



Emerald Fire Brigade



ANNUAL REPORT 2019



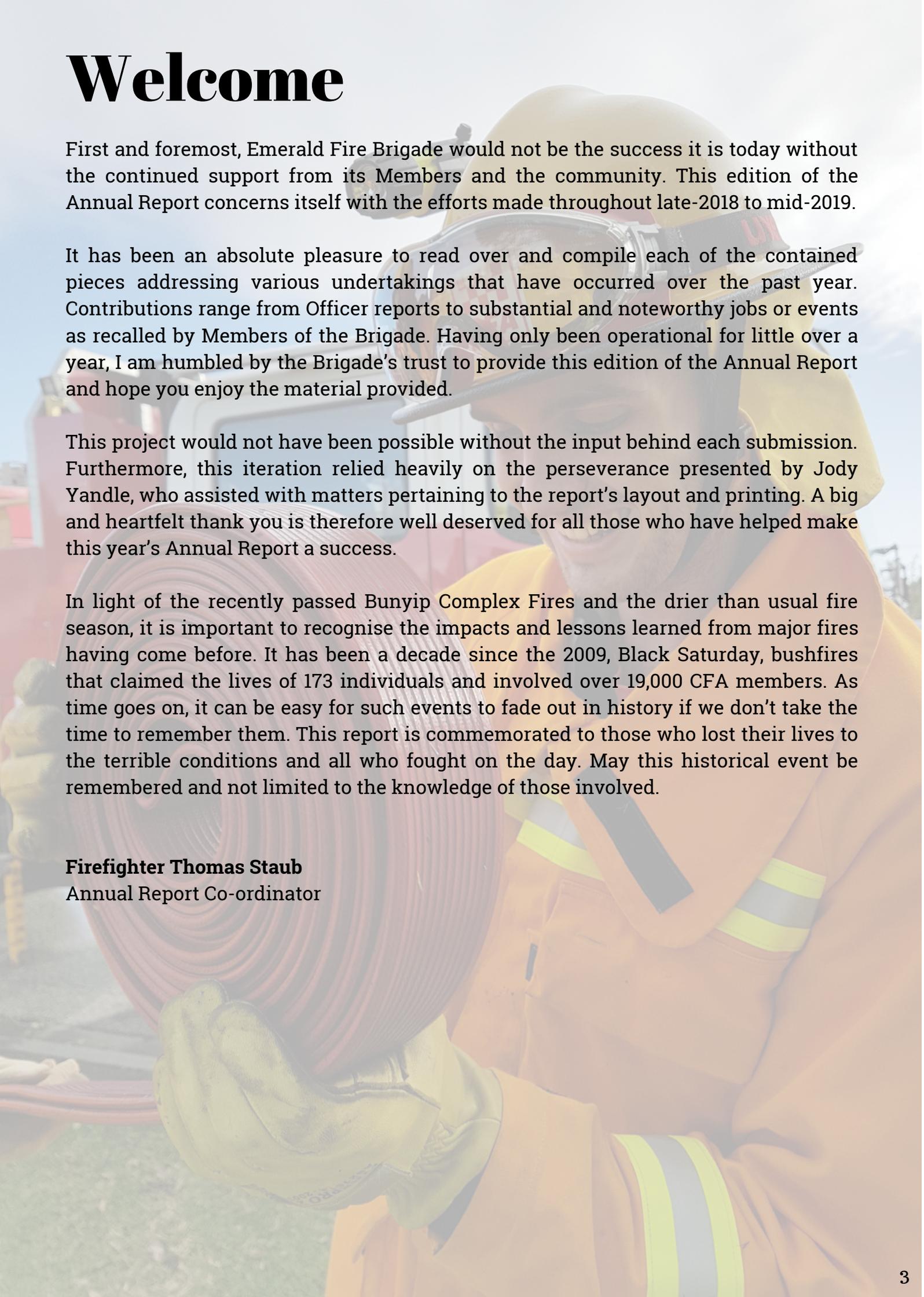
GEMBROOK

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY

EMERALD

MICHEL

Welcome



First and foremost, Emerald Fire Brigade would not be the success it is today without the continued support from its Members and the community. This edition of the Annual Report concerns itself with the efforts made throughout late-2018 to mid-2019.

It has been an absolute pleasure to read over and compile each of the contained pieces addressing various undertakings that have occurred over the past year. Contributions range from Officer reports to substantial and noteworthy jobs or events as recalled by Members of the Brigade. Having only been operational for little over a year, I am humbled by the Brigade's trust to provide this edition of the Annual Report and hope you enjoy the material provided.

This project would not have been possible without the input behind each submission. Furthermore, this iteration relied heavily on the perseverance presented by Jody Yandle, who assisted with matters pertaining to the report's layout and printing. A big and heartfelt thank you is therefore well deserved for all those who have helped make this year's Annual Report a success.

In light of the recently passed Bunyip Complex Fires and the drier than usual fire season, it is important to recognise the impacts and lessons learned from major fires having come before. It has been a decade since the 2009, Black Saturday, bushfires that claimed the lives of 173 individuals and involved over 19,000 CFA members. As time goes on, it can be easy for such events to fade out in history if we don't take the time to remember them. This report is commemorated to those who lost their lives to the terrible conditions and all who fought on the day. May this historical event be remembered and not limited to the knowledge of those involved.

Firefighter Thomas Staub
Annual Report Co-ordinator



EMERALD

FIRE

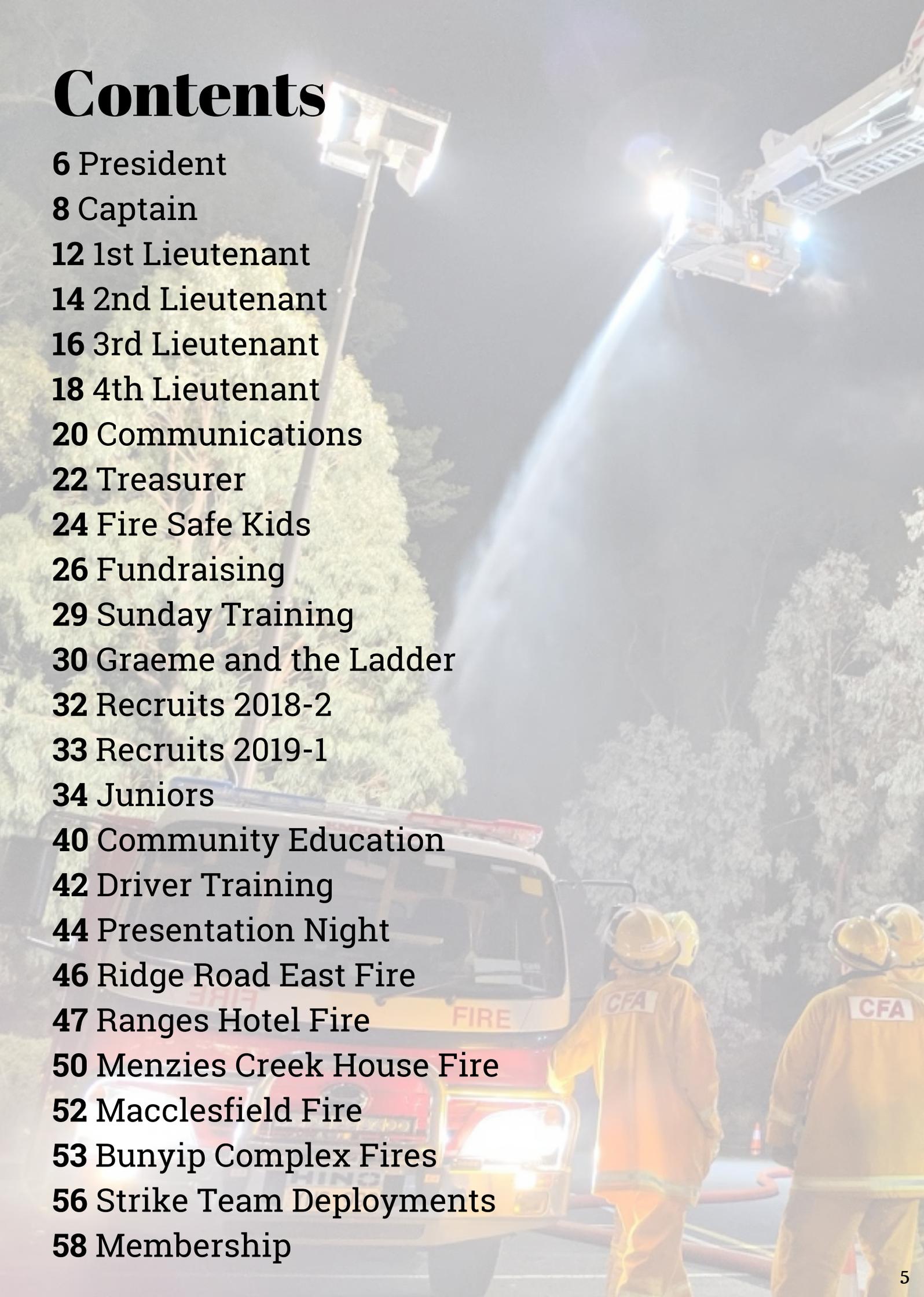
FIRE

HINO
YNC-993

CFA

CFA

Contents

The background image shows a night scene with firefighters. A fire truck is visible with its emergency lights on. A ladder is extended from the truck, and a bright beam of light from a spotlight on the ladder illuminates the scene. Two firefighters in yellow gear are visible in the foreground, their backs to the camera. The scene is set outdoors with trees in the background.

6 President

8 Captain

12 1st Lieutenant

14 2nd Lieutenant

16 3rd Lieutenant

18 4th Lieutenant

20 Communications

22 Treasurer

24 Fire Safe Kids

26 Fundraising

29 Sunday Training

30 Graeme and the Ladder

32 Recruits 2018-2

33 Recruits 2019-1

34 Juniors

40 Community Education

42 Driver Training

44 Presentation Night

46 Ridge Road East Fire

47 Ranges Hotel Fire

50 Menzies Creek House Fire

52 Macclesfield Fire

53 Bunyip Complex Fires

56 Strike Team Deployments

58 Membership

President

It is with great pleasure that I present my first President's Report and would like to thank the Brigade for letting me do so.

I welcome all in attendance at our Presentation Night at the Emerald RSL, and would like to thank the RSL and their committee for letting us use their premises and for their support.

In the last year we have seen many Members leave us for various reasons and we say goodbye and thank you for your service, but we have also welcomed many new Members to the Brigade and we welcome you to our family and hope you enjoy all we have to offer, both on and off the fire ground.

The last fire season saw some fires closer to home than what we have had in a while and with this brought a few Strike Teams going out to help others. This saw several of our newer Members go out on Strike Teams for the first time and, from what I heard, it was a very rewarding experience both in knowledge learnt and memories made. Well done to everyone that took part.

I would like to thank all our families and partners for your support and help over the last year and the employers of our Members who were given time off work to go and help those more in need, both during the fires and after.

