Maiden Gully Fire Brigade
28th Annual Report 2025/26

Protecting Lives and Property

Operating on Dja Dja Wurrung Country

Maiden Gully Fire Brigade Objectives for 2025-26

- To support CFA's Vision that Victorian communities should be prepared for and safe from fire along with the CFA's Mission to protect lives and property. We will help achieve these through:

An efficient operational capability

- That meets CFA service delivery standards with the appropriate mix of trained personnel and vehicles being responded to incidents.
- Through reviewing and testing our operational pre-plans.
- By having firefighting equipment that is regularly maintained, tested and updated as required.
- Through working cooperatively with CFA District, other CFA Brigades, FRV Station 73 and other agencies to protect our 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.
- Having 100% of our adult members with a Working with Children Card
- 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.
- Maintaining and enhancing our Junior Program
- Encouraging the greater involvement of all members in the full range of our activities.

(b)Operational

- Increased participation in CFA training courses that match our risk profile to achieve the target numbers in the table opposite.
- Maintaining and enhancing firefighting skills through our Training Program guided by our Risk Assessment Plan.
- Achieving an average of 60% attendance at training sessions.
- Achieving zero injuries on the fire ground.

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

An effective Administration

- Meeting all CFA requirements for administration and financial activities.
- Strategic fundraising and community partnerships to support both the current operation of the Brigade and our ongoing development.
- 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 Priority Projects

- Develop Brigade Operating Procedures (BOPs) to replace Constitution and Standing Orders
- Develop a strategic ten-year Plan for Brigade Development
- Review Assignment area including an appropriate response for the Stupa Complex ● Prepare the Brigade for the introduction of a medium Pumper

July 2025

26th Annual Report

Welcome to the presentation of Maiden Gully Brigades 28th Annual Report

This year marks my first serving as Captain of the Maiden Gully Fire Brigade, and it has been both a privilege and a rewarding experience leading such a dedicated group of volunteers.

Throughout the year, our members have continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to operational readiness and service to the community. During what proved to be a significant fire season, the Brigade responded to a wide range of incidents both locally and in support of neighbouring brigades.

It has also been pleasing to welcome several new members over the past year, strengthening our ranks and helping ensure the Brigade continues to grow into the future.

I would like to sincerely thank all members for their dedication and commitment, along with the ongoing support of their families and our community throughout my first year as Captain. It is this support that enables the Brigade to continue serving and protecting our community.

Together, we will continue to strengthen the Brigade and ensure we remain ready to support and protect the Maiden Gully community whenever we are called upon.

An Efficient Operational Capability

Operations

The Brigade attended a total of 150 incidents, including 33 primary responses (22%) and 117 support calls (78%). This reflects an increase of approximately 3.1% on primary responses and 44% overall compared to the previous year. The majority of support incidents occurred within Eaglehawk and Kangaroo Flat, with Marong, Lockwood, Raywood and Woodvale also featuring prominently in support call-outs.

Call type	2024/25	2025/26
Structure	2	5
Non structure	3	13
Grass & Scrub Fires	5	4
Vehicle Crashes/ Rescue	9	8
Other Incidents	7	2
False Alarms/ Investigations	6	1
Total Primary Calls	32	33
Support Calls	72	117
Totals	104	150

The Brigade also contributed extensively to Strike and Task Force Team operations, supporting neighbouring brigades and assisting in manning appliances across the Fortuna Group. This included significant deployments to Harcourt/Ravenswood,
St Arnaud, Charlton, Raywood as well as long-haul task force deployments to Walma for Sam and Simon, and Tom to Lismore/Camperdown (VIC). Members also provided district-level assistance through ground support operations.

We are fortunate to have experienced Sector Commanders within the Brigade, which continues to strengthen our operational effectiveness and leadership capability during major incidents and deployments.

Appliances

Our current brigade appliances remain unchanged, with the table below showing the number of incidents each vehicle has attended.

