

**EMERALD FIRE BRIGADE
ANNUAL REPORT
2021**





*Special Thanks
To*



lesfield 4

SCHOOL BUS
Verlura 1265
PT

Welcome

I'm back baby!

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Brigade once again for entrusting me with the Annual Report for a third time running. I always get a kick out of building something like this from the ground up and hope you receive it with a similar level of enthusiasm!

As for what's in store, the report contains all the entries you've come to expect along with any noteworthy events that have occurred throughout the 2020/21 financial year. Much like its predecessors, I have attempted to make the report as visually engaging as possible.

As we continue to go about our lives as volunteers, take a moment to realise that it's your dedication and commitment to the brigade and community that has helped make achieving our 80-year milestone possible. That's right, Emerald Fire Brigade turned 80 this year!

As always, I hope you enjoy what's on offer and wish everyone a safe and productive 2021/22!

Thomas Staub

Annual Report Coordinator



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President



Well, what a year we have had.

Just when we thought the previous year was going to be one to forget we get given another year of lockdowns and the sadness of losing 2 members of our Brigade.

July 2020 we were all saddened with the loss of F/F Simon Arnold and, at the time, lockdown prevented us from all getting together and farewelling a great person and friend. But in July 2021, we were able to come together and give him the farewell he deserved. RIP Simon.

September 2020 saw us lose David Davidson Little (Doc), and even though Doc had moved interstate back in 2017, his loss was felt both locally and widespread through many organisations that he was involved with.

A very fitting farewell was given to Doc in NSW and a few items were sent up from the Brigade to be placed on his coffin to ensure the brigade were part of his send off. RIP Doc.

Most years I have mentioned fires and floods, but this year we had to contend with the winds. Mother nature always has a way to keep us busy.

Our last year in the brigade has been a somewhat mish mash, as we had to put up with lockdowns, training restrictions, meetings held on Zoom and in the station – be it in the motor room for a few then back into the meeting room, the long-awaited elections, and the longest recruit training course ever.

Congratulations to 3 of our recruits who had to put up with delay after delay but finally they are now Firefighters, and all have had their first turnout.

To all our members, thank you for being part of our Brigade and hope that the near future will bring us to a near norm and get back to a Brigade that we all used to know.

Our Juniors program run by FF. Tanya Jogan and myself had their own take on training during the year, as we ran online zoom sessions. When we were able to train at the station, we had to work to the restrictions. Needless to say, the juniors took this very well and in their stride.

The Anzac Day dawn service was also impacted by restrictions this year, with those wanting to attend having to register and the number of people limited to 600. It was great to see such a positive turnout.



On a private note, I would like to thank Tanya who became my Fiancée in December for being such a wonderful caring person and I can't wait for an exciting future together.

Lastly thank you to all the families supporting our members.

Trevor Ireland

President

Captain

The last year has, again, been quite disrupted due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Rolling lockdowns have been a challenge and impacted our ability to conduct many normal brigade activities, not least of all, the brigades training program, which has suffered significantly. I would like to acknowledge the membership for being able to function in a very flexible way with the various Covid requirements thrust upon us during the year, well done to all.



Although delayed by a year, we were able to hold brigade elections earlier this year. As usual we wish to thank and acknowledge the previous members of the BMT for their work and input to the brigade as well as welcome the newly elected office bearers. The current term of office will be shorter than usual to accommodate a planned return to the normal election cycle in 2022. The focus for the current BMT will largely centre on managing the brigade during the Covid environment and rejuvenating the brigade once any sort of normality returns.

Another core issue the BMT will be working on is recruitment. As we have seen over recent years, recruiting is now a continual process the brigade is required to undertake to maintain an appropriate number of operational members. This brings its own challenges with getting new members through the recruitment process.

This year is the brigades 80th Anniversary. It's been quite disappointing that due to the rolling Covid restrictions, we haven't really been able to celebrate it as we would have liked to. As with most things this year, there has been a large amount of uncertainty in future planning any events. But 80 years strong in our community is still a special milestone and something we should all be proud of. 'Happy Birthday EFB!'

We had the opportunity to assist with several planned fuel reduction burns last Autumn. Whilst these are strategic and necessary works for fire prevention, they also serve as a great learning opportunity to maintain our skills maintenance with real fire. One of these burns was conducted in the Avonsleigh Common on a Wednesday, which presented a good opportunity to spend our normal Wednesday night training patrolling and blacking out. Particularly for our newer members, it was a great opportunity to get them out in the bush and teach them some very valuable 'real life' skills.

Thankfully we didn't have too many major jobs during the year, although several jobs stand out. One such job was a truck roll-over on old Beaconsfield Rd, where a tip truck laying new asphalt along the edge of the road broke through the shoulder, rolling over the edge and down the embankment, consequently spilling its load and trapping the driver as it came to rest against a tree. The driver was trapped for approximately an hour and was lucky to escape with relatively minor injuries. Our members, along with Emerald SES road rescue and specialist high angle rope rescue crews from CFA and FRV were used to get the driver back up to the road level. Ambulance Vic and VicPol crews also attended and great teamwork by all services made for a positive outcome.

June this year saw a major windstorm hit the Dandenong Ranges. Sustained and highly destructive winds from the South East blew up in the early evening on a Wednesday and continued until early afternoon the following day. This led to large scale damage across the wider Dandenong Ranges, with our area getting its fair share of the impact. Our brigade was responded to several local jobs involving trees down, an MVA, and later in the evening were requested to assist the Emerald SES who were dealing with an unprecedented number of calls for assistance. Several houses in Emerald were destroyed, many sustained significant damages and there were multiple road blockages and power outages.



During the night we listened to many rescue crews trying to respond to calls for structural collapses with possible people trapped further up the Hills. Time and time again they would advise that they could not get through due to the roads being completely blocked with multiple large trees. At around 0200hrs there were 6-7 rescue jobs that brigades and other emergency services could not get to – a harrowing situation for first responders to be in, not least the residents involved. Over the next 24hrs it was realised how devastating the storm had been, particularly around the Kalorama area which had been significantly impacted with many houses destroyed. This event would ultimately become a significant part of the Dandenong Range's history.