May I also thank all our Officers for making the Brigade what it is, and for our training which seems to just get better!

In finishing, thank you for your support over the last year; it has been fun and I look forward to the next 12 months.

Thank you and safe firefighting.



Firefighter Trevor Ireland
President





Captain

Welcome to another edition of our Annual Report. I hope you enjoy the experiences and thoughts of our Members from the past year. My thanks to Tom and Jody for their hard work putting it together.

We had an average workload for the year with 120 calls, but there were a few calls that were interesting or saw our Members working hard on the fire ground. Often these were our newer Members who experienced larger jobs for the first time. It's always satisfying to see new fire fighters putting their new found skills into practice and starting to build on their experience and expertise with the Brigade. You will find some of their stories included in this report.

Below are some of the calls of note:

- **Gas Leak/Building Damage** - During a wind event on the 19/8/2018 the Brigade was responded to a smell of gas at a home in Kilvington Drive. The lesson of never taking the pager message as gospel was reinforced, as arriving on scene the Brigade was confronted by a house that had been nearly demolished by a large tree falling over. Initial size up located not only a natural gas leak to contend with, but also an 80 year old resident suffering shock and still inside the structure. The elderly lady was escorted safely away from the compromised building and into the care of paramedics and family.
- **Ranges Hotel Fire** - Sadly the historically significant and iconic Ranges Hotel in Gembrook went up in flames in the dawn hours of 24/9/2018. Emerald Pumper was responded after a call of "make pumpers 4 and ladder platform 1". On our arrival, the hotel was fully involved and our crew assisted with a twin hoselay from the West, BA wearers, thermal imaging camera, hand tools and various attack lines. Crews worked on scene for over five hours.
- **Business Premises Fire** - A good save was made to a business address in Main Street, Emerald after we were responded to smoke issuing from a building on 6/1/2019. The business had heavy smoke and fire coming from underneath at the rear of the building. A successful fire attack was made in the underfloor area during which it was found that the fire had extended to inside the building through a ducted heating vent. A second 'internal' attack then had to be quickly made, including forcibly entry, PPV ventilation, thermal imaging camera use and fire knock down with limited water damage. This was a job well done by all attending.
- **Menzies Creek House Fire** - Shortly before midnight on 14/2/2019 our Pumper was responded to a fully involved house fire opposite the Menzies Creek Fire Station. Due to its construction and design, this fire spread very quickly and was fully involved as the Menzies Creek Members arrived at their station. They quickly called for our Pumper and Tanker to also respond. The Salvage attended some time later to assist with lighting. This was a very close call for the family, as they were only woken by a neighbour and some received minor burns and singed hair whilst escaping the fire.
- **Crane Roll Over** - On 25/5/19 we were initially called to oil leaking from an overturned crane in Avonsleigh. The incident itself had happened several days prior to our call, but we found a 20t mobile crane on its side at the top of a steep driveway. It was perched precariously over the corner of the house and resting on a damaged retaining wall. The oil spill was easily attended to, but the bigger concern was risk of the retaining wall giving way and allowing the crane to complete its roll over, particularly as heavy rains were forecast; potentially washing away the earth around the retaining wall. Crews worked with Emerald SES members to sand bag an area to divert run off and we organised Eagle Towing & Salvage to attend with heavy chains to secure the crane to several large trees. The crane sat in this position for approx. three weeks before being removed by another 'really big' crane.

Captain

The 2018/19 fire season was generally a quiet one for our Brigade, although there were many increased fire danger days with potential for going fire. Our area, thankfully, was spared any major issues.

As has been the case over the last few years and purely by chance, no requests were made for Strike Team 1333, of which we belong, during our rostered periods. Although I hope this is a tradition in future fire seasons, our crew members did respond very well when the call came for composite crews to assist other Ranges Group brigades.

The first two weeks of March were very busy, with large fires in the Bunyip State Park and at Yinnar in Gippsland. Our Members worked approximately 25 shifts on other brigade's tankers at these fires, again with many of our newer fire fighters experiencing their first taste of working at bushfires – great job done by all.

Something we did get a chance to do this year was a fuel reduction burn off. District had organised this burn in the scrubby area to the East and North of the Emerald Secondary College to provide a safer buffer for the school. Emerald Members were keen to be involved along with other brigades from around the Group and District as well as a light up crew from DELWP. Once assembled and briefed, crews were positioned and the light up crew did what they do best while our crews stood by ready.

The FRB was yet another first for our newer fire fighters, this being the first time most had seen an actual fire moving through the scrub and up the trees. The smell of the smoke, the feel of radiant heat, the odd stray spark, having a go on the drip torch and the joy of dragging a charged line through scrub then through black ash when blacking out, all good stuff for keen new firies (and some of the oldies alike). No better training to be had in my opinion.

There were a few small local fires starting early in the season with a 6 hectare grass fire in Mount Burnett in mid-November and a 5 hectare grass fire on Ridge Rd in February, which was started from a farmer trying to burn off a dead cow in a paddock. We had one 'stand up' day on 25th January when Members were asked to crew the station for a 90 second response time. Luckily we were not required to roll and our time was well spent with some preparations and training for what might happen if we did get a call.

Anyone around Emerald at the moment can't miss the growth and further urbanisation that is happening all around town. New developments such as the Emerald Hub, Worrell Reserve clubroom upgrades as well as the new multistorey tilt slab commercial developments popping up shows that our community is growing. These types of premises and the complexities that come with them will change the risk profile of the Brigade and require new pre-plans, local knowledge and training requirements on our behalf - interesting times ahead. Our Brigade continues to put a high emphasis on training and with the large groups of new recruits coming through, our training has often centered on their requirements, particularly our Sunday training. Sunday training is traditionally less formal than the Brigade's official Wednesday night training sessions and gives us a unique opportunity for some more relaxed training with fewer Members present. This usually equates to a more personalised training content which can be tailored to suit those attending.



Captain

Sundays also allow a little downtime; time to have a coffee and a chat. This social time is just as important for the Brigade as the training itself, which I feel is important. Give Sundays a go if you can! I wish to extend my thanks to the entire Brigade for their commitment towards training, including those planning and delivering the actual sessions. It's important that we train hard to gain and retain the skills we need on the fireground.

Thanks also to the Members who have contributed to Community Safety and Engagement in all its forms. Whether it is stands at Woollies, School fetes, Kinder or Scout visits or the Fire Safe Kids work our Members do at the Primary School, it's all relevant, it's all important and it's all very much appreciated. Well done.

As previously mentioned, we have been lucky to receive large groups of recruits after some dedicated work from Lt. Klaus Brodeck in his membership and recruitment portfolio. The larger groups have brought some complexities to the way we operate and train, but it has been a very successful program; it's great to see new Members willing to serve the community via the CFA. It's also gratifying to watch these Members gain experience in the Brigade and it's been interesting watching the very new recruits getting taught and given tips and mentoring from those that were in the last few recruit groups. It's a generational thing, but very satisfying to see.

There's a lot of pride involved with being in the CFA and at the time of writing this report, I had just attended the latest Ranges Group recruit fire fighter graduation ceremony. A large contingent of new recruits in shiny new yellows from across the Group were presented with a certificate of completion and the pride was evident on their faces during the ceremony in front of their peers and families.

I welcome all those that have decided to become one of us during the year. Thank you for the service you are willing to give back to your community and I hope you find your time with the brigade rewarding and enjoyable.

Sadly the brigade lost two stalwart members during the year with the passing of Annette Campbell and Life Member Bill Richman.

Annette Campbell became involved with the Brigade after husband, Roger, joined as a firefighter. Later on, eldest daughter, Wendy, and then twins, Matthew and Melissa, also became Junior Brigade Members. Annette was a very active Member of the Auxiliary and one of those down to earth people who just got on with the job. Whatever or whenever it had to be done - fundraising, feeding or whatever, she was always involved. A lady with a big heart and a wicked sense of humour. Not only did she serve the CFA but Annette was involved in many community groups and the very large attendance at her funeral service proved she will be missed by the whole Emerald community.



Bill Richman to many current Members is just a name on the Life Members Honour Board from another era. However, to me, Bill was a mentor in my very early days in the brigade; an experienced 'fireman' and always calm. As a 16 year old, I attended one of my first fire calls with Bill to a tree fire at Emerald Lake Park. We were tasked with running out a hose (32mm back then) and branch to put the tree out. Being a newbie, I fully expected to be backing Bill up on the branch, but he wouldn't have a bar of it, pushing me to the front and explaining the best way to attack the fire. You don't forget things like that. Bill was a true gentleman and a great bloke with many a good story. I enjoyed catching up with Bill and his ever supportive wife, Shirley, at many annual dinners over the years and he will also be sadly missed.

Captain

Some other highlights from the year:

- **Oxfam Walk** - Simon, Ryan, Amy and Tegan Bell completed this gruelling 100km walk - it was a truly challenging endeavour. Glenn Snashall competed in **and** completed the Eureka Stair Climb in full structural PPC and BA. (Bit of a Superman is our Glenn!)
- **MCG Stadium Stomp** - Amy, Nick and Glenn competed in the event, again in full PPC; this time climbing a total of 7600 stairs on their way to raising \$1000 for the brigade and also raising awareness for mental health.
- **Anzac Day and Emergency Services Brekky** - Our Brigade is always well represented on ANZAC Day, which I feel is well received by our community. It's also great to come back to the station and enjoy brekky, a coffee and a chat with our colleagues from the Emerald SES, Emerald Police and Emerald Ambulance. It's a great opportunity for networking that we normally don't have the luxury of when were all attending incidents.
- **Remembrance Day** - this day was special this year as the RSL organised over 20000 donated, knitted poppies which community groups 'planted' all around town in the week up to the big day. This was a wonderful project by the RSL and the greater community and was very memorable indeed.
- **ESTA visits** - Our Members enjoyed visiting the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority and the home of Vicfire. It was great to meet some of the voices we speak to on the radio and gain an insight to the critical role they play in emergency management.
- **It's NOT OK to be violent towards Women!** - This was the message at our brigade meeting in August. In a special moment, all of the male Members present stood and made a pledge against any physical, domestic or sexual violence towards women. It was important for the men in the Brigade to not only make a statement but to also set a good example to our younger male Members that violence of any type towards women is simply not acceptable and shouldn't be tolerated in the community.

Many other great things happened over the year, great achievements at fire calls and even just at training, on a Brigade and a personal level for many of our Members.

I hope this Annual Report gives just a little indication of what we have been up to over the last year. Looking forward over the next few months, we will be obtaining some equipment upgrades with the roll over to the digital radio network set for early August and new upgraded breathing apparatus sets as part of the state wide BA upgrade also imminent. Both these upgrades will require training from the Members and increases the Brigade's and CFA's strength in supporting our community.

Of course I need to thank not only our Membership for their hard work, but we also owe a great deal of thanks to our Member's families and employers, our fellow local emergency service partners and our wonderful community for supporting us in what we do – Great job one and all!

