



Maiden Gully Fire Brigade 19th Annual Report 2016/17



Maiden Gully Fire Brigade helping to Create Safer Communities

Maiden Gully Fire Brigade Objectives for 2016 – 2017

CFA's mission is to protect lives and property with a vision of working together with communities to keep Victorians safe from fire and other emergencies. Maiden Gully Fire Brigade will contribute to this by:

1. Providing an efficient and effective operational capability through:
 - Meeting CFA service delivery standards.
 - Responding with the appropriate mix of trained personnel and vehicles to all incidents.
 - Maintaining, testing and updating firefighting equipment.
 - Working together with other CFA Brigades and emergency agencies.
2. Working with the Maiden Gully community, in partnership with CFA, to build and strengthen Maiden Gully as a self-reliant, resilient community through the treatments in our Risk Assessment Plan. These include:
 - Being an active member of our Community
 - Contributing to all MGPA and other local newsletters promoting CFA and Brigade messages.
 - Maintaining and expanding our Brigade Website.
 - Hosting at least two community education activities in Maiden Gully.
 - Reviewing all Risk Treatments and Pre-plans.
 - Supporting the introduction of Youth into CFA.
3. Providing Brigade members the opportunity to achieve and maintain appropriate skill levels that will enable them to maximise their potential. This will Improve the safety and capability through:
 - (a) Participating in CFA training courses to achieve the following target numbers:

Qualification	Target
Low Structure & Hazmat ID	30
Breathing Apparatus	21
Respond to Urban Fire	18
Crew Leader at Small Incidents	10
Medium Rigid Licence	20

- (b) Maintaining and enhancing firefighting skills through our Annual Training Program that is guided by our Risk Assessment Plan.
4. Providing cost effective and efficient delivery of the business services with specific emphasis on:
 - Meeting all CFA requirements for administration and financial activities.
 - Conducting a range of income producing activities to support the operation of the Brigade and its future development.
 - Providing quality Fire Equipment Maintenance to clients in Maiden Gully and surrounding areas.
 - Fostering the community partnership with Maiden Gully IGA and Maiden Gully UFS Pharmacy.
 - Encouraging opportunities for Support Group activities.
 - Reducing our impact on the environment by minimising energy and resource use.
5. Planning for the Future:
 - Having a pumper allocated to the Brigade on a permanent basis.
 - Completion of Minor Works Project providing new garaging for the FCV, extra parking and vehicle manoeuvring area.

19th Annual Report

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Maiden Gully Fire Brigade for 2016/17. In this report we will highlight many of the achievements that have been made in the past 12 months. Some of these highlights of the year were:

1. Completion of the FCV shed.
2. Completion of the driveway project.
3. Ongoing Training and Recruitment of our fire fighters to match our Risk Profile.
4. Maintaining our high level of involvement within the community along with community safety activities.
5. Solid fundraising outcomes and community support.

1. Providing an efficient and effective operational capability.

Operations

In the past year our Brigade responded to 57 calls, which is an increase from last year and remains above our average of 39.1 calls. Which is an increase in the

Call Type	2015/16	2016/17	Avg
Structure	9	4	4.1
Non structure	9	16	5.6
Grass & Scrub Fires	20	21	11.3
Motor Vehicle Accidents	4	6	4.2
Other Incidents	3	3	2.1
False Alarms/ Investigations	4	7	6.3
Total Primary Calls	23	23	20.3
Support Calls	26	35	19.3
Total	49	57	39.1

number of calls from the previous year. While the number of grass and scrub fire over the summer was similar to other years we noted an increase in the number of non-structure calls over the same period. The brigade responded to a total of 23 primary calls, the same as last year, but we have seen an increase in the number of support calls (35). The increase has in part due to the up dating of some of our neighbouring brigade's response tables to a more

realistic order of brigades. The installation of traffic light at the Calder Highway / Edwards road intersection will hopefully see a decrease in the number of MVA's at that intersection, we have seen a small increase in the number of MVA's this year. False Alarms calls continue to factor in our numbers with many of these calls being reported by people passing by or concerned neighbours who may not know the full situation. Strike teams have once again figured in our turn out statistics. Tanker 1 was involved in Strike teams while the FCV was called on to provided assistance as both a command platform for Brigades outside our area and for transported Strike team relief crews as well as command vehicle on strike teams. Our members regularly took up roles in Incident Management Teams (IMT) and on Strike teams.