On the Thursday and Friday, our brigade again responded to local jobs as well as proving further support to the SES by co-ordinating several neighbouring brigades, of which included a District 8 Strike Team. As the weekend came around our Salvage and crews were deployed on strike team duty. This was a first for Ranges Group, with all 3 allocated Group strike teams being deployed at the same time to assist in the recovery effort.



Initially deployed to Olinda, our strike team was diverted back to the Emerald area and tasked with assisting Emerald SES with their backlog of work. Strike team 1333 were able to do some good work in our own area including gaining access for an elderly couple who had not been able to leave their property for 4 days. Some hard chainsaw and labour work was able to assist them greatly. Other time was spent checking most of the roads around the Macclesfield area and Sunday afternoon saw 1333 redeployed up to the Sassafra area to conduct welfare checks on vulnerable residents and perform other various jobs. Although our members' houses

escaped serious damage, there were several who had trees come down in their yards and it was pleasing to see other members pitch in to give them a hand with the clean-up. Again, we saw widespread and lengthy power outages in the area.

Sad that it had to happen, but it was comforting that after 12 months we were finally able to give Simon Arnold a fitting send-off. Simon's Memorial was a day short of the first anniversary of his passing and held at the Emerald Secondary Collage. At Simon's fiancée Sarah's request, the brigade was able to play a major part in the service, which was run as a fire fighter's funeral. The laying of evergreens, eulogies and the reading of the Fire Fighters Ritual were features of the day.

Simons OXFAM/Brigade team members were able to carry his ashes to the waiting pumper before his final ride, escorted by a lone bagpipe player through a guard of honour made up of brigade members, Simon's work mates from Davey Pumps, and family. The round of applause for Simon as the Pumper moved forward was such a fitting tribute to a great man. I thank Sarah for allowing the brigade to be involved and to all the members who attended. A special thanks to those that assisted on the day and beforehand.

A fun event this year, between Covid lockdowns, was entering our brigade team in the Victoria Police and Emergency Services Games, which were held in Geelong in March. 'Dodgeball' was the chosen team sport and was a new experience for most of us. We trained reasonably hard and tried to learn the rules, which seemed to keep changing right up to the event. There's nothing like a bit of sport to bring out the competitive nature in our players, but the determination right from the start was simply to have fun. Whilst we didn't exactly win a golden ticket to the world finals in Las Vegas, we didn't go too badly (apparently a night on the town and coffee liqueur shots till the early hours, isn't the best preparation for a big day of sport).

I've been to several other Emergency Services games previously in Perth and Sydney and I would highly recommend participating when the chance arises. Not only is it great to get away and socialise with other members outside of a brigade setting, but the comradery between Emergency Service people from all over is a fantastic thing to be a part of. We had a great weekend away, so thanks to the team and to Jody for organising it!

In closing, I'd just like to pass on my sincerest thanks to all members and your families for doing your best for the brigade in what has been a difficult, frustrating, and challenging year for all of us. I keep telling myself we will get through all this Covid stuff and whilst I'm sure we will, I look forward to brigade life getting back to normal sooner rather than later. My thanks also go to our fellow local Emergency services, neighbouring brigades, community groups and local businesses for their support throughout the year.



Paul Yandle

Captain

1st Lieutenant



As I write this report, Melbourne has just gone into lockdown number five. Unfortunately, this has really been the story of the last twelve months with our stop-start lives making continuity, planning and routine very difficult. This has also extended into the brigade.

A year late, we were finally able to hold our brigade elections and I was very thankful to be able to take on the role of 1st Lieutenant. My portfolios include Training (planning, delivery and reporting), People and Culture, and I have also maintained Recruitment. I look forward to executing these portfolios to the best of my ability.

The People and Culture portfolio is a new one aimed to monitor and promote wellness and culture within the brigade. There have been a few initiatives already introduced, including the Vegetable Boxes for all members during last year's lockdown, BYO dinner at the station for members on Meeting Night for those who want to arrive early and engage with each other, and we have also held a few social events when able to enjoy each other's company in a social setting. I look to introduce some more initiatives as the year goes on. I am also happy to hear your suggestions.

One positive to take out of the significant campaign bushfires in 2019/2020 was the groundswell of new recruits that came forward to take an interest in protecting their community. We enjoyed having 15 new recruits sign up (including numerous daytimers) and were either in the process of completing minimum skills or waiting to commence the 'General Firefighter' (GFF) course. Unfortunately, in 2020, COVID came into play and reared its ugly head. Minimum Skills was cancelled halfway through, the launch of GFF was delayed even further, and training resources were stretched thin within district, meaning a number of these new recruits, understandably, lost patience with CFA. Thankfully a core group of 6 recruits stayed the distance. Congratulations to Geordie, Amber, Rohan, Chico, Braidyn and Craig, who are now operational. We will celebrate their achievement as a brigade when the lockdowns end. In the meantime, we have also gained Nha, Josh, Darcy and Lily, who are at various stages of their Recruits journey.

Despite all these obstacles, I am constantly amazed with the recruits' stoicism, loyalty, and community spirit. Some of them have even been with the brigade for over 18 months! They have also engaged with brigade activities such as competing in the Dodgeball tournament at the Police and Emergency Services Games in Geelong and engaging in assisting locals during the significant storm event of June 2021. This has motivated me and numerous members and if this is an indication of their commitment, we are very lucky to have them as brigade members.



As mentioned in last year's report, the brigade received a sizable donation in the will of a very generous resident, Jane Tilley. With these funds the brigade has already acquired an additional 4 x sets of Breathing Apparatus, taking our total to 6 (4 on the Pumper and now 2 on the Tanker). The brigade also has just endorsed the purchase of a new battery powered Positive Pressure Ventilation Fan, replacing our aging petrol-powered fan on the Pumper. Both initiatives are steps in the right direction to ensure firefighter safety and we are thankful that we have had the opportunity to acquire these items.

