



Maiden Gully Fire Brigade

Annual Report 2019/20



Protecting Lives and Property

Our Objectives for 2019/20

We support the CFA's mission to protect lives and property through working together with communities to keep Victorians safe from fire and other emergencies through:

An efficient Operational Capability:

- Meeting CFA service delivery standards with the appropriate mix of trained personnel and vehicles being responded to incidents.
- Reviewing and testing our operational pre-plans.
- Having firefighting equipment that is regularly maintained, tested and updated as required.
- Working cooperatively with CFA District, other Brigades and agencies to protect the community.

A self-reliant, resilient community

- Being an active member in our Community and fostering key community partnerships.
- Promoting CFA and Brigade messages through local newsletters and social media.
- Holding a range of community education activities including an annual open day.
- Reviewing our Risk Treatment Plan annually.

A strong membership

(a) General

- Having a membership that is representative of our community.
- Supporting the wellbeing of all members through a range of social and other activities.
- Providing opportunities for all members to achieve and maintain appropriate skill levels that will enable them to maximise their potential.
- Encouraging a greater involvement of Support Members in Brigade activities.
- Establishing a Junior Brigade with participation in District Rural Championships over 2019/20.

(b) Operational

- Participating in CFA training courses that match our risk profile to achieve the target numbers in tabled opposite.
- Maintaining and enhancing firefighting skills through our annual Training Program guided by our Risk Assessment Plan.
- Achieving a Brigade average of 60% attendance at all training sessions.

Qualification	Target
Low Structure & Hazmat ID	30
Breathing Apparatus	25
Respond to Urban Fire	20
Crew Leader	10
Medium Rigid Licence	20

An effective Administration

- Reviewing our Brigade structure and Constitution so it meets our current and future needs.
- Meeting all CFA requirements for administration and financial activities.
- Strategic fundraising to support the current operation of the Brigade and its future development that is enhanced by our community partnerships with Maiden Gully IGA and UFS Pharmacy.
- Providing quality Fire Equipment Maintenance to clients in Maiden Gully and surrounding areas.
- Reducing our impact on the environment by minimising energy and resource use.

Key Projects

- Applying for funding to replace our Field Command Vehicle (VESEP funding).
- Installing emergency lighting in the fire station
- Fitting a single lift panel door to replace the current two rear doors that service the tankers.

Introduction

Welcome to the 22nd Annual Report for Maiden Gully Fire Brigade covering the 2019/20 period. In this report, we highlight many of the achievements of the past 12 months measured against the Objectives that we have set. Some of the significant events that the Brigade has seen this year include:

- A record number of callouts (74)
- Catastrophic bushfires across much of Australia
- The Covid-19 Virus shutdown and its effect on training and meetings
- Progress of Fire Service Reform and transitional issues
- Successful completion of the Station safety lighting and rear door projects
- Successful roll out of new BA sets and ancillary equipment

The Brigade has met all challenges and has recorded another outstanding year.

An efficient operational capability

Operations

Maiden Gully has seen a 12% increase in total calls to a record 74 turnouts. However, our primary calls have remained at a similar level to recent years. The

<i>Call Type</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>
Structure	2	1
Non structure	4	6
Grass & Scrub Fires	5	4
Motor Vehicle Crashes	1	8
Other Incidents	5	4
False Alarms/ Investigations	7	1
Total Primary Calls	24	24
Total Support Calls	42	50
Total Calls	66	74

table opposite shows an analysis of our turnouts. Considering the potential, it is pleasing to see that locally our Grass & Scrub fires have slightly decreased. This and the sharp reduction in False Alarms may be a reflection on community education. Unfortunately, we have seen a very large increase in Motor Vehicles Crashes with some fatalities. All Code One calls met the CFA standard of a fire truck on

scene within eight minutes. Maiden Gully has sent crews interstate and across Victoria to help with the devastating bushfires that started in the spring and continued into the New Year. Local support calls have increased especially into Bendigo Response Area. We committed two appliances over two shifts to major fires at Bob St, White Hills and Millwood Rd, Huntly. Crew numbers have generally been excellent and strike team positions were easily filled.