Appliances

This year we have continued to operate with our CFA Tanker 1, Hino 2.4C (MCX363), Brigade owned Light Tanker 2 (ZKU554), Light Pumper (MCL934) and the Ford Ranger FCV. Throughout the year, these vehicles have been well maintained by the workshop at Kangaroo Flat, along with servicing our appliances they have supplied us with a wealth of information and advice whenever we have asked.



The brigade continues to work closely with OM Steve Smith on having a pumper permanently allocated to Maiden Gully to replace the state spare light pumper that we currently operate. The major issue the brigade has with the state spare pumper is that if the DMO's require the pumper for a breakdown we lose the vehicle at short notice and without a replacement. The past calendar year have seen the pumper available to the brigade for

only 37% of the year, this is mainly due to a shortage of spare pumpers within the state fleet. Unfortunately the past situation looks like it will continue this year. It is disappointing to have the pumper return from a staff recruit course at Bangholme with no hose and a large amount of equipment missing. What is also disappointing is the difficulty the DMO and the District staff have had recovering the equipment from Training.

Equipment

The brigade made a number of equipment purchases over the year, a snorkel has been added to the FCV to bring the vehicle into line with the standard equipment for an FCV. Along with the snorkel we have purchased a portable UHF radio to enable us to communicate with private units and earth moving plant on the fire ground, another useful addition to the FCV and Tanker 1 are GPS units. These enable crews to navigate around the fire ground as well as calculating the area of the fire giving us a more accurate measurement. At the fire station to assist with catering tasks the brigade purchased a pie warmer, the unit has been utilised at a number of events held at the fire station.



Communications

Over the last 12 months there have been no major change to communications at Maiden Gully. The listening sets are being put to good use enabling our members to be better informed about current operations within the local area. The dispatch computer has proven to be a useful tool assisting members turning out getting out the door within our allotted 4 minutes. In the future we will investigate other systems that will provide a greater level of information regarding the incident we are attending. The testing of both the pagers and the spectrum hub is undertaken by the Fortuna Group to maintain their operational readiness.

2. Working together with the Maiden Gully community, in partnership with CFA, to build and strengthen Maiden Gully as a self-reliant, resilient community through the treatments in our Risk Assessment Plan.

Risk Management

Maiden Gully is one of three residential growth areas in the City of Greater Bendigo with a population that is now nearing 5,000. 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	2017	2021	2031
Population	4,958	6217	9,658
Dwellings	1,720	2073	3,242

Residential dwellings in Maiden Gully continue to grow all be it at a slightly slower rate than past years. This is mainly due to the lack of active residential developments in the area. This will be addressed with the commencement of the Westbury estate (123 Lots) on the Calder Hwy and the Armitage on Hermitage road. The Marist School that opened in 2015 continues to grow with over 600 students.

Our monthly fireplug inspection has continued throughout the year, the plugs were inspected twice during the year.

Community Education



Over the year we have been able to provide information on fire safety, brigade activities and progress in the regular Progress Association Newsletter as well "FlatMatters" and the NHW and Primary School Newsletters. This information was also provided through our website. We held an Open Day in conjunction with CFA Sunday, a display at IGA with the wood raffles and the brigade also attended the Maiden Gully school fair providing practical displays and giving advice to members of the public. At our winter wood raffles we continued to supply newsletters and further fire

safety information to the public. During the year the brigade played host to a number of visitors, as well as the brigade visiting other organisations at their own premises. Through the year, members of the brigade also took part in the Bunnings Warehouse Family Day, Bunnings Christmas and Bunnings Easter Family Night along with Jenny's Early Learning Centre family fun day and a number of Santa Runs prior to Christmas.