With a quiet fire season just gone, it feels like it has been a quiet year on the fire call front. The only event of real scale was the significant storm event in June, which saw members work in the Emerald area on the storm night but also for the next three days across the devastated areas at the top of the Dandenong Ranges. This included chainsaw work as well as welfare checks on impacted residents. This was quite a significant event and the crews who responded did a magnificent job whilst keeping safety at the forefront of their minds in such dangerous conditions.

Our brigade SDS performance has been very strong over the last 12 months. Primary SDS is the key measure where we are to get on scene to Code 1 jobs in our response area within 10 minutes over 90% of the time. We achieved 100% for Jul – Aug Quarter, 81% for the Sep-Dec Quarter (with some reporting discrepancies), 100% for Jan-Mar Quarter, and 100% in the Apr-June Qtr. Great job by all.

Training will be a significant focus during my term as 1st Lieutenant. I am aiming to quickly build a long-term plan for brigade internal training to cover off all the necessary topics a Class 4 brigade is required to. Another aspect needing attention is ensuring that the brigade meets its training competency requirements against the BOSP, which is challenging with the current climate within CFA training. Nonetheless, we will try and find solutions to overcome this and hope that there is a strong appetite within the brigade to complete some of these courses.

I really look forward to working with the new BMT this term and all members of the brigade. There is certainly a new feeling of exuberance and enthusiasm within the BMT which is contagious. This pushes each of us to do better which is a great environment to work.

Have a great year,

Klaus Brodeck

1st Lieutenant



2nd Lieutenant

My report this year is going to be short. We spent a great chunk of last year in lockdown and this had a huge impact on the brigade and its activities. We had our moments of normality; the election for 3rd LT which I was successful in, our combined Christmas and Presentation night, and then our elections for the BMT that happened a year late.

We have had some significant changes in the BMT and this has bought new ideas and enthusiasm. I moved up to 2nd LT and have been given the role of Quartermaster. This involves maintaining and ordering PPC or PPE and all purchasing for the Brigade. This is a large and encompassing role as we are constantly getting new members, replacing damaged gear and when we are attending the station on a regular basis there is always consumables to replace or order.



We had a very quiet summer season and yet I have had a few opportunities to step up and run a couple of jobs. We had a burn off out of control in Dewhurst that had no ready water supply and a long single lane driveway. It impacted the area around the burn – the driveway lined with agapanthus, trees and some of the fencing. It was challenging but with all the training we do there was nothing unusual about the job, only that it was my first one as an OIC. I also had the benefit of our training at a car vs tree accident that had a large branch overhanging the car, of which still had the occupant inside. We excluded one side of the car from any access, which, moments after the driver was extracted, saw the branch fall into.

This year also saw the formation of the Emerald CFA Dodgeball team thanks to Jody. We trained hard for a couple of months with the help of the brigade. One lovely weekend we decamped to Geelong to participate in the Victoria Police and Emergency Services Games. We had a lot of fun and managed to come 5th.

Unfortunately, this year also saw the death of Doc and Simon. Doc's funeral was held in Beresfield NSW and due to the lockdown, we could only watch from afar. The advent of live streaming gave us this opportunity to be there. Simon also passed during lockdown and we have subsequently had his memorial this year near the anniversary of his passing. Doc had moved to NSW several years prior but both deaths have been felt within the brigade.

We have also lost Calum to a move to Golden Beach and with him, the experienced Driver Trainer. As Driver Training comes under my preview, I will miss having that experienced brigade member to train our drivers. As someone that has learned a great many things from Calum, including how to drive a truck, I will miss having him around.

Kelly Harris

2nd Lieutenant



3rd Lieutenant

Firstly, I would like to thank all members who have voted me into this position as third lieutenant. I would also like to say congratulations to the other BMT members who have been given the opportunity to serve this term on the Brigade Management Team.

It takes an enormous amount of teamwork and support to run a fire brigade as effectively as we do, so I would like to share a massive thank-you to the outgoing BMT. As you may or may not know, a lot of work goes on behind the scenes to keep the brigade running as well as it does, so thank-you again to those members who have dedicated their expertise and personal time.



As I have recently been voted into this position, I do not have much to report. The continuous stretch of lockdowns has forced irregular attendance at the brigade that has caused disruption to our training and has not allowed us to spend much face-to-face time together as a group. Despite this, it has been great to see the brigade band together through these trying times and keep us ticking along smoothly. The pandemic has been tough on everyone, but being able to get trucks out the door in a timely manner is a great effort from all our members. Despite all the barriers we have faced, I am hopeful that the next 12 months will see our brigade attend regular fire calls and training sessions, to continue to effectively service our community.

Look forward to seeing you all on the trucks and at training!

Regards,

Brendan Manning

Third Lieutenant



4th Lieutenant



Firstly, on behalf of myself and my fiancée Laura, I would like to say a big thank you for the Emerald Fire Brigade welcoming us into the family. It has been such a great honour to be able to join a CFA Brigade that embodies the values of the CFA and puts the community at the forefront of what they do.

Stepping into the role of 4th Lieutenant this year has been a challenging yet invigorating role for myself. Despite COVID stemming us from doing more as a brigade, we have still made some great progress with a passionate BMT leading the way. The profile of the 4th Lt this year has been covering off on pre-plans, key management, a bit of safety and assisting the 1st Lt with some training implementation.

As times continue to move forward, we are seeing more infrastructure within the Semi-Urban/Rural interface that is Emerald. We have a dynamic and ever-changing response area that is continuing to push forward as Melbourne expands into the bush. As a town, Emerald has slowly risen in population since 2016, where it had initially recorded 5778 people. With an increase to an estimated 7500 people in 2020, Emerald is fast becoming a hill-change for many urban dwellers and, as such, we are seeing an increase of infrastructure and risk for our brigade to mitigate. With all that in mind and a tight knit BMT, we have been looking into the modernisation of the brigade in preparation for the coming 5-10-year cycle.