Operational Pre-plans

The Brigade has plans that address our major static risks. All these plans have been reviewed over the past 12 months with test exercises conducted at Avondel Caravan Park, Car Club Hall, Jenny's ELC and the Primary School. From these and visits during FEM work the plans have been updated by Lt Adam Brough using an improved format.

Appliances

Our fleet has remained the same over the year, with the Brigade operating CFA owned Light Pumper, a Medium 2.4C Tanker and the Brigade owned Light Tanker and Field Command Vehicle, All vehicles have seen a lot of action in the last 12

months. The District Mechanical Workshop in Kangaroo Flat has been very helpful with the upkeep and servicing of the vehicles and other little improvements we have ask them to do. The brigade applied for VESEP funding to upgrade the ageing FCV but was unsuccessful this round. We have also initiated talks with the District about upgrading the Light Pumper to a Medium Pumper.

Firefighting Equipment

As part of the statewide program to replace breathing apparatus sets, District 2 changed over in November. We received the MSA Classic sets that have a few more features including a lighter 300bar cylinder and buddy airline than the old Sabre Centurion units. With the new sets, the Brigade purchased four additional Masks and Mask Drying Cabinet to help with training and faster changeover after jobs. Our two spare cylinders returned giving us ten cylinders once more. A car entry tool (Big Easy) was purchased to help unlocking vehicles without causing too much damage. A training night with the Marong SES helped us with the finer skills in using this tool. A root soaker was purchased for Tanker 1 to complement the root spear on Tanker 2. These units are most useful in mopping up and were put to good use during summer. All equipment including hoses has been regularly tested with District replacing the very few failed hose lengths.



Communications

Over the past 12 months, greater use of the BART system has been made and it was particularly useful with organising strike team crewing. The Brigade added a further five users to our annual contract. We look forward to CFA's Supplementary Alerting System due to be introduced in 2020 that will provide similar features to BART but at no cost. With membership changes, there has been considerable reallocation of pagers. Regular testing of both the pagers and the spectrum hub was undertaken by the Fortuna Group to maintain operational readiness.

A self-reliant, resilient community

Active in the Community

We began the year with our usual Easter activities. The Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal tin rattle was highly successful raising \$4,561.10 with teams at IGA and Don/High Street lights. We are now collecting throughout the year with tins at several Maiden Gully premises. Members also enjoyed participating in the Easter Saturday Torchlight Parade. In May, we helped out our friends at the Stupa with the spectacular fireworks at the Illumin8 Festival over two nights (see front cover of this report). For the first time, the Brigade was involved in the Firefighters Stair Climb with



Adam, Nick and John attacking the Crown Metropol Hotel tower raising money for mental health. Adam later went on to the Eureka Tower and finished with a creditable time. Maiden Gully provided a truck for a number of community groups to transport Santa and the big one covering all of Maiden Gully on Christmas Eve. As usual, we had a strong presence at the annual Australia Day Breakfast. The brigade continues to be active

members of the Maiden Gully Progress Association and our Station continues to be used by a range of community groups including the monthly Maiden Gully Neighbourhood Watch meetings.

Getting the message out



Excellent news is that our new website format was launched in late March (www.maidengullycfa.org.au) as a result of many hours of work by our Webmaster, Matt Howlett. It features a completely new look (front end) that will better present information and is easier to use. Behind it is a whole new package making it more usable on a variety of devices (see phone view opposite) and is easier to update. Use of our old website was largely consistent with last year with 718 users and 897 sessions. There were several spike days in December-January and one in April 2019. Many users used our site to link to CFA and other services. The "Contact Us" portal has again proven to be very valuable providing the first contact for community groups, donors and prospective new members. Our summer and winter newsletters are published on the website. We expect to see the new site creating greater interest over the next 12 months. Our Facebook page administered by our Community Safety

Coordinator, Holly Franchina, has continued to be a great success. As well as delivering timely community safety messages, it promotes Brigade activity in the community with the details of our Santa run being well received. A new addition has been a Brigade only Facebook page to provide information to families at times of high brigade activity. Good use has also been made of traditional media. We have regular articles published in the local Neighbourhood Watch and Primary School

newsletters along with the E-newsletters of Marist College and Jenny’s ELC. The “Bendigo Advertiser”, KLFM, “Flatmatters” and ABC Radio have been used successfully particularly for our CFA Sunday when ABC’s Sian Gard visited and recorded several interviews that were played for their listeners over the next two days and uploaded photos onto their Facebook page.