Supporting CFA Youth Programs

In the past year our junior brigade has been somewhat inactive with only one member. While our junior brigade has been inactive the brigade has enlisted the junior members support at a number of community events as well as fundraising activities.

Other Community Activities

Our Station continues to be used by a range of community groups with the Maiden Gully Neighbourhood Watch meetings on the second Wednesday evening every month. The brigade continue to be active members of the Maiden Gully Progress Association with their meetings on the 1st Monday evenings of the month during the year, we continue to work with the Progress Association on road safety and traffic management within the area. Once again this year the brigade members took part in the tin rattle for the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal, this year we raised \$3251.25, a similar amount previous years. This year we will be collecting at the Maiden Gully IGA on Good Friday to improve the collection. We have also participated in a range of public activities including Australia Day celebrations, Christmas Santa runs, Maiden Gully primary school fair and the Easter Fair Torchlight Parade.

3. Providing Brigade members the opportunity to achieve and maintain appropriate skill levels that will enable them to maximise their potential.

Qualifications

Our targets for key qualifications for active responders compared to actuals are set out below (numbers in brackets)

Qualification	Target	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/12	2012/13
Wildfire	100%	97%(29)	93%(28)	100%(30)	93%(28)	100%(29)
Low Structure	100%	83%(25)	87%(26)	90%(27)	87%(26)	86%(25)
Wildfire & Structure	70%	46%(14)	46%(14)	46%(14)	43%(13)	44%(13)
Structure & Wildfire	50%	23%(7)	27%(8)	23%(7)	20%(6)	24%(7)
Crew Leader	30%	30%(9)	30%(9)	30%(9)	24%(7)	24%(7)
Medium Rigid Licence	50%	70%(21)	66%(20)	66%(20)	63%(19)	69%(20)

Qualification	Target	2017
Low Structure & Hazmat ID	30	21
Breathing Apparatus	21	20
Respond to Urban Fire	18	18
Crew Leader at Small Incidents	10	9
Medium Rigid Licence	20	21

Like most years the brigade's membership changed slightly over the past year. Never the less the operational members have maintained their motivation and have actively participated in training at brigade and regional level. The current position of the brigade is 97% of current members are qualified in wildfire, while 83% are qualified in Low Structure. These figures reflect that we have a number of new members awaiting places on recruit courses. Once again members are having to apply for courses outside our local area to gain places on these courses. Currently 20 (71%) of members hold the BA qualification. While our members are well trained and participate in regular skills maintenance sessions, we still find it difficult for our members to gain positions on District courses. This issue is not helped by "Brigade Members" qualifications included with "Operational Members" when reports are

requested from CFA Training. This issue is also having an impact on our ability to transition our members through to the brigade's risk profile of "Structure with Wildfire". We will continue to work with District Operational and Training Staff in an attempt to improve the current situation.

Skills maintenance

The brigade continues to run a structured program to maintain member's skills. Activities are planned for the first Tuesday evening and second Sunday of each month. We have continued to train with the light pumper and new tanker, members and continued to develop our skills and teamwork with the appliances. Training has involved hose laying, using hydrant, relaying from both tankers into the pumper as well as the use of CABA. The use of short scenarios similar to those used in the past will continued to be used to assist members to maintain skills. Pre-plan tests also feature in our training. Skills maintenance has been recorded on CFA's Webtrain software. We look forward to the introduction of the new learning and development software LMS that is reported to be easier to use and will give greater flexibility in producing reports and data searches.

4. Provide cost effective and efficient delivery of business services needed to support the Brigade's operation while minimising energy and resource use.

Membership

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

Operational	
• Active	28 (26)
• Probationary	0 (4)
Juniors	0 (1)
Support Members	<u>15 (13)</u>
Total Membership	<u>43 (44)</u>

Once again the past year has seen our membership remain very stable. We have had some brigade member's transfer from Maiden Gully to take up operational positions at other brigades. While we have had members leave the brigade a number of trained members have transferred into the brigade. The brigade was able to recruit a number of new fire fighters for daytime response. Several social activities have been conducted varying from suppers after meetings and a very successful family Christmas party complete with a visit from Santa.