Captain Paul Yandle



1st Lieutenant

Wow, I can't believe it's already time to write another report! The last twelve months at the Brigade seems to have really flown by.

We have managed to achieve a great variety of training sessions, both on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings. It is always a challenge to create a training calendar to try and include topics that are relevant to both the Membership and the time of year. The next challenge then becomes the training sessions themselves. We try to make each and every session interesting, relevant and engaging to all our Members, new and old. A big thanks to the other Officers and Members that have helped to deliver some really great training to our Brigade.

Some of the topics we have covered this year include:

- Communications
- Practical structure fire drills
- Rope rescue demo with both Monbulk Rescue and Emerald SES
- Vehicle guiding and reversing
- Chimney fires
- Class B foam update
- Various draughting sessions
- Pre-plan inspections
- Pre-season matrix sessions
- Digital radio
- Gas detector
- Ventilation
- Thermal Imaging Camera
- Off-road driving
- Motor Vehicle Accidents



This is just a small sample of the variety of our training sessions.

Once again, I believe that our Pre-Summer Training Matrix was helpful and, hopefully, we can improve on the number of topics that we cover off for the next fire season.



1st Lieutenant

On one warm December evening we headed down to the old golf course where we split the Members up, with some practising their grass fire attack on the back deck of the Tanker whilst the remainder performed some BA skills maintenance. To try and keep things interesting, I decided to get the crews to set up a draught on the Pumper. Everyone did well, even with the additional gear on their backs.

Throughout this last year, quite a few of our Members have been very busy attending training courses all over the place. This included Low Structure, First Aid, CPR update, MR Licence, Drive on Road, Drive Off Road, Hazmat Awareness, Electrical Awareness, Breathing Apparatus, Hazardous Trees, FOV Introduction, and Gas Suit Maintenance.

Due to the current and unfortunate lack of District trainers, we are being a little short changed in the variety of courses that are currently available. I have been continually requesting various courses that are appropriate to our Brigade to be conducted in our District. Unfortunately, there have been none scheduled in the near future at the time of writing this report.

If anyone has any ideas or requests for some training, please come and let me know. I'm always open to give something new a go! Remember practice makes perfect.

Thanks for reading and stay safe out there.

Lieutenant Adrian Trimmell



2nd Lieutenant

The end of the financial year has arrived and it is time again for us to take stock and review the previous 12 months, as well as looking forward to the future. It has been another interesting year with a real mixed bag of call outs: Everything from house fires, significant grass and scrub fires to large crane rollovers and rescues. We also see our town continue to urbanise with two new commercial premises being built in the main township, plus plans in place for a new Puffing Billy Discovery Centre to be built at Emerald Lake by the end of 2020.

Last report I spoke about our strong recruitment campaign to increase the Membership base within the Brigade and strengthen our stocks for the future. Significant effort was put into the onboarding program to ensure those new Members felt welcome, instantly were part of the Brigade, and were on the right path to become skilled firefighters. I am very pleased to say that this has happened and some of those Members have even gone on to secure their heavy vehicle licence, complete low structure courses (in the western part of the state) and even completed breathing apparatus courses. It is always great to have an injection of enthusiasm in the Brigade. The statistics also support this injection, as our average number of Members turning out per job has increased from 5.82 Members in 2017/18 to 7.75 this financial year. A big step in the right direction.

Recruitment momentum continued into 2019 with another 3 recruits completing the Dandenong Ranges Group course and are on track to become operational in July, whilst another 8 recruits will be commencing the same recruits course starting in early July. Even though the General Firefighter course, which would have shortened the time it takes to bring a recruit to become operational, did not eventuate, I am still optimistic all 8 new Members will become operational before the peak of the next fire season. My aim is to raise the average Members to 10 per job in this next financial year, which is more than achievable with the above activity.



2nd Lieutenant

For the first time in a few years, there were some significant fires pretty close to home during the fire season. As it would have it, ST1333 always seems to miss out. However, we certainly played our part in cross-crewing and filling shifts for numerous Brigades working on the Gembrook/Bunyip and Yinnar fires. My task was to manage the crewing requests and it was quite fulfilling that we filled 25 shifts in total, night and day. When requested by Group or another Brigade, there was never a request we couldn't meet. Our Members cross-crewed appliances from Clematis, Sassafras, Silvan, Macclesfield, Olinda, Kallista, and Menzies Creek. Our newer Members also were able to experience the busy times and not-so-busy times in being part of a strike team during a major fire.

I was also able to organise two tours for our Members to ESTA (otherwise known as VicFire) in Burwood East. These tours were not only really well received by all Members who attended, but the ESTA staff were also very encouraging of these visits. It was an eye-opener for all who attended to see these highly skilled staff in action and gave us a better understanding of the multi-tasking they must perform constantly to carry out their role.

It was also pleasing to play a role, some as Crew Leader, Incident Controller, or even Sector Commander in a variety of local jobs which again develop my skills even further. Thank you to all those who have supported me in this aspect, as well as those who have supported me with bringing the recruits into everyday valued team members.

Best wishes to all and stay safe again this year.

Lieutenant Klaus Brodeck



3rd Lieutenant

There have been many things to learn, organise and manage over the last 12-month period. My 3rd Lieutenant portfolio has included:

- All station maintenance
- All truck maintenance
- Procurement of items for ration packs, first aid kits, all station amenities, office supplies and consumable truck equipment items
- Hose pressure testing
- Water plugs
- The smoke alarm battery change-over program
- Driver training

The procedure I implemented of fully completing one truck check each week and rotating through so that all three trucks are done every three weeks has led to more thorough inspections and timely follow-ups for anything needing further action. Truck checks are one of those tasks that no-one really likes doing, but they do help with maintaining our knowledge, skills and equipment familiarisation standards. Little things can sometimes make a big difference.

I commend D13 Training for initiating and implementing the Daytime Response Driver Training Grant. The Grant purpose was to enable Brigades with better daytime response capabilities. Two candidates from each Brigade could nominate to obtain their MR truck licence by attending TDT for a one day, fully funded train and assess course. Congratulations to FF Amy Fontana and FF Glenn Snashall who were successfully nominated and obtained their fast-tracked MR licences as part of the Grant.

Each fire season brings with it competency anxieties, heightened emotions and challenges to overcome. The 18/19 summer was hot and dry and the fire season saw large fires a bit too close to home for comfort. Our Brigade was involved in the Bunyip Complex Fire. This gave many Members (including myself) their first Strike Team experience. Fortunately, everyone returned home safe and all follow-up reports commended our Members on jobs well done.



3rd Lieutenant

As with previous years, I have continued to try and lead by example by being proactive and involved with everything from the mundane station chores to organising our Brigade functions - Christmas Dinner, Presentation Night and ANZAC Day Breakfast.

I encourage all Members to be involved and show initiative, there's plenty to do – and many hands make light work!

I have tried to support our experienced Members, and I have continued to spend time teaching and helping our newer Members learn. I too have learned - and I encourage others to be mindful of this. It is important to do your refresher training as some of the terminology and procedures previously taught are long out-dated or have completely changed. We all have to move with the times!

I continue to feel that being part of CFA is much more than just getting on a truck when there's a call out. I believe in the camaraderie, the extended family feeling and I appreciate the opportunity for personal growth. I welcome, encourage and really look forward to seeing our new Members becoming more involved and being a part of all of this.

I would like to thank FF Calum Bean for his time spent training our new drivers, our BASO Kate Murphy, our DMOs and all the people who work behind the scenes for their support, contributions and advice. I thank the Membership for allowing me the opportunity to represent our Brigade at BMT level. Most of all I would like to thank my family – Ricky, Shona and my Trevvy; your support and encouragement never waivers and you mean the world to me, xoxo.

I accept that I don't always get everything right... but I do consistently put in the time and I always try my best!

I wish everyone many laughs and happy times in the coming year.

Lieutenant Tanya Jogan



4th Lieutenant

First of all, my sincerest apologies for my lack of attendance around the station over the past 12 months. A combination of becoming a new dad, landing a new job and then deciding now would be a good time to begin studying for an MBA, all have resulted in me having less spare time to spend at the station.

This being the case, there isn't a whole lot for me to write about, so I'll do my best to fill up the page for Tom, who I'm sure has enjoyed putting the annual report together. Having done it last year, I know how much time and effort it takes, so well done to you and your team on another great document for Members to enjoy.

This year has been a turbulent one to say the least for the Authority with the controversial Fire Services Reform Legislation passing into law, promising to strengthen the segregation of an already fractured Fire and Rescue sector. The outcome of this legislation will not truly be evident until many years to come and while I remain hopeful of what this future looks like, the events that led us to where we are today have been nothing short of disappointing. It seems the word 'reform' is open to interpretation depending on the desired outcome. In my view, true reform involves merging CFA/MFB/FFM/SES into one unified state-wide Fire and Emergency Service, just like the New Zealand government did in 2017.

Politics aside, one of the more interesting experiences I had this year with CFA was an overnight shift as Crew Leader of Olinda Tanker at the Yinnar fires as part of Strike Team 1333. Although we didn't see a whole lot of front-line action, we patrolled the local area during the night talking to residents and extinguishing any hot spots we came across. Crews from FFMV were kept busy clearing roadways for us and we also worked side by side in fire affected pine plantation areas. Like most deployments, there was not a whole lot of organisation or list of tasks to complete but we filled in the hours and got some good skills maintenance in.

While no longer responsible for the Communications portfolio, it remains an interest of mine. I believe we now have an official launch date set for the digital radio system to be activated. Many years of hard work has gone into this project and I hope everything goes smoothly for its launch and its continued operation into the future.

