Recruit Course
101 graduates
New Control Unit on the road
Meet our new Directors
Pedal for Prostate riders return
Community safety in action

December 2010

FIREMARK
News from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Melbourne Australia
Recruit Course 101 graduates at Burnley

Luckily, the rain held off for Recruit Course 101’s graduation parade at Burnley Complex on Wednesday 1 December.

The recruits were welcomed into the MFB ranks by Board President Neil Comrie and CEO and Chief Officer Graham Fountain, together with representatives from fellow emergency services and the recruits’ friends and families.

Following the traditional parade, the Recruit Course 101 flag was unfurled before the recruits performed a demonstration of their newly acquired firefighting skills, including traditional hose drills, a hot fire scenario and a road rescue using the ‘jaws of life’.

The 29 members of recruit course 101 completed 16 weeks of intensive training including hose drills, hot fire training, emergency medical response, dangerous goods detection and road accident rescue, conducted at MFB’s Burnley Complex as well as CFA’s Sale and Fiskville training grounds.

Any environment is dynamic by nature but that is especially so at an emergency services organisation like the MFB.

Following the resignation of the CEO and Chief Officer on 16 December I am currently acting in the role.

The MFB Board is expected to begin the process of searching for a permanent replacement in the new year. In the meantime, MFB’s operational capability remains uncompromised by this outcome.

I can reassure you that the MFB Board remains committed to its vision for the future and our new Executive Leadership Team will be working through the holiday period to bring about the organisational change so vital to our successful future.

Looking back on the year, there are many noteworthy events and achievements worth reflecting on including our new EBA and the bridges that have been built with our colleagues at the UFU. We’ve also just recently welcomed our newest recruits; the fresh young faces who will go on to one day be leading figures within MFB; supported the recommendations of the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission such as the appointment of the first Fire Services Commissioner, Craig Lapsley; and the proposed changes to the Fire Service Levy.

The need to meet community expectations now and into the future is behind much of the MFB’s change agenda especially the need for better information to the community during a crisis; our new web-based community warning system is specifically designed for this use.

A new station at Nunawading was completed and opened this year, while our major acquisition was the purchase of land at Craigieburn to pave the way for a new practical and hot fire and rescue training facility.

We have engaged in organisational change creating six new directorates to replace the former structure. This includes replacing four operational zones to two regions in the North West and South East to align with the Faireer Victoria regions.

Our Marine Division, Rapid Impact Assessment Teams and a range of incident management staff assisted VICSES with the floods in north east Victoria.

We celebrated ten years of working with Ambulance Victoria to provide Emergency Medical Response, a service uniquely offered by MFB.

Of course, we attended thousands of fires, maintaining our performance standards to minimise loss of life and property and, through it all, that firefighter spirit was ever present. Firefighters ran across America to honour the fallen of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, while others cycled around Australia to raise money for prostate cancer research; some ran around the block to raise money for the Royal Children’s, some grew moustaches in November, others shaved their heads, others ran up the stairs of our tallest building and on Christmas Day firefighters will make the annual visit to bring some cheer to sick children at the Royal Children’s Hospital with the Once a Year Club.

MFB welcomed the new government, and particularly the new Minister for Police and Emergency Services, The Honourable Peter Ryan. We also farewelled Emergency Services Commissioner Bruce Esplin, CFA CFO Russell Rees and former Emergency Services Minister Bob Cameron.

From the office of the CEO and CO and on behalf of our President Neil Comrie, the Board and our new Directors, I hope you all enjoy the holiday season. Stay safe and get ready for a dynamic and exciting 2011.

Shane Wright
Acting Chief Executive Officer and Chief Officer
New Control Unit on the road

Our new Control Unit (car 091) was officially commissioned on Friday 12 November at Eastern Hill fire station before an audience of media, firefighters and public.

Media and public were given a tour of the $1.5 million Control Unit and its hi-tech features.

Since commencing service on 5 November, the new Control Unit had a baptism by fire: called to a large warehouse fire in Coolaroo on its very first day of service, where it was used to conduct emergency management team meetings and to coordinate resources.

The vehicle, which was built on a Scania coach platform, has expandable pods to create more space internally, external briefing capacity, back-to-base computer feeds, high definition CCTV mounted on a telescopic light with 4000W lighting, and has inter-agency connectivity to work with other emergency services including CFA if required.