Brigade Management

The past 12 months have seen the Management Team working hard to give the brigade a strong direction and leadership. The team below that was elected last year catered for all aspects of the operational needs of the brigade.

President:	Brian Perry	Captain:	David Mustey
1 st Lieutenant:	Peter Dole	2 nd Lieutenant:	Shaun O'Brien
3 rd Lieutenant:	Jason McIlroy	4 th Lieutenant:	Adam Brough
Comms Officer:	Andy Donnellan	Brigade & Com. Safety:	Barry Barnett
Secretary:	Dennis Barnett	Treasurer:	Andrew Howlett

The leadership team have worked well and been respected by the brigade as a whole following the elections last year. BMT meetings have been well attended and are held monthly in the week prior to the Brigade Meeting. It has a key role in

developing strategic direction, reviewing progress on Action Plans and projects, summarising correspondence and making recommendations to the Brigade. We continue to mentor other members of the brigade planning for the future leaders of the brigade. We would like to thank and acknowledge the work and dedication of Lt Shaun O'Brien and Brigade & Community Safety Co-coordinator Barry Barnett, both Shaun and Barry will not be standing for re-election at the upcoming elections.

Financial

Over the past year, we have continued with a rigorous budget process that sets priorities for equipment purchases and identifies income sources to better focus our fundraising at the start of the financial year. A "mini-budget" was considered in December and minor budget changes were made. As is usual, full financial statements will be provided in July after the end of the financial year. However, it is valuable to reflect on the past 12 months. At the end of March, our bank balance was \$122,210, which is an apparent increase of \$18,190 from the same time last year. This figure exaggerates our financial position because we owe \$18,600 for the new FCV Shed (awaiting CFA Invoice), making our actual funds at the end of March to be \$103,610 similar to last year. Expenditure on major items totalled \$26,670 covering:

- The construction of an extension to the workshop to better house our FCV as well as increase general storage at a cost of \$19,000.
- Concreting of the new area in front of the FCV Shed and access driveway and re-erecting the wing fence and gates. This project costing \$15,750 was largely supported by a VESEP grant with the Brigade contributing just over \$5,070.
- A further \$2,600 was invested in two GPS units, two extra handheld UHF radios, a pie warmer, and a snorkel for the FCV and further development of our despatch computer systems.

In terms of income, highlights included:

- Fire Equipment Maintenance being our largest single income source raising \$9,700 (see next section).
- A very successful year with fundraising activities. Our Monster Garage Sale in April raised \$1,700 along with \$95 for Prostate Cancer Research. Our ten Firewood raffles at IGA during winter produced \$2,864, which is close to last year's record but with associated sausage sizzle results up. We conducted 3 sausage sizzles at IGA and one at Bunnings Epsom raising over \$1,900. Our Bunnings result was the best ever.
- The YService Club of Bendigo Inc supported us by providing \$1,400 towards the cost of additional handheld UHF portable radios and part of the cost of a digital community information sign.
- Our donation tins, helmet and extinguisher situated at Balgownie Estate, Basement Bar, Post Office and Pratty's Patch raising over \$340.
- Our two major community partners, Maiden Gully IGA and BUFS Pharmacy, again contributing \$2,450 through their customer programs.
- Villawood Properties provided \$1,500 towards the FCV Shed.
- Notification that we will receive \$2,362.50 from the Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability Grants Program in early April to convert all our lights including incident scene lights to energy efficient LEDs.

As well as that mentioned above, other income came from donations from residents, Fuel reduction burn, Bank Interest, Grill'd Healthy Burgers, catering and soft drink sales. \$4,000 was added to our term deposits enabling the effect of low interest rates to be minimised. Careful research has kept our expenditure on regular purchases at reasonable levels.

Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM)

At the end of March, the number of units serviced (extinguishers, fire blankets and hose reels) by the brigade had increased by 16% from 425 to 493. This was largely due to the reactivation of the former Solar Systems complex at Bridgewater by Ceramet Solar and additional sheds at Bridgewater Poultry. We also experienced growth in our core area of Maiden Gully through new buildings at Marist College, Avondel Caravan Park and the Stupa. Good Earth at Epsom closed and was cancelled as a client. The breakup of this work is shown in the table opposite with the previous year's figures in brackets.