In addition, we are also looking into firefighter safety and wellbeing by way of equipment and PPC cleanliness coming into align with global best practice and ensuring that all our members can continue to do what they love at CFA for many years to come. This includes research into global and industry best practice for particulate management and cleanliness of PPC. Though you all might not see much of the work, there is a huge amount put into the back-end cycles of what we do as a brigade and as CFA.



On the lighter side of things, I'd like to wrap up with one of my CFA highlights for the year. At an incident with a truck rollover off an embankment, I was fortunate enough to get in a harness and assist with a patient extrication alongside our Monbulk Rescue and SES Rescue responders. This was a highlight for me because it demonstrated the uniqueness of CFA and how interoperability is pivotal to the safety and wellbeing of our community.

I'd also like to thank all the members of the brigade who have shown excellent dedication to their CFA duties in the past 12 months, and congratulations to all the new members who were able to finally catch the gear alongside us. I look forward to catching the gear for the next 12 months and into the future.

Thanks Again,

Christopher May

4th Lieutenant

Communications Officer

I would like to begin my report by thanking everyone who elected me into the Communications Officer position. It's been an honour to serve the brigade at a management level and I have thrown myself into the role in a way that I hope many of you expected.



Since being elected, a variety of tasks have been successfully fulfilled. These include:

- A reboot of the Brigade's emails.
- Configuration of the trucks' dash cameras.
- Resolution of Community Alert Siren issues.
- Addressment of any faulty equipment.
- Updating of the Spectrum Tree.
- Full swap over of Portable Radio Batteries.
- FIRS reporting.
- All things pager and BART related.

In terms of what's cooking away in the background, research and consideration has been given with respect to the following issues:

- Upgrading of the trucks' mobile phones which are more user friendly, can take better quality photos and run any necessary applications.
- Upgrading of the brigade's office computer to effectively run updated Microsoft programmes and consider the integration of a secure and controlled virtual private network.
- Reassessment of our online domain.
- Updating of LCF guides.

The Comms Officer role is made much easier with the help of other likeminded individuals. That's why I would not only like to thank our Assistance Comms Officer, FF. Mitch Fraser, who has been the primary driver for the second point listed directly above, but also Lt. Kelly Harris for running me through the processes, FF. Ryan Lewis for imparting his breadth of knowledge on all things CFA tech related, and FF. Nick Whiley for all the tech knowledge in-between. You've consequently made my job a breeze and to say I appreciate all you've done to help this year would be an understatement.

As for the rest of the brigade, if ever you feel there is an issue with anything comms related, please do not hesitate to bring it forward so it can be rectified.

Wishing everyone the best for the year to come!

Thomas Staub

Communications Officer

Treasurer

The 2020/21 financial year has been an unprecedented year with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns largely impacting the brigade's ability to raise funds. I feel sure that many businesses are struggling during this time, which has seen a significant decline in our much needed and appreciated donations from local businesses and the community collection tins.

Regular contributors to our brigade are the Pakenham Opportunity Shop, St Marks Opportunity Shop in Emerald and Ritchies (Emerald IGA). We would like to thank these organisations for your ongoing support and faith in our brigade.

Other donators have included Pete Minahan, Emerald Football Netball Club as a token of their gratitude for our assistance with parking for the ANZAC Day game, and a member of the community who wishes to remain anonymous.

The Brigade would also like to acknowledge the kindness of the local community who donate generously throughout the year. Every little bit helps, and all the coins and notes put into our donation tins contribute significantly.

As a further result of the pandemic, the year has seen very little activity in terms of purchases and grant procurements.

Account	Opening Balance: 1 st July 2020	Closing Balance: 30 th June 2021
Bendigo Bank (Main Account)	\$45,498.38	\$19,039.48
Bendigo Bank (Jr Account)	\$3,023.95	\$3,273.95
BankWest High Yield	\$202,998.37	\$228,106.86
Juniors Petty Cash	\$398.25	\$509.08
Total Balance	\$251,918.95	\$250,938.37

Incoming

\$IN	
Donations	\$7,723.01
Bank Interest Received	\$122.57
CFA payments/refund	\$1,818.20
Allowances/Reimbursements	\$1,264.18
Member purchase reimbursements	\$532.20

Outgoing

\$OUT	
Subscriptions	\$1,100.47
Brigade Welfare & Gifts	\$1,746.41
Printing and Stationery	\$1,285.77
Uniforms and PPC	\$785.80
Station Consumables	\$472.39
Equipment Purchases	\$2,037.18
Telstra (phone and internet)	\$612.59
Brigade Functions	\$1,556.55
Sundry Purchases	\$745.32
Member Purchases	\$608.46
Vehicle Expenses	\$325.90
Building Maintenance	\$388.64
GST (for reimbursement)	\$784.26

Amy Fontana

Treasurer

Recruits 2019-20

The summer period leading from 2019 through to 2020 will be a chapter for the history textbooks for decades to come, especially here on the Eastern seaboard of Australia. The 'Black Summer Bushfire' period, brought about some of the worst fires in Australia's recorded history; decimated over 1 million hectares of land, and devastated the livelihoods of thousands. But with the horrors of these fires also ignited a tremendous movement in one of the proud cornerstones of the Australian identity; a wave of unity, coming together, standing up and doing whatever possible to help our fellow countrymen. By December/January, a record number of some 80 odd keen individuals found themselves putting their names forth with their local brigades – welcome to District 13, Dandenong Ranges Recruit Group.

