-19 can cause serious illness affecting every organ system in the body, even in vaccinated people with seemingly mild infections. It can cause cognitive decline and dysfunction consistent with brain injury; trigger immune damage and dysfunction; impair liver, kidney and lung function; and significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Then there's long COVID, a debilitating disease that robs fit and high-functioning people of their ability to think, work and exercise.

Robyn Schofield, aerosol scientist at Melbourne University is particularly concerned with preventing infection in healthcare settings. She bravely spoke out last year when, while being treated for breast cancer at Peter Mac in Melbourne, the hospital decided to relax its masking policy for patients. “COVID cases were actually rising at the time, so it was a bad call,” she says. “And it was then reversed.” But she was still “disgusted” and lost respect for the hospital's leadership, she says: she expected that staff would understand the science of COVID-19 transmission and take steps to protect vulnerable patients.

Even before she was diagnosed with cancer, Dr Schofield was taking precautions — for starters, she knows where the “most risky settings” are. Trains, planes and automobiles are big red zones: “Buses are actually the worst,” she says, because they recirculate air without filtering it. She regularly uses nasal sprays, wears an N95 respirator when she's indoors with other people — in meetings at work, for instance — and makes sure air purifiers are switched on. “If I walk into a space, I will also open windows. I just go around and open them,” she says.

When eating out, she chooses restaurants that have outdoor dining areas: a newly revamped boathouse in the Melbourne suburb of Kew is a favourite of hers, and Korean barbecue is “always excellent”, she says, because there are generally extractor fans at each table. It's all about good ventilation.



Covid is still around and is still making sick and people are still dying from Covid. In crowded spaces consider using a face mask and sanitise hands.

Five minutes with... David Mann

This weekend, FRV Ambassador David Mann AM KSJ FAICD celebrates a remarkable milestone – 50 years at Melbourne's 3AW radio station. His time as an on-air personality has also led to a 30-plus year affiliation with the former Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and, now, Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV).

From riding along on callouts as a civilian observer, attending the Metro Fire Chiefs Conference in the United States, and emceeding graduation and award ceremonies, David has carved out an utterly unique career with the fire service.

This was recognised in 2006 when David was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for 'service to the community through a range of police, nursing, heritage and emergency services organisations', and in 2018 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

How did you first become engaged with MFB?

In 1981 I was working on air at 3AW and in those days people would call in and tell me there was a road accident or structure fire, things like that. I realised I didn't know anything about first responders.

3AW's parent company and MFB agreed to an honorary contract whereby I became the first civilian to legally ride a fire appliance to observe what firefighters do.

I was stationed at FS01 (Eastern Hill), and I would do a night shift nearly every week with B platoon. I spent nearly a decade there and then they sent me to FS44 (Sunshine) as another experience.

In the beginning I was a bit of an anomaly, and often the first time firefighters would see me was in the truck on the way to an incident and they'd be like, "who's this bloke?"

They gave me a bit of a hard time at the start to find out what I was made of, but then I became a team member, and made some lifelong friends I still have to this day.

You also spent some time as the on-call public relations manager, and after that, you moved into corporate support.

We had the first major corporate support of a fire service anywhere in the world, with Manchester Unity (now Australian Unity). They gave us \$1M a year for three years, and we brought a lot of ideas back from overseas.

I was privileged to be the only civilian to attend the Metro Fire Chiefs Conference in the US. That's where all the metro fire chiefs from across the US get together to exchange ideas and talk about innovation. For example, smoke alarms, trauma teddies, robotic fire trucks, and EMR (emergency medical response) all came back from that. We would bring the ideas back and implement them with the help of Manchester Unity and support of both major political parties.

This year you became the inaugural FRV Ambassador. What does that involve?

My job is to explain the diverse work of FRV to the community and our stakeholders, be at events, emcee the Long and Good Service Awards and graduations, and talk to my government and industry contacts about ways they can potentially support FRV and help us lift our profile. I just do my best to get the message out about what FRV is about, what we do, and how we support communities.

What are you most proud of?

Helping secure the corporate support was a massive thing in those days, getting millions of dollars to do things we didn't have the budget for – trauma teddies, smoke alarm campaign etc.

I'm also proud that I was accepted as an outsider. I had a Chief Fire Officer's Commendation given to me, and I've received other awards in the fire service. They're all big honours, and it is very unexpected but makes you feel like part of the family.

Do you have a Christmas message to share?

Be proud of what you do. You're part of one of the best fire services in the world.