Client Locations	No of Clients	No of Units
Maiden Gully	17 (17)	230 (213)
Marong	9 (9)	92 (92)
Other Bendigo	8 (9)	56 (56)
Bridgewater	2 (1)	115 (64)
Totals	36 (36)	493 (425)

In addition, we completed the conversion of hydrants and boost points at Marist College to Storz couplings. FEM contributed over \$9,700 to brigade funds in the past 12 months from regular service work as well as supplying new units. Further growth is expected in the next 12 months with at least two additional buildings at Marist (28 units), two additional sheds at Bridgewater Poultry (20 units) and the new shops in the commercial precinct. We have maintained our policy of assisting local businesses and not for profit groups by providing equipment at a reduced cost. With the assistance of our major supplier, Flamestop, we were able to provide extinguishers and mounting brackets for Golden Square's new LPG Support Vehicle at no cost. Out of date extinguishers were used for our own training, a Group activity and four sessions for clients. Once emptied, the units are dismantled with steel going into Onesteel's charity bin while aluminium and brass is sold for brigade funds. Our FEM technicians with other Brigade members have done an excellent job over the past year completing all servicing to a high standard within the time requirements. Congratulations to Brian Perry and Bob Williams for qualifying as FEM Technicians in September. The CFA's Client Services Section based in Bendigo has again given us excellent support.

Support Group

The Group began the year with the Garage Sale with members providing Devonshire Teas, feeding the helpers as well as assisting with the sale of items. They also catered for two District training courses at our Station that raised \$260 for the Brigade. The Group also catered for the CEO's visit lunch and the YService Club dinner. Both of these events were very successful with plenty of food. Maxine Howlett capably continued in the role of Catering Co-ordinator.

Around the Station



The past year has seen a number of changes around the fire station, two of the major changes are the FCV shed that was fully funded by the brigade, while the project took longer than expected the finished product is a great addition to the fire station and is being well utilised. Along with the FCV shed a new driveway was concreted, the driveway was constructed with the assistance of the VESEP program. The driveway project was

efficiently managed and completed within a very short time frame. The gardens around the fire station are the pride of the area thank largely due the hard work of Steve Hall, Steve can be seen watering the gardens before he heads off to work in the mornings. Further development in the back yard of the station is well in the planning and work will start soon. With the addition of the FCV shed there have been upgrades to some of the lighting in the back yard to LED lights, the remainder of the lighting will be upgraded to LED's thanks to a grant from EMV.

Webpage Report Go to – www.maidengullycfa.org.au

Our website has been reworked over the past twelve months by our Webmaster, Matt Howlett (Meerware) with new photos in the header, all sections updated, all links updated and our annual report made available for downloading. New photos have been added to the Gallery. Use of our website fell slightly over the past year with 753 visitors who seemed to stay longer on the site. More detail of usage is shown below with no particularly busy times except for an unexplained spike in late July. The “Contact Us” portal has again proven to be very valuable providing the first contact for community groups, donors and prospective new members.



5. Planning for the Future

In 2014, the Brigade began researching the infrastructure needed to adequately support our community into the future. Two clear priorities came out of this, having a pumper allocated to the Brigade on a permanent basis and securing additional land.

The Pumper

Over many years, the Brigade has been working towards having a Pumper allocated to us rather than a Spare that can disappear at any time. There is no doubt that this is needed to address the growing structural risk in our community. This has been a long and frustrating process that has been exasperated this year with the absence of the spare pumper for long periods. We have worked co-operatively with CFA staff (ACO Gavin Thompson and Operations Manager Steve Smith) and Maree Edwards MLA to reach a resolution. The BMT met with our Operations Manager in February who emphasized that we are the number one priority for a pumper in District 2. Steve also explained two options that will likely result in our community having its own Light

Pumper this year. Both options involve a number of swaps (cascades) but are feasible. This is a very pleasing outcome.