Community Education Activities

The last 12 months provided many interesting and rewarding activities. We began with Bunnings Easter Family Night in April and also used our Bunnings sausage sizzle the same month to distribute fire safety messages as we did at our September sausage sizzle. Our involvement with Bunnings Epsom continued with further Family Nights for Fathers Day & Christmas. We provided a truck, crew and often Captain Koala. This year, the brigade changed the IGA wood raffle format to only having two raffles held over one weekend (Friday night and Saturday morning) in conjunction with a



winter fire campaign display and BBQ and was followed with the summer fire campaign display in October. We hosted a very well attended Fire Safety night for family members at the station to learn about and operate fire extinguishers and blankets. In November, the Station was opened up to the public for CFA Sunday. Around 300 people came through the station, Some of the displays included Golden Square LPG support and Rehab truck, CFA Community Education Group with Rosie the helicopter, Marong SES and a number of other community groups. We appreciate

the great support provided by the local Lions Club with running the barbecue. In the New Year, we provided a truck to a number of Bushfire Fundraisers including Harley Central and Haymes Paints. Our IGA display in March had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 restrictions and these will



also affect many planned events into the rest of 2020.

Risk Management

Maiden Gully remains one of the three major residential growth areas in the City of Greater Bendigo with a current population of 5,870. The area’s rapid rate of growth into the future is illustrated in the table below taken from the City of Greater Bendigo’s website:

Year	2020	2026	2031
Population	5,870	7,399	9,350
Dwellings	1,929	2,434	3,076

Maiden Gully has grown noticeably in the last 12 months. All 71 lots in the Armitage Estate have been sold and are being built on. Westbury Estate has 129 lots with very few blocks left with the final 6th stage (25 lots) being released soon. It contains the Maiden Gully Early Years Hub (Shinebright Kindergarten and Medical Centre) that is opening in the next 12 months. Maiden Gully Primary School continues to maintain a

student population of around 570 students and Marist College is growing with Prep-12 currently with 1030 students and 136 staff. With the missing 4th grade being added next year, the school will expand to 1200 students. The final stage of the multi-storey senior block was completed in January but further work is planned. The Great Stupa of Human Compassion has now reached its full height of 48 metres. Along with its grounds, it has become a major tourist attraction and hosts several festivals annually. These changes and those identified during visits have been reflected in our annual review of the Risk Management Plan.

A strong membership

Membership

At the end of March, membership numbers (last year in brackets) were:

Operational	
• Active	28 (31)
• Probationary	4 (2)
Juniors	0 (0)
Support Members	16 (19)
Total Membership	<u>48 (50)</u>

There has been considerable change in our actual membership over the past year although this does not reflect in the overall numbers, which show a slight decrease. The BMT usually monitors the operational membership fairly closely but this year, a major review took place of non-attending Support members creating some changes. Operationally, we have welcomed back Sam Falkingham and Craig Waters both who are qualified firefighters and gained Brandt Gladman and Lexie Palmer on transfer. Sofia Leat-Hagart is now also operational. David Mustey, Brian Perry and Robert Bruce have transferred to Support. The Brigade is in a very strong position with our operational strength with overwhelming interest in the community in joining. Unfortunately, we have had to start a waiting list. The Brigade wishes to acknowledge the work of Lyn Pearce who has retired as a Support member. Lyn has given 20 years of service to the brigade especially in the catering area.