4th Lieutenant

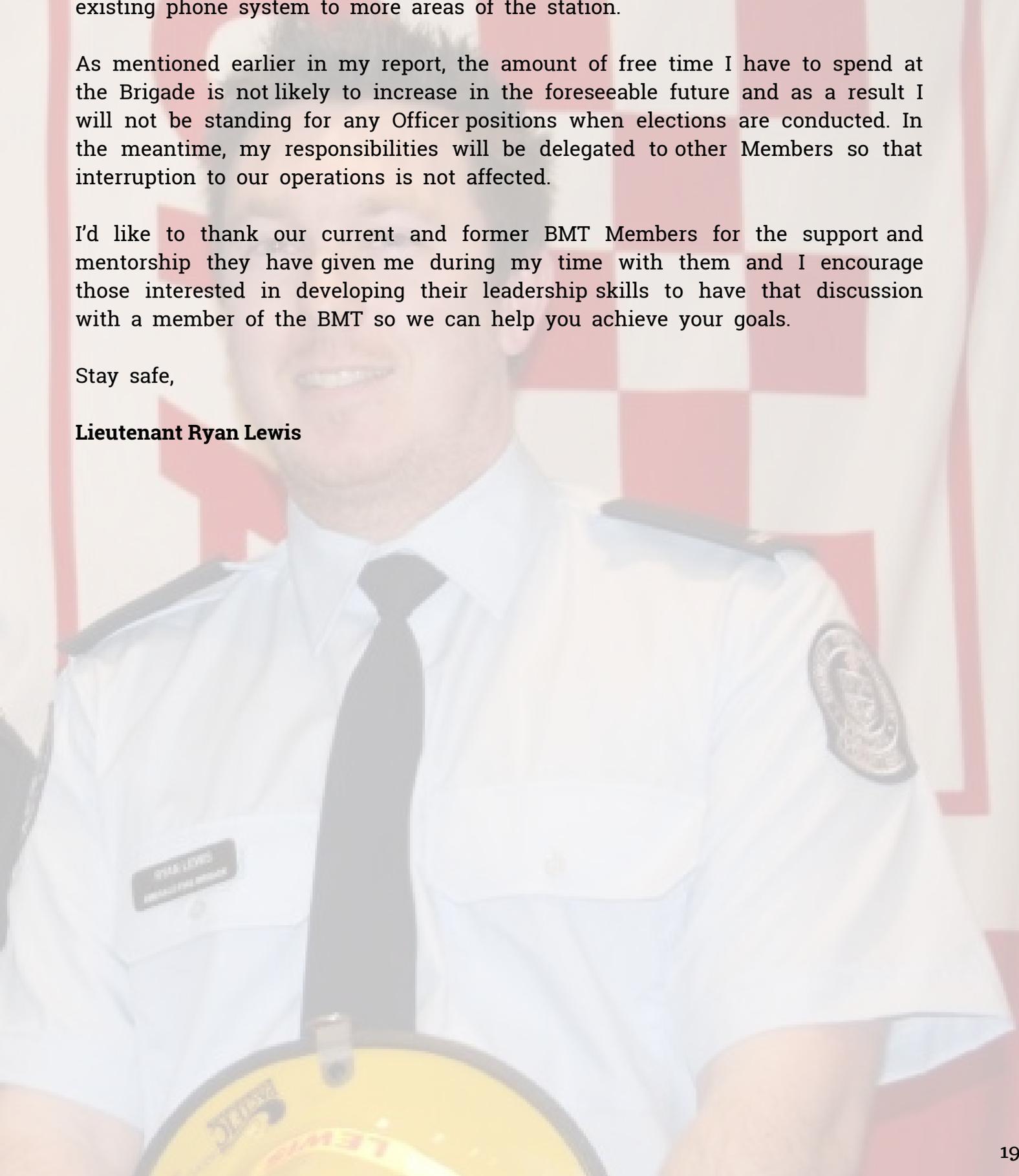
Some other projects that are in various stages of completion include a CFA funded NBN connection, which should be active by the time you read this, and an improved PA system for the station which can provide 000nav system announcements, VicFire dispatch audio and voice paging capabilities from the existing phone system to more areas of the station.

As mentioned earlier in my report, the amount of free time I have to spend at the Brigade is not likely to increase in the foreseeable future and as a result I will not be standing for any Officer positions when elections are conducted. In the meantime, my responsibilities will be delegated to other Members so that interruption to our operations is not affected.

I'd like to thank our current and former BMT Members for the support and mentorship they have given me during my time with them and I encourage those interested in developing their leadership skills to have that discussion with a member of the BMT so we can help you achieve your goals.

Stay safe,

Lieutenant Ryan Lewis



Communications

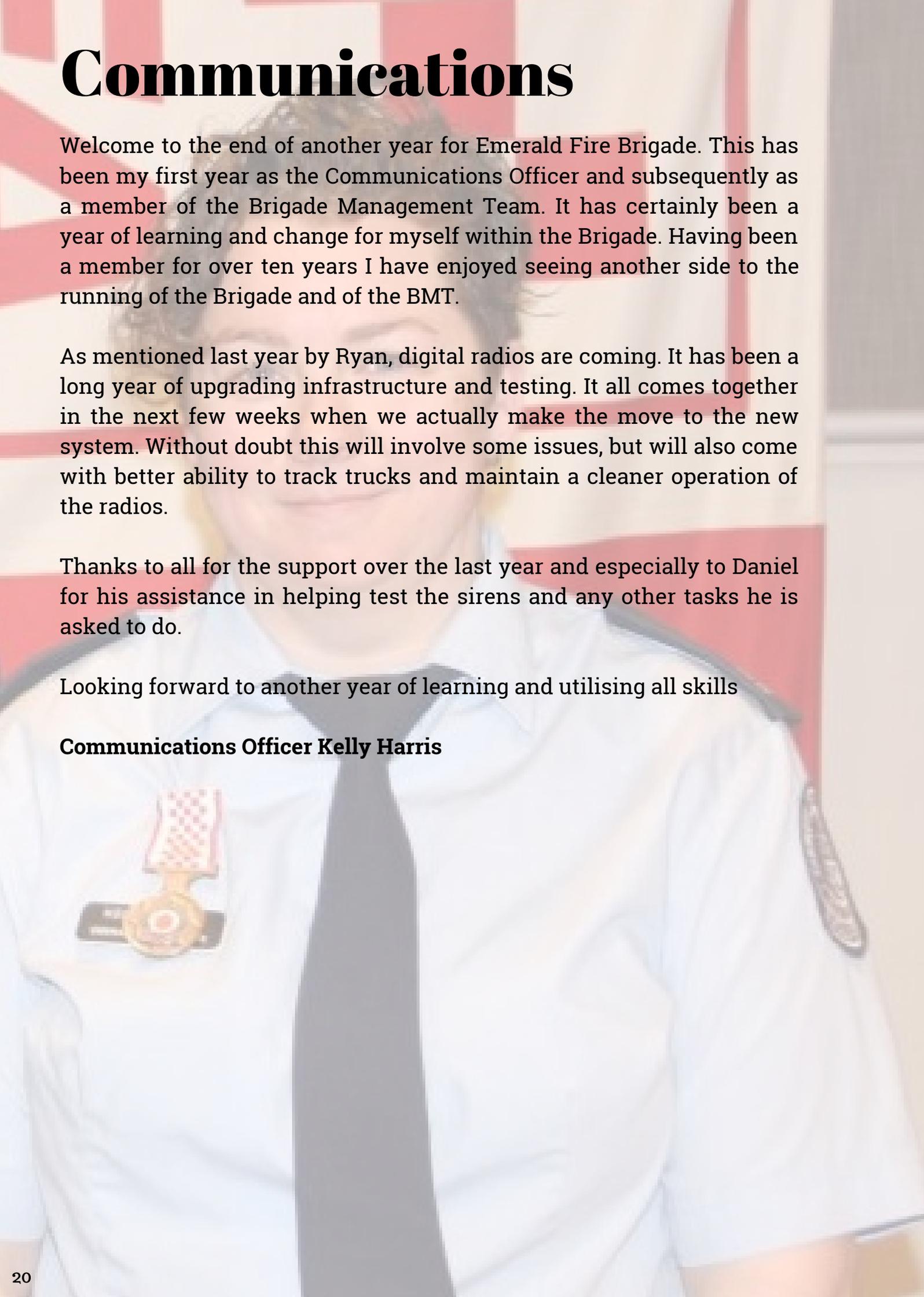
Welcome to the end of another year for Emerald Fire Brigade. This has been my first year as the Communications Officer and subsequently as a member of the Brigade Management Team. It has certainly been a year of learning and change for myself within the Brigade. Having been a member for over ten years I have enjoyed seeing another side to the running of the Brigade and of the BMT.

As mentioned last year by Ryan, digital radios are coming. It has been a long year of upgrading infrastructure and testing. It all comes together in the next few weeks when we actually make the move to the new system. Without doubt this will involve some issues, but will also come with better ability to track trucks and maintain a cleaner operation of the radios.

Thanks to all for the support over the last year and especially to Daniel for his assistance in helping test the sirens and any other tasks he is asked to do.

Looking forward to another year of learning and utilising all skills

Communications Officer Kelly Harris





Treasurer

Throughout the last financial year the Brigade has continued to put funds away in savings for the eventual replacement of fire fighting vehicles, with most excess funds raised going towards this project. This is in line with our long-term financial plan. We have shelved some fundraising plans for the time being, relying on donations and grants at this stage while we explore some long term fundraising options that can be implemented on an annual basis.

We have approximately twenty donation tins in local businesses, and these have been generously contributed to by the community. Other main donators for the year were the Emerald Opportunity Shop, the Pakenham Opportunity Shop, Ritchies Community Benefit (Emerald IGA), Emerald Tourist Railway Board (Puffing Billy) and The 7.30 Thursdays. The Brigade would like to give our heartfelt thanks to the community members and groups who recognise and value us with their donations. We appreciate your donations, and they continue to support the running of the Brigade and our future plans.

Other funds have been raised by Lt Klaus Brodeck. These have been in the form of many grants that he procures and without his hard work, the Brigade would have to use much of the donations and potential savings to replace equipment and ensure the station is up to date. This year, a grant for over \$3500 was awarded to the Brigade to upgrade the office equipment that keeps the station running. The funds were also used to purchase a heavy-duty washing machine, which will allow fire fighters to wash uniforms at the station, as opposed to taking them home and potentially spreading hazardous materials.

The Brigade's BART subscription has increased from the 2017/18 year. However, the Brigade sees this as a worthwhile cost as the degree of communication allowed by the application improves the way the Brigade members can communicate either in emergencies, or for the discussion of Brigade business.

Two other areas of expenditure were the purchase of dash cameras for each of the trucks (and the associated mounting cradles), and the continued purchase of new uniforms as the recruitment of new fire fighters continues. These are valued areas of spending in that the dash cams can protect our Volunteers in this changing world, and the continued recruitment of fire fighters (and thus purchase of uniforms) is always welcomed. The dash cams follow a recent pattern of Brigade and station upgrades, bringing the equipment we use into the 21st century, and allowing a higher degree of safety and monitoring.

Thank you for you ongoing support of our Brigade's fundraising efforts of the past year - we look forward to your support in the next financial year.

