



VFBV | VOLUNTEER FIRE
BRIGADES VICTORIA

ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023



RON JACOBS

RON JACOBS OAM AFSM

Ron was appointed as the Association Secretary for the Victorian Urban Fire Brigades Association (VUFBA) in July 1984 after initially acting in this position from April 1984. He continued in this role until his retirement in July 1993.

A member of the Chelsea brigade (now Patterson River) for more than 44 years, Ron was heavily involved in and passionate about urban competitions not only as a competitor but also spent more than 30 years as a committee member for both the Eastern Districts and Flinders competition Associations.

In 1992 Ron was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in the Queens Birthday Honours List. He was also further recognised in the 2012 Queens Birthday Honours list an Order of Australia for service to the local community through roles with historical, local government and emergency service organisations.

Upon his retirement the VUFBA Annual Report noted that Ron was responsible for streamlining and modernising the Association's administrative processes and ensuring that two way communication existed between the Association, Regions and individual brigades.

Ron was awarded VUFBA Life Membership in 1995 and the VUFBA Gold Star in 1986 recognising his significant contribution to the Association.



**ROBERT
MCDONALD**

ROBERT "Bowser Bob" MCDONALD

Elected as the Region 23 representative to the Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association (VRFBA) in 1973 Robert was at the time one of the longest serving State Councillors upon his retirement in August 1999.

During his time as a State Council member, Robert served on many committees including the Accident Fund for five years, the Research Committee for seven years, Fire Prevention Committee for six years, the Training Committee for one year and the Executive for five years.

Impressively Robert served as a member of the VRFBA Equipment Review Committee for 27 years and then also was a member of the VFBV/CFA Joint Equipment and Infrastructure for another three years between 2011 and 2014. He was known for his particular interest in equipment design, his staunch advocacy for issues that were affecting volunteers and for emphasising the importance of fire prevention as a part of CFA's legislated duty in protecting the community.

Robert was a long serving, distinguished and respected member of the Bowser Fire Brigade, having joined the brigade upon its inception in 1961. He served in many roles including Lieutenant for 22 years and Captain for 16 years and was a member of the brigade until his passing.

In 1999 upon his retirement as a State Councillor, Robert was awarded VRFBA Life Membership which at that time was one of very few life memberships to have been awarded by VRFBA.



**QUENTIN
TURNER**

QUENTIN TURNER AFSM

Quentin devoted 27 years of service to VUFBA and VFBV. He was elected as the Executive Member for Region 15 to the VUFBA in 1983 and retired from the role in 2004. He then continued his service as a VFBV Board member until October 2010.

During his time with VUFBA he served two terms as Association Vice President and three terms as Association President. As well as serving on almost all VUFBA and CFA Joint Committees he was a CFA Board Member from July 1989 to December 1993.

Quentin was one of the driving forces in bringing together the Urban and Rural Associations under VFBV. So much so that he was elected as the inaugural Chair of VFBV in October 2002 serving in this capacity for two years and continued on as a VFBV Board Member for a further six years.

In 2004, Quentin became one of the founding Trustee's of the CFA and Brigades Donations Fund and served as a Trustee of the Fund until 2019 and also served as Chair of the Trust for many years.

A member of the Creswick Fire Brigade for more than 60 years, Quentin held a number of roles in the Brigade including Apparatus Officer, Secretary and Captain. Quentin held the role of Captain for 24 years and was also the Group Officer of the Creswick Group for 10 years.

For his service to volunteers, Quentin was awarded the VUFBA Gold Star in 1992 and VUFBA Life Membership in 1993. He also received the Australian Fire Services Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2002 in recognition of his diligent service.

Ron, Robert and Quentin were all strong supporters of the Association and will be sadly missed by friends and fellow firefighters from across the state.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc.

Reg No. A0057948T ABN 110 830 80403

Strong Volunteerism, Embraced to Build Community Resilience for a Safer Victoria

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023

For the year ended 30 June 2023

9/24 Lakeside Drive
Burwood East Vic 3151

P.O. Box 453
Mt Waverley Vic 3149

Tel: 03 9886 1141
Fax: 03 9886 1618

Email: vfbv@vfbv.com.au
Website: www.vfbv.com.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cfavol

Twitter: twitter.com/vfbv

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/vfbvtv

Instagram: [@volunteer_fire_brigades_vic](https://www.instagram.com/volunteer_fire_brigades_vic)

Some photographs courtesy of: *Fire Wise, Uniform Photography and CFA, Whittlesea SES Unit and CFA*

OVERVIEW

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) is the CFA Volunteer association and peak body established under the Victorian Country Fire Authority Act (CFA Act) to specifically represent CFA Volunteers and ensure there is meaningful consultation with the elected representatives of Volunteers on all matters which may impact upon them.

More generally, under the CFA Volunteer Charter that is enshrined in Section 6 of the CFA Act, VFBV is recognised as the association representing all CFA volunteers, providing for their general representation to the CFA Board and management and to governments, ministers, members of parliament, councils, instrumentalities, business and the public.

VFBV is not a trades union, and our history predates CFA, with our predecessor associations being formed back in 1885. We are the peak body for CFA Volunteers and operate in the spirit of mutual respect and goodwill to work in harmony and consultation together with CFA and the State of Victoria to resolve any differences of opinion which may arise.

VFBV also represents Coast Guard Brigades in Victoria and has close working relationships with other emergency service volunteer associations across Victoria and Australia. VFBV and volunteer fire brigade associations in all states of Australia work together on issues of common interest and/or national relevance through the Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA).

VFBV is an organisation run by the CFA volunteers it represents. VFBV is an independent and united voice of volunteers and engages with the State Government, Emergency Management Victoria, the CFA Board and management, Members of Parliament, official inquiries, municipal councils and instrumentalities, business and the public to proactively shape the future of emergency management in the interests of efficient and effective fire services and positive community safety outcomes.

VFBV engages with the Government and emergency management agencies to ensure that volunteers and their communities remain actively involved in emergency management decision making at every level through day to day practical work in VFBV/CFA Joint Committees by advocating for positive, practical results from reviews, parliamentary inquiries, royal commissions and inquiries conducted by other statutory holders such as the Inspector-General for Emergency Management in Victoria.

Given VFBV's direct volunteer-based foundations and in-depth knowledge of successful fire prevention, protection and response approaches in Victoria, it's well-established local and statewide networks and the breadth and depth of hands-on experience in matters affecting volunteers and the provision of a volunteer-based service model, VFBV is best placed to provide independent, unified and credible advice on matters affecting volunteers. VFBV facilitates regular state and local consultation forums and engagement activities to ensure that the views of volunteers are known and represented to stakeholders.

VFBV is independent from CFA but is an important part of CFA's foundation and future success. CFA is comprised of the community-based Brigades that form it. CFA management and staff provide the framework, governance, leadership, systems and expertise to direct, coordinate, support and empower this network of Brigades. Those CFA Brigades have built and delivered a remarkably successful and world-respected service to Victoria. VFBV is integral to enabling CFA to harness the leadership, knowledge and experience of volunteers and to engaging those volunteers in decision-making about matters that affect their welfare and efficiency. In a community and volunteer-based organisation such as CFA, genuine engagement with volunteers is vital. Robust, meaningful, respectful and honest communication and consultation is essential, and has been enshrined in the CFA Act through the Volunteer Charter as an obligation on CFA and the Government in any decisions that impact or have the potential to impact upon volunteers.

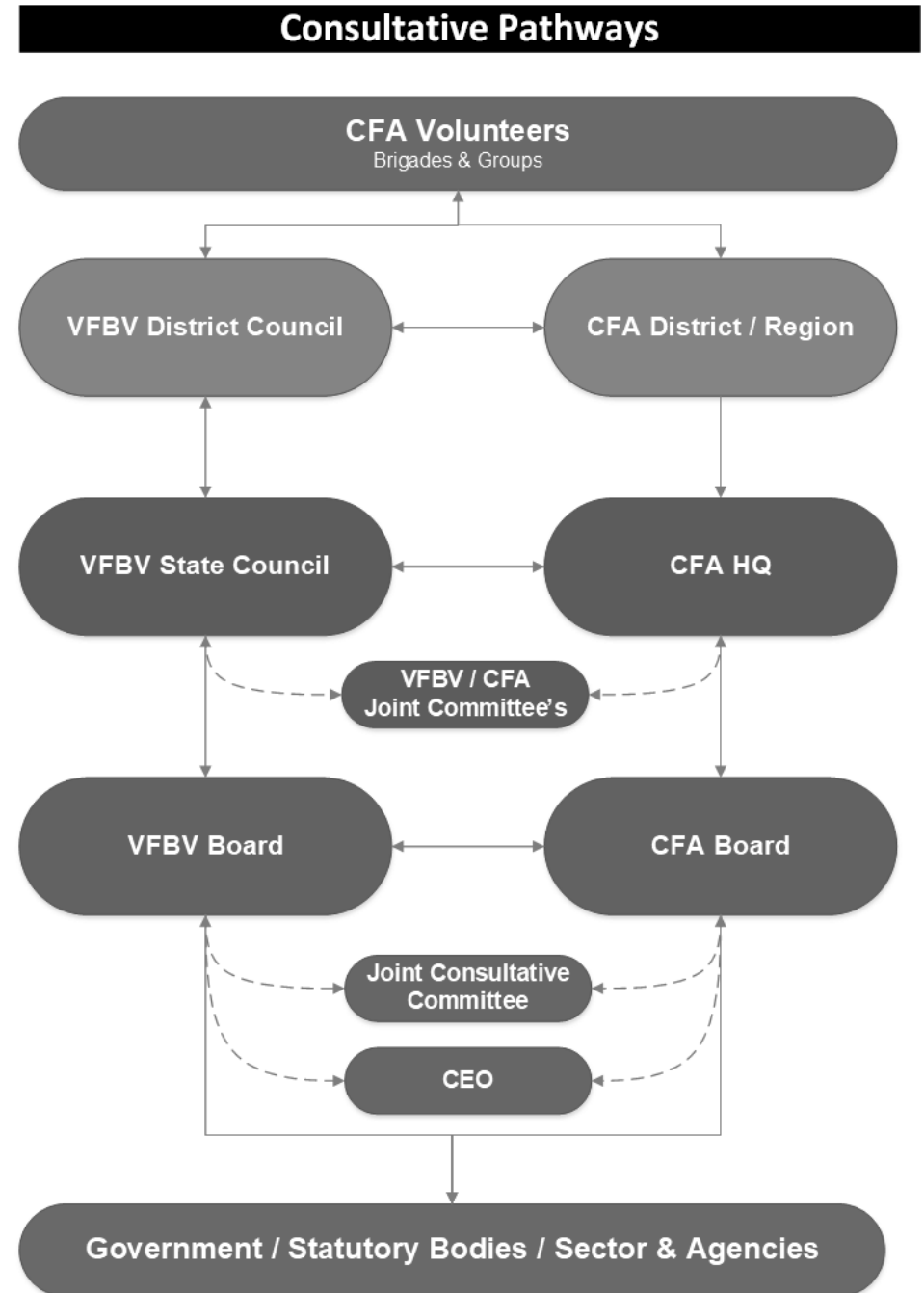
OUR VISION

Strong volunteerism, embraced to build community resilience for a safer Victoria

OUR MISSION

To achieve our vision we will:

- Be well informed of, and responsive to, grass roots volunteer needs, ideas and concerns;
- Represent volunteers and work with CFA and the Victorian Government to ensure ongoing commitment to the principles outlined by the Volunteer Charter;
- Be aware of strategic influences, opportunities and challenges confronting CFA volunteers, volunteerism generally and the decision makers who influence our future;
- Be proactive and prepared to lead and contribute, as volunteer advocates, to decision making and future planning processes at all levels;
- Build the profile and relationships required to position VFBV as an active and respected influence on decision making;
- Deliver communication, representation and decision processes that keep volunteers informed and provide opportunity for volunteers to be consulted on matters that impact on them;
- Resolve concerns and issues raised as quickly as possible;
- Work collaboratively with CFA management to achieve a CFA culture, structure, and operating context that treats volunteers fairly, justly and reasonably.





I have now been in the role of State President of VFBV for over a year and continue to feel privileged and honoured to hold this position.

Over the last year we have welcomed Darren Wallace from District 9 to the board. Darren has brought valuable experience and leadership having served in roles such as Captain, Lieutenant, Secretary, and as a Deputy Group Officer. His vast local government experience has also been invaluable.

If anyone has spoken to me over the last year you will know I talk about feedback. CFA have released over the last year numerous documents and policies for consultation with our volunteers. We have fought very hard to have the opportunity to provide feedback and I encourage you to send through your thoughts, concerns and questions on issues and decisions that may impact you.

VFBV has sought feedback and volunteer views on numerous items such as Drug and Alcohol, Working with Children Clearances, Child Safe and Wellbeing, SOPs, and a Finance suite of policies just to name a few. These documents will impact and affect many volunteers and brigades directly.

One easy but important way for you all to provide feedback to CFA is by completing the yearly Volunteer Welfare & Efficiency Survey. Leadership within CFA use the results of our survey and the data is then used to support decision making. Completing the survey is a fantastic opportunity for your voice to be heard.

Highlights

In June I joined the Minister of Emergency Services, the Hon Jacyn Symes MP as she announced the expansion of the firefighter presumptive legislation to add the three female reproductive cancers (ovarian, cervical, and uterine) to the scheme. We have advocated strongly for these changes and welcomed this announcement while also acknowledging the determination of fellow CFA volunteer and former MP Tania Maxwell who similarly fought hard for these cancers to be included over many years.

I also want to highlight the more than 80 CFA volunteers, who represented our membership on the eight State Joint Committees. All worked exceptionally hard over the last year, and I would like to acknowledge their time, effort and dedication to the role and thank each and every participant for their commitment to making improvements within CFA that lead to better outcomes for all of us.

As a member of the State Joint Training Committee, I am starting to see some momentum regarding the roll out and update of training programs across CFA. This has been a mountain of work for both CFA staff and many volunteers on the committee who continue to provide vital feedback and consultation relating to updated courses.

State Championships

Once again, this year's championships were another highlight on the calendar for two weekends in March. I was delighted to see the smiling faces of our younger members who competed in all events with pride and determination at this year's Junior events. The Seniors were just as inspiring with competitors highlighting the skill of many brigades.

A personal highlight of the Championships was the echelon movement followed by the Torchlight procession on the Saturday night.

These amazing events couldn't be possible without the support of many. This includes our sponsors, participating brigades, dedicated coaches, parents, family and friends, the competitors, numerous judges, and officials, who all give up and dedicate their time and effort to ensure we have a magnificent event.

Over the last year I have also visited many brigades and celebrated many of their accomplishments. Some of these celebrations were of significance including, Echuca, Eaglehawk and Kangaroo Flat who all celebrated 150 years of service to their communities. It was a privilege to attend and acknowledge the service they provide their communities.

I have also attended numerous National Emergency Medal (NEM) presentations around the state. I congratulate all recipients on their award but would like to mention, and not forget the volunteer members who stayed home to protect their own communities so that others could participate in campaign and large-scale events.

Disappointments

This year the lack of respect for volunteers across the emergency services sector was highlighted by the disbandment of the Volunteers Consultative Forum (VCF) by the then Emergency Management Commissioner, Andrew Crisp. This was a slap in the face to every volunteer across the state. The decision to disband the VCF resulted from a secret briefing and recommendation prepared by EMV and given by the Emergency Management Commissioner to the Minister.

The committee of which I have been a member of for many years was totally blindsided by the announcement, and I and my fellow volunteers on the committee were devastated.

The Volunteer Consultative Forum was established in late 2013 to facilitate the government's commitment to consult and engage with emergency volunteers, and to provide a voice direct to the Minister for Emergency Services. It provided an opportunity for members to network, collaborate and develop relationships across the sector, with open communication, sharing and learning. The VCF also successfully and significantly contributed to the development, support, and delivery of various projects, including the 3Vs Final Report (2020) and 3Vs Interim Report (2017), Emergency Management Volunteer Statement (2016), Strategic Priorities for Emergency Management Volunteering in Victoria (2015).

Coincidentally, prior to the committees disbanding, the VCF was working tirelessly to voice volunteer issues and concerns to government through EMV. The current focus of the VCF was to highlight concerns of EMV's poor record of engagement and direct consultation with volunteers and their representative bodies on several matters. Volunteers are wanting integrity and transparency from EMV and can now only be concerned with how EMV will conduct a future review into future consultation with emergency service volunteers.

I won't be frightened off and will continue to advocate strongly for all emergency service volunteers. The Board has designated EMV as an 'organisation of concern' to send a very strong message that volunteers will not be silenced.

Vale

Sadly, during the last 12 months we also acknowledge the passing of three VFBV Life Members, Ron Jacobs OAM AFSM, Robert "Bowser Bob" McDonald and Quentin Turner AFSM.

Ron passed away in February 2023 and was a life member of the Chelsea Fire Brigade (now Patterson River). Ron was the Association Secretary for the Victorian Urban Fire Brigades Association between 1984 and 1993 and was awarded Life Membership of VUFBA in 1995 following his retirement.

Robert passed away in March 2023 and was a longstanding member of the Bowser Fire Brigade which garnered him the nickname of 'Bowser Bob'. He was a member of the Central Council/State Council for the Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association for 26 years. When he was awarded VRFBA Life Membership in 1999 he was one of very few members to have been afforded this honour.

Quentin passed away in late March 2023 and will be fondly remembered as VFBV's inaugural Chair. A member of the Creswick brigade for more than 60 years he also contributed 20 years as a VUFBA Executive Member and a further eight years as a VFBV Board Member. Quentin was one of the driving forces in bringing together the Urban and Rural Associations to form VFBV in the early 2000's and will be remembered as someone who left no stone unturned in seeking better conditions for CFA volunteers.

VFBV extends its sincere respects to Ron, Robert and Quentin's family, friends, and fellow brigade members.

Thank you

On behalf of the board, I would like to acknowledge our VFBV delegates, District Executives and State Councillors, for your valuable contribution towards the Association. We are as strong as the members who attend. I am grateful for their support and effort to solve issues and provide guidance to members.