Qualifications

The targets we have set for key operational qualifications compared to actuals are:

Qualification	Target	2020	2019
Low Structure & Hazmat Awareness	30	25	25
Breathing Apparatus Wearers	21	17	20
Respond to Urban Fire	18	16	17
Crew Leader at Small Incidents	10	12	11
Medium Rigid Licence	20	21	21

The currently 100% of our operational members are qualified in wildfire, while 90% are qualified in Low Structure. Six members just need the opportunity to do Hazmat Awareness to reach our target. Most of our recruits from last year have achieved this level, which is a credit to them. The drop in Breathing Apparatus wearers is a result of some members transferring to support roles and others finding that it has become too physically demanding for them. All of our BA wearers completed the MSA Conversion course with our own members as instructors. This was a successful process. Members have been generally able to gain positions on courses conducted by District and Fortuna Group and have demonstrated that they are prepared to drive

considerable distances to achieve this. The Brigade has continued to offer financial support to assist members gain their Medium Rigid Truck Licence with John Roskam completing his licence in the past year.

Skills maintenance

Attendances at brigade based training held on the first Tuesday evening and second Sunday of each month have improved significantly due to a greater emphasis placed on this important activity with having a dedicated Training Officer. Our structured program to maintain member's skills has involved all appliances and is particularly focussed on the risk that we face in Maiden Gully. Consequently, Pre-plan tests also feature in our training along with pumping skills that are programmed for the first Sunday of each month. A well-attended evening at the Huntly Training Ground (VEMTC) was held in June with the theme of building fires making good use of the TIC. The use of short scenarios continues to be used to assist members to maintain skills in using the vehicles and the equipment stowed on them. We have also participated in training events conducted by the Group and neighbouring brigades. Skills maintenance has been recorded on CFA's Learning Hub.

Supporting a Junior Brigade

Maiden Gully is continuing to work on re-launching a junior running team. Lieutenant Daryl Bunton is focusing on starting with a senior team to develop the necessary skills next summer and then introducing juniors to this interesting fire service sport.

An effective administration

Review of Brigade Structure and Constitution

Our Brigade structure has gone largely unchanged since formation in 1998 and while the BMT periodically reviews our Standing Orders and Constitution, the only major changes have related to some CFA introduced positions and policies along with the effects of additional vehicles. This year saw the introduction of a separate Training Officer position in order to place greater emphasis on this crucial area of the brigade's operation and a complete revamp of the position descriptions for our four lieutenants. The other change saw to removal of a Support Group as a distinct entity in our Constitution. The draft changes were approved by the membership and the Operations Manager approved our new Constitution in October.

Brigade Management

Our April 2019 election saw major changes in the Management Team. New Captain, Peter Dole, took on the leadership of the Brigade at start of July. It is somewhat of a generational change as the previous two Captains, David Mustey and Andrew Howlett, were both in their forties when elected. However Peter, like Andrew and David, is a foundation member of the brigade beginning as a junior firefighter back in 1998. It is also significant that both Andrew and Dave remain as contributors to the BMT.

President:	David Mustey	Captain:	Peter Dole
1 st Lieutenant:	Adam Brough	2 nd Lieutenant:	Daryl Bunton
3 rd Lieutenant:	Nick Isaacs	4 th Lieutenant:	Holly Franchina
Comms. Officer:	Andy Donnellan	Community Safety:	Holly Franchina
Secretary:	Chris McDonald	Treasurer:	Andrew Howlett
		Training Officer:	John Roskam

Brigade wishes to record its sincere appreciation to Life Member Brian Perry who has been on the BMT since the founding of the Brigade. He has held a wide range of positions, often stepping in to vacant positions to ensure the brigade continued to function smoothly. His managerial experience has had a lasting impact on the professional way the Brigade operates. Jason McIlroy also stepped down after seven years as a Lieutenant and his hard work and time on the BMT is also appreciated. We welcomed Daryl Bunton to the 2nd Lieutenant position and Holly Franchina as our first female Lieutenant in at 4th. The Management Team has also grown by electing John Roskam as a dedicated Training Officer (as mentioned above).