Christine Davey-White

Treasurer

ACCOUNT	OPENING BALANCE 1st July 2018	CLOSING BALANCE 30th June 2019
Bendigo Bank (Main Acc)	\$ 5,745.79	\$ 8,979.89
Bendigo Juniors Acc	\$ 4,523.95	\$ 4,023.95
BankWest High Yield	\$111,325.35	\$117,532.47
	TOTAL BALANCE	\$130,536.31

Treasurer

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS

1st July 2018 to 30th June 2019

Bendigo Bank - Main Account

RECEIPTS

Interest	87.17
Donations	15,186.29
Grants	4,661.27
Returned Funds	979.00
Presentation Night	1,270.00
CFA	1,744.00

TOTAL \$23,927.73

PAYMENTS

BankWest Transfer	5,000.00
Phone	1,161.63
Flowers	290.90
Sundry	56.99
Uniform	1,696.55
Trophies	647.50
Presentation Night	1,300.00
Stationery	159.28
Catering	232.73
Station Supplies	963.65
Postage	135.00
Equipment	5,321.65
Affiliations	181.00
CFA	13.34
Printing	2,224.56
Subscriptions	306.00
BART	733.00
Website Hosting	146.48
Domain Name	70.00
Diary Cheque	5.00
Gifts	48.37

TOTAL \$20,693.63

NET RECEIPTS \$3,234.10

BankWest High Yield Account

RECEIPTS

Transfers from Bendigo Bank	5,000.00
Interest	1,207.12

TOTAL \$6,207.12

PAYMENTS N/A

NET RECEIPTS \$6,207.12

Bendigo Bank - Juniors

RECEIPTS N/A

PAYMENTS

Petty Cash Withdrawal	500.00
-----------------------	--------

NET RECEIPTS -\$500.00

Fire Safe Kids

It's been such a busy year! We've had two kinder classes and two scout groups visit the fire station, along with the provision of the Fire Safe Kids (FSK) Summer Program to Grades One, Three and Five (approximately 225 children) at Emerald Primary School.

The visits from Emerald Pre School are always fun. The children are so inquisitive and you have to be on the ball and think outside the box to answer some of their questions! They love looking over the trucks and seeing what firefighters wear. This year it was hard to tell whether they preferred the thermal imaging camera or squirting water from the Tanker!

We each had a group from the Cockatoo and Emerald Scouts visit the fire station. These children had lots of well thought-out and intelligent questions. As they went through the trucks, they were very interested in what we use the equipment for. Being able to hit the cone with the hose was definitely the highlight of the visit for both of these groups.

Kelly and I split up and took FSK sessions at Emerald Primary School. We presented to three classes of Grades One, Three and Five. This took us a full day each! The primary school kids are lots of fun to present to. Some of the questions they ask and how much they remembered from last year's session are amazing. We will complete the rest of the school later in the year.

A big thank you to all of our FSK helpers! We couldn't do it without your support.

Kate Griffin

Brigade Member & Secretary

Fire Safe Kids



Fundraising

The 2018/19 financial year started on a positive note as we were advised we were successful with our EVG grants that we had submitted at the beginning of 2018.

First approved was the station upgrades grant, which included:

- a 10kg washing machine to ensure we clean our dirty wildfire PPC at the station
- 7 new meeting room and office chairs
- a new laptop for improved training
- a multifunction printer for the office
- a defibrillator to be mounted at the station

The second grant came through later in the year and included:

- LED light bars for all three trucks
- conversion of the light mast globes from halogen to LED on the Salvage
- 2 new Pelican remote area lights to replace the generator driven lights on tripods

I also took the opportunity to submit two more grant applications – one for new fire-resistant chainsaw chaps and helmet after the Australian Standards recently changed, along with a submission to the Dandenong Ranges Community Bank who put forward a grant program for local community groups seeking defibrillators. Thankfully we were successful with both grants. This now means we will be able to carry a defibrillator on each truck and have one permanently mounted at the station. At the time of writing this report, we are still awaiting the acquisition of the defibrillators through CFA and the Pelican lights and LED light mast changeover are hopefully not far away.

Whilst we have been able to capitalise on the opportunities provided by various grants, we still need to bring in everyday funds to keep progressing in building savings to put towards replacement of our Brigade-owned vehicle in the future. We were lucky enough to receive a \$1000 donation from the Cockatoo Branch of the Dandenong Ranges Community Bank. We certainly appreciate their support with this donation, as well as their generosity with the defibrillator grant.

Fundraising

Amy, Glenn and Nick participated in the Stadium Stomp event at the MCG on June 30th, with all funds raised going back to the Brigade. They exceeded their target and raised over \$1,000. Great job guys!

We reconvened the Fundraising Committee in 2018 and developed some great initiatives to bring back to the BMT. However due to the anticipated higher than average fire season ahead of us, the committee was put on hold to increase our focus on operational training and preparedness. We were still able to benefit from some very generous donations during that time utilising our collection containers around Emerald and Avonsleigh. I would like to thank those Members who helped manage that process.

With the year ahead, we will regroup with the Fundraising Committee to bring our initiatives to life. We are also in discussions to relaunch a Brigade Auxiliary, who would certainly be of help in this area.

If you want to help, or have some great fundraising ideas, come and have a chat with me!

Lieutenant Klaus Brodeck
Fundraising Co-ordinator



Fundraising



Sunday Training



First responders have an enormous responsibility to provide a service that is both efficient and professional. The last thing you want in an emergency is unqualified and unorganised individuals who lack the capacity to assess and respond to the situation at hand. Thankfully, our Brigade is one that strives to train on a regular basis in preparation for the tasks that may be presented to us in the field. This has been evident through the hard work Lt. Trimmell and the other Brigade Officers display when delivering training sessions every Wednesday. It is important to maintain our skills; the more we practice, the better we become. That is why I thought it appropriate to draw attention to an additional day of training that has seen a drop in member participation over the months.

On most Sundays, Capt. Yandle and Lt. Jogan welcome Members to a morning training session where the topic is often decided there and then. The smaller turnouts have allowed for a lot of one on one training opportunities, which has been invaluable to both me and others who have only been operational for little over a year. Sunday Training elaborates further on topics covered in our Wednesday Training sessions, allowing for additional questions to be asked and further practice. It also gives Members an opportunity to train on topics of importance pertaining to organisation and response planning, of which Captain Yandle knows a great deal about!

Because of its structure, Sunday Training is often more about doing than it is about showing. With large Wednesday groups, it can be hard to organise effective rotations to ensure that everyone gets ample practice time and many sessions are dedicated to simply understanding the topic. Sunday allows you to put this understanding into practice. You are often given a situation and it is up to the crew to decide what needs to be done, with feedback serving as the teaching element. This is particularly beneficial for newer Members and serves as a great refresher for those who have been around for a bit longer. Without Sunday Training I might still not have known how to properly utilise the Pumper!

So, what is the point of this spiel? Hopefully it will encourage more of us to come along to Sunday Training and better prepare for that next callout. The knowledge and practice gained from additional training is an invaluable tool that can be applied to future situations. For some, this might be hard to do and there is no pressure to do so! We are Volunteers, after all. But if you have a couple of spare hours or plan of having a lazy Sunday, perhaps consider coming down to the station to perfect your skills.

Firefighter Thomas Staub

Graeme and the Ladder

If "A Bird in the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush", What is the Worth of One Bird in the Bush?

Early brigade extension ladders were wooden with their two-stages adjusted by way of a rope and pulley.

But when homes were built on steeper and steeper hillsides, further challenges arose because floor-levels at the back often were some metres above the ground-level below. And so it was that Emerald Brigade, ever alert to demonstrate initiative, purchased a triple-stage extension ladder of aluminium. Problem solved! Weight: Manageable, even by a single operator. Height: Where it was needed, was now attainable. They were safe items of equipment. Aluminium is durable and does not deteriorate. Electrical concern? Just keep clear of overhead wires! So, everyone was happy with this new piece of equipment.

But then, along came a bird. A bird in trouble! A pet bird freed from its cage and tethered by a light chain to its outdoor perch. And tethered it remained... until somehow the perch-end of the chain came adrift. The colourful bird now freed from its perch flew up into the sky to enjoy its freedom. Freedom to land high in a tall gumtree a considerable distance from where it should have been. Freedom, that was, when the bird went to take off for another destination, prevented once the dangling chain had become caught in a nearby twig. Since the bird was well beyond the reach of outstretched hands and quite unable to fly off, help was sought.

A desperate phone call from a desperate owner in a nearby township,
"Bird caught in tree with chain on its leg."

What a relief! The caller could notify their local fire brigade! Oops! Their home Brigade didn't have a ladder long enough.

Clearly it was time to ring Emerald Brigade... They had a longer ladder.

Since it wouldn't have been appropriate to drive a fire truck out of its area, especially for a cat or bird with a crew of only one to a non-emergency situation, an alternate solution was required. At the time, I drove a Volkswagen Combi Van. It had a strong pack rack – strong enough on which to attach a triple-extension ladder. As a lone individual, I manhandled the triple-extension ladder from the fire truck and transferred it to the Volkswagen's overhead pack-rack where it was secured. Meeting up with the distraught bird-owner on the side of Belgrave-Gembrook Road was a relief. Now, all that had to be done was to locate the tree with the bird trapped high in its branches. The owner indicated that, with the ladder now on my shoulders, I should follow her.

Urgently she strode down the nearby driveway, apparently failing to advise the owner of her intention and neglecting to gain his approval. With the lady leading and the ladder following we all scrambled over the back fence and into the bush below. Logs were stepped over, holes in the ground were circumnavigated, dense bushes were parted and pushed through, and low-hanging branches were avoided. Patches of thick bush impeded progress underfoot and slowed it all down. Bush-bashing at its best.

At the base of the bird-capturing tree I stood the ladder up, pulled on the ropes and extended both the first and the second stages of the ladder. The top of the ladder finally reached the branch near the bird. Even ascending the ladder slowly caused the branch to waver just a little.

Graeme and the Ladder

If "A Bird in the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush", What is the Worth of One Bird in the Bush?

Even so, it was sufficient to startle the bird into a desperate effort to escape. Wings fluttered furiously and all that effort snapped the twig and freed the light chain.

The ungrateful bird flew a substantial distance to the back yard of another house even further down the hill.

Lowering the triple-extension ladder and again balancing it on my shoulders, the cross-country bush tramp was re-launched. Logs were stepped over, holes in the ground were circumnavigated, dense bushes were pushed through and low-hanging branches were avoided. Patches of thick bush impeded progress and slowed it all down. More bush-bashing!

Another fence was negotiated, and the ladder was readied for its next activity. But the bird had discovered an extensive patch of bamboo. As anyone who understands bamboo knows, individual stems simply can't bear the weight of a climbing adult, let alone sustain a triple-extension ladder (even at its shortest, folded length), nor does it claim any branches upon which to stand, let alone climb. Despite the climbing gear at hand, a parrot well beyond reach from the ground and a distinct shortage of climbing aids resulted in a bird becoming more and more desperate.

Considering "a bird in the hand being worth two in a bush", what was a bird trapped in a bush worth? How can we get it into 'the hand'?

Somehow, and with desperate effort, I began to clamber up several stems of bamboo clasped together by using two arms and two legs. I climbed closer and closer to the parrot. Finally, getting really close to the bird, came the realisation that to grasp it would require releasing one hand from the bamboo stalks and risk falling. But it worked. I quickly release one hand, reached out to grasp the parrot and swiftly thrust the bird down the front of my shirt before restoring a firm grasp around the bamboo.

The comparatively short descent required that the bird be neither squashed against bamboo stalks nor damaged in any other way. It was a success.

The bird-owner was gratified and relieved.