It will be deployed to major incidents as a mobile command centre able to plot the course of the particular incident, assign, direct and chart MFB crews, send community warnings and provide a communications hub to liaise with other emergency service organisations, the State Control Centre and MFB Command Centre in Melbourne.

It is crewed by a minimum of two specially trained operators and will be called in by an on-scene Incident Controller if an emergency situation is deemed to have reached a critical level.

The new vehicle replaces the old Control Unit which has seen over 20 years service and attended major incidents such as Coode Island, Silvertop taxi blaze and more recently the petrol spill at Exxon Mobil in Altona.

Christmas cheer for sick kids at South Melbourne fire station

Santa dropped his sleigh in favour of an MFB fire truck, to visit the Peter Mac paediatric Christmas Party hosted by South Melbourne fire station on Friday 3 December.

Over 60 paediatric patients from Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, together with their family, friends and Peter Mac staff gathered at South Melbourne to celebrate Christmas.

Dr Greg Wheeler, Chair of the Paediatric Service, sees most of the children who are referred to Peter Mac from all over the state and from Tasmania.

“We see this celebration as an important step for our patients. Some children have completed their treatment and others are about to commence. Having a party allows children to continue to have fun events in their lives at a time when life in general has been turned upside down.” says Dr Wheeler.

MFB Senior Station Officer Paul Juhlin said the firefighters at South Melbourne fire station were excited to support the paediatric patients and families who have had a tough time.

“The kids got a lot of joy from the day and it provided a break and distraction from the serious illnesses they have been confronted with this year.”

Peter Mac is Victoria’s provider of specialist radiation therapy, caring for children from the Royal Children’s Hospital and Monash Children’s, Southern Health. It is Australia’s only public hospital solely dedicated to cancer treatment, research and education.

In previous years, Peter Mac has held this party on site, but this year children and staff alike were delighted to be invited to party in a fire station!
Meet our new Directors

Six new Executive and Regional Directors have been appointed to lead MFB into an exciting future.

The team started at MFB on 6 December, working offline on new strategies and organisational structure. The team will come online on 1 April 2011 to officially commence their new leadership roles.

Danielle Byrnes
Executive Director
People and Culture

Danielle is a human resources executive with a reputation for delivering significant cultural turnaround. Danielle has over 20 years experience in human resources at organisations including Australian Unity, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Acciona Energy, Western Health and Yallourn Energy. Most recently she was a Senior Consultant at Jo Fisher Executive.

Danielle will work in partnership with our existing HR and training teams to develop our workforce.

Danielle’s skills in fostering constructive organisational development will aid her in developing a human resources strategy to align with MFB’s new organisational goals, while her passion for employee engagement will assist in managing significant organisational change and drive the positive redevelopment of MFB’s culture.

Russell Eddington
Executive Director
Corporate Services

Russell is a highly experienced Chief Finance Officer, with a background of leadership in setting and executing organisational strategies.

Russell’s most recent role has been General Manager Corporate Services at South East Water, prior to this he was the Chief Information Officer for six years.

Russell will lead MFB’s new set of corporate service functions including finance, asset management, information and communication technology and the new Fire Safety Services, which will extend Fire Equipment Services to include refilling and workplace emergency management (WEM).

Russell’s history of driving strong leadership will play a key role in strengthening our internal capabilities and collaboration and enable him to further develop MFB as a robust yet responsive and fiscally focussed organisation.

Paul Stacchino
Regional Director
NW Metro Region

Paul brings 29 years of emergency management experience to MFB and a proven track record of leadership in times of crisis as well as strong performance during times of change.

Paul’s most recent role has been Regional Manager for CFA Barwon Southwest Region and for the past 15 years, he has held middle and senior management roles in CFA and NSW Rural Fire Service.

As Regional Director at MFB, Paul will provide leadership to our firefighting and emergency response service delivery and support development of resilience in communities.

Paul has been appointed the rank of Deputy Chief Officer.

Peter Rau
Executive Director
Strategy and Innovation

Peter has been with MFB since January 2009 and as Director Operations Support has nurtured the Future of Learning and Development project as well as providing support to the Operations and Community Safety directorates.

Prior to this, Peter developed his career at CFA over 26 years, where he was an Operations Manager for eight years and was well regarded for assisting in the development of innovative strategy.

Peter’s new directorate will play an integral role in enabling innovation at all levels across the organisation.

Peter will also be involved in establishing a shared vision of MFB, building the MFB brand, and engaging key stakeholders.