The number of prospects from early on was overwhelming, with trainers and assessors being tasked with an almost impossible mission. But in true CFA form, tackling the impossible and daunting was all par for the course, and so we got on with the job as best we could! But 2020 was not near finished dealing out the cards of chaos. By February, our Recruits group was nearing the halfway point of our course, having completed several assessments along the way. We had lost a few people, but most were on track with unwavering eager. Little did we know, a new and far more complex fight lay ahead. A fight that nobody saw coming, from an enemy that can't be seen. As quickly as the fires had gotten out of control, people went from P2 masks outside because of the smoke, to any face coverings because of health advice. Within weeks, the nation had been completely shaken and divided once again, by quarantine, isolation and lockdowns. Recruit groups across the state were all put on hiatus, as brigades awaited further direction from the government. Frustration, fatigue, despair, hopelessness, and waning motivation crept across much of the population. Firefighters and recruits weren't impervious to these newly encountered challenges. But insult to injury was still to come, when the current General Firefighter Course would see its cessation; previous learning, accomplished assessments and foundation skills would have to all be redone.

It's hard now thinking back as I write this, to remember a precise timeline for all the interruptions, lockdowns, restarts, lockdowns...did I mention lockdowns? I remember having a good laugh with a few of us, remarking that, "we might be the first Firefighters to get a 5-year service medal, before we even graduate and become operational". By now, our numbers had started to dwindle, as the fatigue, motivation and lifestyle changes brought about by the pandemic had impacted many. But the ones who have remained are a sheer testament to the very fabric of our proud organisation; some of the finest displays in dedication, perseverance and resilience.

Fast forward to +18 months and some sense of normalcy was starting to filter back into our lives. Perhaps the longest running Recruits period in our history? And to this date, at the time of writing, some have since 'graduated' (ceremony pending) and even been fortunate enough to make it out on a truck once or twice! Frustratingly, however, some of our beloved group are still awaiting to the chance at their final assessment! So, I want to close this piece with a message to all of them:

To all of you who are still awaiting your shot. Those who have been there from the very beginning, and those who joined the tumultuous journey somewhere along the way...Please, stay the path and keep pushing forth with your fantastic dedication. The reward at the end, knowing the challenges along the way, are going to make it that much sweeter for you all. You've come so far and given up so much...but at the end of the day, that's what being a Firefighter is all about. So, keep fighting until the job done!

Geordie McDonald

Fire Fighter



Juniors

Active Junior Members for the year 2020-2021

Alice Mattille
Brenton Wood
Xander Harper
Luke Nicholls
Eliza Owen
Kristian Fotia
Amos Quadling
Sienna Hughes
India Fitzallen
Courtney Fotia
Lily Quadling
Peta Revell



The Junior Fire Brigade is open to young people of all abilities aged 11 to 16 who live locally to Emerald. Junior training is held on Tuesday nights from 1900 to 2030 during school terms at Emerald Fire Station. Our curriculum and training plans are based on General Firefighter competencies (formerly Bushfire Firefighter Minimum Skills), local events and community activities.

Well... that is how the Junior Fire Brigade would run during 'normal' times.

We now have 'COVID normal' with ever changing information, restrictions, limits, bans and lockdowns. So, what have we done? We have adapted, we have shown resilience and we have kept on going.



On the 21st of July 2020 Emerald Junior Fire Brigade held its first ever Zoom online training session – the first of many during Terms 3 and 4. Neither Trevor nor I had hosted any form of online training previously. Initially there were a couple of hiccups, but we pushed on, encouraged by the Juniors who are adept and very familiar with online learning.

Our Term 3 and 4 Zoom training sessions covered many topics, including:

- Tree hazards.
- A case study of the 2015 Pinery Fire in South Australia.
- Burn-overs, burn-unders and entrapment procedures.
- Aerial firefighting.
- Water sources, static & reticulated water, hydrants.
- CFA safety information from the seasonal focus; LACES and DRA.
- The fire triangle and methods of extinguishment.
- How fire sprinkler systems work.
- Water catchments, reservoirs, water treatment plants and desalination.
- General firefighting knowledge quizzes.
- We shared hobbies and interests, had virtual tours of Juniors' backyards.
- How TICs work and what they can be used for.
- We looked at photos of equipment from the Tanker and discussed its uses, pros & cons.



Keeping the online sessions fun and interesting became an ongoing challenge. The Juniors were completing their schoolwork by home-schooling and were already spending many hours each day looking at a screen. Researching and creating the PowerPoints we used for the online sessions was another challenge, with many hours every week dedicated to preparing each session.

On the 24th of November 2020, Juniors could resume face-to-face training. Finally! This session was fun water games using the Tanker, hoses, and branches. But first we had to fit the Juniors with new overalls because they had all grown so much!

Our COVID friendly end of year celebration was held outdoors at Emerald Lake Park. We played games and at the end of the session each Junior was given a bag of goodies which included food, drinks, a \$20 gift voucher and a beautiful handmade Christmas bauble with “Emerald Junior Fire Brigade 2020” written on it. The happy smiling faces indicated Juniors were suitably impressed!

We were mostly able to continue with face-to-face training in Terms 1 and 2 of 2021, with just a couple of sessions held via Zoom.

Our Term 1 and 2 face-to-face and Zoom training session topics included:

- Introduction to BA: how it works, when it is used, the new BA on the Tanker.
- Safety while we are at the station.
- RECEOVS and various scenarios.
- Heat illnesses, hydration, and safe lifting.
- A hay shed fire scenario demonstrating fireground practices using toys as props.
- Practised dry draughting and setting-up a water point.
- Excursion to Emerald Lake with the Salvage.
- Introduction to the gas detector.
- Tree fire, car fire and electrical fire attack scenarios in the carpark.
- Fire extinguisher theory and practical.
- Equipment familiarisation.
- Hoses: hose lay, bowling, rolling, couplings, types, using the hose tower.
- Safely getting on and off the fire trucks.
- PPC & PPE, structure gear vs wildfire gear and the turn-out race.
- Pumper boosting Tanker setup.
- Parts of a bushfire and protecting the POO (Point of Origin), the impacts of embers and spot fires.