The ladder was returned to its carry position on the shoulder before the return trip was embarked upon. But now, the hill.. seemed to be steeper than memory recalled – and the logs bigger to climb over, especially. A longer route was taken so to avoid climbing over anyone's back fence and certainly to avoid entering a certain property unannounced. The triple-extension ladder is hefted to the pack-rack and secured.

And it was back to our Fire Station where the front door needed to be opened, the ladder untied from the Kombi, lifted down, raised to the shoulder, carried inside, lifted to its place on the tanker, and secured. And then it's a log-book entry, close the door and depart.

And, now you know, "A bird in the bush, when returned to the hand, is worth great joy to its owner."

Graeme Legge
Brigade Life Member

Recruits 2018-2

Well done to Daniel, Brendan and Jesse whose recruit journey concluded in the second half of 2018. These firefighters have, in their first year, shown to be dedicated Members as demonstrated by their participation within the Brigade, which includes attending training, call-outs, and further developing their skills by attending several CFA courses.

Daniel and Brendan have put their hands up to learn how to drive the big red trucks and have been accepted to undertake their medium rigid truck licence from Transport Driver Training as part of District's daytime driver funding project. Both were also able to experience their first strike team experience at the Bunyip & Yinnar fires in the recent fire season, which no doubt was a highlight in their short time in CFA.

In such a short time, they have become integral members of the Brigade and we look forward to their continued development as firefighters.

Lieutenant Klaus Brodeck



Recruits 2019-1

Congratulations and welcome to the latest group of new fire fighters to join the Ranges Fire Brigades Group. We had Adam, Nick and Eze from our Brigade, who graduated on 21/07/2019 after months of hard work at their recruit training course. Well done guys and welcome to the team!



Juniors

Emerald Junior Fire Brigade is open to boys and girls aged 11 to 16 who live locally to Emerald. Training is held on Tuesday nights at Emerald Fire Station from 1900 to 2030 during school terms. Trevor and I have created our own curriculum and training roster based on Bushfire Firefighter minimum skills and the incorporation of local events and community activities. Over the years, the Juniors have not withheld their opinions to let us know that they much prefer practical activities over theory and PowerPoints... Thus, we have adapted, re-thought and tailored our session plans to involve more 'teenager-friendly fun stuff'. We must be doing something right because the Juniors come back week after week with happy smiling faces - and their continued enthusiasm spurs Trev and myself on, encouraging us to maintain the training standards we've set!

This past year has seen excursions to Emerald Lake, Cockatoo Fire Brigade, Emerald SES, along with a ride on Puffing Billy and our Christmas dinner at Elevations Restaurant. We had an impromptu visit from Emerald Police and an excellent First Aid session presented by nurse, Liz Quadling.

Our other training sessions have included:

- CFA & SES
- home emergency plans
- hand tools - safety & practical uses
- structure fire equipment & identifying hazards in structure photos
- CFA communications, VICFIRE, phonetic alphabet, radio types & procedures, radio use
- Fire extinguishment PowerPoint, hose & branch work and using extinguishers
- Class A foam PowerPoint and practical Tree Hazard Awareness and Entrapment Video & discussion
- CFA 'Catastrophe Avoided' video & discussion
- Pumper use and hose testing
- Local knowledge, situational awareness, local road access
- Truck cleaning and washing
- Junior Code of Conduct
- Station safety info - turn-outs, engine bay doors, light switches
- RECEOVS
- Hydrants & water in/out procedures using our Tanker & draughting
- Hoses - types & sizes, hose tower, uses, matching pieces/adaptors & where hoses are stored
- Being ready and being prepared as firefighters - our crews, trucks, equipment
- Fuel types & arrangement - how fires react/burn in different situations
- Home fire awareness - BBQ's, gas cylinders, fire blankets, smoke detectors, candles
- Lights, lighting and portable generators
- Maps and mud map activities, and
- Ventilation PowerPoint & theatrical smoke practical activity

Juniors

Trev and I feel very proud when our Juniors transfer to a Senior Brigade and we then see them on the fireground. It's also great to see Juniors and their parents at sporting events or in the supermarket. We love hearing, 'Hey Trev, hey Tanya!' and seeing genuine happiness on their faces.

This year we have seen former Junior, Nick Brodeck, re-join CFA at Emerald Fire Brigade and complete the Semester 1 Group Recruits course and Junior, Russell Gledhill, turn 16 and transfer to Emerald Fire Brigade ready to begin the Semester 2 Group Recruits course.

Our 2018 Junior Presentation Night was held on August 21st at Emerald Fire Station. Our guest speaker was former Junior, now Cockatoo Brigade Firefighter, Rory Ratten.

Awards presented were:

Junior Firefighter of the Year – Russell Gledhill.

Runner-up Junior Firefighter of the Year – Tara White.

Encouragement Award – Peta Revell.

Our Junior Captain for 2018/19 has been Tara White and our Junior First Lieutenant has been Russell Gledhill. Trev and I give our thanks to both Tara and Russ for taking on a leadership position and for doing a great job representing our Junior Brigade.

As voted by the Junior Brigade, our Junior Captain for 2019/20 will be Lily Quadling and our Junior First Lieutenant will be Sienna Hughes. Trev and I thank all the Juniors who nominated for an Officers position, and our congratulations go to Lily and Sienna.

Changes to Brigades' involvement and declining numbers saw the end of an era with the Junior Hills Fun Day (AKA Kalorama) not being held in 2018. All Group Juniors were invited to participate in the annual Group training event, which for 2018 was a mini Olympics held on November 11th. Unfortunately, Emerald Junior Fire Brigade and Emerald Fire Brigade were unable to participate as we were already committed to Remembrance Day events in Emerald.

CFA is required to comply with the 7 Child Safe Standards as legislated by the Victorian Government in late 2015, making it a child safe organisation. In 2019, this legislation saw the implementation of a Child Safety Officer, much digital and print media coverage, a greater awareness of what's okay and what's not okay – and what to do if something is not okay. Trev and I welcome CFA's Rules for Child Safety. More information can be found using the links below.

www.cfa.vic.gov.au/childsafety www.cfa.vic.gov.au/wellbeing
childsafety@CFA childsafetyofficer@cfa.vic.gov.au

The Junior Brigade has continued to celebrate birthdays with a little bit of party food and our tradition of badly singing the 'Happy Birthday' song... Juniors, I hope this triggers your memories and brings a smile as you remember just how ridiculously awesome and loud our singing was!

Juniors

Trev and I would like to thank our Juniors' families for continuing to encourage and help them be part of our community and supporting both Emerald Junior Fire Brigade and Emerald Fire Brigade.

I would like to thank Junior Leader Firefighter, Trevor Ireland, for his continued dedication and I would like to acknowledge the enormous amount of time he's put into Emerald Fire Brigade's Juniors program over the years. Trev, you have made a positive difference to our Brigade and our community. Much appreciated, mate!

Lieutenant Tanya Jogan

Junior Leader



Juniors



Juniors

Juniors Contributions

Tara - Joining Juniors was one of the best decisions I ever made, as I have made a ton of new friends, learnt many new skills and my confidence has gone up like crazy! Tanya and Trevor rock! Peace.

Eliza - I joined the Junior CFA because it sounded interesting and I thought it would help me become an SES volunteer, since they work quite close together. I found out about the Junior CFA through Dad. Dad said it would help me with the SES when I am older.

Courtney - The last few months when I joined CFA have been a blast! I've had so much fun with everyone here. The support and kindness of every person is amazing. I have always dreamed about becoming a firefighter. Junior CFA is the first step there.

Amos - I have been a part of the CFA Juniors for a year and a half now. In this time I have done all different activities, gone on excursions and got heaps of food.

Kaiden - I like all the activities we do outside the station, like learning about draughting at Emerald Lake.

Harry - I joined the CFA at the start of the year but had no intention of becoming a firefighter. However, as the year passed I gained an interest in firefighting and have enjoyed every session.

Lily - CFA has been such a great experience and I am grateful for all the opportunities they have given me. I have enjoyed all the amazing things we have done and the support they give me. Even though the presentations are boring I still learn lots of things from it :-)

Riley - I joined Juniors because I want to be a firefighter when I get older.

Tay - I joined Juniors because it's another way to be able to help other people. It's also another way of socialising with new people.

Kristian - I joined because fire safety is very important and here at the CFA we learn life skills.

Sienna - I've been in the Juniors for the last 2 and a half years and have had a jolly good time. I never feel left out when I'm there because we are always doing something together and you make friends pretty fast.

India - CFA has taught me so much about safety in the community and helping others.

Peta - I've been attending Juniors for a little while now and I really enjoy it. One of my favourite Juniors sessions was when we got to use foam and pretend to put out fires.

Russell - I've been part of the CFA Juniors for a few years now and I'm coming towards the end and moving on to the Seniors. I couldn't have asked for a better life lesson and the skills that I have learnt will stay with me for a very long time.



Community Education

Another year has gone by and another year our friendly faces have been outside Woollies asking our community the question, “Do you need any info regarding fire safety”?

Be it winter or summer, within three minutes of their time we have provide a better understanding of fire safety in and around their home ranging in topics from fire blankets and smoke alarms all the way to bush fire safety in the hills.

Some of the ways that we provided Community Safety information were:

- New home fire safety packs
- Stall outside Emerald Woollies.
- Emerald School Fete.
- Facebook – largest audience by far.
- Emerald Funfest.
- Fire Safe Kids Program (thanks Kate and Kelly).

For the companies associated with my work (my paid job), I ran a Fire Awareness program aimed at teaching people what the fire risks are at home, what can be done to prevent them and what can be done to help save yourself or your house if a fire starts. It was attended by over 350 employees and I have been nominated for a safety award.

Being a Member of the Brigade makes us all responsible for community fire safety. We must all remember that we are not only there to save lives and property if a situation arises, but are there to also help make our community safer.

More lives have been saved by prevention and education than turning up to a situation in a shiny red truck with lights and sirens blaring!

Firefighter Simon Arnold
Community Education Coordinator



Driver Training

In August 2018, after another callout that we were unable to attend due to not having a driver, I approached Captain Yandle about learning to drive the firetrucks. I had not been operational for long but was, however, in a position where I could be available during the daytime, on week days, when we had a shortage of driver availability. Paul confirmed that I would be able to go ahead and learn.

Happy days! I had always been excited about the day I would be able to drive the big red trucks, and it seemed that I would have the opportunity sooner than expected.

Later that same month, Paul and I had a free Sunday afternoon and headed to Cardinia Reservoir. First Paul explained the things I needed to know to get going, and then I was behind the wheel of our Tanker! It was interesting at first as I got used to the gears, and maneuvering such a massive, heavy vehicle. However, it wasn't long before Paul felt confident to let me drive a little further around the reservoir than just laps of the carpark. He did, however, make mention of having his "last smoke" before we set off! Haha!

We did a few laps around various parts of the reservoir, then I was instructed to head out onto Wellington Road. I felt apprehensive, but also extremely excited! We headed down Wellington Road, around a few streets in an industrial area, then onto Eastlink. The Tanker is much, MUCH louder than I was used to. At 100km/h, the truck definitely feels like it could use another gear. But what a thrill! I loved every second.