Financial

Full financial statements will be provided to members and the CFA after June 30th. However, in the 12 months to the end of March, our funds were \$118,834.60 down slightly on last year (\$121,415.39) and including \$75,000 in our Future Development Fund and \$27,000 in the Vehicle Replacement Fund. During the year, we made the strategic decision to set aside \$5,000 annually for vehicle replacement covering both the FCV and the Light Tanker. This is a more realistic amount to provide for both vehicles. In terms of income:

- Fire Equipment Maintenance was our largest single income source raising \$12,240 (increase of \$940).
- Community Partnerships: ASQ, Maiden Gully IGA and BUFS Pharmacy contributed an amazing \$2,700 through their community rewards programs, which would have been higher except one payment is overdue. We have continued to actively promote the IGA Community Rewards Program (key tags) over the year.
- Fundraising activities: Over the year, we again conducted 3 sausage sizzles at IGA and two at Bunnings Epsom raising over \$2,550. The result was down \$500 on 2018/19 due to poor weather on both Bunnings Days and the cancellation of the IGA sausage sizzle in March due to COVID-19 restrictions. The new format with the IGA firewood raffle proved to be successful in making \$700, was less labour intensive and had greater community impact. We have further rationalised our fundraising and community events for 2020-21 with a single Bunnings day in September, IGA in March and the two firewood raffles & sausage sizzles in June. There was no paid catering carried out by our Catering Team.
- Bushfire Fundraisers: We have been privileged to receive \$5,800 from a range of community efforts to support CFA Brigades. The groups involved are MGPS Out of Uniform Day, Tyson's Reef Hotel's "Fire up for the Firies", Harley Central CFA Ride and Grill'd Local Matters.
- Our donation tins, helmet and extinguisher situated at Balgownie Estate, Post Office and Pratty's Patch and general donations provided us with \$1,080 (up slightly from last year).
- Bank interest provided \$2,452 up slightly on \$2,362 last year due to a slightly larger amount in term deposit and taking terms with the maximum interest rate.

On the expenditure side:

- Around the Station: Major expenditure was on the improved safety lighting over our exit doors and the installation of a large panel lift door to replace the two rear doors used by our tankers entering the engine bays. Along with extra PPE lockers, built by Daryl Bunton, we expended \$19,525 on station improvements. A new and larger pressure washer was purchased with a sizeable discount from

Bunnings. A contract has been let for an automatic security gate that will be largely funded from bushfire fundraisers.

- A current priority is ensuring that all BMT members have uniforms and those other members with uniforms are able to replace worn items. So far this has cost us \$1,225.
- To support the introduction of the new BA sets and to encourage more training; we purchased a drying cabinet and 4 extra masks at a cost of \$7,320.
- Extra equipment on the trucks (Root soaker, car entry tool and two first aid kits in bags) saw an outlay of \$1,100.
- We spent \$950 on general maintenance and \$910 on our Internet connectivity and other digital media costs. Both figures are similar to the previous year. Bendigo Community Telco has continued to provide a good discount for our Internet connection.

This is the first year for some time that our expenditure has exceeded our income but we have been able to fund a number of significant projects that will improve brigade efficiency for years to come. The Brigade remains in an extremely strong financial position and while COVID-19 will affect our fundraising in coming months, we will be able to fund a replacement FCV if we succeed in the next round of VESEP grants. We would not be able to equip our brigade to such a high level if it was not for all members who help with fundraising along with a very supportive community.

Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM)

The past year has again been a successful one for FEM. As well as an excellent source of funds, it has enabled us to regularly inspect most of our risks and hold conversations about fire safety with clients. While our number of clients has remained the same, we saw a 6% increase in the number of units serviced (extinguishers, fire blankets and hose reels) taking us over the 600 mark. We lost the long time client Radio KLFM with their work picked up