In recognition of Peter’s operation experience and capabilities, he continues to hold the rank of Deputy Chief Officer in this position.

Shane Wright
Executive Director
Emergency Management

Shane has built his career over 29 years at MFB, developing extensive leadership skills and experience over this time.

Shane’s broad experience in emergency management theory and operations places him well to lead MFB’s emergency management team toward greater collaboration and interoperability across the emergency service sector.

He will work closely with the two Regional Directors to ensure the alignment of emergency management strategy with our service delivery.

Shane’s directorate will also support end-to-end service improvements across the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR) continuum.

Shane continues to hold the rank of Deputy Chief Officer.

David Youssef
Regional Director
SE Metro Region

David has made himself well-known in his 25 years at MFB and will bring strong operational experience and robust analytical and strategic skills to his new role.

David has recently advanced MFB’s Marine Response Strategy and has also held the position of acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer in Central Zone.

As Regional Director of South East Metro, David will work closely with the Regional Director NW Metro and Executive Director Emergency Management to oversee regional activities and our core business service delivery of firefighting and emergency response.

David’s enthusiasm, coupled with his extensive organisational knowledge will ensure the region is led with a strong operational focus.

David now holds the rank of Deputy Chief Officer.
Pedal4Prostate riders return

After 600 hours and 15,000 kilometres in a bike saddle, most people would have had enough of cycling.

But for the 12 MFB firefighters in the HostPlus Pedal4Prostate ride around Australia, not only wasn’t it enough, they’re already planning to repeat the feat next year.

The ride raised $70,000 for the EJ Whitten Foundation into prostate cancer, a disease that MFB estimates will touch up to 180 of its staff at some point.

Organiser, Commander Mark O’Connor said despite the incredible distances it was a great way to see the country.

“It was really magnificent. The scenery, the wildlife; what a way to see Australia!” said Mark at the MCG where the riders were welcomed home on 25 November.

“We left in the rain on 30 October and came home to rain again 25 days later, but we’d do it all again; just maybe not straight away.”

MFB CEO and Chief Officer Graham Fountain was at the finish along with family, friends and colleagues of the riders and support crew.

“They had a couple of interesting moments along the way, but if you circum-cycle Australia at 40 kilometres an hour, you have to expect something will happen,” said Mr Fountain.

“Of course, the riders could not have done this without a support team. And there were a host of people directly and indirectly giving their help and time to make the dream a reality.

“We do this kind of thing very well at MFB – we understand team work in our professional lives and we know how to employ that drive and dedication when we take on projects like this.”

For more information or to donate go to: www.pedal4prostate.com

Leading Firefighters Matt Collins and Callum Donoghue receive their commendations. Photo: Andrew Noble.

Tony Murphy received a Chief Officer’s commendation for his service to MFB.

Farewell to Chief Fire Officer Tony Murphy

Chief Fire Officer and Director Operations Tony Murphy left MFB in October to take up a long-term secondment to the office of the Fire Services Commissioner.

Tony’s appointment as Executive Advisor Operations and Interoperability, reflects his extensive executive and operational experience gained in his 30 years at MFB, as well as the major contribution Tony has already made to the Victorian fire and emergency services sector.

And in a surprise ceremony, Tony was presented with a Chief Officer’s commendation for his role in MFB’s response to the Black Saturday bushfires.

Tony’s contribution to the response to Black Saturday, collaboration with other agencies in implementing recommendations of the Royal Commission and giving evidence at the Commission hearings went beyond the normal course of duties.

His leadership, dedication and courage in undertaking these tasks was exemplary.

Although Tony is inclined to credit his teams for successful outcomes, his leadership mobilised, motivated, guided and mentored others to achieve great outcomes for the organisation.

The presentation took place at Thomastown fire station, where Callum and Matt were joined by their colleagues, family and friends in celebrating their heroism.

Leading Firefighters Donoghue and Collins left their shift at Broadmeadows fire station to defend LFF Donoghue’s home in Strathewen, which was under serious threat of fire.

Although they were unable to save the Donoghue house, the pair battled aggressively and persistently to save the neighbouring Tully home, where the Donoghue family, together with a number of neighbours had sought shelter in the extreme conditions.

The leadership and courage demonstrated by Leading Firefighters Donoghue and Collins, combined with their willingness to repeatedly expose themselves to the cyclonic winds, extreme temperatures and associated dangers, to save the lives of others, represents the finest of fire service traditions.