We exited the freeway in Dandenong and stopped for a break and a cuppa at a well-used truck stop. I remember looking back at our Tanker, parked amongst the semi trailers and other trucks and being amazed at how small it looked. Almost like a Matchbox Truck. We then headed back to Emerald.

After several hours behind the wheel I was exhausted. So many things to think about: Keeping it in the lines as it is so much wider than my car, allowing for extra time to stop given it's massive weight, which gear to use and when, adjusting to the difference in visibility of other cars on the road, and the silly drivers who think its OK to cut in front of you or sit in your blind spot. But I loved every bit of it!



Driver Training

Over the next few months I went on several drives with both Captain Yandle, and more frequently later on with Firefighter Bean. Both shared many stories of the experiences they've had driving professionally in trucks that make our Tanker look tiny, and I developed a whole new respect for how to drive around these vehicles when I'm on the road in my own car.

With each drive I became more confident, more comfortable and more competent. We spent hours driving on narrow, windy and unsealed local roads. These were the roads I'd most likely be driving on during future callouts. Later in the year a program was introduced by CFA to encourage development of daytime drivers, and I was lucky enough to be eligible to spend a day at TDT (Transport Driver Training) in Hallam, brushing up on my driving skills then attempting to obtain my Medium Rigid licence.

TDT contacted me late in November and we booked my test in for 12th December. I went in the day before to complete the relevant paperwork and sit the theory assessment. I had been studying the Truck and Bus Learner book provided by Lieutenant Jogan, and despite my nerves, I passed with relative ease.

On the day of the test, I was assigned a dedicated instructor who was with me for the whole process. We spent several hours driving around the local industrial estate, practicing parking, reversing and other necessary skills. He explained a lot of theory, and also what would be required of me in the driving test. By lunchtime he believed I was ready, so we began the test shortly after.

I'm happy to say that I passed with flying colours, but not surprising given the exceptional instruction I had received from both Paul and Calum. I am so grateful to belong to a Brigade of such highly skilled firefighters and leaders, and the time and detail they put in to teaching us all the necessary skills to be great at fighting fires and everything else that goes with our role. I look forward to being able to assist in 'getting a truck out' during future callouts.

Firefighter Amy Fontana



Presentation Night 2018



Presentation Night 2018

Firefighter of the Year

Runner Up Firefighter of the Year

Officers of the Year

Best First Year Firefighter

Captain's Appreciation Award

Merit Award

Tool of the Year

FF Simon Arnold

FF Trevor Ireland

Lt Adrian Trimnell

Lt Calum Bean

Lt Klaus Brodeck

Lt Tanya Jogan

Comms Officer Ryan Lewis

FF Glenn Snashall

FF Trevor Ireland

FF Jody Yandle

FF Shane Merrett



Ridge Road East Fire

After Emerald was finally paged, we headed out in the Tanker towards the specified location. However, when en route, further information told us the fire was located on Ridge Road East.

Getting there was an adventure in itself. Once there, we observed a grass fire approximately 2 football fields in size already being extinguished by Clematis Fire Brigade, who turned out prior to the call with the expectation they would be paged. Surely enough they did and got a head-start on us.

Luckily for all concerned the weather was on our side and it was contained fairly quickly. If it hadn't been stopped, the fire could have quite easily travelled towards the Emerald township.

On arrival it wasn't an ideal area for a Tanker to be, so Slip-Ons were called and we were tasked with refilling them and extinguishing anything that was within a couple of lengths from us, which included fence posts and even the area around a couple of prime movers, which luckily did not catch fire.

Once organised and dodging the property owner's friend on a motor bike, we asked the owner's son what had happened and that's when we were informed they were burning a cow that had died a week earlier.

No need to say that the fire was moooving...

Once we needed more water we were sent downhill to the fill point set up by the Salvage which was a great team effort by all concerned.

After another fill we finished the mop up, filled up again and returned to the station - a great result and a great experience for the newer members.

Well done to all involved.

Firefighter Trevor Ireland



Ranges Hotel Fire

When my pager sounded at 0614 on the 24th September 2018, I was fast asleep. Upon hearing the call, however, I sprang out of bed, grabbed my keys and water bottle and rushed to my car.

I drove to the station, put on my Wildfire Gear (over my pyjamas), and was informed by Lieutenant Jogan that we would be taking the Pumper. As I organised myself, Richard arrived and was informed that he would be the driver. I remember finding it difficult to imagine getting behind the wheel of such a massive truck whilst still feeling half asleep and was relieved that this wasn't my responsibility!

As we were preparing to leave, the back door of the appliance opened and in climbed someone I hadn't met before. It was Mitch, a Member of the Belgrave South Brigade, who sometimes turns out with Emerald depending on his location of residence. We introduced ourselves, and it was at this moment I realised the job wasn't going to be like the others I had attended. It was a fire of significant size and would become the largest local job I've been to upon writing this.

The Gembrook Pub was burning! We headed towards the fire with lights on and sirens blaring. Although it was a serious situation, it was very exciting turning-out Code 1, particularly so early in my firefighting career. Due to the anticipation, it felt like a very long way to Gembrook! There was discussion in the cabin about the radio traffic that had been heard, and I started to wonder just what we were going to find when we arrived.

As soon as we were on scene, Captain Yandle met us and instructed Mitch and I to find a specific hydrant and set up twin lines to the Pumper. We acted with purpose to quickly complete our first task. Unfortunately, in my eagerness, I promptly fell on the road for no reason at all. I imagined Mitch was wondering, "What is wrong with this rookie?" Thankfully I was okay and continued with the task!

Mitch and I started digging around to find the hydrant in the long grass as the Pumper did a forward lay of two 64's. We eventually located the water-point after a fair bit of digging and proceeded to clean it, set up the standpipe and connected the hoses. We were given the 'Water On' signal immediately.

As I headed down to the truck, which was three hose lengths away, I found it hard to believe what I was seeing! It had not been long since I'd shared a meal with other Brigade Members at this pub, and it was surreal seeing it engulfed in flames. Paul was at the pump and instructed me to relieve Tanya on the branch, so she could operate the pump.

It was exciting to be putting water on a real fire! A BIG fire! There were approximately 40 other firefighters on scene and very quickly I felt like part of a machine; each of us doing our bit. I was extremely surprised at how you could deliver hundreds of litres of water, and barely see an impact on the size of the fire, realising just how hot it must be.

Ranges Hotel Fire

I delivered water for a while through a side window and along the eaves before being moved by Paul to look after a 64mm hose with the large Protek branch. He lashed the hose together and had me kneel on it, using my weight to keep it in place with the branch in a stand of sorts to keep it under control - 950L a minute, almost a tonne of water every minute, and so little impact on the fire.

As the fire was being brought under control a lot of smoke was being produced and so those without BA were moved back from the fire. I didn't have much to do after that and so had the opportunity to stand back and take it all in - 40 plus firefighters, 9 or so appliances relaying water to each other, hoses and branches off in all directions, the ladder platform making an overhead attack, everyone very busy, but also very calm. I observed how part of the roof was caving in and watched firefighters in structural gear and BA enter a safer part of the building. Someone from the local bakery came around with egg & bacon rolls for us, which was great as we'd not had a chance to eat anything!

As the fire became controlled, Tanya and I had an opportunity to walk around the site, and it was extremely surreal to see the damage that had been done. Brigades were beginning to be released at this stage, and we assisted other Brigades making up their hoses. When it was time to disconnect our water supply, I stood in the back of Captain Yandle's ute as Richard passed up hose to flake whilst Paul crept the Holden Colorado along. Thank goodness we didn't have to roll up 6 lengths of wet 64mm hose!

As we headed back to the station, it was amazing to realise we'd been on the job for approximately five and a half hours! It certainly didn't seem like that long. I guess time flies when you're busy. I learned so much at that fire from the other Emerald crew members, as they guided me and explained different things that were happening. Quite a bit of our training started to make a lot more sense once I was putting it in action in a real-life situation.

It was a sad day for the community of Gembrook, and surrounding areas, to lose a heritage listed pub with so much character; a central hub for a great meal, live music, a few drinks and laughs with good friends.

Firefighter Amy Fontana

Ranges Hotel Fire



Menzies Creek House Fire

After just going to bed, I heard the chime of my VIC Emergency App. I checked it and it came up with "Building Fire in Menzies Creek". Curious, I put the scanner on to hear what the job was as if there was a going structure fire in Menzies Creek, we were likely to be needed to assist. As soon the radio came on, a panicked female voice came up and requested Emerald. Quickly I got dressed and started heading up to the station. About 2-3 minutes after the request for assistance, Emerald pagers went off. I arrived to the station and saw an experienced crew was enroute on BART and subsequent members if more appliances were required.

I took on the role as Crew Leader on the Pumper, Adrian driving with Ryan, Kelly and Simon in the back. Whilst Adrian was gliding us through the vacant streets of Emerald and Clematis to the fire, we heard the "Not Yet Under Control" word-back and the request for Emerald Tanker. They turned out shortly after us. We had made a call to stick to the bitumen and come up School Road and avoid the dust bowl known as Menzies Road. Twenty seconds later, we were instructed by Emerald Captain on the fireground channel to exactly that.

Coming into School Road, and knowing the house fire was directly opposite Menzies Creek CFA station, we would get a good view of the fire. And it certainly didn't disappoint. Flames shooting 30 metres into the sky and the house fully involved (If you get the chance, try and view the dash cam footage).

Effectively, efficiently, we pulled up, twinned two short length 64 lengths into the Pumper, whilst running out one exposure line to protect the neighbouring house, plus running numerous lengths to the back of the property. Shortly thereafter, we put in a dividing Y-piece and added another length to attack the fire from the side. We did need to punch out a few fenceposts to be able to reach a comfortable position to reach the fire.

With Adrian running the pump, Kelly was on the exposure line at the front of the house, Ryan and I were attacking the western side, whilst Paul and Simon were attacking the rear of the property. Clematis and Menzies Creek were attacking the fire from the front and eastern sides with numerous Members.

For a good chunk of time, it felt as if our water was doing little to reduce the ferocity of the fire, but eventually, the flames started to subside and you were able to see the true impact the fire had left on the property.

Between Menzies Creek, Clematis and Emerald Brigades (with Bayswater BA refilling cylinders), the fire was brought under control. We had heard the residents were able to escape without injury but it was a very close call. It is such a shame to see an iconic local house be destroyed, but I was thankful, with a sigh of relief, for the outcome that no life was lost.

After a few hours of battle, the Pumper and Tanker returned, and we briefly took the Salvage to the scene to assist with lighting. On return, it felt like we had put in a solid performance and really worked well as a team. Numerous members of all Brigades supported each other by rotating roles, bringing drinks and tools as necessary, and making up equipment.

Very much a team effort and a job well done by all.