Client Locations	No of Clients	No of Units
Maiden Gully	20 (20)	307 (291)
Marong	11 (10)	125 (100)
Other Bendigo	7 (8)	61 (69)
Bridgewater	2 (2)	135 (135)
Totals	40 (40)	628 (595)



by the Victrack contractor but gained a larger client in Lazenby Farms in Lockwood. Other growth was due to expansion at Marist College and the Stupa along with both tourist parks. A summary of this work is shown in the table above with the previous year's figures in brackets. In the coming year, the extended Champagnet block at Marist College will add further units. Traditionally most of our work is carried out in May/November but we have steadily added out of area clients to a March/September regime that now involves 25% of the units maintained. After expenses, FEM contributed \$12,240 (last year \$11,300) to brigade funds. Including CFA Sunday, we provided five training sessions on fire extinguisher and fire blanket use. A total of over 100 people are now better prepared to use these units at work and in their homes. Our trained FEM

technicians, helped by other Brigade members, have done an excellent job over the past year completing all servicing to a high standard within the time requirements.

Servicing mornings have proven to be an enjoyable activity on the Brigade's calendar. We greatly appreciate the support provided by the CFA's Client Services Section based in Bendigo.

Environmental Impact

The Brigade aims at reducing our impact on the environment by minimising energy and resource use. Over the past few years, we have completely replaced all station lighting with energy efficient LED units. We have recently begun working with the Bendigo Sustainability Group to look at ways of funding solar panels and batteries in order to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions from electricity to zero.

Key Projects

Replacement of the FCV

We were disappointed that for the third time we missed out on VESEP funding to replace the FCV with the new standard CFA build unit. It is our intention to apply again in the next round.

Installing emergency lighting in the fire station

With the assistance of Friswell Electrical, we finally achieved a great outcome with improved lighting with battery backed up emergency exit signs on all exit doors including those in the workshop and FCV shed. The project also provided better lighting over the front and rear personal access doors and some other minor electrical improvements. All new lights are LEDs in line with our energy reduction objectives.

A single lift panel door instead of the two rear roller doors

After a frustrating number of delays, we eventually we notified that we were unsuccessful in the second round of the Enhancing Volunteerism Grants Program. The Brigade decided to self-fund this project and the Bendigo Door Centre completed it to a high standard. We appreciate the advice of Brian Bartlett on the structural aspects. Brian is the Structural Engineer who designed the steelwork in the engine bay. Brigade member, Owen Shay did all the electrical connections for this job. It has greatly improved safety when trucks return to station and our drivers appreciate how much easier it is to enter the engine bay.

In conclusion

It has been an exciting year for the Maiden Gully Fire Brigade with several major projects completed and others in the pipeline. There is great enthusiasm around the station and this is reflected in our numbers attending turnouts, meetings and training sessions. Unfortunately with the Covid-19 shutdown this momentum has slowed and our challenge for later in 2020 is to get it back to the previous level. Brigade members and our community can be justifiable proud of their fire brigade.

We wish to acknowledge the assistance we have received from the CFA staff from District 2, Client Services (FEM), career firefighters at Bendigo Fire Station and the District Mechanical Workshop at Kangaroo Flat along with Municipal Fire Prevention Officer Sue Moses. We greatly appreciate the help provided by Tarrengower Prison who send us a team of workers every fortnight to help clean the Station. The support

we receive from our local community is incredible and this is evidenced by the many local businesses and organisations that have assisted us throughout the year; we specifically acknowledge the help from the following:

- ASQ Garden Supplies (Community Rewards Program)
- Avondel Caravan Park (LPG Refills)
- Balgownie Estate (donation tin)
- Bendigo Bank
- Bendigo Community Telco
- Bunnings Warehouse Epsom (Sausage Sizzle, discounts and donations)
- BUFS Pharmacy – Maiden Gully (Healthy Communities Program)
- Coles Group (\$500 voucher)
- Friswell Electrical (Safety Lighting upgrade)
- Good Earth Garden Supplies (Donation of garden materials)
- Grill'd Healthy Burgers (Local Matters Program)
- Maiden Gully IGA (Community Programs, Sausage sizzles & wood raffles)
- Maiden Gully Marong Lions Club
- Maiden Gully Post Office (donation helmet and other services)
- Maiden Gully Primary School (newsletters)
- Neighbourhood Watch (newsletters)
- Pratty's Patch (donation extinguisher)
- Tarrengower Prison (cleaning services)