Commendations awarded for Black Saturday bravery

On Saturday 4 December, Leading Firefighters Callum Donoghue and Matt Collins were presented with Chief Officer’s Commendations for their outstanding selflessness, leadership and bravery which saved the lives of 14 people in Strathewen on Black Saturday.

The riders approach the finish line.
Over 100 children on school holidays came out in the sunshine to see their emergency service heroes in action, before getting the opportunity to squirt the fire hose, check out the fire trucks, ambulance and police car and even be breath tested!

Community Safety Month ran throughout October, encompassing a whole host of local events across the state in partnership with local communities, groups, schools, regional services, businesses, state and local government departments and agencies, community safety organisations and emergency service agencies.

The premier event of the month was Docklands Community Safety day, held on Sunday 24 October.

On a beautiful Melbourne day, thousands made the trip out to Docklands to see Victoria’s emergency services and community safety organisations on display.

MFB was a major exhibitor, with SmokeBUSter, High Angle Rescue Team crews, and lots of fire trucks on display.

Highlights of the day included three inter-agency road rescue demonstrations.

Led by MFB, the demonstrations incorporated Victoria Police, MFB, CFA, VICSES and St John Ambulance crews working together to rescue trapped dummies in a simulated crash.
Victorians have been urged to be Fire Ready and prepare for the summer fire season.

The week was launched at Warrandyte State Park on 10 October by then Premier John Brumby, Emergency Services Minister Bob Cameron, and Environment Minister Gavin Jennings, joined by fire agencies and the Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley.

As part of Fire Action Week, MFB and Whitehorse City Council partnered to hold a community Reserve Clean-Up and Bushfire Information Session at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary on 13 October.

While rain prevented the clean-up happening on the day, a lively information session was held for local residents and Grade 5 students from Blackburn Lake Primary School, who were able to ask questions from the available expert personnel about the actions they can be taking now to prepare for the threat of fires this summer.

MFB’s Acting Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Darren Davies, Commanders Mark Milaszewicz, Rob Dean and Frank Stockton and the crew from Nunawading B platoon attended, with Mark and Frank leading the discussion.

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary is one of the area’s most significant environmental assets and is regarded as one of the most important bird refuges in metropolitan Melbourne.

However with many homes adjacent to the bush and parkland, it is also a serious fire risk.

Commander Milaszewicz said it was terrific to see so many interested residents and children from the neighbouring school.

“The session was a great opportunity to speak one on one with Blackburn Lake residents and give them advice on what to expect in a bushfire and how to prepare their homes and properties,” said Commander Milaszewicz.

MFB reps together with firefighters from Bayswater CFA (left) and new Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley (centre).

Crews from Ringwood and Vermont South B platoon visited the old Knox Cinema Complex in October, but on this occasion it wasn’t to see the latest blockbuster.

MFB crews joined CFA Boronia, Dandenong and Bayswater Stations, Knox Police and Knox City Council for an Incident Management and Breathing Apparatus (BA) exercise at the complex.

Crews turned out to the currently disused cinema in a real time scenario, which involved the cinemas being filled with smoke and various casualties who were unaccounted for. Crews quickly established an inter-agency incident management team and implemented breathing apparatus search procedures, integrating communications from both fire services.

Knox Police were on hand to coordinate their resources and implement emergency management procedures.

MFB and CFA crews identified the seat of the fire and located and removed casualties, placing them in a triage area managed by MFB crews with Emergency Medical Response (EMR) equipment.

Officers and crews from both services were able to coordinate search tactics using both MFB and CFA radios while maintaining structured command areas.

The debrief was later held at CFA Boronia Fire Station where there was a chance to discuss the drill and get to know each other better over a BBQ lunch.

Students from Blackburn Lake Primary School.

A staging area was established for the appliances to assemble.

The incident management team.

BA stage 2 in operation.
**Summer** preparedness ‘drilled’ in

An inter-agency exercise held on 5 December proved a timely refresher for the summer fire season.

The exercise was lead by CFA, involving CFA strike teams and Incident Control Centre staff as well as VicPol cars and staff, DSE and Parks Vic Slip-ons, tankers and staff, VICSES crews and ICC staff, firefighting, emergency and media aircraft, Channel 9 news crews and Salvation Army to provide catering. Over 500 personnel across all agencies are expected to participate on the day.