I'm very proud of everyone at FRV; not just the firefighters but all the support teams. A few to mention: people at the workshops, those who work with the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA), the people looking after building safety, the United Firefighters Union, those working at the FRV Academy, and the Executive Leadership Team. It's a massive organisation, and everyone plays an important part.

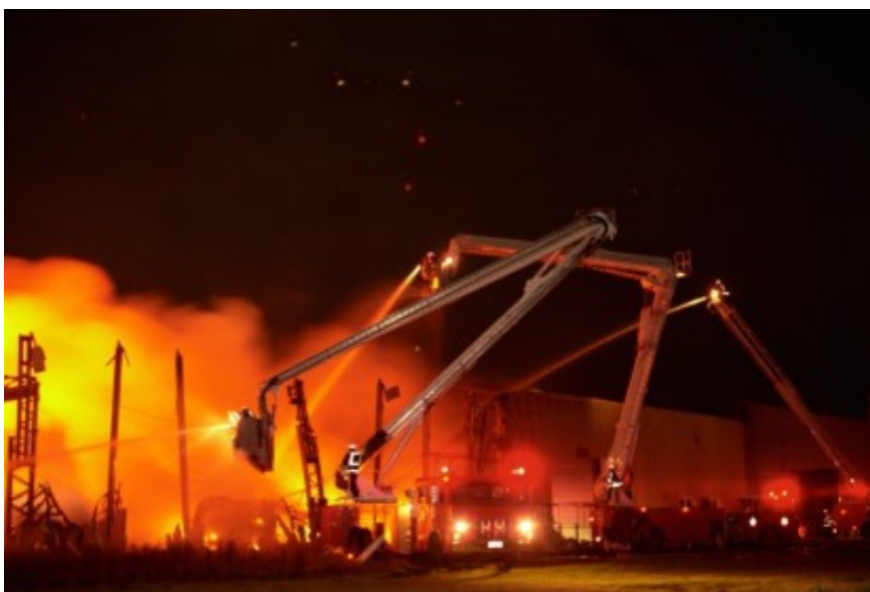
I look forward to continuing to work with you in the new year.

Invicta Mills Fire – By Les Gray. Continued from November, 2023 issue of Water Off.

Returning from a horrific car accident, the driver said “look at that smoke.” Turning my head to the left I could hardly believe what I was seeing. A huge column of black smoke billowing upwards about 100 meters high and moving slowly in a Northerly direction. My immediate reaction was we’ve found ourselves another job, turning left into Ashley Street I radioed VKN8 and informed them that a large fire was showing up probably in Ashley Street in the vicinity of South Road, Braybrook and am proceeding on, will send word back shortly. A minute or so later VKN8 came on the air relaying a message that No’s 44 and 47 Stns. Pumpers were turning out for an exchange telephone call for a fire in the Invicta Mills Carpet storage building, Ashley Street, Braybrook and are being followed by No. 44 Stns Aerial Appliances. Shortly after other Pumpers from Western District, Aerial Appliances and Pumpers from Central and other districts were on the road. Proceeding down Ashley Street as we approached the fire we saw that the smoke was issuing from the roof at the centre of a large building.