BA Brigade	BA Use Count	% of Total Calls	Fleet Utilisation
Yes	6	6%	31%

Brigade Vehicle Activity Profile for Selected Period

Brigade Name	Owner	Resource Name	Rego	Category	Type	Age	Maint Level	4x4	Resource Utilisation	Brigade Attendance	Distinct Incidents	Called Off #	Called Off %	Km Travelled	Ave Turnout Duration (H/M/S)	On Site Duration (H/M/S)	Ave Member Attendance
Maiden Gully	Brigade	Maiden Gully Tanker 2	ZKU554	Tanker	Light	14	2	Y	16%	16	11	5	31.3%	93	01:43:16	19:11:18	6.01
Maiden Gully	CFA	Maiden Gully Tanker 1	MCX363	Tanker	Medium	11	1	Y	72%	82	41	41	50.0%	520	00:05:50	72:18:40	6.01
Maiden Gully	CFA	Maiden Gully Pumper	MCL934	Pumper	Light	15	1	N	26%	30	25	5	16.7%	113	00:05:24	12:57:40	6.01
Maiden Gully	Brigade	Maiden Gully FCV	1VC9NF	Field Command Vhcl	N/A	5	3	Y	10%	12	12	2	14.3%	211	04:52:37	18:04:35	6.01

As of last year, a statewide Medium Pumper build program is underway. One unit has been built to date and is currently undergoing extensive evaluation. We will continue to strongly advocate for a cascade upgrade that aligns with our risk profile.

There is currently no confirmation that Maiden Gully will be included in the cascade allocation; however, we will continue to monitor developments as further information becomes available.

Equipment

Over the past 12 months, the Brigade has continued to invest in equipment to enhance operational capability and efficiency.

Key upgrades include the introduction of a new tablet to support operational activities, alongside the CFA rollout of the appliance tablet system, which has further improved navigation, situational awareness, and operational efficiency. A remote workstation with monitors and docking station has also been installed, improving flexibility during extended incidents.

Additional equipment improvements include a hose winder and air horn fitted to Tanker 1, along with the acquisition of additional BA cylinders to support operational readiness.

The Juniors Replica Running Trailer has also been registered, with CFA covering the registration, making it an official CFA asset and further strengthening Brigade resources.

Around the Station

The FEM crew have remained busy throughout the year maintaining the gardens and broader station grounds. During this period, mulch was laid, which has proven highly effective in reducing weed growth and improving overall presentation.
The Junior members now also have a dedicated rack system in the FVC shed for all their equipment, improving organisation and accessibility.

Communications

Work to obtain a base radio for the station has now been completed, and a formal justification has been submitted. With the rollout of the new radios nearing completion, the Brigade will now liaise with District to progress the acquisition of a portable radio kit to further enhance operational communications capability.

The purchase of Uniden radios has also significantly improved communications, enabling clearer and more reliable communication between the pump operator and crew during operations. These units have proven to be a valuable addition to the Brigade's communications capability, particularly in maintaining effective coordination on the fireground.

Reducing our impact on the environment

While we make good use of the Council green waste and recycling bins, the Brigade also undertakes a range of additional environmental initiatives. Used extinguishers and batteries are recycled, along with a considerable amount of soft plastics. The Brigade also utilises solar panels and battery storage as part of its ongoing commitment to sustainability.

A self-reliant, resilient community

Risk Management

Residential risk within the Brigade area has continued to grow steadily over the past year, driven by ongoing subdivision activity and the release of large residential allotments in Monsants Road and along Edwards Road for future development. In addition, the long awaited Coles supermarket is scheduled to open in the coming months, further contributing to increased activity and exposure within the area. This reflects a continuing trend toward increased urban expansion within the Brigade's response area.

Based on the best available data regarding projected growth, further residential and commercial development is expected to continue, resulting in a gradual increase in exposure and operational demand. This reinforces the importance of ongoing planning, preparedness, and capability development to ensure the Brigade remains well positioned to respond effectively to future risk.

Year	2022	2026	2031
Population	6,138	7,399	9,350
Dwellings	2,120	2,434	3,076

The Statistical Area level 2 in Maiden Gully (which is the fastest growing SA2 in the region, with an annual growth rate of 2.98% per annum) is expected to retain the largest proportion of land supply remaining at the end of the forecast period, with approximately 40% of identified supply yet to be utilised.

Recent site updates at The Great Stupa include the addition of a new Memorial Office, continued operation of a Tuesday–Thursday bus service from Bendigo Station, and an upcoming Buddhist Path of Compassion symposium.
Marist College continues to grow, with a current enrolment of 1,225 students and 160 staff. The broader local education precinct also includes Maiden Gully Primary School and three childcare centres.
The suburb is experiencing continued growth, with integrated children's centres such as the Maiden Gully Early Years Hub providing both long day care and kindergarten services, further contributing to the area's expanding population and community activity.