Thank you also to my fellow board members, who have provided support and guidance over the last year during my first year as President.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment by our VFBV staff. Your tireless support of volunteers goes above and beyond each of your roles. As a board we appreciate the commitment that you give to us.

Over the last year I have worked closely with our CEO Adam Barnett. His knowledge, allegiance, and dedication to VFBV needs to be mentioned. Adam's leadership of VFBV has continued to benefit our organisation. His ability to influence others, with pertinent discussions, advocacy and highlighting our views have resulted in stronger relationships with stakeholders across CFA and Government.

Adam's efforts continue to be extraordinary, and I thank Adam for his unwavering support and guidance as I continue to learn in my journey as State President.

Samantha Collins
VFBV State President



"Are we there yet?" is often the refrain coming from little voices in the back seats of thousands of cars across Australia, often coinciding with important family trips or outings. One cannot help but ponder such a question when I look back on the preceding twelve months.

As always, I look back fondly on all the incredible work our office holders, delegates, volunteers and staff have been able to achieve over the past twelve months, in pursuing our mission to improve and strengthen the world class volunteer and community led fire service we call our CFA.

We continue to work very hard to shape and guide the relationships required to ensure our advocacy on behalf of Victoria's 51,000+ CFA volunteers is understood, respected and acted on. VFBV has continued to use its deep volunteer and brigade networks to ensure we remain in touch with the contemporary issues affecting volunteers as we tap into our enormous reserves of organisational knowledge, leadership and experience to

influence and propose solutions to those issues detracting us from keeping Victorian communities safe and resilient.

This year I would like to thank the Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP as our Minister for Emergency Services for her support throughout the year in ensuring CFA has stable leadership and direction. While we continue to work with the Government through difficult reform outcomes such as the secondment arrangements and the need for sustainable and adequate base funding of our fire services, I have been pleased with the Minister's personal commitment to supporting our volunteers and seeking to better understand our unique challenges. I also commend the expansion of Victoria's presumptive legislation to include additional female reproductive cancers to the scheme, which the Minister has personally led and championed.

I also wish to thank the CFA Chair, CEO and Chief Officer for their individual support and commitment to supporting VFBV, brigades and CFA volunteers by ensuring as custodians of CFA, their respect for the commitments under the Volunteer Charter are honoured. As this year's VFBV volunteer survey demonstrated, volunteer satisfaction with how they are treated by CFA has been on the improve, with five of the seven survey themes reporting an improvement in volunteer satisfaction over the preceding twelve months. Our success in driving many of these improvements can be attributed at least in part to the significant investment we have made cultivating and developing effective and practical relationships with CFA and senior leadership to achieve outcomes.

Our annual survey connects grass root volunteers directly to decision makers and allows volunteers to influence funding, priorities and initiatives aimed at improving CFA. Our survey is the largest of its kind across Australia and is just one of the many ways VFBV gathers evidence-based views from volunteers on matters important to them.

It is these large evidence bases that support VFBV to contribute to significant reviews and agency initiatives, helping us provide highly factual and credible submissions and input. This year we contributed significant time and energy to a number of formal initiatives including the Parliamentary Inquiry into the 2022 flood event in Victoria; COVID-19 vaccination mandates for emergency service volunteers; the Fire Service (Reform) Implementation Monitor's quarterly and annual reports; the Fire District Review Panel's interim determination of fire risk; and CFA's independent culture review implementation plan to name just a few.

Each of these required extensive research, engagement and analysis to inform our advocacy. None of which could be done without the involvement and input of our highly respected volunteers, delegates, State Councillors and VFBV office holders.

This year the Board has also reported a greater than expected short-term operating surplus that continues to ensure VFBV remains in a strong and secure financial position that allows us to weather any future storms. This year's surplus is due to underspends and not only comes from prudent financial management such as our decision not to draw down on our consultancy budget and reduced staffing but has been helped by two unexpected factors. The first of these factors was the quicker than anticipated rise in interest rates on deposits. This has benefited us due to our reliance on using our investment income from our savings to generate a portion of our operating cash flow. The second factor was the slower than anticipated return of volunteers to our face-to-face forums and working parties following COVID-19 restrictions. As reported in previous years, we have been reluctant to not budget for the full return of members to our face-to-face forums to ensure there were no artificial barriers to members returning in person. But it is clear that many have adapted to remote and electronic meetings which has had a corresponding impact on reducing our travel and accommodation reimbursements. We will continue to monitor and are exploring some additional member initiatives to redirect these savings in future years.

Over the course of the year, our State VFBV/CFA Joint Committee's spent considerable time addressing issues and pursuing improvements that empower and support our members. Our delegates have advocated strongly on all manner of issues to do with CFA Training including the expansion of volunteer instructors - trainers - and - assessors; new training courses for structural firefighting; a review of the general firefighter program; monitoring of capital works programs

including new fire stations and appliances; development of the volunteer 'give us a hand' recruitment campaign; trials of the new cadet program for our youth members; support for members involved in CFA's complaint process; support for diversity and inclusion initiatives including the provision of clothing and equipment to support greater gender diversity; completion of the volunteer workwear initiative; next generation bushfire PPC; implementation of the Australian fire danger rating system; respiratory protection for bushfire firefighters; radio replacement and allocation; and addressing the governance and reporting of occupational health and safety issues through district and regional committees.

While by no means an exhaustive list, it gives an indication of the breadth and quantum of the issues that VFBV is pursuing on behalf of our members and detailed further throughout this report.

We have also been required to staunchly defend CFA volunteers rights and protections throughout the year, helping to reform CFA's complaints process and ensuring natural justice and procedural fairness are well entrenched in any process where there are significant imbalances of power. This advocacy has extended to arguing for volunteer compensation that is compassionate and remains fair and equitable and member privacy is protected on matters involving their health, including improved mental health initiatives aimed at supporting members deal with traumatic experiences and incidents.

Sadly we have also been required to stand up for volunteers and give a voice on matters that have attempted to sideline or disrespect the volunteer contribution. We have advocated strongly on issues such as the lack of equitable budgetary resourcing for CFA; the blatant violation of the emergency management volunteer statement by EMV; the lack of sector wide after action reviews from last year's flood event; the inadequate investment in developing volunteer incident management systems and personnel; the continued decline of volunteer numbers and the potential impacts from climate change that will require stronger investment in volunteers to build corresponding capability across the fire services to deal with longer, drier and more volatile fire seasons.

Pleasingly, our unflinching focus on advocating and supporting our members has seen an increase to our already all-time highs of affiliation and support amongst brigades. This year we achieved a further 1% increase in support, taking our affiliation levels to 95%. In a further nod to our tireless work supporting the welfare of volunteers, our welfare fund which has operated since 1913 predating even CFA itself has assisted more than 1,328 volunteers with more than \$2.5 million in welfare grants disbursed. This year we have achieved the highest level of brigade subscription levels with 1,087 brigades electing to subscribe to the fund.

Our welfare fund committee of management, made up entirely of volunteers has successfully navigated historical record low interest rates over recent years, and protected the funds capital investments while ensuring brigade subscription fees remain at record lows. This year was the second year in a row that fees were reduced, an extraordinary achievement when considering other comparable health and insurance type products fees in the broader community have skyrocketed. All the while we have protected the sustainability of the capital base to ensure future demand is covered safeguarding the fund for the future so we can continue to protect volunteers in perpetuity for decades to come.

In Samantha's State President's Report we acknowledge the passing of three life members, and I wish to also acknowledge the passing of the Hon. Jane Garrett MP, and Bill Watson AFSM. Both of these people had a significant impact on our service. Jane served as our Minister between Dec 2014 – June 2016, and was an inspiring, brave Minister and true friend to CFA volunteers. Her courage knew no bounds and we were heartbroken when she lost her fight with breast cancer on the 2nd July 2022. Bill was a passionate CFA volunteer for over 55 years, and was a strong VFBV advocate for firefighter safety. He was instrumental in the establishment of many of our community recovery initiatives after fires, flood and droughts and will always be remembered as a staunch and compassionate advocate of CFA volunteers. Bill passed away on the 11th October 2022 following complications from heart surgery. Both Jane and Bill will always be fondly remembered and deeply missed.

To our staff team I express my most sincere appreciation for the work they do to tirelessly support and encourage our volunteers and delegates. They are the most loyal and committed staff that one could ask for, and no matter the issues they are presented with, always work above and beyond to try and help our members find positive outcomes.

To our Board members, State Councillors, District Council members and brigade and group delegates across the State, I reaffirm my respect and admiration for the work you do every day to support your fellow CFA volunteers and thank-you for your efforts. While often a thankless task, you choose to put other volunteers ahead of yourselves each and every day and I acknowledge the incredible sacrifices you make in order to advocate on behalf of volunteers with integrity and passion.

To my fellow CFA volunteers, thank-you for all you do for your communities. Not just your own community, but the thousands of others across the country that benefit from your knowledge, experience and professionalism. As your representative body, we are proud of the work you do and reaffirm our unwavering commitment to support you and advocating on your behalf.

Adam Barnett
VFBV Chief Executive Officer

Despite a challenging year, VFBV continued to successfully advocate for CFA volunteers on various issues and contribute to the continuous improvement of Victoria's fire services in many ways. While most restrictions relating to COVID-19 global pandemic had subsided, impacts were still felt by VFBV, Brigades and members with some disruptions still present throughout the year. VFBV has kept focus on all aspects of our portfolio and delivered pleasing results. In addition to the issues covered in detail elsewhere in this report, the following is a brief snapshot of some of the key issues for the year:

- VFBV's Welfare Fund distributed \$170,668 to assist 40 volunteers and their families during this financial year with more than \$2.5 million dollars distributed since the Welfare Fund was established in 1913.
- The annual VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey had more than 2,000 CFA volunteer participants in 2022, with the results studied by VFBV, CFA and Government to better understand volunteer opinions.
- VFBV Board, State Council, eight Joint VFBV/CFA Committees, 21 District Councils and numerous Working Parties continued their hard work and advocacy pursuing a wide range of issues impacting on volunteers' day to day work and our future success.
- VFBV provided assistance to many Brigades and Groups applying for VESEP grants throughout the year, with an updated VFBV Application Help Pack distributed along with case studies of successful grants from previous years to support applications.
- VFBV continue to distribute the VFBV Quarterly Supplement in partnership with Fire Wise four times a year. The VFBV Quarterly Supplement is distributed to all Brigade Secretaries and Captains, Group Officers and Group Secretaries and includes 16 pages of relevant news, updates and information on current issues being pursued by VFBV on behalf of members alongside VFBV's popular Joint Committee Two-Minute Briefings
- VFBV continued to monitor the implementation of the Victorian Government's Fire Services Reform following the creation of Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) on 1 July 2020. VFBV also continued to advocate for volunteers, particularly those volunteers at the former integrated, now Co-located Brigades. In 2022-23 this included the release of the first determination of change in fire risk from the Fire District Review Panel.
- The 2023 State Championships were again run as a combined event with the Urban Senior and Rural State Championships held in Mooroopna on the same weekend and the Urban Junior State Championship was conducted the weekend prior at the same location.
- VFBV welcomed the State Government announcement in June that three additional female-specific cancers will be included in Presumptive Legislation following advocacy from VFBV, volunteers, and former MP Tania Maxwell.
- The VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust (VRST) has ordered four trailer pumps for distribution to three CFA Groups in District 11 and one Group in District 24. It is hoped that the trailer pumps will be delivered in the next financial year.
- VFBV was disappointed to learn of Emergency Management Victoria's decision to disband the Volunteer Consultative Forum with no consultation with the members of the forum, breaking a commitment made in the Emergency Management Volunteer Statement signed in 2016 to consult with volunteers on issues that may affect them.
- From October 2022 to January 2023 Victoria was impacted by a major flooding event, with thousands of CFA volunteers mobilising to assist the Victorian SES and communities around the state in responding to the flood event.
- Throughout the year, VFBV conducted formal consultation on one draft Standard Operating Procedure, six draft new and revised CFA policies and procedures, COVID-19 vaccination mandates and other surveys; gathering over 3,800 items of formal feedback from our members.
- February 2023 marked the 40th anniversary of the devastating Ash Wednesday fires which brought about many improvements to fire services which are still evident today.

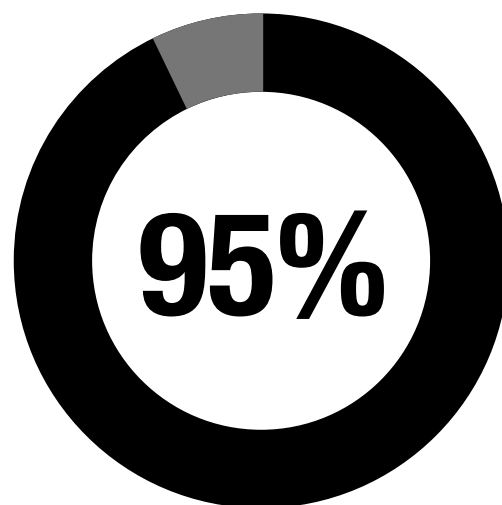
Again in 2022-23 CFA Brigades and Groups have showed that it is more important than ever that volunteers have a strong, united, independent and credible voice.

VFBV's Brigade affiliation rate increased by a further 1% during the year, with 95% of Brigades demonstrating their strong support for VFBV's important work in representing and advocating for all CFA volunteers. VFBV also received strong support from CFA Groups with the majority of Groups choosing to affiliate with VFBV.

The strong support from Brigades and Groups can be in part attributed to the hard work and good local representation of each VFBV District Council, Brigade and Group delegates and State Council delegates.

These high levels of affiliation are especially appreciated as CFA and the wider emergency management sector continue to undergo significant change. With Brigades and Groups continuing to choose to contribute to VFBV's tireless support and advocacy of CFA volunteers.

The high level of affiliation reinforces the importance of VFBV's legislated role in the CFA Act and our driving motivation to encourage, maintain and strengthen volunteerism and the capacity of volunteers to deliver CFA services. We continue our efforts in highlighting the critical importance of the role that CFA volunteers play not only within CFA but also across the entire emergency management sector in Victoria.



To thank Brigades and Groups for their support, all Brigades and Groups who paid their 2022-23 affiliation invoices prior to 31st July 2022 were automatically entered into a prize draw to win one of four prizes valued at over \$5,000. The prizes were donated again in 2022-23 by GAAM Emergency Products and Powdersafe. VFBV acknowledges the kind and generous donations from GAAM Emergency Products and Powdersafe in support of VFBV and CFA Groups, Brigades and volunteers.

The affiliation prize winners were:

G-Force Nozzle and Gated Wye donated by GAAM

Root Soaker donated by GAAM

TFT Break Apart Nozzle donated by GAAM

Five 3325 Helmet Torches
and carry case donated by Powdersafe

Toolern Vale Fire Brigade – District 14

Dartmoor Fire Brigade – District 4

Stratford Fire Brigade – District 10

Tungamah Group – District 22

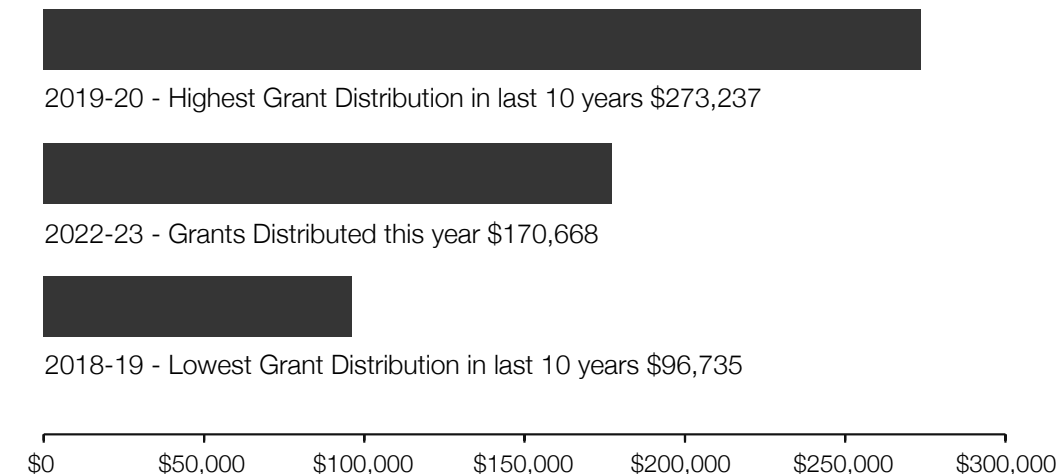
**of CFA Brigades affiliated
with VFBV in 2022-2023**

2022-23 was a year of milestones for the VFBV Welfare Fund. Record subscription levels were reached, with 1,087 or 91% of brigades electing to subscribe to the Fund. With the Fund also marking 110 years of operation, grants distributed from the Fund have now exceeded \$2.5 million since the Fund's establishment in 1913.

For the second year in a row a discount was applied to the Welfare Fund subscriptions, acknowledging the fundraising undertaken during the 2019-20 bushfire season. The Welfare Fund Committee of Management carefully considered the health and sustainability of the capital base of the Welfare Fund with estimated future demand to ensure that the capital base of the Fund is protected and that the Fund can continue to serve future generations of volunteers for decades to come.

This year the Welfare Fund distributed \$170,668 in grants to assist 40 volunteers and their families who were experiencing personal financial hardship. At the same time the Fund's high approval rate of applications continued, with 100% of applications submitted to the Fund awarded a grant in 2022-23.

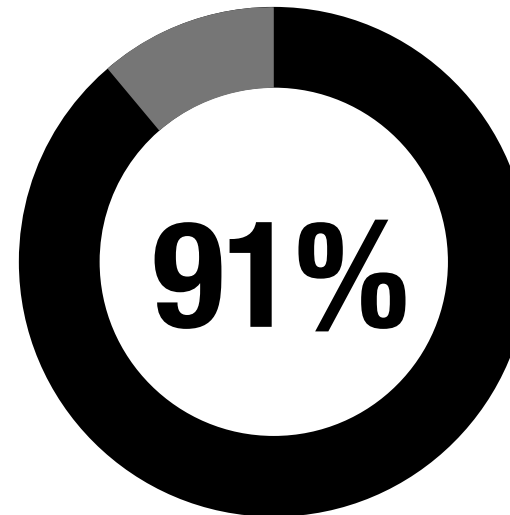
Overall, since the creation of the Welfare Fund in 1913, the Fund has assisted 1,328 volunteers with more than \$2.5 million in grants distributed. The Fund was established to aid members who find themselves experiencing severe financial hardship and are unable to meet their essential living expenses.