MFB committed two strike teams from Southern Zone and Northern Zone, as well as the New Control Unit (with the new Cyber Quad) and ICC staff.

The exercise scenario focused on the areas around Plenty Gorge, Warrandyte, North Warrandyte and Christmas Hills on a day of very high fire danger, with a total fire ban in place, which enabled a test-run in activating the Emergency Alert system to advise residents of the exercise in their area.

An observer program also provided an opportunity for agency representatives to witness specific events, such as water drops from aircraft.

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Win for SUDI DVD

MFB’s SUDI (Sudden unexpected death of an infant) DVD won the award for the Best Communication of a Safety Message at the National Safety Awards of Excellence, held by the National Safety Council of Australia and GIO in October.

The SUDI DVD produced by MFB’s Media Production Services in 2009, revealed to viewers some of the underpinning thinking and strategies emergency services personnel can use to better manage these traumatic incidents.

The National Safety Awards of Excellence is designed to identify innovative safety solutions, the implementation of best practice OHS management systems or the communication of a safety message that demonstrates a commitment to workplace health and safety.

Leading Firefighter Jarrad Jeffs on a national podium

There’s a lot involved in driving an MFB fire truck and one firefighter who knows that better than most is Leading Firefighter Jarrad Jeffs.

Jarrad joined the elite of young truck drivers to win third spot in the Scania Young Australian Truck Driver of the Year competition.

The Scania Young Australian Truck Driver 2010 competition aims to increase road safety, boost driver confidence and skills as well as improve the perception of professionalism of truck drivers in the wider community.

Jarrad demonstrated exceptional driving skills, a positive attitude, road safety awareness, stamina and professional pride. Only drivers with these qualities made it through to the finals on Saturday 20 November 2010.

Jarrad, who says he always wanted to drive the most powerful, best looking vehicles, has been with MFB since 2003 and is a drive instructor, driver assessor and a fire appliance driver.

CyberQuad flies in

Innovative new technology for the fire ground will soon give our incident controllers a bird’s eye view of the emergency, with the ability to fly over the fire and provide video footage and images back to the Incident Controller.

The CyberQuad is part of the equipment deployed to incidents with the new Control Unit 91, and will be operational in the new year.
Fire Station anniversaries

Box Hill and Spotswood Fire Stations recently celebrated 75 and 50 years of service to their local communities.

On Monday 8 November 2010, firefighters both serving and retired, community, Council and emergency services representatives gathered to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Box Hill Fire Station at 1052 Maroondah Highway.

FS20 A Platoon, headed by SSO Ken Campbell and ably assisted by LFF Russell (Rusty) Murphy, LFF Phil (Filly) Kelly; and LFF Nick (the stirrer) Petersen were excellent hosts for the morning.

Guests from the local Council, Box Hill Historical Society and the UFU were welcomed, with speakers including Acting Southern Zone Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Mark Swiney who was born in Box Hill and spoke of his fond childhood memories of the station, and City of Whitehorse Mayor, Councillor Bill Pemberton.

On Thursday 2 December, around 60 people gathered at Spotswood Fire Station (FS45) to celebrate 50 years of firefighting and community service in Spotswood and neighbouring areas.

Commander Guy McCrorie from Western Zone commenced proceedings, for an audience comprising of Spotswood Fire Station’s very own Station Officer Noel Flakemore and his crew; Peter Marshall from the United Firefighters Union (UFU); representatives from both the Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay City Councils; Victoria Police; SES; other current firefighters of all ranks; retired firefighters; neighbours and friends.

Retiree Barry Wells, who still lives locally, spoke of his early days when his father worked at Spotswood and shared how the station was like a ‘second home’. The No 3. Fargo Pump, an open vehicle, on loan from the Fire Services Museum for the day, was gallantly driven by Retired Special Services Senior Officer David Russell in the pouring rain. David was resplendent in his brass helmet and tunic from the 1960’s.

Congratulations to both stations on achieving these milestones.

Pool safety a focus for summer

This summer, MFB firefighters will work with KidSafe Victoria to promote summer pool safety.

The number of drowning emergencies MFB attends to provide Emergency Medical Response (EMR) grows dramatically over summer, with many of them involving young children and backyard pools.

Just recently Nunawading firefighters gave CPR to a six year-old who was unconscious and not breathing after being pulled from a backyard pool in Doncaster. Ambulance Victoria arrived and the child was taken to hospital in a serious condition.