OH&S

Occupational Health & Safety remains a key priority for the Brigade, with a continued focus on maintaining a safe and compliant working environment for all members.

First aid kits are regularly inspected and monitored to ensure they remain fully stocked and compliant. Chemical audits are also ongoing to ensure safe storage, handling, and compliance with relevant standards across the station.

Community Education

Community education remains a key priority for the Brigade, with a strong focus on engagement, prevention, and maintaining a visible presence in the community.
On 5 October, the Brigade held a “Get Fire Ready” event, providing fire safety information and preparedness messaging to the community.
The Community Engagement Plan for 2025 was submitted to the District Community Education Group, with the 2026 plan also completed and submitted, ensuring ongoing alignment with CFA priorities.
The Brigade’s community engagement activities commenced with the Maiden Gully Progress Association Autumn Festival at Balgownie Estate, where the trucks and puzzle pieces remained a strong attraction for children. The Brigade also attended Illumin8 in support of fire prevention activities associated with the fireworks display and ‘Burning of the Bad’.

In June, the Brigade supported the community through the Winter Display and Sausage Sizzle at IGA on 24 June 2025, followed by the annual Bunnings Sausage Sizzle on 20 September 2025, both well supported by the local community.

Maiden Gully also hosted its first “Come and Try” Running event as well as hosting a Twilight Running Event at the Janelle Park Playspace on the 20th February, further expanding local engagement opportunities.

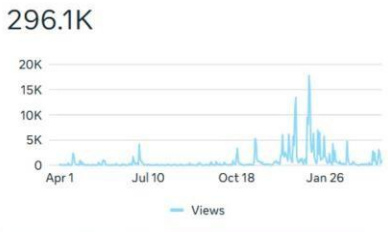
The Brigade continued its involvement in major community and external events, including the Eaglehawk Dahlia & Arts Festival Parade, the Bendigo Easter Fair Torchlight Parade, and the State Championships Torchlight event in Mooroopna for the first time. These events continue to provide valuable opportunities for engagement, fundraising, and fire safety education while reinforcing the Brigade’s presence in the wider region.

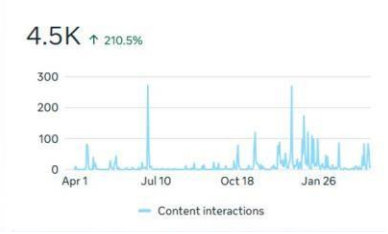
The Santa Runs continue to grow each year, alongside the successful rollout of the Santa Tracking App, remaining one of the Brigade’s most recognised community engagement activities.
Our annual Open Day was again a major success, attracting strong attendance and promoting community safety and emergency preparedness. Participating agencies included Oscar 1, Fire Rescue Victoria and the Bronto platform, SES, Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, Lyn and Daryl’s coffee van, the Maiden Gully Progress Association, and the small fire trucks kindly made, painted, and donated by Jenny Moretti and Sofia.
Junior members and volunteers were actively involved throughout the day.

The Brigade’s online presence continues to support engagement, with strong reach across key events, particularly the Santa Run, which remains our highest performing post.

Social Media including promoting CFA and Brigade message

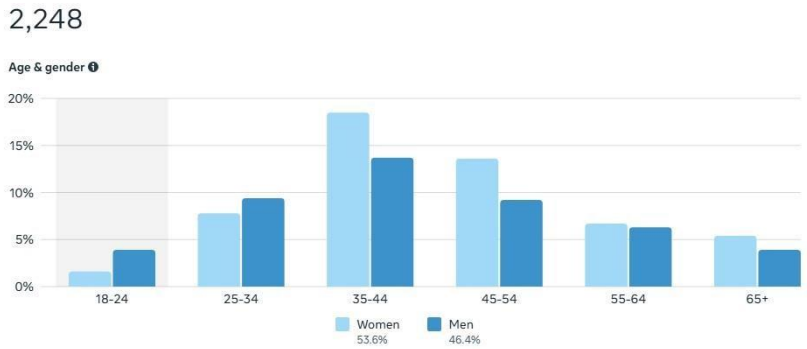
For the past few years, we have been working toward building a Facebook following of 2,000. As of January 2026, we reached this milestone and now have a total following of 2,248. Christmas especially our Santa Run continues to generate the highest level of engagement, with last year's event utilising a Santa app which proved very successful thanks to Rocky, aside from some network connectivity issues experienced on the day.





