



Metropolitan Fire Brigade Melbourne





All Fired Up About Safety in Our Diverse Communities

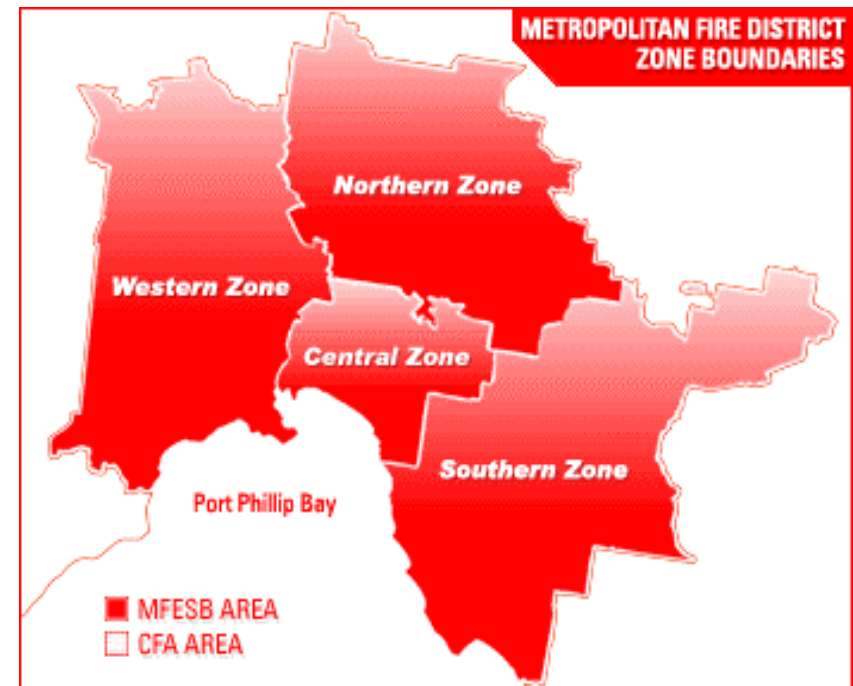


Sharon Landers, Community Engagement Strategist
Con Patralis, Equity and Diversity Unit



The Foundation of an Organisation

- 1540 career firefighters at 47 strategically located fire stations throughout metropolitan Melbourne
- Protecting 1,096 sq kms, \$200b in property and over 3 million residents
- Responsible for:
 - Fire suppression
 - Road Accident Rescue
 - Emergency Medical Response
- Response Statistics
 - Targeted response time 7.7 minutes
 - Highest % of fire containment to room of origin
 - Preventable fire deaths at an all time low





Building on the Foundation – The Community's View

In a recent social survey, people were asked:

“What is vital to your community?”

45% replied: “A Fire Station”

(local doctor 59%; local school 58%; their family 53%; good local transport 51%; post office 47%)

In an annual Australian Readers' Digest survey, subscribers were asked:

“Who do you trust?”

Ambulance Officers were the most trusted profession: 8.9/10

Firefighters were a close second: 8.88/10



Building on the Foundation Working with the Community

What are the drivers?

- MFB has a strong sense of community itself (culture)
- By its very nature, MFB is part of the community
- Need for local solutions to local problems – importance of knowing the community and their needs
- Increasing nature and complexity of our diverse community
- Effectiveness of working with communities in partnership
- All of government/community approach



Community Engagement

The Proactive End of the Spectrum

- **Links with Corporate Direction:**
 - Reducing Community Risk
 - Increasing Workforce Engagement
 - Continuous Improvement
 - Partnering with Government Initiatives
- **Developing a Cultural Change**
 - Public Relations
 - Communication
 - Community Education
 - Consultation
 - Participation





Community Engagement at the MFB

- Organisational infrastructure which supports the principles and practices of community engagement:
 - Community Engagement Strategy
 - Interdepartmental Advisory Committee
 - Specialist staff
- Station Community Safety Plans – local risk assessments and solutions for local problems





Our Diverse Communities

Victoria's Diversity

- 43% of Victorians either born overseas or have a parent born overseas
- Aboriginal people make up .5% of Victorian community

MFB Access and Equity Policy

The MFESB is committed to:

- ensuring all its services are accessible by all members of the community
- having a workforce that closely reflects the composition of our community



Engaging Through Consultation

Consultation Areas

- Perceptions of and previous contact with MFB
- Fire safety issues within community
- Perceived recruitment & information provision barriers
- Community Education Programs
- Key Community Contacts / relationship building





Engaging Through Consultation

Key Findings

- Indigenous community historical importance of fire
- Fire safety awareness considerably lower than mainstream
- Available information not culturally appropriate
- Minimal awareness of education programs
- Particular issues for new and emerging communities
- Vulnerability of elderly
- Barriers to accessing information
- Children are an important medium for information provision
- Perception of fire service as mono-cultured
- Dangerous occupation / negative experiences with uniforms
- Key role of parents in career choices



Key Action Areas

Partnerships and Networks:

- Focus on encouraging community participation in program development and ensuring the MFB are responsive to needs (relationship building and collaboration are critical)

Workforce Professional Development:

- Increased cross cultural awareness and establishing a workplace where diversity is valued

Diverse Recruitment:

- Creating sustainable employment opportunities and career paths for individuals from diverse backgrounds



Partnerships and Networks





Partnerships and Networks





Workforce Professional Development



METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADE

Cultural Awareness Training Manual

**“Protecting our
Community in
all its
Diversity”**





Diverse Recruitment





Diverse Recruitment





Contacting Us

Con Patralis

Equity and Diversity Unit
Office of the Chief Executive
456 Albert Street
East Melbourne 3002
Ph: 9665 4360
Fax: 9665 4443
cpatralis@mfbb.vic.gov.au

Sharon Landers

Community Engagement Strategist
Community Safety Directorate
433 Smith Street
North Fitzroy 3068
Ph: 9665 4464
Fax: 9420 3890
slanders@mfbb.vic.gov.au