Typical circumstances of volunteers who have been supported by the Fund over the last year included volunteers facing financial difficulty due to prolonged illness, bereavement, loss of earnings or costs associated with supporting a family member in hospital or undertaking medical treatment or hospitalisation as well as assisting members who may have been impacted by natural disasters.

The Welfare Fund is run as a Government-approved charity under Australian Taxation Office rules with a Committee of Management comprising of six long-serving CFA volunteers. The Fund is independently audited annually, with all operating and administrative costs covered by VFBV. This ensures that every dollar earned by the Fund's investments and subscriptions goes to assisting volunteers in need. Grants from the VFBV Welfare Fund are financed by Brigade subscriptions along with donations and interest earned on the Fund's invested capital, which ensures the Fund's capital base is maintained to support CFA volunteers in need for future generations.

Supporting volunteers in their time of need is not possible without the support and dedication of the VFBV delegates who serve as members of the Welfare Fund Committee of Management. The work that these members contribute selflessly to support fellow CFA volunteers in their time of need is incredibly important and appreciated. Thank you to the members who put their hands up to take on these roles year after year.



91% of CFA Brigades are members of the VFBV Welfare Fund in 2022-2023

Over the last year, VFBV and CFA have worked together to re-invigorate the Joint Committee process by introducing standard Terms of Reference and governance structure that will encourage better outcomes from the quarterly meetings. VFBV CEO Adam Barnett worked with the CFA CEO Natalie MacDonald and Chief Officer Jason Heffernan to reinvigorate the Joint Committee processes and to agree on overarching governance arrangements to ensure that the Committees are set up for success and supported by both organisations.

As a result of this work, 2023 saw the introduction of an eighth Joint Committee to ensure the Operational Capability and Operational Performance aspects are both given the due diligence they require and a renewed commitment from all sides to strengthen these critical consultative mechanisms. The new commitments included a renewed focus on genuine engagement, transparency and accountability with new mechanisms to provide oversight and escalation where necessary. The revised committee structures don't rely on VFBV and CFA always agreeing, but rather provide for a formal mechanism for each organisation to discuss and explore issues of mutual interest.

Collectively the Joint Committees meet at least an average of 32 times a year and involve more than 80 volunteer delegates drawn from each of the 21 VFBV District Councils. These commitments account for more than 10,000 individual volunteer hours contributed to working with CFA to solve issues of common interest.

VFBV sincerely thanks all Joint Committee volunteer delegates for their time and contribution, which is instrumental to our consultative process. Their efforts make an immense difference to all volunteers across the state and to the effectiveness of volunteer input into CFA decision-making.

Communications & Technology	Technology & Innovation	Dave Arnott Nathan Jolly	Andrew Bath Robert O'Connor	John Cowan David Sidebottom	Shane Cramer Gary Taylor	Peter Dillon	Neil Irving-Dusting
Community Safety	Community Safety	Samantha Ackland Katie McKenzie	Mary Anne Egan Shaun Robyns	Elissa Jans Darryl Wagstaff	Bruce Jewell	Annaleise Johnson	Phil Lind
Equipment & Infrastructure	Equipment & Infrastructure	Kim Anderson Bridget Robinson	Noel Austin David Stephens	Geof Bassett Ben Stork	Jason Kerr Robert Waterson	Mark Jones Peter White	Stephen O'Keefe Trevor Wyatt
HR, Welfare & OH&S	People, Culture & Safety	Steven Atkinson Michael O'Mara	Kelvin Bateman Eric Smith	Kevin Chisholm Howard Smith	Mark Gravell Michelle Terray	Allie Guegan Jennifer Tonkin	Vickie Linaker
Operations	Operational Capability	Paul Denham Adrian Marshman	Timothy Desmond Ryan O'Shannessy	Cara Disint Peter Shaw	Rohan France Leigh Tomlinson	Lachlan Gales Greg Walcott	Josh Gamble Bernadette Williams
	Operational Performance	Jan Cleary Garry Morgan	Eric Collier David Webb Ware	Phillip Davidson	Chris Dent	Peter Hannan	Mark King
Training	Training	Craig Aiton Harold Jochs	Noel Arandt Raymond McGeehan	Victoria Clarke Greg McIntyre	Samantha Collins Kimberley McMahon	Andy Cusack Rod Taylor	Neil Hillas Justin Wills
Volunteerism	Member Services	Malcolm Bishop Julie Owens	Robert Clark Roger Smith	Maurice Dumesny Bryan Walpole	Carly Ficheroux	Graeme Jilbert	Max Johnson

Overview

Some key issues that were addressed by our consultative forums and working parties during 2022-23:

RESPOND TO URBAN FIRE TRAINING COURSE

After many false starts, the full release of the Respond to Urban Fire Course, formally known as Structural Firefighter continued to edge closer. Following a long period of development, CFA released a draft of the training package in October 2022 which was approximately 14 days long and included additional units of competency than what was required under the national competency. While the material contained in the course was quite good, additional elements added significantly to the length of time required to complete the course.

Following strong advocacy from VFBV, CFA agreed to trim the course to align to the Respond to Urban competency with a revised length of approximately 9 days. The revised course was released by CFA to VFBV delegates to the Committee only one week prior to the February 2023 Joint VFBV/CFA Training Committee meeting which CFA requested that delegates endorse the package at. In a show of good faith several delegates worked through the large amount of material prior to the meeting and concluded that the course was not ready for release, highlighting errors and quality control issues with learning materials and assessments which were disjointed. A compromise was reached between CFA and VFBV delegates for CFA to refine the materials while also simultaneously delivering a few pilot courses in consultation with VFBV to gain further feedback prior to the full release of the course.

Disappointingly CFA did not keep to this commitment nor share updated materials with VFBV prior to the course being rolled out. Following escalation, VFBV secured an agreement with CFA that the course materials will be shared with the Committee for review and delegates were provided with an opportunity to provide further feedback as well as VFBV delegates attending some courses as observers. The feedback gathered through this process will then be considered by CFA for adoption into the course.

While VFBV still have concerns with the overall length of the course, the recent changes to the public safety training packages have made it difficult to streamline this course any further. The Joint VFBV/CFA Training Committee will monitor how districts are scheduling and delivering the course to ensure that it is manageable for volunteers and will also continue to push CFA to develop flexible methods of delivering this course to make it accessible to the largest number of volunteers possible.

FIRE MEDICAL RESPONSE

After long advocacy by VFBV, the Victorian Government and CFA announced the establishment of the Fire Medical Response (FMR) program to be rolled out in 50 locations across Victoria in July 2022. VFBV welcomed this announcement which will continue the proud tradition of the Emergency Medical Response (EMR) program that has been operating within CFA since 2008 which saw CFA partner with Ambulance Victoria to simultaneously dispatch a brigade along with an ambulance for specific medical emergencies requiring early interventions such as CPR and defibrillation. The rollout and expansion of the original EMR program has encountered many roadblocks over the years, including the Victorian Government announcing in 2015 that EMR would only be expanded to CFA's career staff at integrated locations, excluding volunteers. VFBV continued its advocacy and support for the expansion of medical response long before the pandemic which stretched health services even further. To have a medical response program finally endorsed and funded is a wonderful result for CFA and the wider Victorian community. Following the announcement VFBV requested the CFA work with us to develop a comprehensive informed decision-making model that clearly outlines the additional commitments of taking on FMR, as well as the likely impacts both positive and negative. VFBV will continue to work with CFA on the rollout of FMR in the coming year through working parties and Joint Committees.

MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

CFA advised delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Technology and Innovation Committee of its plans to strengthen its online security by introducing multi-factor authentication (MFA) for all CFA online systems including Members Online, FIRS, email and other applications. VFBV delegates were surprised to learn that CFA was not going to provide any options for members who either don't have a mobile phone or a device compatible with an authenticator app or without mobile service at their home or place of work which would have left these members locked out of CFA's online systems. VFBV lobbied strongly to ensure that no CFA member would be left behind and convinced CFA to offer a small token device to members who cannot access a code via their phone. This was a great outcome for members and demonstrates the value of volunteer consultation and how the committee processes can work collaboratively to solve problems. The rollout of MFA will commence in the coming months and VFBV delegates will continue to monitor for any further volunteer impacts during the rollout.

CFA MEDICAL APPEAL AND GUIDELINES REVIEW

Following concerns raised by VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA HR, Welfare and OH&S Committee about the inconsistent approach to assessing medical conditions, work continued on CFA role analysis to identify the tasks that may require a medical professional to assess

a member's suitability to undertake. These role statements are designed to encourage a more informed and consistent assessment by a medical practitioner of the impact a condition may have on a person's ability to perform a specific task or role. They have been designed to minimise needless and arbitrary 'stand down' orders being issued to volunteers when they notify CFA of a medical condition.

PUMPING PITS

VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Operations Committee have continued to raise concerns from brigades to resolve the suspension of the use of pumping pits dating back to February 2015. Following a renewed push for a resolution, CFA's environmental compliance team began investigating options for brigades to maintain the necessary pits in a safe manner with two different options being considered. The first option was to reinstate the pumping pits with a water quality testing regime to ensure firefighter safety and the second is moving to replace the pits with a 2000 litre collar tank. With pros and cons for each option VFBV delegates suggested that CFA run a trial of the use of collar tanks while also considering further a regular testing and maintenance program for existing pumping pits to enable their use. The committee delegates continue to pursue a resolution to this issue which ensures firefighter health and safety while also maintaining critical training infrastructure that supports volunteers.

MOBILE ENGAGEMENT UNITS

As reported last year, VFBV delegates from the VFBV/CFA Joint Community Safety Committee worked with the Mobile Engagement Unit (MEU) project team and CFA engineering on the design of Mobile Engagement Units funded by public donations following the 2019-20 Black Summer fires. An initial eight units have been built and are fitted out with large external TV screens, whiteboards, WiFi, external lighting and a PA system for brigades to use at events to ensure that a consistent fire safety message is delivered to communities across the state. Each MEU is able to be driven with a standard car licence and are based strategically around the state with the aim of volunteer travel time to access an MEU to be limited to an hour or two. The delegates to the Community Safety Committee also requested that CFA develop an online booking system for allow brigade Community Safety Coordinators to easily book a one of the MEU's which CFA has developed for members to access the MEU's for their brigade or community events.

FORWARD COMMAND VEHICLES (FCV)

Over the past year, VFBV received a request from the VFBV District 20 Council for CFA to consider a standard for brigade or group identification to be placed on the rear of FCV's similar to the current standard for tankers. The District 20 Council highlighted that there has been confusion during strike team deployments as to whether

the lead tanker is following the correct vehicle on busy firegrounds. This was raised at the Joint VFBV/CFA Equipment and Infrastructure Committee and it has been agreed that it would be possible to include the brigade or group name on the rear of new standard build FCV's. Committee delegates also requested that CFA investigate funding to retrofit existing vehicles if brigades or groups are unable to fund the retrofitting themselves.

VFBV delegates to the Equipment and Infrastructure Committee have also requested that CFA undertake a review of funding arrangements for the maintenance of group and brigade owned FCV's as the current brigade and group allowances are insufficient to cover the costs in full. VFBV also continue to highlight to the State Government the grossly inadequate funding for CFA to maintain its fleet and continues to call for fair and equitable funding that is adequate and sustainable.

IMPROVED CONFLICT CASE MANAGEMENT

For many years now, VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA People, Culture and Safety Committee have been advocating for better capturing and recording of all complaint matters, especially those that historically have not been overseen by the CFA Complaints Department but have been managed at the District level. CFA have recently implemented a cloud-based contact and case management application which is secure and effectively records all complaint matters both formal and less formal. This has been a longstanding concern for VFBV delegates, as many less formal matters have been left unresolved, some for years, and volunteers involved have been left waiting for adequate resolution. In the past CFA relied upon spreadsheets which were only as current and accurate as manual recording allowed. The new system was implemented in November 2022 and CFA concede there may be historical matters that have 'slipped through the cracks' and have not been captured. VFBV delegates will continue to monitor the capturing and reporting aspects of the new case management system to ensure that matters are being dealt with in a timely manner.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Member Services Committee have continued to monitor the number of CFA volunteers over the past year which have continued to decline, as well as receiving requests from brigades via their VFBV District Council that more support is needed to assist brigades with recruitment. The delegates to the Member Services Committee have been calling for some time for a statewide recruitment campaign to support local recruitment drives and while CFA joined with other emergency sector organisations to develop a digital 'give us a hand' campaign there has been little government funding contributed to allow for

any broadscale TV and radio campaigns which has hampered local recruitment efforts.

The committee delegates also continued to reinforce to CFA that assistance is also required to retain current members and brigade viability through a reduction in red tape, assistance with training and more support for members of the brigade management teams. The delegates also highlighted continuing concerns with the volunteer recruitment hub, particularly for junior members transitioning to senior membership upon their 16th birthday. VFBV has received complaints from brigades where members haven't received a notification to transfer their membership which results in them being automatically deregistered and then having to start the registration process from scratch. CFA have asked brigades to monitor their junior members transitioning to senior membership while they investigate how this is occurring and how to better link brigades into the process. The VFBV delegates also continue to raise concerns about the stop-start nature of the recruitment hub and is seeking changes to better streamline the process and to avoid new member applications stalling in the recruitment system.

MOBILITY SOLUTIONS PROJECT

VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Communications and Technology Committee were informed by CFA throughout the year that the Mobility Solutions Project have been working on addressing the installation of mounting brackets for tablets, cameras and dashcams in CFA vehicles. The project noted that many brigades were using tablets to access pre-plans, alerting services and maps when responding to callouts and brigades had been requesting guidance on how these devices could be mounted safely in vehicles. Through the Mobility Solutions project CFA have also been trialling a number of CFA supplied tablets in 30 vehicles which have access to FIRS online, SAS, HAZMAT, Road Crash Rescue, weather, EMCOP and pre-plan applications already loaded to assist brigades in reducing the workload and the amount of paperwork required by volunteers after responding to call outs. The Committee will continue to monitor the project and its rollout to brigades.

OH&S COMMITTEES

VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA HR, Welfare & OH&S Committee have been raising concerns for some time around the inconsistency of the structure of District based OH&S committees and the lack of meeting regularity of those committees and their reporting lines. Delegates worked with CFA to build a framework to standardise the structure of all OH&S Committees across the State. Delegates suggested a senior officer such as the ACFO should be accountable for ensuring meetings take place and CFA agreed, and further, that these meetings are attended by a Chair, volunteer OH&S

delegates, VFBV representatives, CFA management and staff and consultants as necessary. The consensus of delegates was that a District level committee would be preferable to a Regional level, as a regional perspective may be too broad and creates increased travel impositions on many attendees. CFA continue to work on a policy addressing governance, structure, terms of reference and possible guiding templates for District OH&S Committees.

VOLUNTEER TRAINER AND ASSESSORS

Delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Training Committee have continued to raise with CFA inconsistencies across the state in relation to the endorsement of Volunteer Trainer and Assessors. CFA headquarters agreed to write to all Managers for Learning and Development to ensure that the endorsement process for volunteer trainer and assessors is applied consistently across each region and district. VFBV also continued to pursue with CFA professional development sessions for trainer and assessors to ensure that all volunteer trainer and assessors are able to demonstrate ongoing professional development to maintain their qualification to deliver training for a Registered Training Organisation. Committee delegates will continue to monitor the rollout of professional development sessions and the endorsement process across the state.

BREATHING APPARATUS (BA)

As reported last year, the VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Operations Committee have continued to express their frustration at the lack of a clear statewide BA strategy for CFA. VFBV consider that a statewide BA strategy should be a priority for the organisation and continue to request that CFA broadly consult with members on the strategy during development as there is a lot of interest from members across the state.

The VFBV delegates were also disappointed to learn that CFA has progressed with a trail of a helmet decal to indicate whether a member has internal or external BA qualifications without any involvement or consultation with Committee delegates. The Committee delegates continue to request that they are involved and engaged in decisions around the use of decals for members with BA qualifications before a final decision is made.

DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN FRV FIRE DISTRICT

VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Community Safety Committee are monitoring the implementation of an Operations Bulletin released by the Chief Officer in April 2023 for brigades wishing to conduct community engagement activities or programs within Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) areas. The bulletin is intended to provide guidance on the appropriate process each agency should

follow when delivering community engagement within the FRV fire district. It also aims to promote collaboration and coordination between the two agencies. The Committee delegates will monitor the implementation to ensure that affected brigades are not unnecessarily impacted and that sufficient community engagement services continue to benefit the community.

PRESUMPTIVE LEGISLATION CLAIMS ASSISTANCE

A brochure outlining the Gallagher Bassett procedure for volunteers making a cancer claim was developed by Gallagher Bassett in conjunction with valuable feedback and input by VFBV delegates. The brochure was requested by VFBV through the Joint VFBV/CFA HR, Welfare and OH&S Committee to improve the volunteer claims experience and to remove a lot of the confusion volunteers had been reporting. Gallagher Bassett are the external law firm engaged by WorkSafe to manage the volunteer cancer claims. It is CFA and VFBV's intention that CFA will be overseeing the Gallagher Bassett 'end to end' process for volunteers, to ensure that Gallagher Bassett are making the process as seamless and easy as possible for volunteers and that CFA is appropriately supporting its members throughout the process, acknowledging these members will often be in distress or unwell as they undergo treatment at the same time as lodging a claim under presumptive legislation.