The followers, the majority of whom are local, with a small international audience (0.8%) and notable followers including WIN News and 9 News. This year's Santa Run reached 4,391 people, highlighting the strong reach and engagement of our social media presence.

A brigade BBQ, hosted with the kind donations from Maiden Gully IGA and Food Fresh, also generated significant online engagement. In addition, our presence and messaging following the devastating fires in Harcourt resulted in a substantial increase in online reach and community interaction.



Our Facebook page continues to be administered by members of the Brigade Management Team, delivering timely community safety messages and promoting current events, particularly our annual Santa Run. As in previous years, traditional media— including local newsletters, newspapers, and radio—has continued to provide strong support to the Brigade. We are featured monthly in the *Flatmatters* newsletter and receive regular coverage of special events through local schools and early learning centre newsletters, as well as radio outlets.

A feature by Darren Howe in the *Bendigo Advertiser* profiling the Brigade was published across two editions in June and generated considerable community interest.

Our online presence continues to be centred around our website (www.maidengullycfa.org.au) and Facebook page. The website, administered by Matt Howlett, provides an introduction to the Brigade, its history and equipment, fire safety advice, and options for donations, along with links to further information. Website usage has increased from 1.4k (last year) to 2.5k users, with 3.7k visits recorded and several notable spikes in activity as shown in the accompanying graph.

The 'Contact Us' portal continues to be highly valuable for community enquiries, donations, and prospective new members.

Reducing our impact on the environment

While we make good use of the Council green waste and recycling bins, the Brigade also undertakes a range of additional environmental initiatives. Used extinguishers and batteries are recycled, along with a considerable amount of soft plastics. The Brigade also utilises solar panels and battery storage as part of its ongoing commitment to sustainability.

Membership

Membership

At the end of March 2026, membership numbers (previous year in brackets) were as follows:

Operational	
● Active:	31 (26)
● In training:	1 (1)
Juniors	20 (11)
Support Members	16 (18)
Total Membership	**68 (56)**

Membership has increased over the past 12 months, including a number of transfers from other areas. We welcome Tom and Mel Bligh from Korong Vale, Lewis from Golden Square, along with Casey and Jane. We also welcome Taryn, Vienna, Brenton and Alan, whose transfers are in the process of being finalised, along with Nick returning to an operational role.
Our Junior ranks have also grown significantly, with Ollie, Koby, Deon, Kallan, Sophie, Corey, Bianca, Ethan, Evelyn, Reuben, Louie and our newest Junior, Jasper, joining the Brigade. We also acknowledge the transition of Kellan from the Junior program, with a number of our Juniors now reaching an age where they can begin considering progression to firefighter status.
The younger members of our Brigade have been kept busy each month thanks to the dedication of our Junior Leaders. Activities have included a visit to Oscar 1, where they learned about rope rescue and, more importantly, a range of practical knots. The Juniors were also treated to an end-of-competition season celebration at The Great Escape, enjoying a fun evening followed by pizza in the park. They are now looking forward to another break-up event after what has been a very successful competition season in the coming weeks.

A special thank you to our Junior Leaders for their ongoing commitment, and in particular to Aleisha, who has done an outstanding job as Junior Brigade Co-ordinator. Her efforts in keeping the teams engaged and organised were clearly reflected in the success of this year's championships.

Qualifications

Our targets for key qualifications for active responders compared to actuals are set out below:

Qualification	Target	2025	2026
Respond to Isolated Structure & Hazmat ID	30	25	37
Breathing Apparatus	21	6	23
Respond to Urban Fire	18	15	24
Crew Leader at Small Incidents	10	14	18
Medium Rigid Licence	20	21	25
First Aid	12	6	9
Working with Children Card	100%	100%	100%

Members have continued to gain qualifications with courses becoming more readily available

An effective administration

Brigade Management

Chair:	Craig Waters	**Captain:**	Holly Franchina
1st Lieutenant:	Leigh Neale	**2nd Lieutenant:**	Thomas Bligh
3rd Lieutenant:	Rocky Moore	**4th Lieutenant:**	Daryl Bunton
Comms. Officer:	Andrew Donnellan	**Community Safety**	Thomas Bligh
Secretary:	Mel Bligh	**Treasurer:**	Andrew Howlett
Training Officer:	Leigh Neale	**FEM:**	Andrew Howlett

Junior Brigade Co-Ordinator: Aleisha Shay

Last year was an election year, resulting in the appointment of a new Management Team and a realignment of key responsibilities.
The First Lieutenant now oversees Brigade planning and training; the Second Lieutenant is responsible for Community Safety and OH&S; the Third Lieutenant manages Infrastructure and Apparatus; and the Fourth Lieutenant oversees Services and PPC/PPE.
Administrative roles have remained unchanged, except for the inclusion of the Junior Brigade Coordinator position.
The Brigade Management Team would like to thank Sofia for her contribution during her time in the Second Lieutenant role.