The ongoing COVID related stresses along with our stop-start-stop-start and online training throughout the year did not give each and every Junior the best opportunity to be involved and thus earn points towards an award, so in a break from traditional proceedings, Trev and I agreed to not hold a Junior Presentation Night and give awards for the year 2020/21.

Trev and I thank the parents, guardians and families of our Juniors for supporting them (and us) over the last 12 months. The Juniors have been consistently happy to just get on with things. They have taken each hurdle in their stride with positive attitudes and smiles on their faces.

Well done Juniors, you are all valued and appreciated members of our Brigade!

Tanya Jogan
Junior Leader



Community Safety Education

Community Safety Education kicked off to a promising start in 2021 with Emerald Village Meats inviting CFA Emerald to host a barbecue. It was the perfect day to get us out and doing what we love, engaging with our community.

With the sun shining and the smell of a barbecue, we had the opportunity of chatting to a range of people from newly arrived residents who were willing to discuss fire plans to day trippers visiting the hills, along with some community members wanting to know how to become a volunteer.

As we continue through this current environment, how we engage is changing. While we are not able to conduct face to face activities, CFA head office has been busy in building resources that will allow for online community webinars, improved social media messaging and projects to increase safety in homes.

With planning day just around the corner, we are now looking to the future and hoping to once again be out at supermarkets, hosting station open days, attending markets and festivals, and conducting online webinars.



Leanne Johnson
Community Safety Coordinator



Emerald's Fireballs



In early January this year, I was scrolling through the latest CFA News and noticed an article about the upcoming Victoria Police and Emergency Services Games planned for 17th - 21st March 2021. That, I thought, could be fun. I looked at the sports being offered, trying to find something that might suit a group of people with a wide variety of skills, and came across... dodgeball.

I floated the idea with a few members who were a lot keener than I'd expected. Despite having minimal/no knowledge of the rules of dodgeball other than having seen the movie, "Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story", I brought the idea up at the February Brigade meeting.

Dealing with COVID during the past year had been challenging and even though the BMT put in a huge effort to keep Members engaged and connected, the thought of an activity where we could spend some time together, head out of town for a couple of days, participate in a team sport and engage in valuable team building was incredibly appealing!

Our team had more enthusiasm than expertise, but those with the skills were quick to share with the rest of us – Kate is an excellent netballer, Klaus brought skills from his baseball days and the teacher came out in Geordie with some great drills. We trained at least weekly to become the best we could in the six weeks before the Games. Early in our training regime we were invited to a practice game at Wantirna South with a team from the Melbourne Dodgeball League who generously taught us the rules and provided us with guidance and tips.

We designed an awesome logo and team t-shirt, but their supply was delayed so they, unfortunately, didn't arrive in time. We waited as long as we could but eventually had to find an alternative and faced competition day dressed in our Emerald CFA polo shirts and red shorts. What we wore wasn't going to change our performance, so we turned up excited and ready to bring home gold!

Kelly hit the jackpot when she found us accommodation in student dorms at Deakin University on the Geelong Waterfront. They were perfect and came with great kitchen facilities, alfresco and lounge areas which we virtually had to ourselves... and made the most of.

When we arrived on Friday night, we walked into Geelong, had dinner at an Italian ristorante and a few drinks at the Wool Exchange before heading back to Deakin.

We woke up on Saturday morning to bacon & egg muffins (breakfast of champions), raring and ready to go. Our team played exceptionally well; all things considered. Vance, Kate, Geordie, Klaus, Lea and Paul had massive throwing power. Kelly, Amy, Amber and I were a bit hit or miss (no pun intended) with our throwing and dodging (those balls really hurt!), but each of us still hit a few opponents each game and every one of us cheered on and encouraged our teammates with passion. An SES crew were our Volunteer brothers in arms and we strongly supported each other during games – they were a really good team!

It turns out VicPol Members and Corrections Officers can be quite competitive – no doubt the champion team from Port Phillip Prison were used to dodging things being thrown at them!



Other highlights of the day include Vance distracting our competitors with his Ninja rolls and doing ‘the worm’, Mick stepping up to drive an injured competitor (not one of ours) to hospital, one or two teams increasing their Dutch courage at lunchtime and, on the way back to the accommodation, we may or may not have followed a code one FRV appliance on the way to a job...

At the end of the competition, we found ourselves with the following results:

- Overall, Fifth Best Emergency Services Dodgeball Team in the State 2021.
- Best Fire Service Dodgeball Team in the State 2021.
- Runner-up Best Volunteer Emergency Responder Dodgeball Team in the State 2021.

We came fifth.... depending on how you look at it



Gotta be happy with that!

One team was dressed in 80’s gear, heavily influenced by the “Dodgeball” movie and “Aerobics Oz Style”.



One player doing serious justice to a “Flash dance” leotard caught all our attention and Vance ended up challenging her to a race doing the “worm” on the floor... and easily won. There is no end to that man’s talent. Everyone cheered each other on during the presentations and celebrated a great day of competition. It was a big day but a fun day.

Once we’d returned from the day’s competition, we had a huge dinner of Chinese food, followed by drinks and nibbles in the alfresco area at the top of the building, which had fantastic views over the bay and surrounding city – just beautiful at night!



The Victoria Police and Emergency Services Games were an awesome experience and I’m sure each member of the “Fireballs” would thoroughly recommend participating.

The 2022 VPESG are again being held in the Melbourne area from 1st – 10th April and it would be great to compete again – whether that’s in dodgeball, ten pin bowling, lawn bowls, beach volleyball or whether some Members have expertise in any of the individual sports on offer.

We had the best time, laughing, re-connecting after the first disruption of COVID and getting to know some of our newer Members. Dodgeball was just the catalyst.

I’d do it again in a heartbeat!