APPROVED CFA EQUIPMENT REGISTER

Some time ago, VFBV delegates via the Joint VFBV/CFA Equipment and Infrastructure Committee requested that CFA develop an up-to-date equipment register of all approved CFA equipment along with ordering and supply details to ensure that brigades have a single source of truth when purchasing and replacing non-stores equipment. While CFA initially agreed to this request and some initial work commenced on developing a register with personnel changes and the passage of time, progress has been slow and CFA have now confirmed that a proposed prototype didn't progress due to funding constraints. VFBV delegates expressed disappointment at this decision and stressed the improved safety outcomes of ensuring brigades have easy access to this information. The VFBV delegates also noted that there is a current online register of equipment for rescue brigades which could be expanded to include other approved equipment. Delegates to the committee will continue to pursue the development of an equipment register in the coming year.

FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM (FIRS) APP

VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Communications and Technology Committee requested improvements to the FIRS app that is currently available for brigades to enter their fire reports. Concerns were raised by volunteers that the app is currently unable to filter questions based on the relevance of details already entered as previously the FIRS call takers would just skip over these questions

if they weren't relevant to the report. The delegates also suggested to CFA that there could be some prompts or information provided to members when submitting details which would assist with improving data quality. The VFBV delegates also raised concerns with CFA that member attendance at planned burns was not able to be recorded in FIRS. CFA agreed with delegates that this was an oversight and they have engaged a project manager to ensure that planned burn activities can be more easily captured and reported in FIRS. The VFBV delegates will continue to monitor the progress of this work in the coming year.

MAPPING PACKAGES

Over the past year VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Communications and Technology Committee have been working with CFA to determine how digital mapping packages can be better utilised by CFA members. These discussions included whether built in navigation systems in appliances could be activated for use by members and the risks and benefits of using these systems; the use of mapping software packages including Fire Mapper and Avenza and advantages and disadvantages of each package in a CFA context as well as the use of VicMap Viewer, EM-COP and eMap online. CFA informed delegates that as each package has benefits and limitations they do not believe that they can standardise to only one package at this time and that members should use the mapping package that they feel most comfortable using as long as the data can be exported in a format that is usable by CFA's systems.

SERVICE HISTORY

Over the past twelve months, VFBV has become aware of some auxiliary members who's service records do not contain their historical auxiliary years of service following a change to membership classifications in 2012 where auxiliary members could transfer to the brigade member title. Through the Joint VFBV/CFA Volunteerism Committee, CFA have developed a process for members to update their records by providing evidence of their involvement or by completing a statutory declaration. This can then be provided to the members local district office for validation prior to the updating of service records. VFBV delegates to the Volunteerism committee have requested that this procedure also be added to the brigade management manual along with the process to recognise members who have died in the line of duty.

FIREGROUND TABARDS

For a number of years now delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Operations Committee have been raising concerns about the availability of tabards, the length of time it has taken CFA to finalise tabards for operational roles on the fireground and that the current lime green tabards in use made it difficult to identify the incident controller at structural incidents due to colour similarities with

structural PPC. Progress has been made over the last year with CFA funding the rollout of new tabards which are made of a lighter, fire-retardant woven material which comply with Australian Standards and also have interchangeable titles. The new tabards are also red in colour to make it easy to identify the incident controller. The Committee delegates welcomed the introduction of new tabards and the additional funding provided from recovered budget savings to support the rollout.

WELLBEING ASSISTANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED IN COMPLAINTS PROCESS

The VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA People, Culture and Safety Committee alerted CFA to a number of volunteers involved in the CFA complaints process, who upon contacting the CFA Wellbeing Line for support, were troubled to find that some counsellors were unsure if their role enabled them to deal effectively with volunteers discussing conflict matters. This caused undue distress to these volunteers at a moment of vulnerability and anguish. CFA have since begun discussions with the wellbeing line providers to stop this happening in the future and to better educate the services how these matters should be dealt with. The role of wellbeing services is not to solve the conflict matter but support distressed volunteers through the experience.

RADIO REPLACEMENT PROJECT

VFBV welcomed the announcement that \$126 million had been allocated to the Radio Replacement Project to introduce new radios into service across the state. The VFBV/CFA Joint Communications & Technology Committee have been monitoring the project through the testing and pilot phases to ensure that the radios are suitable in a range of situations and terrains. While there is a risk that the rollout of new radios may be delayed due to a worldwide semiconductor shortage the Committee have been assured that the funding for the project has been quarantined.

JOINT EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE WORKING PARTIES

Throughout the year, VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Equipment and Infrastructure Committee have been busy contributing to a number of working parties on new vehicle or appliance designs.

Ultra Heavy Tanker: the working party continued to meet and review feedback from brigades who had been involved in using the first prototype ultra heavy tanker. This feedback has been incorporated into an updated prototype which has recently completed its quality assurance and final checks to allow it to be released to the field. CFA have committed to the construction of 29 ultra heavy tankers in the first round of funding and are hoping that they will all be completed for the 2023-24 fire season.

CAFS Tankers: VFBV representatives to the Compressed Air Foam Systems (CAFS) tanker working party have reported good progress with CFA purchasing from the Tasmanian Fire Service a CAFS 8.1 Heavy Pumper Tanker which is undergoing modifications inline with CFA's build requirements and standards. This is further to the retrofitting of two 4.4R Heavy Tankers and a 3.4C Heavy Tanker Conversion to allow for the use of CAFS. CFA is also working on the development of training documentation which should be completed shortly to allow all vehicles to become operational.

The committee delegates have also contributed to working parties relating to helmet stowage in vehicles, light tanker, next generation CFA pumper and the next generation big fill appliance.

CHANGES TO VOLUNTEER SUSPENSION PROCESS

VFBV Delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA HR, Welfare & OH&S Committee raised concerns with CFA on the increasingly indiscriminate and routine way in which volunteer suspensions are frequently being used by CFA, often before any investigation or finding of wrongdoing has occurred. With some investigations taking many months to complete, these volunteers have not had the presumption of innocence and their wellbeing and mental state have often been adversely affected. The suspension of members under the CFA Regulations is not mandatory, it is discretionary and should only be done if there is a clear safety concern or for serious matters requiring immediate action. In the past many volunteers were suspended at the instigation of any complaint, no matter how frivolous and VFBV believe, these suspensions were not always justified, especially when these members have then gone on to find themselves fully cleared of the charges. Where the safety of volunteers is compromised, VFBV agree, a suspension may be reasonably considered however, VFBV have constantly questioned the need for 'carte blanche' suspension of volunteers by Districts with little oversight or justification. As a result of this work with the Joint VFBV/CFA People, Culture and Safety Committee, CFA have agreed to refine their suspension processes to ensure a measured, mutually agreed decision will be reached between the District Office and the CFA Complaints Department as to whether the suspension of a volunteer is necessary. This will be a case-by-case consideration and will ensure there is better consistency across the state. The Committee will continue to monitor the implementation of the changes in the coming year.

CB RADIOS

The VFBV/CFA Joint Communications and Technology Committee held robust discussions with CFA concerning the installation of CB radios in appliances. VFBV volunteer delegates advocated in support of the use of CB radios as they believe it to be operationally necessary as there may other organisations present at incidents who do not have CFA radios installed. This often includes the inability for CFA members to speak with heavy machinery and private appliances at incidents which can present a safety risk. The Committee reached consensus with CFA that CB radios should be supported for installation where required however not in the most prominent location in the vehicle as this should be reserved for the CFA radio.

Some additional key issues each VFBV/CFA Joint Committee worked on over the year included:

Community Safety

- Smoke alarm installation project
- Engaging with local government
- Community engagement for Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) implementation
- Fire Safety planning workshops
- Community engagement guidelines
- Schools in fire country
- Planned burns program
- Joint fuel management program

Equipment and Infrastructure

- Brigade toilets
- ULT remediation works
- Community Safety Building Authority
- Entrapment instructions
- New Station Designs
- Changerooms for greater gender diversity
- Wildfire respiratory protection project

Member Services

- State Championships
- Youth Cadets pilot
- National Emergency Medal (NEM) Presentations
- Cash for cans
- CFA pocketbook
- Brigade finance policy suite
- Brigade Capability Profile Application
- CFA Honours and Awards

People, Culture and Safety,

- Child Safety
- Support for volunteers involved in complaints process.
- Brigade 'cultural' reviews
- Mental health literacy and wellbeing
- CFA Safe – identifying and reporting hazards.

Operations – Capability & Performance

- Dashcams
- FIRS Online
- Compressed Air Foam Strategy
- Wildfire helmets
- ACFO/Commander Vacancies
- Volunteer fire investigators
- Fire Medical Response
- Baseline Capability Profiling
- Service delivery

Technology and Innovation

- Microsoft Office 365 work group
- Supplementary Alerting Service (SAS) App
- Missing Pager Messages
- Alert conferencing system
- Connected brigades
- Triple zero messaging
- Digital radio project

Training

- PUA19 transition progress
- AFAC peer review
- First aid training
- Trainer and assessor endorsement
- Language, literacy and numeracy support
- Structural thermal imaging camera training
- Improvements to training package release process

VOLUNTEERS HAVE THEIR SAY

Through VFBV's network of 21 District Councils and elected volunteer representatives, VFBV maintains direct links with volunteers. VFBV's process of engaging with and seeking feedback from volunteers is vital in enabling VFBV to credibly advocate to CFA on behalf of volunteers.

VFBV sought feedback through its representative networks and encouraged all members to participate in discussions at the District, Group and Brigade level on a number of important issues during the last year.

2022 VFBV VOLUNTEER WELFARE AND EFFICIENCY SURVEY

The annual VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey opened in October 2022 and ran until early 2023, with more than 2,000 CFA volunteers taking part in the survey.

The annual VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey is an initiative by VFBV designed by and for volunteers to help capture and communicate fundamental issues as volunteers see them. The survey contains 38 questions on topics chosen by volunteers.

The survey is a critical and important tool that gives CFA and other decision makers clear feedback, directly from volunteers about the issues affecting them. It is a critical tool in monitoring short-and-long-term trends and the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at improving CFA volunteer engagement and wellbeing.

The survey is a reliable and important method that is used to capture the views of volunteers at a point in time while also tracking trends in volunteer opinion over the years. It is one of the largest surveys of its kind in Australia. VFBV regularly support other Australia States and Territory volunteer associations in the running of the survey within other fire services to gain a national perspective on volunteer views through the Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA). VFBV has also worked with our colleagues from the Victorian SES Volunteers Association (VicSESA) in offering the survey to VICSES members in recognition of the shared respect between CFA and VICSES volunteers.

The survey results are used by VFBV to advocate on behalf of volunteers and also by senior leaders across the emergency management sector. The results go straight to decision and policy makers, within CFA, EMV and Government. It shapes and drives the important advocacy work that is done in the background to help volunteers.

More detailed results from the 2022 Survey can be found on pages 18 and 19 of this report.

CFA POLICY AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE CONSULTATION

Over the last year VFBV have sought feedback from volunteers on new or revised CFA policies, procedures and standard operating procedures. Feedback was sought from volunteers via VFBV's monthly newsletter, the 21 District Councils, State Council, VFBV Board and specific surveys designed some topics.

Chief Officer Minimum Requirements

VFBV sought feedback from members regarding the ongoing application of the Chief Officer's minimum requirements for operational response. The current requirements are the successful completion of minimum skills (now known as General Firefighter), an annual entrapment drill, and tree hazard awareness course every three years. The feedback received demonstrated how broad and varied our membership, brigades and operating environments are across the state.

Responses to the survey suggested that a large majority of members support the ongoing application of the Chief Officer's minimum requirements, including the requirement to conduct an annual entrapment drill, however some members suggested that the entrapment drill could be conducted every two years instead. The suggestion that the entrapment drill refresher could be conducted via an online package was not supported by respondents. When asked if changes to requirements could be considered depending on the brigade classification of brigades, the majority of respondents did not support this proposal.

The main feedback from the survey was that respondents wished for more flexibility and support from CFA in meeting each of the Chief Officer's minimum requirements. This support could include greater flexibility with expiry dates, empowering brigade leaders to deal with individual cases where appropriate, providing more opportunities for members to complete the requirements, a shortened refresher package for tree hazard awareness and a longer expiry on the larger package which could be conducted less frequently or when there are significant changes or lessons learned.

VFBV has sought further engagement with CFA that will allow volunteers to provide further feedback as any proposed changes are identified.

SOP 5.04 – Service Hose Testing and Coupling Inspection

Formal consultation on amendments to CFA Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 5.04 Service Hose Testing and Coupling Inspection commenced in August 2022. For the most part the proposed amendments to the SOP were relatively minor in nature with the most significant change being added stipulations with regard to persons authorised to perform hose repair in Schedule 1.

Following feedback from members, VFBV provided CFA with recommendations for amendments to the SOP including: the inclusion of hose testing trailers within the SOP; CFA to re-consider the requirement for hose to be hydrostatically tested after each use but rather inspections take place after each use; better clarity around suitable PPC/E; consideration of basing test pressures on class of hose and appliance capability rather than brigade classification; and to address differences in interpretation as to what constitutes the no-go zone. VFBV also requested that sufficient time and access be provided for members to access the hose repair training module.

The CFA Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) team took on board this feedback and most was incorporated into a revised SOP which is now vastly more intuitive and user friendly and will be more likely to achieve the improved safety outcomes sought. VFBV congratulates the FEM team for the collaborative and respectful manner in which they conducted the SOP review.

Surveillance Device Procedure

CFA commenced formal consultation on a proposed procedure to cover the use of surveillance devices in August 2022. The procedure aimed to provide appropriate guidance to CFA members in the installation and use of surveillance devices and to ensure that they are used in compliance with legislation and privacy principles.

VFBV agreed to an expedited consultation timeline to allow for an interim procedure to be developed as the lack of procedure had been causing delays in the provision of dashcams and installation of security equipment for brigades and groups who had received funding from grants programs such as the pick list program run by the CFA and Brigades Donations Trust following the 2019-20 fire season.

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

CFA updated their Child Safety and Wellbeing policy in 2022 to reflect the new Victorian Child Safe Standards that came into effect on 1 July 2022. The new standards included new requirements such as involving families and communities in efforts to keep children and young people safe; a greater focus on safety of Aboriginal children and young people; and managing the risk of child abuse in online environments. VFBV consulted with individuals, brigades, groups and District Councils to gain feedback from members which was provided to CFA before the policy was finalised.

Asset and Building Naming Policy and Procedure

A proposed CFA Asset and Building Naming Policy and Procedure was developed by CFA to apply to the future naming of buildings, parts of buildings and other assets such as vehicles.

In developing the draft policy and procedure CFA advised VFBV that there were a number of considerations including: government requirements for CFA to consider diversity in selection of names; ensuring that there is a single defined, fair and transparent process for the selection of names across CFA; existing names on buildings and assets is unaffected; the need for CFA to ensure that there is a probity process in place; and development of an avenue of appeal if required.

Radio Allocation Policy and Procedure

As CFA was working through the planning and procurement for the replacement of CFA's operational radio's a revised suite of policies and procedures for radio allocation were drafted for VFBV to seek the views of volunteers. Consultation was undertaken at the same time as the tender and procurement process to ensure that that procurement of new radios was not unnecessarily delayed and VFBV facilitated an expedited consultation timeline as assist. The intention of the revised policy and procedure was to ensure that CFA radios are allocated in the most effective, practical and systemic way that guarantees the utilisation of the radios in an effective manner. Included also was an operational justification procedure, proposed radio allocation matrix and a process to establish how CFA will monitor underutilised radios and relocate them instead of issuing additional radios in the first instance.

Draft Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy

The most contentious policy released for consultation by CFA this year was the draft Alcohol and Other Drugs policy. The policy included equal application to employees and volunteers, aimed to ensure the ongoing health and safety of CFA members around alcohol and other drugs, had no requirement for testing, provided guidelines for acceptable practices in relation to the legal and responsible consumption of alcohol at CFA activities and events as well as guidance for members who are taking prescription or over the counter drugs which may impact their ability to perform their duties safely.

Of the feedback received from members, none argued for the inappropriate use of alcohol or other drugs, but rather focussed on practicalities and concerns that the policy was infringing on members private lives. In fact only 13% of respondents to the survey indicated that they were very comfortable with the policy in its current form.

Based on the feedback received from members, the VFBV Board and State Council Executive developed some high level principles

and potential policy statements to assist CFA's future deliberations on this policy. CFA welcomed the feedback provided by VFBV and committed to considering it in detail before advising any potential next steps.

PRESUMPTIVE LEGISLATION

In a pleasing and welcomed move, the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP announced in June 2023 that the Government would introduce legislation to expand the presumptive rights scheme to include three female specific reproductive cancers to Victoria's presumptive legislation scheme for firefighters.

VFBV welcomed the Government's announcement in June which followed VFBV's continued advocacy for the Government to support amendments which had been tabled in Parliament in 2022 by fellow CFA volunteer and former Upper House MP Tania Maxwell. Tania's untiring support and advocacy has been instrumental in highlighting this issue and gaining support along with the work of another Upper House MP Melina Bath who worked with VFBV many years ago to shine a light on the lack of female firefighters included in international study cohorts.

The proposed amendment will expand the scheme by adding primary site cervical, ovarian and uterine cancers to the list of prescribed cancers covered under the scheme and will be backdated to cover diagnoses on or after 1 June 2016. VFBV looks forward to the Bill's passage through parliament in the coming year and continues to work to encourage all members of parliament to support the Bill.

In December 2022, there were amendments to the Commonwealth Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act via the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Prescribed Cancers) regulations to add a further eight cancers to Commonwealth's firefighter presumptive legislation. The new cancers added were lung, skin, cervical, ovarian, penile, pancreatic and thyroid cancers as well as malignant mesothelioma taking the total number of cancers covered by the federal scheme to 20.

The amendments to the Commonwealth legislation were negotiated by independent ACT Senator David Pocock as part of negotiations with the Federal Government regarding changes to the Federal Industrial Relations legislation. Senator Pocock also negotiated changes to Federal legislation to ensure that ACT volunteer firefighters are also covered under the commonwealth legislation which had been missing previously.

The changes to the federal legislation which covers federally employed firefighters (those employed at airports) and ACT volunteer firefighters adds further impetus for the Victorian scheme to be updated not only with the three female specific cancers the government has committed to, but also with the additional cancers now included in the federal legislation.

VFBV will continue to advocate for all parties to support the proposed Victorian Government legislation as well as pursuing further amendments for the Victorian legislation to mirror the federal legislation over the next 12 months.

VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES EQUIPMENT PROGRAM (VESEP)

VESEP is an ongoing program funded by the Victorian Government. The annual program was established more than 20 years ago in 2000 after VFBV proposed an annual program to provide emergency services volunteer groups with grants. VESEP provides funding to assist emergency services volunteers in acquiring a wide range of ancillary equipment in recognition of their significant contribution in supporting Victorian communities in times of emergency.

The 2022-23 program successful applicants were announced in October 2022 with CFA Brigades and Groups sharing in more than \$8.9m in grants. Of the 145 successful grants, 52 were for the replacement or upgrade of firefighting or specialist vehicles, 29 for volunteer amenities improvements or minor works projects and 71 for operational equipment. Included in this was 15 brigades and groups who received a grant with assistance from the Special Access Grants program which assisted in reducing or eliminating the brigade or group contribution, the majority of these grants were for minor works or operational equipment. In addition to the Brigade and Group grants, a further \$380,000 was awarded for statewide initiatives which included additional entry tools for CFA rescue brigades.

The 2023-24 program was opened by the Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes MP in April 2023 and applications closed in mid-June 2023, with the successful projects from this round of funding to be announced in late 2023.

As with previous years, VFBV provided an Application Help Pack for the 2023-24 program which included Case Studies to assist Brigades and Groups in preparing their application for the program. The Help Pack includes practical suggestions to help with the application process and compiles CFA information sheets and application forms as a one stop shop of information.

Throughout the 2022-23 year, CFA volunteers and VFBV faced some challenges, from the disbanding of vital consultative forum to reports being tabled or reviews established.

DISBANDING OF THE VOLUNTEER CONSULTATIVE FORUM

In April 2023 VFBV was disappointed to learn of the decision to disband the Volunteer Consultative Forum (VCF). The VCF was an initiative proposed by VFBV during discussions on the Victorian Government's White Paper on emergency management in 2012. The concept was embraced and announced by the then Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Kim Wells MP and officially formed in November 2013.

The forum was designed to provide multi-agency, volunteer feedback loop directly to the Minister for Emergency Services on issues affecting emergency management volunteers and deliver on the Government's commitment to consult with emergency management volunteers.

In May 2016, the Premier Daniel Andrews and then Minister for Emergency Services Jane Garrett along with the Emergency Management Commissioner signed the Emergency Management Volunteer Statement which was a commitment between the State of Victoria and emergency management volunteers that committed the state to consulting with emergency management volunteers and their representative bodies through the VCF on matters which affect them. The statement was also co-signed by each of the 11 organisations represented on the VCF including VFBV.

Therefore it was surprising to the members to learn that consultation around the disbanding of the VCF with the VCF itself did not occur prior to the decision being made. Rather VFBV learned that the decision to disband the VCF was made after a secret briefing and recommendation that was prepared by EMV and given by the Emergency Management Commissioner to the Minister.

VFBV has taken no comfort from the Commissioner's protestations that EMV will conduct some future review and consider future arrangements further. Especially given the expansion of EMV in recent years into a bureaucracy with several hundred staff that could no longer support a peak volunteer forum that was given enduring effect under the Emergency Management Volunteer Statement. The VCF was also the only EMV committee that was dedicated to consulting with emergency management volunteers who make up more than 90% of the emergency management workforce in Victoria.

In response to this decision, the VFBV Board unanimously declared EMV to be an 'Organisation of Concern'. This decision was not made lightly and follows the disbanding of the VCF as well as consideration of other recent activities such as the EMV Operating Model Review

and the lack of a cross agency after action review following the flooding that occurred across Victoria in late 2022.

The VFBV Board took this unprecedented step in order to highlight the serious disquiet and concerns held towards this behemoth of a bureaucracy and its recent poor record of engagement and direct consultation with volunteers and their representative bodies on several matters.

Members need look no further than the poor progress on EMV's actions towards the 13 strategic priority actions developed by volunteers through the VCF in 2015 which have been quietly erased from EMV's strategic action plan over the subsequent years to see how far volunteer priorities and initiatives have been abandoned. The EMV Operating Model Review reported on in last year's annual report is another example of where EMV's solution to any and every problem facing the sector was to recommend that more public servants be employed rather than embracing, encouraging and training the existing volunteers who want to be involved in Incident Management Teams.

VFBV will continue to monitor and pursue meaningful arrangements that ensure genuine volunteer engagement and consultation wherever possible over the next year.

COVID-19 VACCINATION MANDATE

Following the expiry of the Victorian Governments COVID-19 vaccination mandates and pandemic orders in October 2022 VFBV received a number of concerns from brigades about how CFA's COVID-19 vaccination mandates at that time were impacting on brigades.

VFBV decided to consult with Brigade Captains from across the state, inviting all captains to provide feedback to a short survey to assist the VFBV Board and State Council in forming a position which moved the pendulum away from a one-size fits all mandate to one of personal responsibility.

The feedback received from captains was compelling and made a strong case for change with 67.4% of captains indicating that they no longer supported CFA's policy of a minimum of three COVID-19 vaccinations and just 19.3% indicated that they supported retaining the policy into the future. When members were asked about what their preferred position was for the future, 68% advocated that CFA policy return to community settings and drop all mandates in place.

Soon after VFBV wrote to Government and CFA advising the outcomes of the survey, CFA announced that it had reviewed its position regarding mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirements and

were moving to community settings where vaccination is no longer mandatory but strongly recommended. CFA made this decision based on VFBV's position as well as health advice from the Victorian Government and in consultation with other emergency services.

This represented a good outcome for CFA volunteers and demonstrate the value of VFBV's consultative networks.

FIRE SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION MONITOR ANNUAL REPORT

The Fire Services Implementation Monitor's annual report for the 2021-22 year was tabled in parliament in March 2023. The annual report showed how the independent monitor, the Hon. Niall Blair considered and reported on the progress of implementation of the Government's fire services reforms.

At a high level the report recognised the good progress that had been made on implementation actions. Importantly the Monitor acknowledged that much of the progress had largely been made possible from the goodwill and personal endeavour of volunteers and staff rather than from any formalised arrangements and plans.

The report also outlined slow progress and why actions were behind schedule as well as highlighting some of challenges caused by secondment arrangements, less than optimal volunteer utilisation, the sense of loss for those who have faced changes brought about by reform and how it was done. There were also warnings about the dangers around future sustainability of the fire services including the risks of chronic underfunding of capital funding for asset replacement and renewal.

The findings from the Monitor vindicated many of the concerns raised by VFBV on behalf of volunteers during the debates on the merits of fire services reform prior to implementation including predicted impacts on budgets, morale, culture, volunteer numbers and potential declines in surge capacity.

It was also refreshing for VFBV to see an independent statutory officer walk up to the issues and call them out while also providing frank and fearless advice to put the communities and the millions of people that the fire services protect at the heart of what fire service reform should be about – actually delivering better services and building strong and resilient communities.

FIRE DISTRICT REVIEW PANEL

Later in March 2023, the Victorian Governments Fire District Review Panel published its determination of "change in fire risk" in the Victorian Government Gazette, accompanying the determination, the panel also published a 'supporting report' on the same day.

The panel's report claims to use a risk-based assessment of changes in fire risk to support its determination. The report and determination then identified 13 station response areas, all in the country area of Victoria and covered by CFA. This determination of 13 response areas resulted in a high level of anxiety and concern for the brigades affected, and volunteers expressed to VFBV the detrimental impact this had on brigade morale.

While there is nothing unusual about fire services conducting analysis to track changes in fire risk to help inform and plan how service delivery can meet community need. The approach taken by the panel who are not experts in fire service planning was deeply troubling.

The report published acknowledged that this was the panels first report and in VFBV's view the first report should have been used to build a baseline for future years. Unfortunately, the panel has relied on 13-year-old data to attempt to highlight what the panel believes is a change in fire risk, without any corresponding baseline or definition. The first review also incorporated a new metric and data source which wasn't contemplated in the draft or methodology papers. The Panel's use of motor vehicle accidents and casualties dwarfs the number of casualties from fire and explosions significantly and has been lumped in with vehicle fires. This is despite the Victorian road safety action plan identifying the Department of Transport, Victorian Police, the Transport Accident Commission and the departments of Justice and Health as being responsible for road safety.

The report also focuses on the parts of the Country Area of Victoria which have experienced a change in fire risk, while being vague about which parts of the FRV fire district have experienced a similar change in fire risk. To only analyse the FRV district in order to draw criticisms of CFA areas is neither fair, balanced, evidence-based nor in the public interest.

The panels review is now suspended while they await formal advice from the CFA Chief Officer. Following that advice, the panel will submit a final recommendation to Government. Prior to the Minister making a final determination, the Minister must have regard to the capacity of each fire service, any implications on budget and resources and any other consequences before deciding to either make no changes, make some changes or ask the panel to conduct a further review.

Over the coming year VFBV will work with CFA to ensure that each brigade identified is supported to understand what the change in fire risk actually is, how it should be treated and what additional resources would be required from government to address the "changed risk". We will then advocate to the Victorian Government to ensure that each brigade is supported to continue to protect their community.

FLOOD RESPONSE AND PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

In October 2022 communities across the state experienced major flooding. The response to the emergency presented an extraordinary, shared effort by emergency services, local councils, business and community members to prepare for rising flood levels and the CFA model of sharing responsibility with the community again came to the fore.

While the Victorian SES is the primary agency for flood response, CFA once again rose to the occasion to support the response with in excess of 8,000 volunteer deployments to the flood campaign by the end of November 2022 (this doesn't include any local brigade deployments made at local levels). CFA volunteers mobilised in significant numbers for months on end to assist with the flood response while also preparing for the upcoming fire season, which fortunately was relatively mild in historical terms.

During the flood event VFBV put together a fact sheet to assist members directly impacted to bring together the support available from the various local, state and commonwealth government agencies. The fact sheet was a one stop shop for members to gain access to what is available to assist them in their time of need. VFBV Support Officers were also available to assist any brigade and its members in accessing the services available.

In February 2023 the Legislative Council commissioned the Environment and Planning Committee to inquire into the state's preparedness for and response to Victoria's major flooding event of October 2022. The terms of reference cover topics such as the causes and contributors to the Flood event; the adequacy and effectiveness of early warning systems; the resourcing of the SES and the adequacy of its response to the Flood event; implications for future planning decisions and any other related matters.

VFBV provided a submission to the inquiry which covered topics such as resourcing, the adequacy of response, the failure by EMV to conduct a multi-agency after action review, failure to build an appropriate pool of endorsed Level 3 Incident Management Team personnel, volunteer expense reimbursement, personal protective clothing and equipment for flood response, training of CFA members to assist in flood response operations, the disbanding of the Volunteer Consultative Forum, the VFBV Board's concerns about Emergency Management Victoria, the EMV Operating Model Review, the State Crisis and Resilience Council, employer and self-employed recognition, resource management and tasking and volunteer utilisation and training for Incident Management Teams.

The Inquiry is due to report by no later the 30 June 2024 and VFBV looks forward to their findings.

CFA CULTURE REVIEW & ISSUES MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Following the release of the External Review of Culture and Issues Management Report in June 2022 conducted by Dr Helen Szoke AO, VFBV have worked with CFA on the development of an implementation plan to address the recommendations of the review team.

In February 2023, CFA began consultation on the draft five-year plan with volunteers. VFBV were pleased to see the early efforts internally at CFA to build a set of draft actions that seek to address the findings from the review.

CFA committed to undertaking broad consultation with members on the draft plan. VFBV challenged CFA to articulate and quantify how the various actions will result in improvement and how each action will be felt, heard and seen by individual members in order for results and progress to be judged against the proposed actions. VFBV reminded CFA that too often in the past, actions from various reports have been paid lip service or wrapped in corporate speak which has not resulted in any definable or quantifiable improvements. As the draft plan is intended to be implemented over five years, VFBV will retain a watching brief on the actions and progress to ensure that volunteers will see and feel tangible outcomes.

FISKVILLE REDRESS SCHEME

VFBV welcomed the Victorian Government announcement, in August 2022, of the establishment of a Fiskville Redress Scheme to support Fiskville affected persons. The scheme opened in September 2022 and was established in response to a key recommendation from the 2016 Parliamentary Inquiry into Fiskville for the Victorian Government to establish a dedicated redress scheme offering a range of options such as access to health services, financial payments and a meaningful apology.

The redress scheme acknowledges that firefighters were exposed to toxins released during combustion and in the agents used to extinguish fires during hot fire training in the same way that they are exposed during random fire events. The scheme will accept applications from people who had prolonged exposure to toxic substances at the former Fiskville Training College site between 1971 and 2015. The scheme will be administered by the Department of Justice and Community Safety independently from CFA.

ASH WEDNESDAY 40th ANNIVERSARY

The 16th of February 2023 marked 40 years since the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983.

The Ash Wednesday fires were some of the deadliest in Australia's history, only surpassed by the 2009 Black Saturday fires. A total of 75 people died, including 14 CFA volunteers and 3 CFS volunteers. Throughout the day, CFA attended over 180 different fires throughout Victoria, eight of which were considered to be major included Cudgee/Ballangeich; East Trentham/Mount Macedon; Otway ranges; Belgrave Heights/Beaconsfield Upper; Cockatoo; Monivae; Branhholme; and Warburton with more than 606,000 hectares of land burnt.

In July 2022, VFBV supported the formation by CFA of an Ash Wednesday memorial working party to plan and prepare an appropriate memorial service to be held to commemorate the 40th anniversary. VFBV, along with volunteers that were active during the Ash Wednesday fires contributed significantly to the working party and diligently worked through options together with CFA senior officers and the CFA corporate communications team.

The memorial service was held on Sunday 12th February at the Ash Wednesday Bushfire Education Centre in Cockatoo to mark the anniversary and was an opportunity to reflect and pay tribute to those who were involved in fighting fires during the 1982/83 bushfire season. The service was well attended, and involved agency representatives from the other agencies across the emergency management sector.

A commemorative booklet was made available for the service that outlined each of the major fires, while also acknowledging the significant improvements made to the fire services as a result. Following Ash Wednesday there were significant changes made to training, as well as improvements to ensure adequate personal protective clothing and eye protection, refined 'Red Flag' warnings and the intricate processes to ensure all crew members are advised of changing conditions, access for fire grounds for CFA vehicles through police roadblocks, introduction of a dedicated fire prevention department within CFA, improvements to heat shielding on appliances and the transition to diesel to lessen vaporisation of fuels in fire trucks.



2022 VFBV VOLUNTEER WELFARE & EFFICIENCY SURVEY

The annual VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey attracted responses from more than 2,000 CFA volunteers when it was conducted in late 2022 and early 2023. The survey, in its eleventh year, provides highly valid and credible results.

The VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey is an initiative by VFBV designed by and for volunteers to help capture and communicate fundamental issues as volunteers see them. It is conducted annually, with the first survey conducted in 2012. The VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey is a critical and important tool that gives CFA and other decision makers clear feedback, directly from volunteers about the issues that are affecting their welfare and efficiency. For many volunteers this survey is one of the key opportunities to have their voice heard, both individually and collectively.

The survey measures volunteer opinions on what is important to their welfare and efficiency and how well CFA is performing according to what they are experiencing, the gap between the measurement of importance and performance is referred to as the Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Level (VolWEL) outcome. A high VolWEL is a sign that things are not working well, and while a low VolWEL is a sign that things are working well. Any VolWEL over 2.0 indicates a large to critical gap is emerging and volunteers are highly dissatisfied with arrangements requiring priority attention.

WE LISTENED TO
2045
CFA VOLUNTEERS



GENDER

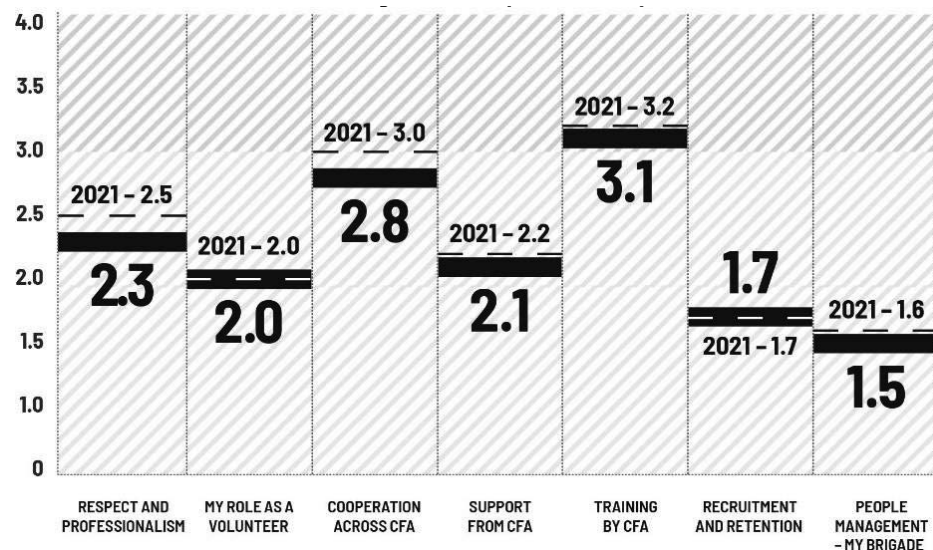


18%



81%

VOLUNTEER WELFARE & EFFICIENCY LEVEL (VOLWEL) – OVERALL RESULTS



The results from the 2022 survey show that there has been an increase in volunteer satisfaction across five of the seven main survey themes. While the Training by CFA theme showed a slight improvement in 2022, it has still recorded a critical VoIWEL outcome indicating that there is still a lot of work to be done for CFA to improve volunteer satisfaction with training. The Cooperation Across CFA theme has improved again in 2022 with the theme now considered to have a significant VoIWEL outcome. While the improvement in VoIWEL outcome is welcomed, there is still significant issues that need to be addressed to improve volunteer satisfaction. Volunteers indicated through the survey that they are the most satisfied with people management at a brigade level however there still could be improvements to increase satisfaction.

Overall the survey results are further evidence that the changes that CFA have implemented over the last year have helped to improve volunteer satisfaction. The majority of statements have shown improvement with just six statements recording an increase in VoIWEL outcome indicating that volunteers are less satisfied with these statements than they were in 2021.