We entered the premises via Ashley Street, Hampden Street to Crothers Street which brought us to the Northern end of the building. I set up the Initial Control Point, leaving Trevor in charge of same. (The Initial Control did not function as it should have for a number of reasons, Trevor could monitor messages from VKN8 but had no way of relaying them on to me, he simply did not have a personal radio to contact me on Channel 9. VKN8 could have contacted me on my personal radio but they never did for additional information. Realizing this, there was no way I was just going to sit in the car listening to VKN8 turning out appliances etc, being District Officer I had a job to do especially when there was a fire gathering momentum in a large building. I told Trevor to remain in the car and monitor VKN8. If there were any pertinent messages requiring my attention come and find me on the fire ground and let me know. Eventually Trevor joined up with the crew of one of our Western District Pumpers and ended up on a Hose Line. Leaving Trevor at the car I ran down the West side of the building counting my steps as I ran to determine the size of the building (for my word back information) I counted about 135 paces and just as I came to the front of the building (South end) No. 44 Stns. Mk 111 Pumper with S01 Bob Undy and his men came roaring onto the scene. Bob positioned the pumper on the South East end of the building between Stan Cash’s Warehouse and Invicta Carpets storage building, whilst his crew ran out a feed from a nearby hydrant and a delivery line from the pumper. I asked him to pace out the front of the building, which he did and reported that it was about 134 metres (The measurements that Bob & I paced out made the building approximately 18,000 square metres. Bob and his men took their hose line into the building about 10 – 15 metres, he related later that the fire spread so fast he noticed a rollover of smoke and realised the possibility of a flash over behind them. He withdrew the men and hose line back to the main door, this was after 5 – 10 minutes they then directed their stream of water into the advancing fire. He said later that initially they had problems finding enough water for the pumper. When No. 1 Stn’s. Hose Layer arrived on scene they run out a 90mm dia. feed from South Road, which gave them ample water, by this time 7 hand lines were deployed on the South end of the building, a monitor and 3 hand lines on the East side. As quickly as I could I sent word back that the fire was in a single storey building about 135 x 134 meters, constructed of concrete floor, steel framed walls – iron clad, with steel trussed roof – fibro and iron clad, containing rolls of carpet, the building is well alight, “ASSISTANCE REQUIRED”. The West side of the building proved to be a serious problem as there was insufficient distance between Invicta Mills carpet storage and their neighbouring buildings. One of the neighbours had bulk storage of 100’s of compressed cylinders of various kinds of gases, which necessitated the deployment of a Mark 111 pumper with its monitor and hand lines run out from it and also a Magirus-Deutz Ladder set up as a water tower to protect this exposure. To complicate this there were a large number of 44 gallon drums of petrol stored along the South wall, these drums had to be man handled away to safety by firemen assisted by Invicta Mills employees. A number of LPG cylinders that were stored along the East side of the building also had to be removed. The carpet was stacked 4 meters high from floor to roof void height, generally right throughout the building. The rolls of carpet had a rubber latex backing and they were wrapped in flat plastic sheeting, this proved to be quite a high fire load. There were 2 large Roller doors each end of the building and they were left open to allow for Fork Lifts and Trucks to move in and out. As the fire gained momentum the open doors acted as a wind tunnel allowing air to be inducted into the building feeding the fire, accelerating it as fast as man could walk By this time with all the Exchange Telephone Calls coming into No. 1 Stn’s Communications Centre, Control Superintendent Ken Wilson had despatched additional appliances and the Main control unit to the fire. All on call Executive Officers were notified and SO2 Geoff Hughes No.1 Stn. drove Deputy Chief Fire Officer Alan Richards and the C.E.O. of the Metropolitan

Fire Brigades Board, President Mr. Brian Parry along with him (which no doubt enlightened him to the problems faced by fire fighters at large structure fires). SO2 Hughes' role at this fire was to be an M.F.B. liaison officer with the police concerning traffic control in Ashley Street, South Road and other streets, to have them blocked off to stop traffic running over the hose lines. Control Superintendent Ken Wilson also turned out a short time later with his driver/orderly, on arrival he noticed that No. 45's Cranvel tower was not achieving anything where it was set up and had it made up and moved to the North end of the building. Initially as the Western District Officers, men and appliances arrived on scene they set up their appliances around the perimeter of the building where ever they could see a hydrant and got to work. We all realised from the beginning that there was no way of saving the building and its contents because of an acute shortage of water in the area, it was one of containment and protection of surrounding buildings, particularly houses in Hampden Street (on the East side of the storage building) from radiated heat, what saved the houses was that the wind was blowing directly from the South, taking most of the heat and smoke away from them, never the less we also had hand lines fed from pumpers set up at regular intervals along Hampden Street pouring water into the burning building and people were using garden hoses in an effort to dampen and cool down the front walls and roofs of their dwellings It was a token effort as in a short time the water stream from their hoses dropped down to a trickle. (Continued next issue – May, 2024)



JOKES - Joyce

One from the Veterans!

A bloke goes to a City Council to apply for a job.
The interviewer asks him, "Are you allergic to anything?"
He replies, "Yes, caffeine. I can't drink coffee."

"Have you ever served in the military?"

"Yes." he says. "I was in Iraq for two years."

The interviewer says, "That will give you five extra points towards employment."

Then he asks, "Are you disabled in any way?"

The bloke says, "Yes. A bomb exploded near me and I lost both of my testicles."
The interviewer grimaces and then says, "Okay. You are a disabled ex - serviceman,
so you have enough points for me to hire you right now."

"Our normal hours are from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. You can start tomorrow at 10:00
AM, and plan on starting at 10:00 AM every day."

The bloke is puzzled and asks, "If the work hours are from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM,
Why don't you want me here until 10:00 AM?"

"This is a Council job," the interviewer says. "For the first two hours we just stand
around drinking coffee and scratching our balls. No point in you coming in for that."