Jody Yandle

Brigade Member, Group & VFBV Delegate



Presentation Night Awards

Simon Arnold Memorial Firefighter of the Year:

FF. Amy Fontana

Runner Up Firefighter of the Year: FF Trevor Ireland

Officer of the Year: Lt. Klaus Brodeck

Best First Year Firefighter: FF. Brendan Manning

Merit Award: FF. Alan Quadling

Captain's Appreciation Award: Kate Griffin



Truck Rollover Rescue – 28/01/21



When the pager went off at lunchtime late January, I didn't fully appreciate what a standard "Possible Persons Trapped" pager message could develop in to:

EMLD4 RESCC1 * CAR ACCIDENT – POSS PERSON TRAPPED, 13 OLD BEACONSFIELD RD EMERALD / WONG HEE RD // JARMINA WAY M127 G8 (636989) AFPR CCLEM CEMLD CMENZEMER1 F210110736

My first thoughts were that this was a strange location for a car accident. Once we had turned out, the further information told us that it was a tipper truck that had rolled down an embankment with the driver still inside.

Firecom then advised us that it was being upgraded to a rope rescue job due to the truck being 3-4m down the embankment. As a result, District 8 and 13 Rope Rescue was also responded.

The trip to the job was fine until well down Old Beaconsfield Road, road workers who were trying to resurface the road hindered us and an overzealous traffic controller tried to stop us from getting through to attend the scene. With a slight delay, we were able to finally get through.

On scene we came across a tipper truck, carrying gravel as part of the road re-surfacing crew, down the embankment with the driver still inside the cab. He wasn't mechanically trapped yet was upside down and unable to get out.

I assumed the role of CFA Commander and communicated to Firecom the situation and put in place a traffic management plan for the appliances to approach the scene via Kilvington Drive & Wong Hee Road.

With SES on scene shortly after us, we utilised a ladder for them to climb down the embankment to assess the rescue aspect of the job whilst Monbulk soon attended and managed the rope rescue of bringing the patient back to roadside. After taking advice from the Rescue OIC (Monbulk Captain), we secured the truck from falling further down the embankment, as it was only stopped by some thin trees, by chaining the truck to Menzies Creek tanker.

The Emerald Crew were busy the whole time and did a fantastic job. Amy, Kelly and Ryan, who came on the tanker, were given numerous tasks throughout the event including possible fire suppression and ongoing tasks and jobs. With radio reception poor at the scene, Jarryd Miller (Clematis Captain) took over radio communications in a paddock on higher ground with Firecom, which worked very well. Chris May rung the control point to see if he was required and we asked him to come direct to the scene as we certainly could have used his skillset.

With FRV crews committed at a factory fire, their ETA was 50 minutes, so Monbulk did a tremendous job with their members as well as Wandin rescue operators. Chris was able to join in seamlessly with them and play a key role in rescue with the Monbulk & Wandin crew.

I was regularly checking with the SES & Monbulk Captain as to what they needed to get the job done. I also sought a best estimate of when



we would have the driver back on the road as the Ambulance Team Manager was checking with me every few minutes due to their Air Ambulance sitting at Worrell Reserve waiting to take the patient to one of the city hospitals.

After approximately an hour, SES crews, with Amy and Kelly assisting at the cabin, were able to release the driver from the cab. Then Monbulk, Wandin members and Chris, extricated the driver in the litter back to the roadside where he was treated by Ambulance and transported to the awaiting helicopter.

At this stage, most resources started to leave and we awaited heavy haulage. Due to the tricky nature of where the truck was positioned, two heavy haulage trucks were required.

After over four long hours and approximately 30-40 emergency services members on scene, the truck was removed, Ryan had a go as a heavy haulage truck driver, and we returned to station. A job well done by all.



Appliances in attendance:

- Emerald Tanker
- Clematis Tanker
- Menzies Creek Tanker
- Emerald Rescue 1 (SES)
- Wandin FCV
- Monbulk Rescue
- Monbulk Rescue Support
- Pumper 87B
- Technical Rescue 87
- District 8 Ops Car
- District 13 Ops Car
- WorkSafe

Lt. Klaus Brodeck



Planned Burn Task Force – 26/04/21

“The Safer Together Planned Burn Taskforce project is a recruitment program which deploys available CFA volunteers to planned burns in need of personnel”.



I joined the Taskforce several years ago at its inception, as I have a very flexible schedule and can get away to assist with such things at short notice. I love attending planned burns and have learned a lot about fire behaviour from doing so. I also believe strongly in the difference such burns can make when it comes to fire suppression in the future.

In the early part of 2021, there were many calls for crews to assist with planned burns all around the state. I put my name down for almost all of them and was finally successful in securing a place for 3 days of fuel reduction burns around Wodonga, in late April.

On the 26th April I drove to Wodonga and checked in to pre-arranged accommodation at Quest Hotel. I then headed across to an adjoining restaurant to meet the rest of the crew, have dinner and receive a briefing on what the week would hold for us. I also met my super cool roomie, who I enjoyed getting to know over the week.

On the Tuesday we headed out to breakfast as a group to a gorgeously restored train station café. The food was amazing, and we had breakfast here each day. We then headed to a decommissioned CFA station where we collected trucks and had a briefing about the day. I was assigned to drive the FCV for the week, which was exciting; a role I hadn't done before! It meant essentially spending the day with the burn OIC, driving him around and any other bits and pieces he needed done. Our first day was spent burning a large section of roadside along a fairly main road, due north of the township. Some of the terrain was quite challenging, with very thick growth, but also really satisfying to see it cleaned up so well afterward.

On the second and third days we travelled out to Shelley, about a 90min drive. I always love driving in convoy in CFA vehicles! We had the pleasure of working with a private group who oversee the care and maintenance of pine plantations, and it was explained how they are a significant resource in Australia. The demand for pine is already larger than can be met with new building projects, that to lose any during bushfire season was quite detrimental to the industry and, to some extent, the Australian economy. Our burns for Wednesday and Thursday consisted of many acres between the main road and the pine plantations to try and mitigate the chance of fire spotting over into plantations in the event of a bushfire. On Wednesday, I was selected to work on the lighting crew, which proved to be extremely challenging given the hilly terrain and thick undergrowth. But of course, I loved every second! On the Thursday I was mostly tasked with monitoring for and extinguishing spot overs into the plantations, as well as ensuring the burn area was under control.

