

summer news

from the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade

March 2015

Bushfire training in the
Bend of Islands
photo Robyn Adams



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Change Your Clock Change Your Smoke Alarm Battery

Daylight saving ends on Sunday 5th April 2015, so when you change your clock, change the battery in your smoke alarm.

House fires occur more frequently during winter, so make sure you go into winter with a working smoke alarm. If your alarm is hard-wired it still has a battery back-up and this battery also needs to be changed.



Let us know if you need help. Read more at:

<http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/smoke-alarms/>

only working smoke alarms save lives



Christmas Hills Fire Brigade

(since 1941)

Café Benders Join us for coffee and cake at *Café Benders*, held every 3rd Saturday of the month, starting about 10.30am, south Station, 6 Catani Blvd., Bend of Islands.

Chills Lounge BYO drinks, a salad to share, and BBQ meats for sale (or BYO). Starts 5.30pm every 1st Friday of the month at the north Station 720 Ridge Road, Christmas Hills. *Chills* usually runs till about 8.30pm, so please bring the kids and drop by, even for a short while!



Chills Lounge Turns Six

One thousand and eighty six gourmet sausages later, *Chills Lounge* is still going and has just turned six! Over the time, *Chills* has raised thousands of dollars for Brigade equipment.

The monthly BBQ held at the Brigade's main station in Ridge Road started on the first Friday in March 2009, just as the last of the Black Saturday fires were being extinguished. Residents and Brigade members were all in "bushfire shock" and the Brigade wanted a local event where the community could get together, where they didn't have to explain again what had happened, but where they could talk about their experiences if they wanted too.

Six years later, *Chills Lounge* is still happening each month, and we're still talking, lured by gourmet snags, chicken satays, veggie delights and Carol's special salad!

AND it's on again - April 3rd (Good Friday)



Chills 2010



Chills 2011



Chills 2014

High-Tech Tools take 2

You will already be familiar with the use of drones (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) by the military, but the use of drones for other tasks is rapidly increasing. Now they are being used as an aid for fighting bushfires.

News reports in late 2014 drew attention to the use of “unauthorized” drones taking aerial images of bushfires, and putting fire-fighting aircraft at risk of collision. Australian fire fighting agencies warned that aircraft would be grounded if rogue drones were spotted in the airspace being used by helitack and aerial water bombers.



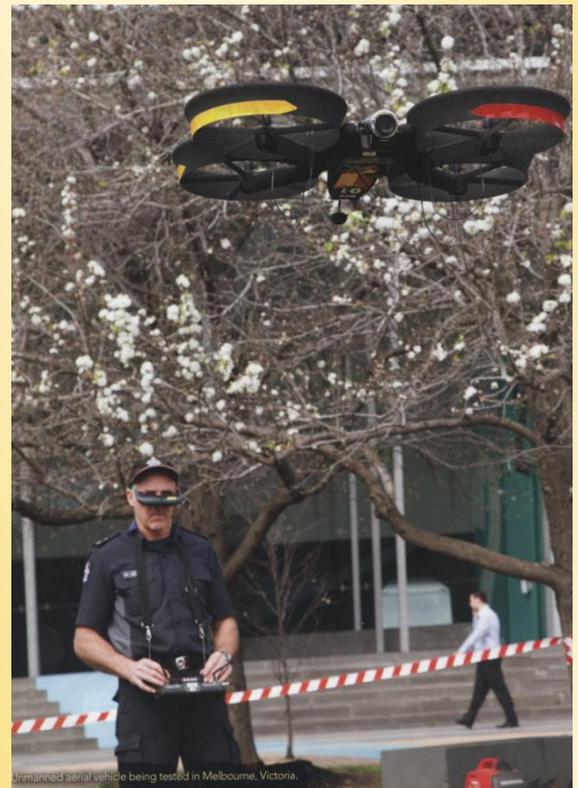
USA Army member prepares a Shadow UAV for takeoff

However drone use has an upside for firefighting, with the development in the USA of UAV's to help firefighters locate hot-spots, determine the perimeter of fires, and to aid in directing resources to the parts of a fire where they are most needed. The drones are flown in a grid pattern over the fire, and use infra-red cameras which detect heat, to locate the active fire through thick smoke or at night. Night use avoids the problem of drones and firefighting aircraft being over the fire at the same time. You might like to read more at:

<http://wildfiremagazine.org/article/field-report-a-pilot-use-of-unmanned-aircraft-systems-uas-for-2014-wildfires/>

Drones Closer to Home

The Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade owns two quad rotor drones, which they have been trialing over the last 12 months. These UAV's are piloted by remote control and carry a camera into the air above an incident. They can transmit real time images to the incident controller via a portable monitor as well as onto the screens in the MFB Control Unit.



Unmanned aerial vehicle being tested in Melbourne, Victoria.

MFB testing drones for firefighting applications

<http://www.mfb.vic.gov.au/News/Aerial-fire-fighting-tool-takes-off.html>

If successful, the rapidly deployed, highly maneuverable UAV's would improve MFB firefighters' ability to quickly gather a more complete overview of an emergency by providing real-time imagery to the incident management team.

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Brigade Elections in April

Elections for the Brigade Management Team are due every two years and are scheduled for the April meeting. Positions are for Captain, 5 Lieutenants, a Training Officer, a Community Safety Officer, a Health & Safety Officer, and a Secretary.

There will be a few changes, as Di Simmons is not standing for re-election as Captain, and there are some changes in nominations for Lieutenants. The new BMT will take over operations in July 2015.

Recent Brigade Activity

The Brigade is happy to report that we haven't had an incident in our area since January. However, we've still been busy doing all the usual maintenance, training and the organization for the Strike Teams which we are still rostered on until the end of April.

Fire Restrictions

The fire restrictions for Nillumbik Shire and the Shire of Yarra Ranges will be lifted on Monday 23th March 2015. Could you please log any burn-offs with VicFire on 1800 668 511. Please be careful with your burn-offs as the bush is still very dry.

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Summer News

Summer News is the Brigade's email newsletter. If you would like to receive the newsletters regularly, and occasional email information, send your email address to:

robyn.adams@members.cfa.vic.gov.au

Captain: Dianne Simmons

0417 386 279

Secretary: Deirdre Lucas

0412 999 224

find us on facebook

In addition to the Brigade's email newsletter *summer news*, and our website, we are also now on facebook.



<https://www.facebook.com/ChristmasHillsFireBrigade>

If facebook is your social medium of choice, then find us on facebook and like our page. We aim to just keep you in touch with Brigade activity, but the page isn't monitored 24/7. For warnings and advice you still need to visit the CFA website or their facebook page.