



MEDIA RELEASE

Victorian communities the true winners at Fire Awareness Awards

The recipients of the 2009 Fire Awareness Awards were announced at a ceremony held at the RACV Club in Melbourne this evening.

A \$10,000 funding boost from the RACV Insurance Fire Safety Grant was awarded to Maffra Secondary College for the project *Teenagers in Emergencies* to further build on the excellent work of Year 9 students Amy Foster, Jessica Bedgood, Tim Liddell and Sam Montague.

The major accolade of the night, the RACV Insurance Award for Excellence, was awarded to the MFB for the *Community Services Training Packages Project*, which led the introduction of a national project to embed basic home fire safety into the national qualifications for community sector workers.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Honourable Bob Cameron, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Innovation the Honourable Gavin Jennings and MFB CEO Ken Latta were among the presenters at the awards, which also recognised the valuable contributions of Fairfax Community Newspapers, ACE Radio 3WM, VicDeaf, Parks Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), and CFA.

The Fire Awareness Awards were developed to publicly recognise the success of fire safety initiatives by individuals, fire agencies, groups and organisations, and are a joint initiative of MFB, CFA and DSE, proudly supported by RACV Insurance.

MFB Commander Frank Stockton said the awards were an opportunity for Victoria's fire authorities to acknowledge and reward the community for their fire prevention and safety efforts.

"Each year, we are amazed by the efforts of individuals and groups who get on the front foot to help their communities prepare for and respond to the threat of fire," Commander Stockton said.

"Although it's great to be able to salute the terrific efforts of the award recipients, we see the true winners as communities that benefit from each and every one of the projects submitted."

RACV Insurance General Manager Paul Northey said RACV Insurance was proud to be involved with the Fire Awareness Awards, and congratulated all the recipients.

"Our goal in supporting the awards is to build awareness that helps reduce the risk of fire in the wider community.

"Our Fire Safety Grant provides funding to help support a great idea. This year, the grant will enable Maffra Secondary College to distribute the *Teenagers in Emergencies* booklet more broadly to teens across the Gippsland region as well as enable Year 7 and 8 students at the school to participate in a practical exercises day."

A new award category to commence next year was also announced at the ceremony.

The inaugural Community Preparedness Award will recognise and highlight positive actions taken by a community group or individual within Victorian towns or municipalities to improve their bushfire preparedness.

***Please see following pages for the full list of Fire Awareness Award winners.**

For further media enquiries please contact:

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MEDIA RELEASE

Fire Awareness Award Recipients 2009

Community Award

Awarded to a not-for-profit, non-fire organisation, community care organisation or community group that has developed and successfully implemented an initiative to reduce the number or impact of fires.

Recipient: *'Bellows' – Bullengarook Community Newspaper – Margaret Boyd*

A local project that helped to increase the fire safety of its community by including fire safety messaging in the Bullengarook Community Newspaper, targeting the specific needs of the local rural community.

Education Award

Awarded to a primary, secondary, TAFE or tertiary educational facility that has developed and successfully implemented an initiative to educate students and the wider community about fire safety or fire prevention.

Recipient: *Teenagers in Emergencies – Amy Foster, Jessica Bedggood, Tim Liddell and Sam Montague, Maffra Secondary College*

These community-minded Year 9 students responded to the information needs of local teenagers in order to prepare for and respond to emergencies, including bushfires, in their community, creating the *Teenagers in Emergencies* booklet that was distributed to teens in their local area.

Fire Services Award

Awarded to a fire service, brigade, station or district depot, including an agency department, that has developed and implemented an initiative via fire safety measures and community education to reduce the number or impact of fires.

Recipient: *Wilsons Promontory Fire Community Engagement – Parks Victoria, DSE*

This intensive pro-active community engagement program educated local communities and park visitors about the planned burning program at Wilsons Promontory and also encouraged increased community participation in fire management planning at the park.

Highly Commended: *'Now Hear This' Enhanced Fire Safety for Deaf Children – MFB, VicDeaf*

The 'Now Hear This' program caters to the specific needs of children with hearing impairments by incorporating visual materials and hands-on displays to help them learn about basic fire safety during education sessions provided by the MFB.

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MEDIA RELEASE

Fire Awareness Award Recipients 2009 (continued)

Media Award

This awards recognises a media agency or an individual journalist who has increased awareness of fire safety and prevention in the community through responsible reporting.

Recipient: *Wimmera Summer Fire Awareness Media Campaign – ACE Radio 3WM, CFA, DSE*

This media campaign over the 2008-09 summer fire season incorporated a suite of pre-recorded fire awareness messages for locals, workers, tourists and travellers in the Wimmera region, as well as live interviews with fire agency staff to inform and educate listeners across the Wimmera about fire safety.

RACV Insurance Award for Excellence

This award recognises an individual or group which has developed an initiative that has had a major measurable impact in educating the community about fire safety or fire prevention.

Recipient: *Community Services Training Packages Project – MFB*

In this project, MFB led the introduction of a national project to embed basic home fire safety into the national qualifications for community sector workers, with fire safety now a component of the curriculum for the training of community sector workers nationwide.

RACV Insurance Fire Safety Grant

The \$10,000 grant is to assist a community group, school, not-for-profit organisation, volunteer or individual, to develop and undertake a new fire safety initiative, or to further develop an existing fire safety initiative that will reduce the number or impact of fires in Victoria.

Recipient: *Teenagers in Emergencies – Maffra Secondary College*

The \$10,000 grant money will enable Maffra Secondary College to distribute the *Teenagers in Emergencies* booklet more broadly to teens across the Gippsland region as well as enable Year 7 and 8 students at the school to participate in a practical exercises day, where they will learn basic fire and flood safety skills.

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