Over the week I worked on numerous different trucks, which allowed me to become familiar with different pumps, appliances and branches (they definitely are not all created equal!). I was able to experience how varying foliage burns differently and had plenty of opportunity to ask questions of the local firefighters to gain an understanding of the different challenges we all face. As with every CFA project I have been part of, the highlight for me was the fantastic people I met. We are all passionate about firefighting and CFA, which in turn provided for many laughs and good times during the week. It is also very fulfilling to know we had a hand in helping to keep more people safe in the coming fire seasons.



FF. Amy Fontana

Storm Event – June 2021

Help the Hills – Dandenong Ranges Taskforce

What do you get when you combine ravaging winds with torrential rain and an onslaught of trees down?

A stronger community.

June 2021 presented an unprecedented storm event that obliterated several parts of the Dandenong Ranges and beyond. In hindsight, the impact felt in Emerald, whilst significant, was nothing compared to what happened in Kalorama and Sassafras. As mentioned in the Captain's report, strike teams were mobilised to aid in the massive clean-up effort that was necessary to begin opening roadways and clearing areas that were restricting movement of residents. Once this work was done, however, there was still plenty of cleaning up to do.

After the immediate emergency had passed, a need was identified by Captain Yandle to assist those who lacked the equipment, time and manpower to clean up their properties decimated by fallen trees. This led to the creation of the Help the Hills Dandenong Ranges Task Force, a volunteer group which encouraged people from all around to both request help and generously provide their time and services. The reception by the community was incredible!

The requests for help continue to flow in and we are fortunate to see volunteers coming back for more. Help the Hills would like to thank Emerald Rotary Club and the Veterans from Disaster Relief Australia along with numerous other volunteer groups for donating manpower and time to effectively change the lives of those impacted by the storm event. Some groups have not only donated their time but also their expertise in heavy machinery and specialist equipment. These groups include, but are not limited to, Dynamic Tree Solutions, Catman Excavations and Confined Cut Earthmoving. We also thank all the organisations who have donated valuable safety equipment and tools that our volunteers have used to tackle their jobs.

Finally, a massive thank you needs to go out to all the brigade members that helped make the Help the Hills Dandenong Ranges Task Force possible. Many hours have gone into making it the success it has become and there is still plenty of work to be done!

At the time of writing, the Taskforce's efforts have been halted by COVID restrictions. However, when the state begins to open again, you can expect to see the group tackling the remaining jobs head on. If you wish to volunteer or need assistance yourself, be sure to follow the Facebook page: Help the Hills – Dandenong Ranges Task Force.

Thomas Staub

Comms Officer & Help the Hills Volunteer





Membership

Paul Yandle – Captain	Ian Woodhouse – Firefighter
Trevor Ireland – President	Daniel Young – Firefighter
Klaus Brodeck – First Lieutenant	Karissa Baddeley – Brigade Member
Kelly Harris – Second Lieutenant	Katrina Cree – Brigade Member
Brendan Manning – Third Lieutenant	Matt Cree – Brigade Member
Christopher May – Fourth Lieutenant	Bevan Davis – Brigade Member
Thomas Staub – Communications Officer	Jesse Davis – Brigade Member
Leanne Johnson – CMTY Safety/Firefighter	Chris Davey-White – Brigade Member
Kate Griffin – Secretary	Frank Eggers– Brigade Member
Amy Fontana– Treasurer/Firefighter	Anthony Fairbridge – Brigade Member
Braidyn Fontana – Firefighter	Ian Hall – Brigade Member
James Abraham – Firefighter	Graeme Legge – Brigade Member
Calum Bean – Firefighter	Nha Nguyen – Brigade Member
Anthony Cranston – Firefighter	Josh Prior – Brigade Member
Thomas Dawe – Firefighter	Lily Quadling – Brigade Member
Mitch Fraser – Firefighter	Darcy Roma – Brigade Member
Russell Gledhill – Firefighter	Sharon Rooke – Brigade Member
Michael Hamilton – Firefighter	Nicholas Waldron – Brigade Member
Eze Hirschfeld – Firefighter	Brett Wild – Brigade Member
Tanya Jogan – Firefighter	Jody Yandle – Brigade Member
Ryan Lewis – Firefighter	Kaiden Brodeck – Junior
Josh Mahon – Firefighter	India Fitzallen – Junior
Amber McDonald – Firefighter	Courtney Fotia – Junior
Geordie McDonald – Firefighter	Kristian Fotia – Junior
Shane Merrett – Firefighter	Xander Harper – Junior
Vance Nichols – Firefighter	Sienna Hughes – Junior
Rohan Nunn – Firefighter	Tay Kennett – Junior
Adam Pickett – Firefighter	Alice Mattille – Junior
Alan Quadling – Firefighter	Luke Nicholls – Junior
Glenn Snashall – Firefighter	Eliza Owen – Junior
Adrian Trimmell – Firefighter	Amos Quadling – Junior
Richard Van Iersel – Firefighter	Peta Revell – Junior
Dean Wall – Firefighter	Riley Sharkey – Junior
Craig Ward – Firefighter	Tara White – Junior
Nick Whiley – Firefighter	Brenton Wood – Junior

**Emerald Fire Brigade
wishes to thank its
supporters for their
ongoing commitment in
ensuring a proud and
passionate emergency
service:**

- *Dandenong Ranges
Community Banking
Group***
- *Emerald Fruit Barn***
- *Emerald Village Meats***
- *Pakenham Opportunity
Shop***
- *Ritchies IGA
Supermarket***
- *St Marks Opportunity
Shop***
- *The Greater Community
of Emerald***