Lieutenant Reports

1st Lieutenant's Report - Leigh Neale

Over the past year, the focus has remained on maintaining an efficient operational capability that meets CFA service delivery standards, ensuring an appropriate mix of trained personnel and reliable appliance response to incidents.

Operational pre-plans have been reviewed and tested to maintain relevance, and all firefighting equipment continues to be maintained to a high standard. Strong working relationships with CFA District 2, neighbouring brigades, Fire Rescue Victoria (Station 73), and other agencies remain essential in supporting effective emergency response.

Supporting a prepared and resilient community has remained a priority through ongoing engagement, community education activities, and consistent promotion of CFA and Brigade messaging. The Brigade Risk Treatment Plan continues to be reviewed annually.

We have also focused on maintaining a skilled and adaptable membership, ensuring compliance with Child Safety requirements and supporting member wellbeing. Training and development remain key priorities, with continued support for the Junior Program and encouragement for all members to participate in training aligned to our risk profile and operational needs.

2nd Lieutenants report - Tom Bligh

Since February, I have taken on the role of Second Lieutenant, following on from Sofia, and thank her for her contribution in the position.

The focus has been on maintaining strong performance across OH&S, Community Education, and Communications. A chemical audit has been completed and entered into CFA ChemWatch, first aid kits have been reviewed, and PPC maintenance has continued, with thanks to Daryl for his support.
Community engagement remains a priority. The Brigade's Open Day was again a success, and we were proud to receive first place for Best Emergency Service Vehicle at the Eaglehawk Dahlia & Arts Festival

Parade. This year's Good Friday Appeal raised $5,428.35, an increase on last year.Good Friday Appeal: Collections were held outside IGA on Thursday and at the Don Street/High Street intersection on Good Friday.

The total was slightly down on the previous year, primarily due to finishing earlier on Good Friday to allow timely counting of tins, as well as the ongoing reduction in cash transactions.

Our online presence continues to grow, with strong Facebook engagement, particularly around key events such as the Santa Run. The Brigade has also maintained a strong presence at local events, including the Autumn Festival and Illumin8.

3rd Lieutenant report - Rocky Moore

Over the past year, a number of improvements have been implemented to enhance brigade operations and efficiency.

A new brigade tablet has been introduced, enabling the transition to a digital inspection system using IAuditor for Sunday vehicle checks. This platform allows for accurate tracking of kilometres for each vehicle and the ability to generate actions where faults or issues are identified.

In addition, vehicle inventory checks have been completed across all appliances using the tablets. Feedback from members has been very positive, with the system proving both user-friendly and efficient.

We have also implemented a hose identification system using coloured electrical tape to indicate testing years. Black tape identifies hoses tested in 2025, while blue tape represents hoses tested in 2026. This initiative has improved visibility and simplified equipment management.

4th Lieutenant Report - Daryl Bunton

Over the past year, systems and processes within the portfolio have continued to improve.

The station cleaning system is working well, with tasks communicated through meeting minutes and members effectively notified and engaged. The hydrant tablet system, managed via Rocky, is also functioning efficiently and supporting improved tracking and reporting.

Hydrant maintenance remains a priority. Members are encouraged to report any hydrants that may be compromised due to dirt or other issues as soon as possible, either via the station whiteboard or by direct contact.

Work is also underway on a station induction process for new members to support consistency and awareness of procedures.

Financial and strategic fundraising

Full financial statements will be provided to members and the CFA after 30 June. However, at the end of March, total funds stood at $184,710.01, an increase of $22,000 on the previous year ($162,907.34). In line with our Business Plan, a further $5,000 has been set aside for the replacement of our two Brigade owned vehicles, bringing the Term Deposit balance to $57,000. We continue to make regular contributions to our Future Development Fund, which is now invested on a shorter-term basis (less than 12 months) to allow flexibility in accessing funds. This is particularly important as our Operating Account no longer accrues interest. An additional $20,000 was allocated this year, bringing the fund to $115,000. This reserve is intended for future station extensions, the proposed rural training track at the Recreation

Reserve, and additional equipment requirements associated with the upgrade of our pumper. We also have existing commitments to CFA for two additional CABA cylinders (on order) and a base radio (awaiting approval).