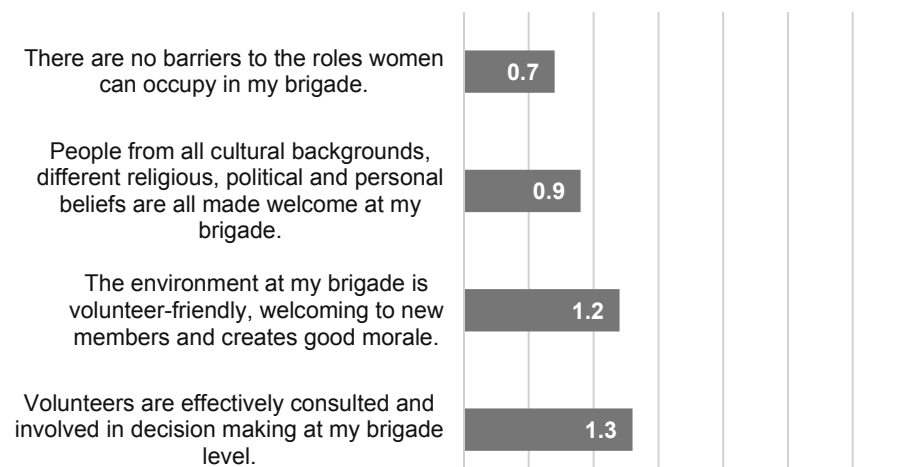
The results show that volunteers are most satisfied with how their brigade environment is welcoming to new members, how they are consulted and involved in decision making within their brigades and that despite the challenges the time volunteers devote to CFA they feel it is productive and worthwhile.

The survey results show that volunteers are particularly dissatisfied with training not being provided in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy for them to participate and that training is not being provided and available within a reasonable distance from their brigade. As well as that volunteers are not being effectively consulted and involved in decision making at the corporate (headquarters) level of CFA.

While the results do show some improvement to volunteer satisfaction, there is still a clear need for CFA to continue to engage with and involve them in decisions that may affect them. This will assist in continuing to improve volunteer satisfaction and the survey results in future years.

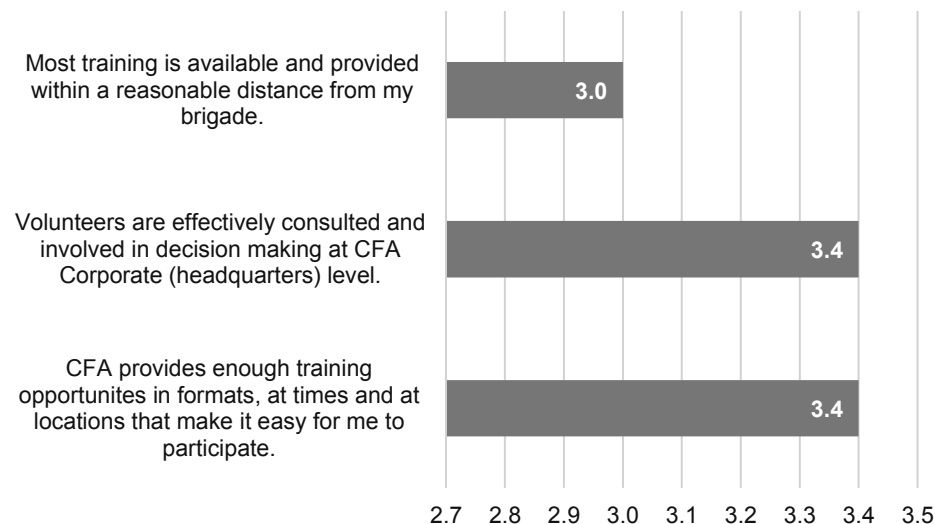
MOST POSITIVE VoIWEL OUTCOMES

These statements have the smallest VoIWEL outcomes, indicating that CFA volunteers' expectations are closest to being met on these topics.



POOREST VoIWEL OUTCOMES

These statements have the worst VoIWEL outcomes. These results show that volunteers are highly dissatisfied and that their expectations are not being met.



After two COVID-19-interrupted competition seasons, the 2022/23 competition season was able to be conducted as normal in the lead up to the State Championships held in Mooroopna over two weekends in March 2023. There were many local competitions held around the state in late 2022 and early 2023 prior to the State Championships.

The first weekend of competition saw the Urban Junior Championship take place on 18 and 19 March, while the following weekend, 25 and 26 March the Rural Senior and Junior Championships and the Urban Senior Championship were conducted.

The 2022 championships also marked 150 years since the first demonstration and display of Victoria's volunteer firefighters was held in 1873 in the streets of Melbourne which also included a Torchlight Procession.

The Torchlight Procession which has traditionally been an event for brigades competing at the Urban Senior Championship was also open to brigades competing in the Rural Championship as well as brigades that have not entered either Championship and was again conducted at Victoria Lake Park in Shepparton. The 2023 winner was a non-competing brigade with Diamond Creek Fire Brigade taking out first place with 96.00%, in second place was Hoppers Crossing with 95.00% and third place honours were taken out by the Pakenham/Narre Warren and Melton teams both with 92.00%

In total over both weekends of competition almost 900 competitors took part with 157 teams entering the four championships, with the Swan Hill brigade entering every competition, with teams for urban juniors, urban seniors, rural juniors, and rural seniors across the two weekends. The Urban Championships also saw teams travel across from Western Australia to take part.

The Harvey and Kellerberrin brigades both entered Under 17 teams in the Urban Junior Championship, with both teams having a successful weekend with Harvey placing second in the Under 17 Aggregate and the Kellerberrin brigade also taking home a number of placings. The Harvey brigade also entered a team in the Urban Senior Championship alongside the Brunswick Junction brigade. Harvey had a second successful weekend with second place in the A Section Aggregate, A Section Appliance Aggregate and the Dry Aggregate.

Of course the championships would not be the success that they are without the support of more than 200 judges and track officials who volunteer their time across the two weekends, without the support of these judges and officials the State Championships would not be possible.

VFBV also passes on appreciation to CFA's State Championships Committee and the local Mooroopna host committee for the hard work and efforts in preparing the venue for the Championships, especially following the flooding that affected much of Victoria including Mooroopna in late 2022. The host committee also sprang into action to clean up the venue after a storm hit on the Thursday prior the second weekend of competition.

We pass on our sincere appreciation to the CFA Executive for their continued support and acknowledge their renewed and strengthened commitment to the State Championships.

VFBV thanks all those involved for their contribution and support in making these events so successful, and our sincere appreciation and thanks are extended to:

- CFA management and staff, particularly the DMO's and Tower Overseers for their work and efforts prior to, during and following the Championships;

- The Greater Shepparton City Council for their continued support of the Championships, this being the eleventh occasion that our Championships have been held in this local government area;
- Members of VFBV's state competition committees who seek ways to improve the events each year and oversee the rules, judges and officials;
- Our major sponsor Hino and the many other sponsors and trophy donors for their continued and generous support; and
- The Brigades, competitors, coaches, families and friends who support the competitions, ensuring the continuation of our Championships and competitions.

Planning is already underway for the 2024 State Championships to be held again in March at Mooroopna.

VFBV hopes to continue to build participation in the Championships and strongly encourages new and former competing brigades to consider attending to make next year's State Championships a bigger and better showcase of our competition events, and of CFA and the community.



JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Napoleons-Enfield A was the runaway winner in the Rural Junior Championship, taking out both the 11-13 years and 11-15 years aggregates for a total of 132 points. Beazley's Bridge A took second place with 56 points ahead of Ascot and District A in third place with 44 points all won by their 11-13 years team.

Impressively, Napoleons-Enfield A managed to win all five 11-15 years events and three of the 11-13 years events, while also setting three new event records. It was a day for records with Ascot and District A also setting a record time in the new Wet Hose and Ladder event for the 11-13 years age group.

The 11-13 years aggregate was won by Napoleons-Enfield A with 52 points, with Ascot and District A in second place with 44 points followed by Beazley's Bridge A with 20 points. Napoleons-Enfield also won both the female and male sprints for this age group.

With three new records set and first place in all five events Napoleons-Enfield A managed a clean sweep of the 11-15 years aggregate collecting a perfect 80 points. Beazley's Bridge A took second place with 36 points and won both the female and male sprints for this age group. While Springhurst A finished in third place with 20 points collecting points in all five events.

2023 AGGREGATE RESULTS CHAMPION TEAM

1st	Napoleons-Enfield A	132 points
2nd	Beazley's Bridge A	56 points
3rd	Ascot & District A	44 points

11-13 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Napoleons-Enfield A	52 points
2nd	Ascot & District A	44 points
3rd	Beazley's Bridge A	20 points

11-15 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Napoleons-Enfield A	80 points
2nd	Beazley's' Bridge A	36 Points
3rd	Springhurst A	20 Points

VFBV STATE PRESIDENT ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD: Strathmerton

STAN ROSS CONDUCT TROPHY: Ascot & District

FIREFIGHTER SPRINTS

11-13 YEARS

Female: Charlotte Roberts, Napoleons-Enfield
Male: Tom Griffiths, Napoleons-Enfield

11-15 YEARS

Female: Abbey Weir, Beazley's Bridge
Male: Otis Patton, Beazley's Bridge



Champion Team – Napoleons Enfield



Stan Ross Conduct Trophy Winners – Ascot & District

SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Hurstbridge A was successful in taking out the Division 1 Aggregate at the Rural Senior Championship with 72 points with placings in all six events including three wins. Eldorado A finished second with 48 points with two first placings. In third place was Leopold A with 30 points who also set a record time in the new Wet Hose and Ladder event.

Taking the honours in Division 2 Aggregate was, Sedgwick A with 68 points winning the first four events of the day. Leading into the last event of the day Mandurang A and Hurstbridge D were tied on points, with Mandurang A securing the win in the event to finish in second place in the aggregate with 48 points, while Hurstbridge D secured third place to finish the day with 38 points.

Dunolly A was successful in the Division 3 Aggregate with four event wins to secure 64 points ahead of second placed Mandurang B with 38 points and Eldorado B came third with 26 points.

2023 Championship also saw the introduction of a new Outstanding Female Team trophy which is open to any all-female team regardless of which division they are competing in. The inaugural trophy was won by the Beazley's Bridge C team.

2023 AGGREGATE RESULTS DIVISION 1 AGGREGATE

1st	Hurstbridge A	72 points
2nd	Eldorado A	48 points
3rd	Leopold A	30 Points

DIVISION 2 AGGREGATE

1st	Sedgwick A	68 Points
2nd	Mandurang A	48 Points
3rd	Hurstbridge D	38 Points

DIVISION 3 AGGREGATE

1st	Dunolly A	64 Points
2nd	Mandurang B	38 Points
3rd	Eldorado B	26 Points

CONDUCT AWARD: Leopold

OUTSTANDING FEMALE TEAM:
Beazley's Bridge C

WINNERS OF THE SPRINTS:

Female: Trinity Williams, Chiltern
Male: Cory Wilkinson, Leopold



Division 1 Aggregate – Hurstbridge A



Outstanding Female Team – Beazley's Bridge C

JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

The first weekend of the State Championships saw Melton A take out the Grand Aggregate for the third year in a row with 71 points to secure their fourth Grand Aggregate title in five years. Echuca A finished second in the Grand Aggregate with 49 points and Euroa A were third with 45 points.

The Under 14 Aggregate was hotly contested across the weekend with Euroa A and Echuca A swapping positions across the weekend. The eventual winner was Euroa A with 45 points ahead of Echuca A with 40 points while Maffra took third place with 21 points.

Melton also had success in securing the Under 17 Aggregate with 52 points ahead of Harvey with 35 points. Grovedale took third place with 23 points.

2023 STATE URBAN JUNIOR AGGREGATE RESULTS
GRAND AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	71 points
2nd	Echuca A	49 points
3rd	Euroa A	23 points

UNDER 14 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Euroa A	45 points
2nd	Echuca A	40 points
3rd	Maffra	21 points

DRY AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	43 points
2nd	Echuca A	26 points
=3rd	Euroa A and Harvey(WA)	22 points

UNDER 17 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	52 points
2nd	Harvey (WA)	35 points
3rd	Grovedale	23 points

WET AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	28 points
=2nd	Echuca A and Euroa A	23 points



Grand Aggregate Winners – Melton A



Under 14 Aggregate Winners -Euroa A

SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Heading into the last event of the weekend, the Champion Fours - only 11 points separated four teams in the Grand Aggregate with 16 points on offer. Melton A managed to hold onto their lead to take out the Grand Aggregate with 67 points. They were closely followed by Harvey from Western Australia with 64 points, one point ahead of Osborne Park A in third.

Osborne Park B were successful in the B Section Aggregate collecting 63 points across the weekend, with Pakenham/Narre Warren close on their heels with 57 points and Echuca took third place with 46 points.

In the female aggregate, Euroa took out back-to-back wins with 16 points ahead of Melton B with 13 points and Tatura A were third with 11 points.

The Champion Competitor was awarded to Bailey Rhodes from Melton with 26 points ahead of Rhys Landwher from Harvey with 22 points.

2023 AGGREGATE RESULTS**A SECTION**

1st	Melton A	67 points
2nd	Harvey (WA)	64 points
3rd	Osborne Park A	63 points

A SECTION APPLIANCE AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	26 points
2nd	Harvey (WA)	24 points
3rd	Dandenong	22 points

DRY AGGREGATE

1st	Tatura	21 points
=2nd	Melton A and Harvey (WA)	16 points

FEMALE AGGREGATE

1st	Euroa	16 points
2nd	Melton B	13 points
3rd	Tatura	11 points

B SECTION

1st	Osborne Park B	63 points
2nd	Pakenham/Narre Warren	57 points
3rd	Echuca	46 points

B SECTION APPLIANCE AGGREGATE

1st	Cohuna	36 points
2nd	Echuca	26 points
3rd	Pakenham/Narre Warren	22 points

WET AGGREGATE

1st	Pakenham/Narre Warren	54 points
=2nd	Osborne Park A, Wendouree, Osborne Park B	52 points

2023 GRAND AGGREGATE Melton A**2023 CHAMPION COMPETITOR** Bailey Rhodes (Melton)**VIC/WA CHALLENGE EVENT WINNER** Victoria

Grand Aggregate Winner – Melton A



Female Aggregate Winner – Euroa

AUSTRALIAN FIRE SERVICE MEDAL (AFSM)

This year seven CFA members received the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM), the highest award for members of the Australian fire services, for their distinguished service.



Mark Cartledge AFSM, Ballarat – acknowledges his operational leadership, commitment and dedication to the brigade's rescue unit as well as his work in increasing awareness of road trauma.



Neil Marshall AFSM, Panton Hill – acknowledges the instrumental role he played in the introduction of the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) into CFA along with the introduction of peer support into CFA.



Michael Rowe AFSM, Cape Clear – was recognised for the development of strategies and techniques which make roadside burning safer and more productive. As well as his role in instigating women-only burn days to encourage women to be involved in and gain experience in roadside burning.



Robert 'Toddy' Small AFSM, Ferntree Gully - acknowledges his distinguished service to CFA for more than 47 years and his involvement in the design and development of the Medium Pumper and Heavy Tanker within CFA.



Ken Stuart AFSM, Mount Taylor – acknowledges his expertise in fuel reduction, the construction of fire breaks and back burning which have been credited in preventing a number of major fires reaching heavily populated areas and for reducing the impact of fires on the community.



Dawn Hartog AFSM, Toolangi – acknowledges her dedicated and exceptional service to CFA for her broad emergency management experience and her compassionate and inclusive nature which has established her as a trusted leader and advocate for CFA.



Paul Denham AFSM, Buxton – acknowledges his service as a highly experienced and respected firefighter in both urban and rural settings as well as his passion for training, the safety of protective clothing and equipment and advocacy for improved amenities at fire stations.

VFBV GOLD STAR AWARDS

Since first being introduced in 1969, there have been 1,544 Gold Stars awarded in recognition of 30 or more years' service to the Association.

This year, 16 long serving volunteers from 10 Brigades were awarded the VFBV Gold Star, and congratulations are extended to:

EAGLEHAWK

S. Mason
M. Mason
D. Murley

MELTON

M. Leitch

WILLOWGROVE

A. Schultz

OFFICER

M. van Den Acker

WONTHAGGI

B. Watson

HURSTBRIDGE

T. Smith
D. Cooper

SUNBURY

S. Riley

WOODSIDE

B. Walpole

KANGAROO FLAT

S. Every
S. Harris
W. Pattison
B. Styles

TRAFALGAR

D. Wallace

BOARD



Samantha Collins
State President
Board Member 2021-23
s.collins@vfbv.com.au



Andy Cusack AFSM
State Vice President
Board Member 2022-24
a.cusack@vfbv.com.au



Libby Hay
Board Member 2021-23
l.hay@vfbv.com.au



Jan Cleary
Board Member 2021-23
j.cleary@vfbv.com.au



Graeme Jilbert
Board Member 2022-23
g.jilbert@vfbv.com.au



Bill Maltby
Board Member 2022-24
b.maltby@vfbv.com.au



David Sidebottom
Board Member 2021-23
d.sidebottom@vfbv.com.au



Howard Smith
Board Member 2022-23
h.smith@vfbv.com.au



Greg Walcott
Board Member 2022-24
g.walcott@vfbv.com.au



Darren Wallace
Board Member 2022-24
d.wallace@vfbv.com.au

SECRETARIAT



Adam Barnett
Chief Executive Officer
a.barnett@vfbv.com.au



Mark Dryden
Executive Officer
m.dryden@vfbv.com.au



Chris Fryer
Policy Support Officer
c.fryer@vfbv.com.au



Cathie Smith
Administration Officer
c.smith@vfbv.com.au



Kara Bishop
Administration Officer
k.bishop@vfbv.com.au



Jade van Blaricum
Administration Officer
j.vanblaricum@vfbv.com.au



Max Blackmore
VFBV Support Officer
m.blackmore@vfbv.com.au



Colin Booth
VFBV Support Officer
c.booth@vfbv.com.au



John Lloyd
VFBV Support Officer
j.lloyd@vfbv.com.au



Peter Sharman
VFBV Support Officer
p.sharman@vfbv.com.au



Jason Willis
VFBV Support Officer
j.willis@vfbv.com.au

VFBV BOARD

At the VFBV Annual General Meeting held on 2 October 2022, the Chair of the VFBV Board Interview Panel, State President Samantha Collins, announced the appointment to the VFBV Board for two years from 1 October 2022 of:

- Andy Cusack AFSM
- Bill Maltby
- Greg Walcott
- Darren Wallace

The VFBV State Council meeting on the same day elected Graeme Jilbert and Howard Smith as the two State Council ex officio VFBV Board members for 2022-23.