Minor Works Project

In last year's Annual Report, we announced that with great support from the City of Greater Bendigo saw an additional 180 m² added to the north side of the existing station site at no cost. This was the key requirement that would enable the provision of additional vehicle accommodation, better access, and larger areas for training and maintenance activities along with more off-street parking. The formal lease was provided at the start of June after a number of delays due to the CFA. Council Officers, particularly Vicky Matthews, were of great assistance and very patient in getting this part of the project to happen.

In August, we received notice that our application to concrete the new area (with the exception of the FCV Shed site) through the State Government's Volunteer



Emergency Services Equipment Program was successful. This provided a \$2 for \$1 grant for the work that was completed by Hanrahan Concreting to a high standard in November. Brigade members were then able to re-erect the wing fence and the gates. (see photo opposite) Total cost of this part of the Project was \$15,750 with our contribution being \$5,070. The Brigade appreciates the excellent advice and co-operation provided by CFA VESEP

Project Officer, Bruce Rowley, in making these works happen.

The most obvious component of our Minor Works Project is the new 8.1m by 6.2m steel shed that now houses our Ford Ranger Field Command Vehicle. This shed also provides extra storage for equipment and will enable the development of a gym in the adjoining building. The FCV Shed, costing \$19,000, was completely community funded through the Brigade's fundraising activities. Considerable financial assistance came from Villawood Properties with Paint Right Bendigo (Haymes Paints) providing the special floor paint and Bunnings Warehouse in Epsom providing the LED light fittings. The shed was supplied and erected by Bendigo Garages who were very competitively priced and most helpful in all aspects of the build. The slab was poured in mid-December and the building constructed in the first week of January. This part of the Project had its frustrations due to it being managed by CFA's Land & Buildings Section in Melbourne. While our contractor was ready to commence months earlier, delays in signing of the lease, gaining planning and building permits dragged the project out by at least 6 months and created additional work for our members. All in all, this major upgrade sees a \$40,000 investment to provide effective emergency

services for the Maiden Gully community into the future. The extra space and other facilities have been well received by all users of the Fire Station.

In Conclusion

The past twelve months have seen the brigade continue to operate at a very high standard, with brigade members taking pride in the work that they undertake, the property and the equipment we have available to us. We would like to acknowledge the persistence and hard work by OM Steve Smith in having a pumper allocated to Maiden Gully, a number of real opportunities have been identified. The steady increase in the number of incidents the brigade attends is helping to maintain the interest of our members, we have responded to a wide range of incidents both within our own brigade area as well as throughout the state. This range of incidents confirms the need to widen our skills base to be able to respond to the challenges that we are presented with.

Our Thanks

The Maiden Gully Fire Brigade would like to acknowledge and record our thanks to Operations Manager Steve Smith and the CFA staff from District 2, the CFA Client Services team (FEM), shift personnel at Bendigo Fire Station, the District Mechanical Workshop at Kangaroo Flat and Municipal Fire Prevention Officer Sue Moses for their advice and support over the past year. There are also a large number of local businesses and organisations that have assisted us throughout the year; we greatly appreciate the help from the following:

- Balgownie Estate (donation tin)
- Bendigo Bank
- Bendigo Bank Telco
- Bendigo Food share (onions for barbecues)
- Bunnings Warehouse Epsom (Sausage Sizzle and LED lights for FCV shed & workshop)
- BUFS Pharmacy – Maiden Gully (Healthy Communities Program)
- Basement Bar (donation tin)
- City of Greater Bendigo (Extended site lease arrangements)
- Grill's Healthy Burgers Local Matters Program
- Hayes Paints (Minor Works Project)
- Maiden Gully IGA (Community Programs, Sausage sizzle, wood raffles and discounts)
- Maiden Gully Post Office (donation helmet and other services)
- Maiden Gully Primary School (newsletters)
- Neighbourhood Watch (newsletters)
- Pearce's Concrete (crushed concrete – Minor Works)
- Pretty's Patch (donation extinguisher)
- Villawood Properties (support of FCV Shed project)
- Y Service Club of Bendigo (UHF Radios and Community Information Sign)