Significant income for the 12-month period included:

- Fire Equipment Maintenance, our largest single income source, generating $15,466 (similar to last year)
- Sausage sizzles at IGA (June) and Bunnings (September), which generated $2,500 after expenses
- Donations, which totalled an outstanding $5,125, raised through local resident contributions and collection tins at two local premises (up from $2,163 last year), with support from Lions, MGPA and others
- Miscellaneous fundraising, including soft drink sales, Open Day sales, and participation in the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS), which also saw an increase. The CDS contributed $338 from containers used in brigade activities, member contributions, and regular collections from Solterra and Vine
- Bank interest of $6,523, similar to last year and expected to be maintained in the coming year

Significant expenditure included:

- Equipment: $1,700 spent on a new tablet, decontamination clothing, replacement Stop/Slow bats, a hose winder and air horn for Tanker 1, and four handheld UHF radios
- Station and Grounds: $2,144 spent across two projects, including an office upgrade ($921) and improved external yard lighting ($1,223)
- Replica Truck Stand: Completed at a cost of $907, including registration (no fee applied) Most other expenses remained on budget and are consistent with the previous year. As expected, a busy summer period resulted in increased maintenance and crew catering costs. The Brigade remains in a very strong financial position, with funds appropriately reserved for future projects and vehicle replacement.

Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM)

The past year saw income after expenses of $15,466, just above our previous record set last year ($15,449). These significant funds, generated through the work of our trained Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) technicians and other Brigade members, are reinvested directly into upgrading our equipment and facilities.

For several years, the number of units serviced had been declining due to a range of factors; however, this trend has now reversed, with an additional 37 units added, largely due to growth within existing premises. Our client base remains steady at 39, with Goldfields Accounting (Coles development) no longer serviced, and the Marong Hotel now added.

It has been particularly pleasing that new owners at Bridgewater Eggs and Solterra & Vine (formerly Balgownie) have chosen to retain us as their contractors. All servicing was completed to a high standard, with documentation returned to CFA well within required timeframes.

Client Locations	No of Clients	No of Units
Maiden Gully	22 (23)	302 (290)
Marong/Lockwood	12 (11)	160 (138)
Other Bendigo	3 (3)	23 (23)
Bridgewater	2 (2)	125 (122)
Totals	39 (39)	610 (573)

Up to nine Brigade members regularly assist with FEM activities. During the year, we also conducted a successful training session for the administration staff at Marist College, in addition to supporting Brigade training, Junior training, and our Open Day.

Our FEM team has also contributed to station projects, with particular focus on the garden and grounds. This work has been supported by the CFA Fire Equipment Maintenance Team based in Kangaroo Flat, who assist with invoicing, regulatory requirements, and provide ongoing advice.

Maiden Gully Junior Program

The Junior Brigade has continued to be highly active over the past year, supported by the ongoing commitment of our Junior Leaders and Brigade members.

A range of engaging activities have been delivered throughout the year, including visits to Oscar 1, where juniors have learned practical skills including rope rescue concepts and knot tying. The program continues to provide a strong foundation in teamwork, safety awareness, and early fire service knowledge.

The competition season was again very successful, culminating in a well-earned end-ofseason celebration at The Great Escape, followed by a social gathering in the park. The Juniors are now looking forward to their break-up event following another strong year of participation and achievement.

We acknowledge the transition of Kellan from the Junior Program this year, and recognise that several other juniors are now reaching an age where they may begin considering progression into firefighter roles in the future.

A special thank you is extended to all Junior Leaders for their ongoing support and dedication. In particular, Aleisha is recognised for her outstanding work as Junior Brigade Coordinator, ensuring the program remains well organised, engaging, and successful. The results achieved throughout the championships are a clear reflection of her commitment and leadership. Aleisha was also a nominee for the The Zonta Club of Bendigo Women of Achievement Award 2026 - First Responders and Emergency Services for making a significant contribution to our Junior Program.

CFA Rural Running Competitions Report

The Brigade's Junior and Senior Running Teams have had a highly successful season, marking our third year of participation in CFA Rural Running Competitions and demonstrating strong commitment, teamwork, and continued improvement.