VFBV BOARD ELECTIONS

At the first meeting of the VFBV Board held in October members elected Samantha Collins as State President, Andy Cusack AFSM as State Vice President, and Libby Hay as Treasurer for the 2022-23 year.

NEWLEY APPOINTED VFBV BOARD MEMBER

Darren Wallace was appointed to the VFBV Board from 1 October 2022. Darren first joined the Trafalgar brigade to help out the competition team and has remained an operational firefighter with the brigade since 1991. Darren has held the positions of Captain, Lieutenant and Secretary at brigade level and Deputy Group Officer within the Baw Baw Group. Darren has also been State Councillor for District 9 since 2017.

RETIRED VFBV BOARD MEMBER

Ex Captain Nev Jones AFSM elected not to re-apply for a VFBV Board position, retiring from the Board as of 1 October 2022. Nev had been a member of the VFBV Board since December 2009 and was elected as State Vice President in October 2013, before taking on the role of State President in October 2015 and served as State President until 24 June 2022.

Nev's enormous contribution to the Association was acknowledged by VFBV State President Samantha Collins and CEO Adam Barnett at the Annual General Meeting in October 2022, with the presentation of a VFBV plaque in recognition of his service and contribution to the VFBV Board and CFA volunteers across the state.

STATE COUNCIL RETIREMENTS**DGO David Farmer (District 27)**

David resigned as a District 27 State Councillor in August 2022 having served seven years on VFBV State Council as one of the inaugural State Councillors for District 27. David was also a member of the Joint Communications and Technology Committee for a number of years.

Firefighter Robert Auchterlonie (District 9)

Rob resigned as a District 9 State Councillor in August 2022 after 14 years of service to VFBV State Council and the Joint HR, Welfare and OH&S Committee and 12 years of service to the State Council Executive Committee. Rob was also an ex officio VFBV Board member for three terms from October 2017 until December 2020. Rob was awarded VFBV Life Membership in 2021.

Ex Captain Bill Watson AFSM (District 8)

Bill resigned as District 8 State Councillor in August 2022 after serving for 5 years as a State Councillor for District 8. Bill spent a number of years as a VFBV delegate to the Joint HR, Welfare and OH&S Committee as both a State Councillor and district nominee. Prior to this Bill was a long-serving District Council President in District 13. Sadly Bill passed away in October 2022 following a period of illness.

Firefighter Stephen McDonald (District 8)

Steve was elected as a State Councillor for District 8 in 2018 and resigned as a State Councillor in August 2022. Steve served as a member of the Joint Training Committee from 2017 to 2018.

Ex Captain Bruce Pickett AFSM (District 7)

Bruce was elected as a State Councillor for District 7 in October 1995 and retired in October 2022. Bruce served on a number of different Joint Committees and was a member of the State Council Executive Committee for 20 years. Bruce was also a VFBV Board Member for eight years and was awarded VFBV Life Membership in 2005.

Ex Captain Mike Evans (District 6)

Mike retired on 30 June 2023 after serving for 20 years on State Council. Mike has been a member of a number of Joint Committees including Operations, Training, and Equipment Review. Mike was awarded VFBV Life Membership in 2013.

Group Officer Shane Cramer (District 15)

Shane retired on 30 June 2023 after serving as a State Councillor for District 15 since May 2012. Shane was a member of the Joint CFA/VFBV Technology and Innovation Committee since 2014 and was a member of the Steering Committee to amalgamate VRFBA and VUFBA in the early 2000's.

Firefighter Peter Hannan (District 16)

Peter retired as a State Councillor for District 16 on 30 June 2023. Peter had been a member of State Council since early 2018. During his time as a State Councillor, Peter has served as a member of the Operational Performance Joint Committee.

Firefighter Mary Anne Egan (District 23)

Mary Anne retired as a VFBV State Councillor on 30 June 2023, having served as a State Councillor for 16 years. Mary Anne has been a member of the Joint Community Safety Committee for a number of years as well as being a member of the State Council Executive Committee for 12 years. Mary Anne was awarded VFBV Life Membership in 2017.

STATE COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

New VFBV State Councillors were elected during the year by their District Councils:

Ex Captain Tony Winsall (District 7) elected October 2022
Firefighter Eric Collier (District 8) elected August 2022
Firefighter Max Johnson (District 8) elected August 2022
Ex Captain Garry Morgan (District 9) elected August 2022
Ex Captain Brendan Jenkins (District 27) elected August 2022

STATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The State Council Executive Committee makes recommendations to State Council on strategic and process matters and issues raised by District Councils.

Members of the State Council Executive Committee for the year 2022-23 were: Geof Bassett, Malcolm Bishop, Sean Brittan, Timothy Desmond, Maurice Dumesny, Mark Jones, Vickie Linaker, Phil Lind, Bill Maltby, Garry Morgan, Greg Murphy, Jim Parsons, Phil Slender, Eric Smith, Shaun Thompson, Leigh Tomlinson, Greg Walcott and Tony Winsall. The two State Council delegates to the VFBV Board, Graeme Jilbert and Howard Smith, also attend as ex officio members to this Committee.

DISTRICT COUNCIL RETIREMENTS

VFBV thanks the following retired members for their contribution to District Councils:

District 2 President Peter Higgins (February 2022)
District 8 President Eric Collier (August 2022)
District 8 Secretary Max Johnson (August 2022)
District 8 President Chris Russo (May 2023)
District 11 President Graeme East (August 2022)
District 12 President Chris Lloyd (July 2022)
District 12 Secretary Kathy Quinlan (July 2022)
District 15 Vice President Maurice Preston (July 2022)
District 18 Vice President Allan McGillivray (July 2022)
District 18 Secretary Kaylene Cossar (July 2022)
District 20 Vice President Robert Moon (June 2023)
District 27 Vice President Brendan Jenkins (August 2022)
District 27 Secretary Craig Griffiths (August 2022)

STATE COUNCILLORS		DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICERS	
District 2	Ex Captain Geoff Browning Secretary Peter Dillon Captain Neil Irving-Dusting Ex Captain Bill Maltby Captain Darryl Wagstaff AFSM	Acting President Lorraine Leask Secretary Peter Dillon	
District 4	Captain Kelvin Bateman Captain Andy Cusack AFSM	President Gary Taylor Secretary Julie Bateman	
District 5	Ex Captain Malcolm Bishop Ex Captain Greg Walcott	President John Mahoney Secretary Charles Dillon	
District 6	Secretary Andrew Bath Firefighter Terry Riggs	President Mike Evans Secretary Terry O'Brian	
District 7	Ex Captain Robert Clark Ex Capt Tony Winsall Ex Captain Rod Taylor	President Gerry Neyenhuis Secretary Eddy Rees	
District 8	Firefighter Eric Collier Captain Timothy Desmond Firefighter Max Johnson	Acting President Eddie Matt Secretary Jeremy Bergstrom	
District 9	Ex Captain Garry Morgan Ex Captain Darren Wallace	President Garry Morgan Secretary Marion Byrne	
District 10	Ex Captain Mark Jones DGO Bryan Walpole	President Mark Jones Secretary Terry King	
District 11	Ex Captain Geof Bassett Firefighter Philip Lind	President Des Ryan Secretary Ian Ashcroft	
District 12	Captain Paul Denham AFSM Lieutenant Eric Smith	President David Gamble Secretary Carly Ficheroux	
District 13	Firefighter Vickie Linaker Ex Captain Rod Stebbing	President Frank Whelan OAM Secretary Carolyn Moorshead	
District 14	DGO Sean Brittan Lieutenant Leigh Tomlinson	President Mark Gravell Secretary Joy Pitts	
District 15	Brigade Member Trinsa Lewis Lieutenant Ryan O'Shannessy	President Ron Head Secretary Kimberly-Rose Betts	
District 16	Secretary Katrina Lee Captain Mal Nicholson	President Peter Hannan Secretary Prue Cosgriff	
District 17	Firefighter Maurice Dumesny Ex Captain John St Clair	President Garry Smith Secretary Bronwyn McIntyre	
District 18	Firefighter Graeme Jilbert Lieutenant Shaun Thompson	President Trevor Wyatt AFSM <i>*currently vacant</i>	
District 20	Ex Captain Greg Murphy Lieutenant Jim Parsons	President Greg Murphy Secretary Jo Guthrie	
District 22	Ex Captain Phil Slender Lieutenant Cara Disint	President Leonard Balfour Secretary Melanie Crosier	
District 23	Firefighter Mick Jones Lieutenant Glenn Mercer	President Garry Nash Secretary Jim Buchan	
District 24	DGO Neil Hillas Ex Captain Howard Smith	President Max Wood Secretary Chris Wingard	
District 27	Captain Mark King Ex Captain Brendan Jenkins	President Ray Mackie Secretary Robert Bonfield	

1946	M.W. Carver	1984	D.E. Gow (Leitchville)	2006	R. Hill (Paynesville)
1951	J.K. Stokes		K.W. Talbot OAM (Dandenong)		J.S. Kennedy (Loch)
1952	C. Ford (Miners Rest)	1985	R. Collier OAM (Portarlinton)	2007	G.N. Lyttle AFSM (Cardigan)
1953	D.M. Cameron		G.T. Evans OAM QFSM (Echuca)		S.M. O Callaghan (Warracknabeal)
1955	J.L. Allen		M.E. Johnson QFSM (Traralgon)	2009	T.J. Brodie AFSM (Longwood)
1956	W.B. Richardson BEM (Wangaratta)		J. McLeod AFSM (Boronia)		P. Downes (Mandurang)
1959	J.R.C. Plante (Lilydale)		P.G. Mullins QFSM (Maryborough)		O.T. O'Keefe (Winslow)
	M. Steward OBE (Warragul)		R.K. Patterson AFSM (Portland)		W.R. Rodda AFSM (Korumburra)
	J. Reilly (Tarndale)		H.W. Stewart (Broadford)	2010	J.I. Thomson (Sunbury)
	H.M. O'Rorke MBE (Lake Bolac)	1986	E.J. Baynes AFSM OAM (Indigo Valley)		B. Conboy (Mt Martha)
1961	H.W. Wade (Natimuk)		M.W. Dawson OAM (Avoca)		R. MacDonald (Carlsruhe)
1962	Hon. I.A. Swinburne GMC MLC	1987	L.J. Baillie (Warrnambool)		W.T. Pressey AFSM (Mortlake)
1966	W.H. Barnes OAM (Chelsea)		B.C. Condict AFSM (Tarnagulla)	2011	B.L. Vine AFSM (Tawonga)
	H. Brown (Golden Square)	1988	D.A. Austin QFSM ED	2012	B. Pyke (Whanregarwen)
	S.G.W. Burston OBE (Casterton)		L.V. Winsall AFSM (Warracknabeal)		P.R. Denham (Boronia)
	T.F. Hayes (Violet Town)	1990	G.H. Baxter AFSM (Freshwater Creek)		M.R. Jones (Stratford)
	W.J. Jones BEM AFSM (Moorooduc)		K.H. Larsen AFSM (Belmont)		R.B. Snell (Hamilton)
	L.J. Slattery (Kyabram)	1991	J.N. McEachern (Wodonga)	2013	A.J. Cusack AFSM (Mumbanner)
	A.E.J. Turton (Wodonga)		W.E. Davies AFSM (Walmer)		T.G. Desmond (Dromana)
1967	E.E. Allen (Kaniva)		W.H. Royal AFSM (Bairnsdale)		M.J. Evans (Barongarook)
	S.M. Begley (Colac)		M.J. Taylor AFSM (Mornington)		R.P. Lind (Mount Taylor)
	Hon. T.H. Grigg CBE MLC (Maldon)		L.L. Thomason AFSM (Woodend)		W.I. Maltby (Castlemaine)
	Dr P.S. Lang	1992	G.A. Ellis (Bendigo)	2014	C. Pomroy (Longford)
1968	F.C.B. Minchin	1993	M.J. Sanderson AFSM (Seymour)		C.W. Dennis (Frankston)
	J.S. Tabuteau (Moe)		Q.T. Turner AFSM (Creswick)		M. Nunweek (Stawell)
1970	D. Campbell (Springvale)	1994	P.R. Bishop AFSM (Mildura)		D.J. Wagstaff AFSM (Maryborough)
	S.C. Diffey MBE MC OAM (Springhurst)		G.C. Dare (Colac)		T.J. Wyatt AFSM (Murrayville)
	H. Lester-Smith MBE (Kerang)		R.D. Walker (Kerang)	2015	G.W. Bassett (Lakes Entrance)
	L.J. Maguire (Boronia)	1995	R.G. Jacobs AFSM OAM (Chelsea)		P.J. Slender (Tatura)
	W.M. Reid (Mooroopna)		B.M. Maher AFSM (Lubeck)	2016	F.J. Grove (Lara)
1971	H.L. King (The Fireman)		J.C. McMillan (Moe)	2017	J.M. Austin (Drouin)
1972	E.J. Barrett (Geelong City)		H.B. Morris (Avoca)		K. Clough (Lake Charm)
	R.A. Dore BEM (Carrum)	1997	R.D. Gartside (Castlemaine)		R.C. Cole (Romsey)
	W.H. Rowe (Maldon)	1998	A.J. Hooper AFSM (Winnindoo)		M.A. Egan (Maingdample)
1973	H.G. Kyle AFSM (Bengworden)		R.A. Horner AFSM (Sassafras/Ferny Creek)		A.J. Ford
1975	N.H. Jenkins (Kyneton)	1999	R.A.C. McDonald (Bowser)	2018	G. Neyenhuis (Wallington)
1976	C.J.H. Drife BEM (Clunes)	2000	D.W. Adams (Carrum)	2020	S.R. Brittian (Werribee)
	W.G. Wilson OAM (Shepparton)		R.E. Schultz AFSM (Benalla)		G.L. Fithall (St Arnaud)
1979	A.I. Laidlaw BEM AFSM (Willaura)		P.J. White AFSM (Casterton)	2021	R.M. Auchterlonie (Dumbalk)
	C.T.N. Stone (Diamond Creek)	2001	H.A. van Hamond AFSM (Wendouree)		G.I. Browning (Kangaroo Flat)
1980	R.J. Jilbert BEM (Swan Hill)	2003	P.E. Davis AFSM (Carrum)		M. Dumesny (Laharum)
	A.E. King AFSM (The Fireman)		L.C. Doye (Golden Square)		J. Davies (Horsham)
	D.J. McEachern OAM (Wodonga)		J.L. Laing		G. C. Jilbert (Swan Hill)
1981	E.C. Caddy QFSM (Drouin)	2004	R.W. Waterson AFSM (Cohuna)		N.R. Jones AFSM (Moorooduc)
	L.W. Peters	2005	B.A. Pickett AFSM (Geelong West)		A. Barnett
1983	R. Jones				
	D.H. Lade QFSM (Highlands/Caveat)				

District 2

Axe Creek
 Axedale
 Baringhup West
 Bealiba
 Bendigo
 Benloch
 Bolinda & Monegeetta
 Bowenvale
 Bullengarook
 Campbells Creek
 Carisbrook
 Carlsruhe
 Castlemaine
 Chewton
 Clarkefield & District
 Coliban Group
 Darraweit Guim
 District 2 Headquarters
 Dunolly
 Eaglehawk
 Elmore
 Elphinstone
 Eppalock Group
 Fortuna Group
 Fryerstown
 Gisborne
 Golden Square
 Goldfields Group
 Goornong
 Guildford
 Harcourt
 Heathcote
 Hesket-Kerrie
 Hunter-Diggora
 Huntly
 Junortoun
 Kamarooka
 Kangaroo Flat
 Knowsley
 Kyneton
 Lake Eppalock Coast
 Guard
 Lancefield
 Langley-Barfold
 Lockwood
 Macedon

Maiden Gully
 Maldon

Malmsbury
 Mandurang
 Marong
 Maryborough
 Metcalfe
 Mia Mia
 Moolort & Joyces Creek
 Mosquito Creek
 Mount Macedon
 Mount Macedon Group
 Mt Camel
 Natte Yallock
 Newham
 Newstead & District
 Oscar 1 Emergency
 Response
 Pastoria
 Raywood
 Redesdale
 Riddell's Creek
 Romsey
 Romsey Group
 Sedgwick
 Spring Hill
 Springfield
 Strathfieldsaye
 Sutton Grange & Myrtle Ck
 Talbot
 Taradale
 Tylden
 Walmer
 Wareek & Bung Bong
 Whipstick Group
 Woodend
 Woodvale

District 4

Bahgallah
 Carapook
 Cashmore
 Casterton
 Casterton Group
 Condah
 Corndale
 Dartmoor
 Digby
 District 4 Headquarters
 Drumborg
 Dunrobin & Nangeela
 Glenorchy Estate
 Gorae West
 Grassdale
 Heathmere
 Henty
 Heywood
 Heywood Group
 Homerton
 Killara
 Lake Mundi
 Lindsay
 Lyons
 Merino
 Merino Group
 Milltown
 Morven
 Mumbannar
 Myamyn
 Narrawong
 Nelson
 Paschendale
 Portland
 Portland Coast Guard
 Sandford
 Strathdownie
 Strathdownie Group
 Tahara
 Wando Bridge
 Wando Vale