“All MFB firefighters have been EMR trained for ten years now but of course, we hope we don’t have to put it to use, especially in the case of a young child,” said Commander Andrew O’Connell.

“The quick actions of bystanders in situations like this one at Doncaster might be the difference between life and death. I’d urge more people to learn CPR techniques; any help is better than none.”

Commander O’Connell said MFB and KidSafe would be campaigning for pool safety throughout summer.

“Backyard pool drownings are one of the top ten dangers facing children. Proper fencing, maintenance and supervision are the keys to ensuring pool safety,” said Mark Stokes, President KidSafe Victoria.

For more pool safety information go to: www.homepoolsafety.com.au
Tour of Duty welcomed home

The Tour of Duty runners were recently welcomed home after successfully completing their epic journey.

The team ran 4,600 miles (7,500 km) across the United States from Santa Monica Pier in Los Angeles to New York City in remembrance of the firefighters and emergency service workers who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001.

Running across the States wasn’t easy-going, with extreme weather conditions, physical endurance and emotional experiences all taking their toll.

Meanwhile, the journey was followed by thousands of people across the world – at last count there were over 6000 fans just on Facebook, let alone the many more who have followed the website, blog, Twitter and extensive media coverage both in the US and here in Australia.

Fire safety initiatives recognised

The annual Fire Awareness Awards, jointly hosted by DSE, MFB and CFA in partnership with RACV and ABC Local Radio were held on 27 October at the RACV Club in Melbourne.

This year there were 16 award categories to apply for. A staggering 86 projects were nominated for awards, making competition fierce.

MFB was a joint winner together with Office of Housing, Swinburne University and CFA of one of the Government and Municipal Awards (there were three awarded), for the ‘Peer training program – fire safety’.

For a full list of winners, please visit www.fireawarenessawards.com.au.

Congratulations to all finalists and winners!

Climbing for a cause

The annual Eureka Tower stair climb in Southbank is no small feat in itself, but climbing it with full turnout gear and breathing apparatus is quite another challenge!

On 14 November, three crew from Deer Park B Platoon set off to attempt this feat, with Station Officer Adrian Talbot climbing ahead (in turn out gear but minus the breathing apparatus) as safety officer. Arriving 38 minutes behind the fastest time and 2.5 hours faster than the slowest time, the team crossed the finish line still in full turnout gear (although they did ditch the breathing apparatus on the way).

A great achievement and team building exercise for Deer Park B Platoon, who have been doing a 30 minute fitness circuit in the gym together for the last 18 months.

Congratulations to all nine MFB teams, who were part of the 1295 participants on the day. The climb raised over $175,000 for disadvantaged young people at home and abroad through Whitelion and Interplast Australia and New Zealand.

South Melbourne B Platoon were also the winners of the Emergency Services Challenge, taking out the top five places in the challenge, which was contested by teams from the MFB, Aviation Fire Rescue, NZ Rural Fire Service, Ambulance Victoria and Victoria Police.

Firefighter Scott McGraw also recorded the fourth fastest time of the day in 09:18 minutes.

Preparation for the emergency service challenge.
MFB competes in NSWFB state championships

For the first time, MFB fielded a team in the 2010 NSW Fire Brigade Championships at Banora Point, Tweed Heads.

A torchlight parade and fireworks, welcomed over 40 teams on the 24-28 October from across NSW with visitors from as far as New Zealand, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and CFA Echuca and Lakes Entrance Brigades.

The following day, friendly yet fierce competition ensued, across 15 events designed to test and showcase contemporary firefighting skills.

MFB’s presence enhanced our operational networks among other national and New Zealand fire services, and provided a great opportunity to see their equipment, technology and share ideas.

MFB achieved two minor placings, coming fourth in both the Discipline Event and the Urban Pump and BA Event. The team also achieved the highest aggregate points of all the visiting teams and was awarded the Invitation Brigades Station Trophy, and prize money of $510 (which was donated to the Prostate cause).

Experience gained at this competition will assist MFB greatly in preparation for the Australasian Firefighting Championships, to be held in Port Macquarie next year.

MFB Firefighters assist injured in Cambodia crush

Sadly, MFB firefighters are often witnesses to tragedy. But two who travelled overseas recently as part of a volunteer training program could never have imagined the scale of drama they would participate in.

Station Officer Tim Erikson, stationed at Carlton and Leading Firefighter Ryan Miller, stationed at Windsor, used their Emergency Medical Response (EMR) training to provide urgent assistance during the tragic crowd stampede in Cambodia that killed 349 people and injured many more in late November.