Throughout the season, teams competed at Lexton, Donald, Rutherglen, Mandurang, and Maryborough, representing the Brigade with pride and consistency. Regular training and preparation were reflected in strong performances across all events, with notable success achieved through multiple medal results in both Junior and Senior categories.

The season culminated in the CFA Rural Running Championships, held in Stawell over the weekend of 28–29 March, where both teams competed strongly against brigades from across Victoria. These performances were a testament to the effort and dedication shown throughout the season.

Monthly BBQs held with both Junior and Senior teams have also played an important role in strengthening team culture, fostering connection, and supporting member engagement.
Beyond competition outcomes, the running program continues to contribute to skill development, teamwork, and overall fitness across the Brigade.

A sincere thank you is extended to all members, coaches, and supporters who contributed to another successful season.

Reducing our impact on the environment

While we make good use of the Council green waste and recycling bins, the Brigade also undertakes a range of additional environmental initiatives. Used extinguishers and batteries are recycled, along with a considerable amount of soft plastics. The Brigade also utilises solar panels and battery storage as part of its ongoing commitment to sustainability.

Key Priority Projects

Development of Brigade Operating Procedures (BOPs):
Over the past 12 months, the Brigade has endorsed six Brigade Management BOPs and two Operational BOPs. These have replaced the previous Constitution and Standing Orders and now incorporate key policy documents. This has been a valuable step in modernising Brigade governance, with the first BOPs now entering their planned two-year review cycle.

Strategic Planning for Future Brigade Development:
Work has continued on the development of a Strategic Plan, including ongoing discussions with Council regarding land and with CFA. Further detailed planning will progress once additional guidance is received.

Review of Assignment Areas and Stupa Complex Response:
Significant work has been undertaken to review assignment areas, with proposed changes approved by the Brigade. However, the introduction of the new CAD system, expected in September, may remove the requirement for assignment areas. Further work is required to refine specialist response arrangements.

Preparation for Medium Pumper Introduction:
Previous advice regarding a cascade following the Scania Pumper build has not eventuated, which is disappointing given the expected growth within Maiden Gully. The Brigade will continue to advocate for an appliance that aligns with our risk profile and future needs.

In Conclusion

In conclusion, the past 12 months have been a highly active and successful period for the Brigade. Membership has continued to grow and diversify, supported by strong engagement across operational, junior, and support areas. Training and development opportunities have increased, resulting in members gaining additional skills and qualifications across a range of disciplines.
The Brigade has maintained a strong presence within the community through events, public education, and media engagement, with continued growth across both traditional and digital platforms. Financially, the Brigade remains in a strong and stable position, with prudent management ensuring funds are directed toward future infrastructure, equipment, and operational needs.
Importantly, the commitment, professionalism, and dedication of our members—along with the support of our Junior Leaders, Brigade Management Team, and wider community partners—continue to be the foundation of our success. The Brigade remains well positioned to meet future challenges while continuing to serve and protect the community of Maiden Gully.

Our Thanks

The Maiden Gully Fire Brigade would like to acknowledge and express our sincere thanks to our neighbouring brigades, CFA staff from District 2, the Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Team at Kangaroo Flat, the Fleet Services (DMO) Workshop at Kangaroo Flat, Fire Rescue Victoria (Station 73), and Forest Fire Management Victoria for their ongoing advice, assistance, and support throughout the year.

The support received from our local community continues to be outstanding, as demonstrated by the many local businesses and organisations that have contributed to the Brigade's activities and success over the past 12 months.

We particularly acknowledge the following:

Donations Tins

- Maiden Gully Post Office (donation helmet and other services)
- Pratty's Patch (donation helmet)

General Support

- Bakehouse Blitz (donations for Open Day)
- Our FEM clients
- Maiden Gully IGA (community programs, sausage sizzles and displays) ● Bendigo Fresh Wholesalers (Brigade BBQ)
- Maiden Gully Marong Lions Club (donations and Open Day assistance)
- Maiden Gully Progress Association (donation)
- Our local schools and childcare centres (newsletters and community engagement)
- Bendigo Ford (BBQ trailer)
- Good Earth Garden Supplies (mulch)
- Total Tools
- Ian Ellis Signs
- Harvey Norman
- OfficeWorks
- Macks Furniture

Captain Holly Franchina