



Kalorama-Mt Dandenong, Olinda & Sassafras-Ferny Creek Fire Brigades Media Release

5 February 2013

A hoot out in the hills!

“It was a hoot!”

That was how CFA Chief Officer Euan Ferguson described the second annual Dandenong Ranges “Ridge Top” brigades Family Fun and Information Day at Olinda.

Around 700 locals passed attended the event on Sunday 3 February jointly hosted by the Kalorama-Mt Dandenong, Olinda and Sassafras-Ferny Creek brigades.

Everyone – including the Chief and Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley – was given a red bucket as they entered, which became a handy container for the loads of information available.

But with it came the more serious message that this might be the only “fire truck” they would see in the event of a bushfire.

The Dandenongs have a long history of major bushfires. Keeping locals engaged with fire prevention and actively thinking about planning for such events is a constant challenge for local brigades.

Event organisers Elissa Jans (Olinda), Virginia McCallum (Kalorama-Mt Dandenong) and John Schauble (Sassafras-Ferny Creek) agreed the response from local families was fantastic.

“We were just blown away,” said Ms Jans. “It was great to see the community step out in support of their local brigades and volunteers.”

“It was great to have this level of interest in fire preparedness and to be able to have conversations about specific local issues with them,” she added.

Highlights of the event included the “Captain Koala and April Show”, Beeper the Smoke Alarm, demonstrations using the fire simulation table, Dandenong CFA platform, Monbulk CFA Rescue and a host of other emergency services vehicles. In addition to displays by CFA, representatives from Emerald SES, Red Cross, Parks Victoria, St John Ambulance and Victoria Police were also on hand.

For the kids, there was a range of activities including jumping castles, Little Lex the helicopter and Little Pat the fire truck, face painting, the Balloon Man and a colouring competition.

Local Federal MPs Laura Smyth and Tony Smith also joined in the fun, along with Yarra Ranges Mayor Jim Childs.

A range of detailed bushfire preparedness advice was available, from how to arrange a free property inspection, to advice about pets and fire and information on fuel reduction burning in and around the Dandenongs.

New Community Information Guides for the district were also available, along with information about Community Alerting Sirens and other warnings information. The CFA Home Bushfire Advice Service was also heavily promoted.

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