

Grand Prix Reflections

Diaconal life has some unexpected turns! I didn't expect to be attending the 2014 Grand Prix or swanning around with the Governor, Premier and other luminaries (not to mention the Grid Girls).

The GP Corporation publicly recognised emergency agencies in a year that has already seen more than its share of emergencies. As a matter of course, **Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry** were included. On Black Saturday, I had never heard of this outfit, but I was thrown into the deep end and it has become a substantial ministry for me in the years since. I have undertaken a range of agency and government courses and work as Area Coordinator, Incident Activity Coordinator and I have trained for Emergency Management liaison.

VCCEM, made up of trained volunteer ministers and parishioners from most VCC affiliated churches, is now welcomed as a vital element of relief and recovery operations in Victoria. I have been deployed and led teams at incidents (mostly fires) throughout my area and beyond.

Clerical status empowers me to work collegially with an eclectic group of ministers and an even more diverse group of those afflicted by crisis. At the same time my worldly experience endows me credibility to relate and interact comfortably with those I encounter. It is the epitome of diaconal ministry. Other agencies have other tasks and specialities but Chaplaincy and Personal Support is what we do best.

Building bridges with our brothers and sisters in Christian ministry is another dividend. After a couple of months of Relief, Recovery and Respite ministry in Mitchell and Latrobe municipalities, I was both honoured and humbled to join Pastor Stuart Stuart (VCCEM State Manager) at the Grand Prix, representing 1700 VCCEM volunteers.

Stuart and I were both delighted to cheer Aussie Daniel Riccardo home to second place, a joy which turned out to be a bit premature !

(I'm the tall good-looking one in the photo)

Rev Deacon Mark Kelly
VCC Emergencies Ministry
Baw Baw Area Coordinator