The pair were in the country volunteering with Australian Firefighter’s International Relief and Education (AFIRE www.afire.org.au) working with CFA’s Station Officer Paul Hurford.

Emergency medical assistance, even ambulance assistance, is not part of the local response. So Cambodian Government officials, realising the magnitude of the disaster, contacted AFIRE and asked for help.

Ryan, Tim and Paul set up a triage area and helped with first aid, CPR and used an MFB-donated defibrillator in an attempt to assist.

Ryan spoke to his father Commander Dave Miller at Southern Zone over the phone and gave a graphic description of how the tragedy unfolded.

Well done to Tim, Ryan, Paul and to the AFIRE team for putting their Emergency Medical Response training into practice to help the Cambodian community in a time of such extreme disaster.

Blast from the past

Historically, December seems to be the month for recruit graduations. We hope you enjoy this historical anecdote about Recruit Course 40’s graduation in 1981.

Passing Out Parade No. 40:

On Thursday 10 December 1981 twenty-four recruits received their Public Service Certificates at Passing Out Parade No. 40. Paul Scadding being “out” of the Court.

The function was well attended, and the weather very fine and sunny.

3rd Zone President, E.V. Johnson, Chief Fire Officer M. L. E. Lawless and Divisional Superintendent J.H. Filsom inspected the recruits.

District Officer J.B. Smith provided the opportunity for the fire-fighting exercises.

The Victoria Police Highland Pipe Band were in attendance and led the recruits on the march past.

To the delight of hundreds of school children and motorists the Recruits went through a series of firefighting exercises conducted by recruit crew members.

A display was provided by the Melbourne Fire Brigade.

The recruits from Passing Out Parade No. 40 were:

R.G. Clithy, P.J. Link
A.H. Name, R.I. Boling
C.L. Grilling, J.P. Barry
J.F. Carpenter, D.F. Ryan
R.A. Milmer, P.R. Sinkey
R.G. Matthews, P.G. Seppings

Chief Fire Officer, M. L. E. Lawless, and Divisional Superintendent, J.B. Johnson congratulating recruit Peter R. Seppings.

Men and equipment at work during the firefighting exercises.

Out of the Court, Paul Scadding with his wife, Judi.
Hazmat incident in Campbellfield

A council worker sent to pick up five 200 litre drums dumped by the side of the road on Connection Drive, was affected by fumes from one of the leaking containers on 30 November.

The worker became dizzy and suffered severe irritation to his eyes and throat from the fumes.

MFB crews wearing breathing apparatus and protective clothing took samples of the yellowish liquid which was analysed by MFB’s scientific officer. Approximately 20 litres of the substance spilled into the drainage system prior to the arrival of MFB crews and representatives from the EPA and Melbourne Water were called in to assist with limiting the potential damage to the environment.

Coolaroo warehouse fire

Two warehouses full of thousands of tonnes of recycled paper burned ferociously just before midnight on 5 November in Coolaroo.

The huge fuel load and deep seat of the fire meant the blaze took just over two hours to bring under control.

Over 80 firefighters from Northern Zone C platoon fought the blaze, with 19 appliances, two aerial units, one CFA tanker, the new Control Unit, Breathing Apparatus Bus and Decontamination Unit were all called to the scene.

Firefighters were able to prevent the fire from spreading into a third shed also containing recycled paper.

Breathing apparatuses were used extensively due to the amount of smoke given off by the burning paper.

The MFB Scientific Officer and EPA also attended to take atmospheric readings and monitor the situation.
Friday 15 October 2010 marked the 40th anniversary of the tragic Westgate Bridge collapse, where 35 workers lost their lives.

To commemorate their loss, the crews of P1A and P45A along with six of the MFB’s finest retired firefighters gathered alongside the memorial plaque at exactly 11:50am, laying two wreaths on behalf of the MFB and the United Firefighters Union.

It was decided the honour of laying these wreaths should be given to the three retired MFB officers (SO Harry Purcell, SFF Bill Grant, and FF Trevor King) who were first responders as part of the rescue effort 40 years ago.

Despite bad weather, the solemn occasion was one MFB firefighters (both past and present) could also take pride in knowing that their efforts made a difference on the day.

Special thanks to the Fire Services Museum who supplied a C Series International appliance and driver to transport our six honoured colleagues to the Memorial.