All is Quiet on the Eastern Front

I was invited for lunch at 26 Stn, Croydon "C" platoon a while ago. I knew three of the chaps from yester-year. OIC boss, was Nasi Georgostathis, Reg 10214, who happens to be the Junior Vice-President of the United Firefighters Union. I asked Nasi about his thoughts on the transition from MFB to FRV. His response was positive. He said it was still a work in progress, not helped by the hackers who have caused massive issues to FRV computer systems. Nasi mentioned that there have positive inroads and working relationships with outer FRV stations, volunteer stations and their crews. An SSO officer exchange occurred in recent times between Boronia and Carlton fire stations and has up to date, been most positive. At Croydon Stn, fires, incidents and EMR calls are fairly consistent. Nasi has been in the job 20 years and he still loves "the best job in the world!"

Leading Firefighter Andrew Marr, Reg 4543, is the senior leading Firefighter of the team at Croydon. He joined the job in 1989 – Recruit Course 75. Andrew has been out in Eastern District for all his time in the job. Does the rosters know about this Andrew? I asked him. Funny, there was no reply, just a smile on his dial! Some of the big jobs he has responded to, have been C.I.G. Preston, Not Yet Under Control in Collingwood. In 1990, Andrew attended the Sydney bushfires with a contingent of firies from MFB. They were flown to Sydney in a RAAF Hercules to assist N.S.W. Rural Fire Service firefighters. They were there for 4-5 days assisting with all types of fire calls. He still enjoys the job, yet looking forward to retirement, whenever that day comes. Andrew has served the community for 35 years, so far!

L/FF Glenn Powell Reg 10023. Glenn joined the job in 1990 and was the last recruit for 8 years. (MFB did not recruit for eight years!) Glenn remembers some of the personalities he encountered when he was at the Abbotsford Training College. Names from the past include, Graham Edwards, Graham Simpson, Peter Geddes and Noel Joyce. Some of the names and stations Glenn remembers of the years are the following: Nunawading – Fred Koolstra, Col Matheson, Rick Warry and Stuart McCall. At Templestowe, there was Des Foster, Rob McKie, John Baulderchino, Nick Beagley, and Glenn Mackwell. At Richmond, there was Darren Davies, and Peter Doyle. He went to one of the World Police and Fire Games (Ten Pin Bowling), however, failed to bring a medal home. In 1994 - 1995 Sydney bushfires (Blue Mountains), he and his crew has no sleep for 88 hours. Houses were exploding from the extreme heat of those fires. When Glenn was stationed at Burwood (Stn 23), that station became a pilot station for a new skill, being, Emergency Medical Response (EMR) in the year 1998.

Kris Powell Reg 11243. Been in the job about 5 years. He was a cabinet maker prior to joining the job. His father-in-law Greg Lewis retired 4-5 years ago. One of the emergency call outs was with HART crew from No.10 Stn to a platform/gantry which has come loose and dangling in mid-air with window cleaners in danger of falling. In BoxHill where a worker was struck by a "kibble –bucket" & fell into wet concrete which was quickly setting and required extrication.

Billy Hartley – Reg 11471. Joined the job at 24 years of age. Enjoyed recruits and now loves the job after 4.5 years. At 26 Stn, Billy has attended many EMR jobs and believes this skill adds value and is a great community service which Fire Rescue Victoria provides. He was an accountant in his former life. His father, L/FF Wayne Hartley retired from MFB after 33 years.

Julian Harris Reg 11710 (almost the junior boy), has been in the job now, for 18 months. He followed his big brother (James), into the job and hasn't looked back. His former life was in Human Resources (recruitment) with NAB. He's been to a few jobs in the area, a large school fire, car accidents, house

fires and EMR calls. He loves the job and says it's a great work/life balance. ** I was told that Julian makes a great pot of tea, which is of course a requirement of the job & one of the junior crew!

The ring-in today was Cody Bekkerus Reg 12005. Well, Cody is the junior of the crew at Croydon for today. Cody is normally stationed at Carlton Station on "A" shift. Cody finished recruits two months ago. He enjoyed recruits and couldn't wait to get out to station and find out what real station life was all about. Cody is from Canada and is 38 years of age. He was a sky-diving instructor in Canada and is married with two children. He loves Australia, our weather, our culture, our great beer, good people and loves our coffee! Citizenship took 10 years to get! At Carlton Station, he attends lots of calls into the city and of course, most are false alarms. It was a tasty lunch. The cook today was Julian. It must have been his DAD who trained him up so well!



Station Crew at 26 Station with an old MFB visitor.



Retired Dick Cleary doing what he loves best.

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