



Members of Bush Fire Brigades (BFB) play a significant and vital role in helping to ensure that the community is a safe place in which to work, live and play.

Bush Fire Brigades are established by Local Governments to provide a volunteer fire prevention and suppression service. Local Government Bush Fire Brigades, funded by the Emergency Services Levy (ESL), administer, maintain and equip Bush Fire Brigade personnel, appliances and equipment.

This information leaflet explains what you can expect when joining the BFB. It can also be given to your employer.

BENEFITS

- protection of your community and environment
- training and development opportunities
- opportunities to use existing skills and gain new skills
- some skills gained are transferable (i.e. workplace, study, home)
- opportunities to help others
- opportunities to make friends
- personal protective equipment
- insurance cover.

ABOUT THE ROLE

Volunteers undertake various roles according to their abilities, interests, and what they are comfortable with. The roles of a BFB volunteer are diverse and include activities such as:

- firefighting
- administration
- equipment maintenance
- community safety and education
- support (incident management and communications)
- leadership
- training.

INDUCTION

Not every local government requires probationary membership, however probation is usually three to six months. New members should complete the induction training which includes:

- information on FESA
- information on Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades
- what your brigade expects of you
- standing operational procedures.

Following induction is the Introduction to Fire Fighting and Bush Fire Firefighting training programs, as appropriate.

TRAINING

Training programs are generally aligned to National Competencies. Volunteers train according to the role of their area. Brigades train regularly and may include topics such as:

- safety and survival
- vehicle awareness
- hose drills
- communications
- wildfire behaviour and suppression
- driving
- basic map reading.

Courses are held throughout the year to help volunteers gain the necessary skills and competencies to assist the brigade to meet its standard training requirements.

Being a volunteer and undertaking regular training means that you can:

- develop new skills and knowledge
- apply existing skills and knowledge to different situations
- have the opportunity to be creative and develop initiative
- develop leadership skills
- improve your interpersonal, communication and teamworking skills
- maintain your current skills and competencies.



YOUR COMMITMENT

As a BFB member you are expected to:

- attend brigade meetings regularly
- be available to attend incidents (whenever possible)
- attend training as required by your local government
- follow instructions
- use brigade's equipment and vehicles and carry out duties in a safe and professional manner
- demonstrate commitment to the ideals of the organisation
- work effectively with other members and agencies
- maintain a reasonable level of fitness appropriate to your role.

Because BFB members work as a team, they are required to participate in activities like public relations, routine checks of appliances (vehicles), and equipment, grounds maintenance and station cleaning.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

The majority of calls for assistance a Bush Fire Brigade receives are predominantly for bush fires. However, other incidents include:

- structural (building) fires (defensive)
- vehicle fires
- support to other emergency services.

Brigades are mobilised to incidents via pagers, telephones and SMS messaging. It is understood that some volunteers may not be available at various hours due to work or others commitments, and are encouraged to discuss emergency service leave arrangements with their employers.

EMPLOYERS

The benefits to employers for supporting employees as volunteers include:

- opportunities to create relationships with the local community
- increased awareness of community issues
- increased ability to attract and retain skilled staff
- increased staff productivity
- increased staff team working skills
- increased staff morale
- positive corporate image
- enhanced public relations through FESA's Employer Recognition Program.

For more information contact:

.....

on

or a Volunteer and Youth Services Branch member on 1800 628 141.



ARE YOU READY?

*to join the
Bush Fire Service*

Information for prospective
Bush Fire Service Volunteers
and their employers