Lieutenant Klaus Brodeck

Menzies Creek House Fire



Macclesfield Fire

Just after 4pm on a warm afternoon in late February we were paged to a grass and scrub fire at a property on Tschampions Rd, Macclesfield.

Smoke was clearly visible as we were getting closer. Cockatoo and Macclesfield Tankers were already on scene and a Helitack was already dropping water on the head of the fire.

We were tasked to enter the paddock put out the large pile of firewood that was stacked around the tree. It was a slow process, pulling the pile apart with a rake hoe. That was until the property owner came out with a skid steer, which made short work of the pile.

We continued to black out the immediate area with class A foam, until it decided to stop working, which is certainly not unusual with our setup.

The Pre-Determined Dispatch with aircraft worked well on this job, as by the time the first trucks were arriving on scene the Helitack was already overhead. This allowed the rapid containment of the fire and limited the damage to fences. It also kept the fire relatively small at approximately 160x50 metres.

Our crews worked well. Another job well done!

Lieutenant Adrian Trimnell



Bunyip Complex Fires

Saturday 2nd March 2019

I was picked up from Emerald Fire Station at 1000 hours by Silvan Tanker and transported with their crew to Nar Nar Goon staging area. At 1220 hours, I joined our Strike Team tasked to work in Tynong North and waited for orders from the Strike Team Leader. We were deployed to search properties to make sure they were clear of residents and asked to put CFA tape on front drive way letterboxes to notify other Strike Teams that the properties were vacated. That task took about 2 hours. We then proceeded to set up at a vacated house and waited for the fire front to hit the grasslands. Then, at about 1455 hours, we were redeployed closer towards Bunyip State Forest and tasked with the Sky Tanker to defend a house that was under threat from a finger of the main fire front. From the deck of the fire truck we attempted to knock down the front of the finger to stop it from reaching the house. After what felt like a couple of hours - but was only minutes - we rejoined the Sky Tanker closer to the house and rolled out hoses to set up and defend the property from the rear. Whilst there, we went for a walk down to another section of track where the fire was coming from. The driver of our truck asked how I was feeling, as I went white when seeing the flames leaping up the trees and how fast and ferocious they were.

After returning to our truck we set up the knapsacks and started putting out spot fires. After attending to the task, I turned around and saw a helicopter water bombing the back of the house where the fire was trying to leap. At 1720 hours, we regrouped with our Strike Team and went to the highest peak of the hills and had lunch, a rest and rehydrated. After lunch we refilled the trucks with water and redeployed to a different section, which was still under threat from spot fires. About 1900 hours, we got redeployed to Tonimbuk where the strike team over there had just lost the Scout Hall due to poor access. We waited for our Strike Team Leader, who was investigating to see if we could go up the tracks with the trucks. When he rejoined the Strike Team, he deemed it too dangerous for us to go up the track any further due to fire coming our way and poor terrain. At that point we all turned back, refilled the trucks with water and headed back to the staging area, re-stowing the trucks after a 12 hour shift.

Tuesday 5th March 2019

Richard and I were deployed to Nar Nar Goon staging area with Silvan Tanker. The day was significantly slower and more organised as decision makers had more time, however, they were struggling to find tasks for us as the fire at that stage had burnt back onto itself. Consequently, we mostly blacked out properties, made sure there were no injured animals and checked trees for fall risks.

The difference between the Strike Team Leader from Saturday and Tuesday's was that Saturday's leader seemed a lot more proactive than Tuesday's leader. There was a lot of sitting around doing nothing compared to Saturday. I was happy doing the blacking out for the whole 9 hours rather than having to sit around waiting for orders. After that, there was a mix up with our Strike Team which was deployed to a location that was 3 hours away. We returned to the staging area at about 1700 hours, had dinner and drove the truck back to Emerald.

Firefighter Daniel Young

Bunyip Complex Fires



Bunyip Complex Fires



Strike Team Deployments

On the first Sunday of March 2019, Brendan Manning and I formed part of the crew that made up Silvan Tanker 2 as part of Strike Team 1314, which was deployed to Maryknoll to work on the Bunyip Complex Fire.

It was a hot day. The overnight low had been 25 degrees and the afternoon temperature reached a high of 36.

Our day started early. We assembled at Bayswater Fire Station at 0630 then headed by bus to the Staging Area at Nar Nar Goon. We had breakfast and were then tasked to asset protection in Maryknoll. We made ourselves familiar with the roads, properties, water sources and layout of the assigned area. We waited and watched from a vantage point at the top of a hill; here we were positioned between the fire-front and the town. There was significant aerial firefighting activity, a lot of dirty smoke just over the next hill and several spot fires growing rapidly in the valley to the East of our location.

After a while we were sent to assist at horse properties under threat, with spotting causing many grass fires within the area. At the end of our shift, we did not return to the Staging Area. Instead we did a 'hot change-over' at a Shell servo and returned by bus, arriving back at Bayswater Fire Station at 2200.

Before being sent to the fireground, Adrian had advised our return drop-off site had not been confirmed, so I thank Trevor for taxiing Brendan and myself both ways on short notice.

This was my first time on Strike Team, my first involvement in a large scale fire event. I am grateful to have experienced both 'hurry-up-and-wait' and 'hurry-this-is-real'.

Lieutenant Tanya Jogan.



Strike Team Deployments

Following the commencement of the Bunyip Complex fire, it was only a matter of time before Brigade Members volunteered for Strike Teams to protect assets and battle what they could of the blaze. Unfortunately, the Strike Team containing Emerald Tanker was severely underutilised. Consequently, the only way we got involved was through cross-crewing with other brigades.

I put my hand up to join a slip-on unit tasked with asset protection up in Maryknoll. I had the pleasure of meeting and working with Lt. Shane Miller from Clematis, who showed me the ins and outs of their appliance that was unfamiliar to me, but very quick to learn.

The nightshift was very long. However, this was not from battling any fire, but merely from the lack of readily available tasks. Communication between leaders and commanders grew thin throughout the night, with the Strike Team Leader realising how underused and wasted we were as a resource by the end. However, despite this classic tale of 'hurry up and wait', the experience was one that introduced me to what it meant to be within a Strike Team and the inner workings of how such operations are approached and implemented. Thus, whilst the tasks we were given were anticlimactic, spending twelve hours on the fireground provided for an experience you simply don't get during training and everyday callouts, even if you are merely resting for upwards of three hours due to a lack of tasks.

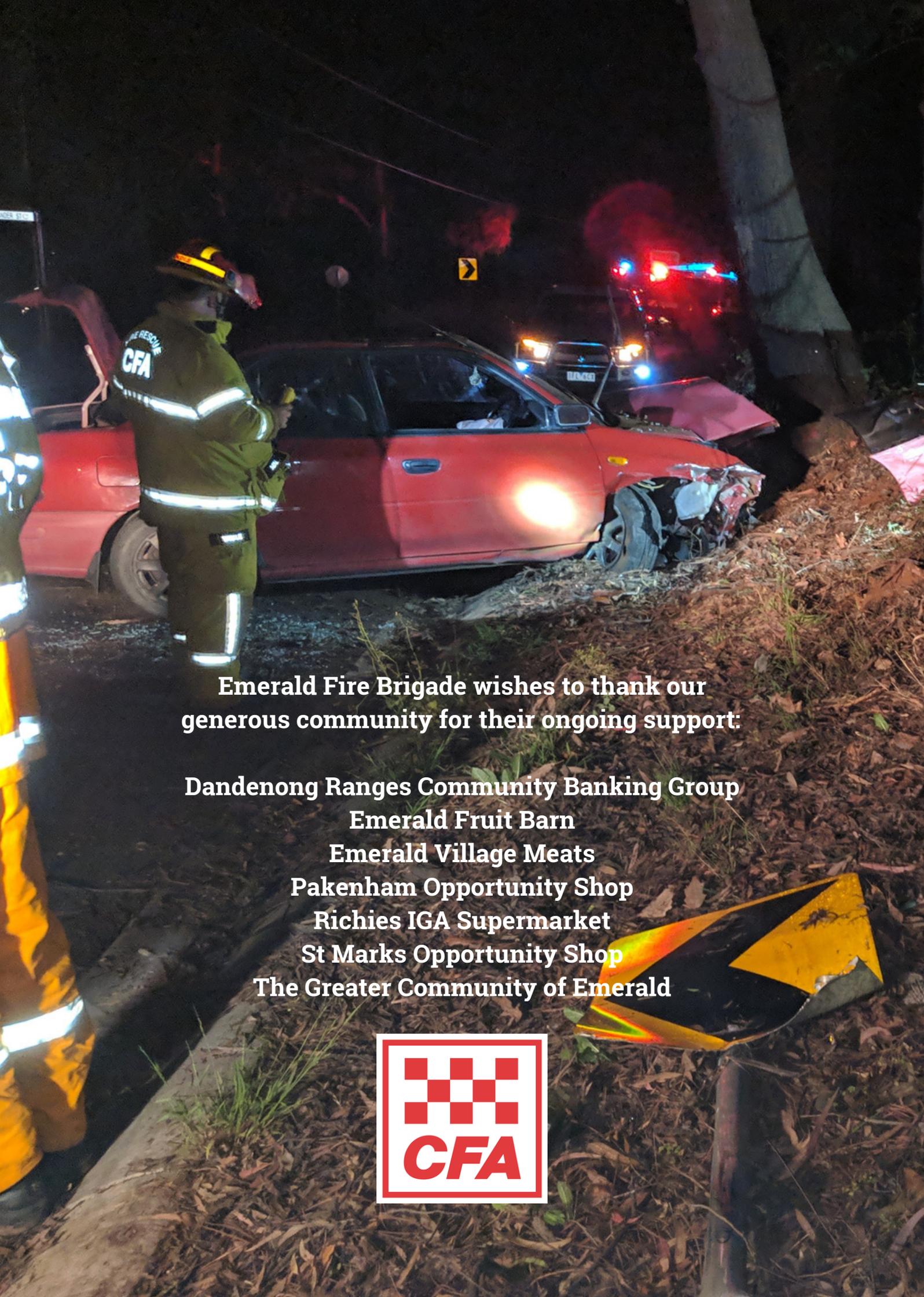
On another note, the food offered at the staging ground both before and after attending the shift went beyond what I expected. I had heard that there is a spectrum of what you can expect from the catering organisations during such firefights, and it is safe to say they were on the very good side!

Furthermore, I would like to extend my thanks to all those responsible for the organisation of cross-crewing for our Brigade. Without your hard work, many of us newbies might not have gotten to see the fireground. Cheers to Lt. Miller for having me on as part of the crew too.

Firefighter Thomas Staub







**Emerald Fire Brigade wishes to thank our
generous community for their ongoing support:**

Dandenong Ranges Community Banking Group

Emerald Fruit Barn

Emerald Village Meats

Pakenham Opportunity Shop

Richies IGA Supermarket

St Marks Opportunity Shop

The Greater Community of Emerald