District 5

Abbey Hills
 Allansford
 Ardachy
 Ardonachie
 Balmoral
 Balmoral Group
 Belfast Group
 Bessiebell
 Bochara
 Branhholme
 Broadwater
 Buckley Swamp
 Bulart
 Burn Brae
 Byaduk
 Caramut
 Cavendish
 Codrington
 Coleraine
 Croxton East
 Cudgee
 Culla
 District 5 Headquarters
 Dundas Group
 Dunkeld
 Eilerslie
 Framlingham
 Garvoc
 Gazette
 Glenthompson
 Grange
 Grassmere
 Gringe
 Hamilton
 Hawkesdale
 Hawkesdale Group
 Hexham
 Hilgay Settlers
 Hopkins - Curdies Group
 Karabeal
 Kirkstall
 Konongwootung
 Koroit
 Laang
 Linlithgow
 Macarthur

Macarthur Group
 Melville Forest
 Mepunga
 Merri Group
 Mirranatwa
 Mooralla
 Mortlake
 Mortlake Group
 Mount Rouse Group
 Muntham
 Nareen
 Nareen Group
 Naringal
 Nirranda South
 North Balmoral
 North Byaduk
 North Hamilton
 Nullawarre
 Orford
 Panmure
 Penshurst
 Peterborough
 Port Fairy
 Purnim
 Ripponhurst
 Spring Creek
 St Helens
 Strathkellar
 Strathmore
 Tarrayoukyan
 Tarrenlea
 Tarrington
 The Sisters
 Toolong
 Vasey
 Victoria Valley
 Wando Heights
 Wangoom
 Warrayure-Moutajup
 Warrnambool
 Warrnambool Coast Guard
 Willatook & District
 Winslow & Yarturk
 Woodford
 Woodhouse
 Woolsthorpe
 Wooriwyrite

Wootong Vale
 Yambuk
 Yulecart

District 6

Apollo Bay
 Barongarook West
 Barwon Downs
 Beeac
 Beeac Group
 Berrybank
 Birregurra
 Bookaar
 Boorcan
 Bostocks Creek
 Brucknell-Ayrford
 Bungador
 Camperdown
 Camperdown Group
 Carlisle River
 Carpendeit-Sth
 Purumbete
 Chocolyn
 Cobden
 Cobden Group
 Cobrico
 Colac
 Corangamite Group
 Cororooke
 Cressy
 Darlington
 Derrinallum
 District 6 Headquarters
 Dixie
 Dreeite South
 Duverney
 Ecklin & District
 Forrest
 Gellibrand
 Gerangamete
 Irrewarra
 Irrewillipe
 Kawarren
 Kennedy's Creek
 Larpent
 Leslie Manor

Lismore
 Lismore Group
 Lower Heytesbury
 Nalangil
 Noorat & District
 Otway
 Pomorneit & Dist
 Port Campbell
 Princetown
 Scotts Ck-Cowleys Ck.
 Simpson
 Stonyford
 Swan Marsh
 Terang
 Tesbury
 Timboon
 Timboon Group
 Vite Vite North
 Warrion
 Weerite
 Wye River
 Yeo & District
 Yeodene

District 7

Aireys Inlet
 Anakie
 Anakie Group
 Anglesea
 Bannockburn
 Barrabool
 Barunah Plains North
 Barwon Heads
 Bellarine Group
 Bellbrae
 Belmont
 Connewarre
 Corio
 Deans Marsh
 Dereel
 District 7 Headquarters
 Drysdale
 Freshwater Creek
 Geelong City
 Geelong Coast Guard
 Geelong Group

Geelong West
Gnarwarre
Grovedale
Highton
Inverleigh
Lara
Leopold
Lethbridge
Little River
Lorne
Lovely Banks
Mannerim
Maude
Meredith
Modewarre
Mount Mercer
Ocean Grove
Portarlington
Queenscliff
Queenscliff Coast Guard
Rokewood
Shelford
St Leonards-Indented
Head
Stonehaven
Teesdale
Torquay
Wallington
Werneth
Winchelsea
Wingeel
Wurdale

District 8

Balnarring
Bass
Bass Coast Group
Baxter
Bayles
Beaconsfield
Beaconsfield Upper
Berwick
Bittern
Boneo
Bunyip
Cardinia Group
Carrum Downs

Casey Group
Clyde
Cockatoo
Corinella
Cranbourne
Crib Point
Dalyston
Dandenong
Devon Meadows
District 8 Headquarters
Dromana
Edithvale
Flinders
Frankston
French Island
Gembrook
Glen Alvie
Hallam
Hampton Park
Hastings
Heath Hill - Yannathan
Kernot-Grantville
Keysborough
Kilcunda
Koo Wee Rup
Lang Lang
Langwarrin
Main Ridge
Maryknoll & District
Moorooduc
Mornington
Mt Eliza
Mt Martha
Nar Nar Goon
Narren Warren
Narren Warren North
Noble Park
Officer
Pakenham
Pakenham Upper
Patterson River
Pearcedale
Peninsula Group
Phillip Island
Red Hill
Rosebud
Rye

Safety Beach Coast Guard
San Remo
Shoreham
Skye
Somers
Somerville
Sorrento
South East Group
Springvale
St Kilda Coast Guard
Toomuc
Tooradin
Tyabb
Tynong
Warneet- Blind Bight
Westernport Group
Wonthaggi

District 9

Allambee
Berry's Creek
Baw Baw Group
Darnum & Ellinbank
Drouin
Drouin West
Dumbalk
Erica & District
Fish Creek & District
Foster
Hallora & District
Hallston-Mt Eccles
Hedley
Inverloch
Kongwak & District
Koonwarra
Korumburra
Leongatha
Leongatha South
Loch
Longwarry & District
Meeniyan & Stony Creek
Milford
Mirboo North
Neerim South
Nerrena
Nilma North

Noojee
Poowong
Port Welshpool Coast
Guard
Pound Creek
Ruby
South Gippsland Group
Strzelecki Group
Tarwin Lower District
Thorpdale
Toora
Trafalgar
Trida
Warragul
Welshpool
Westbury
Willowgrove
Yanakie
Yarragon

District 10

Alberton West
Avon Group
Banskia Group
Boisdale
Briagolong
Carrajung
Clydebank
Coongulla
Cowwarr
Dargo
Devon North
Giffard West
Glenmaggie
Golden Beach
Heyfield
Jack River
Licola
Loch Sport
Longford
Maffra
Meerlieu
Munro
Newry
Perry Bridge
Port Albert

Port Albert Coast Guard
Riverslea Group
Rosedale
Sale
Seaspray
Seaton
Stradbroke
Stratford
Tarra Group
Tinamba
Valencia Creek
Willung South
Winnindoo
Wron Wron
Woodside
Woranga
Yarram

District 11

Bairnsdale
Bemm
Benambra
Bendoc
Bruthen
Buchan
Cann Valley
District 11 Headquarters
Ensay
Fernbank
Flaggy Creek
Gelantipy
Glenaladale
Goongerah
Hillside
Johnsonville
Kalimna West
Lakes Entrance
Lakes Entrance Coast
Guard
Lindenow South
Mallacoota
Marlo
Marlo Coast Guard
Metung
Mossi - Tambo
Mount Delegate Group

Mount Taylor
Newmerella
Omeo
Orbost
Paynesville
Paynesville Coast Guard
Sarsfield
Swifts Creek
Tambo Group
Toorloo
Wairewa

District 12

Acheron
Alexandra
Alexandra Group
Broadford
Buxton
Clonbinane
District 12 Headquarters
Eildon
Flowerdale
Glenaroua
Glenburn
Highlands-Caveat
Hilldene
Homewood
Kilmore
Kinglelake District
Kinglelake West
Koriella
Limestone
Marysville
Mitchell Shire Group
Molesworth
Murrindindi & Woodbourne
Narbethong
Nulla Vale
Pyalong
Seymour
Strath Creek-Reedy Creek
Taggerty
Tallarook
Terip Terip
Thornton
Tooborac

Toolangi
Trawool
Wallan
Wandong
Whanregarwen
Whiteheads Creek-Tarcombe
Yarck
Yea
Yea Group

District 13

Badger Creek
Bayswater
Belgrave
Belgrave Heights & South
Boronia
Chrinside Park
Clematis
Coldstream
Dandenong Ranges Group
District 13 Headquarters
Dixons Creek
Emerald
Ferntree Gully
Gruyere
Healesville
Hillcrest
Hoddle's Creek
Kallista-The Patch
Kalorama & Mt
Dandenong
Knox Group
Liylale
Little Yarra
Macclesfield
Maroondah Group
Menzies Creek
Monbulk
Montrose
Mooroolbark
Mt Evelyn
Narre Warren East
Olinda
Reefton
Rowville
Sassafras & Ferny Creek

Scoresby
Selby
Seville
Silvan
South Warrandyte
The Basin
Upper Ferntree Gully
Upwey
Wandin
Warburton
Warrandyte
Wesburn-Millgrove
Wonga Park
Yarra Glen
Yarra Junction
Yarra Valley Group
Yellingbo

District 14

Arthurs Creek
Bulla
Caroline Springs
Christmas Hills
Craigieburn
Diamond Creek
Diggers Rest
District 14 HQ East
Doreen
Eltham
Epping
Eyensbury
Greenvale
Hoppers Crossing
Hume Group
Hurstbridge
Kal Kallo
Kangaroo Ground
Melton
Mernda
Mount Cottrell Group
Nillumbik Group
North Warrandyte
Panton Hill
Plenty
Point Cook
Research

Rockbank
South Morang
St Andrews
Sunbury
Toolern Vale
Truganina
Wattle Glen
Werribee
Werribee Coast Guard
Whittlesea
Whittlesea/D.Valley Group
Wildwood
Wollert & District
Wyndham Vale
Yarrambat

District 15

Ascot & District
Bacchus Marsh
Ballan
Ballan Group
Ballarat
Ballarat City
Ballarat Group
Balliang & District
Blackwood
Bungaree
Buninyong Group
Buninyong-Mt Helen
Burrumbeet
Campbelltown
Cape Clear
Cardigan & Windermere
Clunes
Coimadai
Creswick
Daylesford
District 15 Headquarters
Elaine
Eureka Group
Franklinford
Glen Park
Glendaruel & Mt
Beckworth
Glenlyon
Glenlyon Group

Gordon
Greendale
Grenville Group
Haddon
Hardies Hill
Hepburn
Invermay
Kingston
Learmonth-Addington
Leonards Hill & District
Linton
Mannibadar
Millbrook
Miners Rest
Molongghip
Morrisons & District
Mt Buninyong
Mt Egerton
Mt Wallace
Mt Warrenheip
Musk
Myrniong
Napoleons- Enfield
Parwan
Pentland Group
Porcupine Ridge
Rowsley
Sebastopol
Smythesdale
Trentham
Ullina
Wallinduc & District
Waubra
Wendouree

District 16

Amphitheatre
Ararat
Ararat Group
Avoca
Barkly & Frenchman's
Beaufort
Beaufort Group
Beazley's Bridge
Bornes Hill
Brewster
Buangor & Middle Creek

Burnbank
Callawadda
Carapooee
Carranballac
Chatsworth
Cross Roads
Crowlands
Dadswells Bridge
District 16 Headquarters
Dundonnell
Elmhurst
Glenorchy & Riachella
Gooroc
Gre Gre Village
Great Western
Halls Gap
Joel Joel
Kooreh
Lake Bolac
Lake Goldsmith-Stockyard
Langi Kal Kal
Langi Logan
Lexton
Marnoo
Maroona
Mininera
Moyston
Narrapumelap South
Navarre
Nerrin Nerrin
Pomonal
Pura Pura
Pyrenees Group
Raglan
Redbank
Rich Avon
Skipton
Slaty Creek
Snake Valley & District
St Arnaud
St Arnaud Group
Stawell
Stawell Group
Stoneleigh
Streatham
Stuart Mill
Tatyoon

Traynor's Lagoon
Wallaloo East
Warrak
Warrenmang & Dist
Westmere
Westmere Group
Wickliffe
Willaura
Woorndoo
Yalla Y Poora

District 17

Antwerp
Apsley
Apsley Group
Areegra
Bangerang
Benayeo
Boolite
Brim
Brimpaen
Bringalbert South
Broughton
Cannum
Charam
Chetwynd
Connewirricoo
Coromby
Crymelon
Dergholm
Diapur
Dimboola
Dinyarrak
District 17 Headquarters
Dooen
Douglas
Dunmunkle Group
Edenhope
Edenhope Group
Gerang
Goroke
Goroke Group
Grass Flat
Green Lake
Harrow
Horsham

Jilpanger Group
Jung
Kadnook
Kaniva
Kaniva Group
Kellalac
Kenmare
Lah
Laharum
Langkoop
Lawloit
Leeor
Lorquon
Lowan Group
Lubeck
Miga Lake
Minimay
Minyip
Mitre
Murtoa
Natimuk
Natimuk Group
Netherby
Neuarpuur
Nhill
Noradjuha
North Wimmera
Patyah
Peronne
Pigick
Pimpinio
Poolaijelo
Propodollah
Rainbow
Rupanyup
Sandsmere
Sheep Hills
South Lillimur
Tarranyurk
Telangatuk
Telopea Downs
Ullswater
Vectis
Warracknabeal
Werrap
Wilkur South
Willenabrina

Winiam & District
Wonwondah
Woorak
Yanac
Yearinga-Yarrook

District 18

Annuello
Berriwillcock
Beulah
Beverford & District
Birchip
Boundary Bend
Buckrabanyule
Buloke West Group
Carwarp
Charlton
Charlton Group
Chinkapook
Cope Cope
Corack East
Curyo
Donald
Dumosa
Glenloth East
Goschen
Hopetoun
Hopetoun West
Irymple
Jeffcott
Kooloonong
Laen East
Lake Boga
Litchfield
Manangatang
Merbein
Mid Murray Group
Mildura
Mittyack
Murrayville
Natya
Nullawil
Nyah Nyah West
Ouyen
Ouyen and District Group
Piangil

Red Cliffs
Reedy Dam
Robinvale
Robinvale and District
Group
Rosebery
Speed
Swan Hill
Teddywaddy
Tempy
Turiff
Ultima
Underbool
Waitchie
Walpeup
Warmur
Watchem
Watchupga
Wemen
Woomelang
Woorinen South
Wooroonook
Wycheproof
Yaapeet
Yeungroon

District 20

Appin South
Bamawn Extension
Beauchamp
Boort
Bridgewater
Campbells Forest
Cohuna
Colbinabbin
Corop
Corop West
Deakin Group
Dingee-Tandarra
Echuca
Echuca Village
Fentons Creek
Gannawarra Group
Girgarre
Gunbower
Inglewood

Jarklin
Kerang
Koondrook
Korong Vale
Kotta
Kyabram
Lake Charm
Leitchville
Lockington
Loddon Vale
Macorna
Meering West
Mitiamo
Murphy's Creek
Murrabit
Newbridge
Pine Grove
Powlett-Salisbury
Pyramid Hill
Quambatook
Rheola
Rochester
Rushworth
Sandhill Lake & District
Stanhope
Tarnagulla
Terrick Group
Timmering
Tongala
Toolleen
Torrumbarry
Waranga Group
Wedderburn
Wedderburn Group
Woodstock West
Woosang
Wychitella
Wyuna
Yambuna
Yarrawalla

District 22

Almonds
Arcadia
Avenel
Baileston
Balmattum
Barmah
Boho
Branjee
Bundalong
Burramine
Caniambo
Cobram
Cobram East & Boosey
COGS Group
Cooma
Cosgrove & Pine Lodge
Creighton's Creek
Currawa
District 22 HQ
Dookie
Drumanure
Earlston
Euroa
Euroa Group
Gooram
Kaarimba
Katamatite
Katandra
Katunga
Kelvin View
Kialla & District
Koonda
Kotupna
Locksley
Longwood
Marraweeny
Merrigum
Miepoll
Molka
Moorlim
Mooroopna
Moria West Group
Muckatah
Murchison
Nagambie
Naring

Nathalia
Numurkah
NW Mooroopna
Peechelba
Picola
Rigg's Creek
Ruffy
Shean's Creek
Shepparton
Shepparton East
St James & District
Strathbogie
Strathmerton
Tallygaroopna
Tatura
Toolamba
Tungamah
Tungamah Group
Undera
Upton Hill
Violet Town
Waaia
Wahring
Wilby
Wirrate
Wunghnu
Yabba North
Yalca & Yielima
Yarrowonga
Yarrowonga Group
Yarroweyah

District 23

Baddaginnie
Barjarg
Benalla
Benalla Group
Bobinawarrah
Bonnie Doon
Boorhaman
Booroolite & District
Boweya
Bowman-Murmungee
Bowser
Carboor
Cheshunt

Chesney Vale
Devenish
Edi
Eldorado
Everton
Glenrowan
Glenroy & Merrijig
Goomalibee &
Upotipotpon
Goorambat Stewarton
Goughs Bay - Howes
Creek
Greta
Jamieson
Killawarra
Laceby West
Lima South
Lurg
Maindample
Mansfield
Mansfield Group
Merton
Milawa
Molyullah
Moyhu
Moyhu Group
Myrree
Oxley
Oxley Flats
Samaria
South Wangaratta
Springhurst
Swanpool
Taminick & North Winton
Tarrawingee & District
Tatong
Thoona
Tolmie & District
Wangaratta
Wangaratta Group
Wangaratta North
Warrenbayne
Whitegate
Whitfield & District
Whorouly
Winton
Woods Point

District 24

Allans Flat
Baranduda
Barnawartha
Beechworth Rural
Beechworth Urban
Berringama
Bethanga
Biggara
Bogong Group
Bonegilla
Bright
Browns Plains
Buffalo River
Bullich
Burrowye
Carlyle
Chiltern
Cornishtown
Corryong
Corryong Group
Cudgewa
Dartmouth
Dederang
District 24 Headquarters
Eskdale
Falls Creek
Gapsted
Granya
Gundowring
Harrietville
Indigo Valley
Kergunyah
Kiewa
Lake Hume Coast Guard
Leneva
Mitta Mitta
Mt Beauty
Mt Hotham-Dinner Plain
Mudgegonga
Myrtleford
Nariel Valley
Noorongong
Norong
Old Tallangatta
Ovens-Eurobin
Ovens Valley Group

Porepunkah
Rosewhite
Rutherglen
Rutherglen Group
Sandy Creek & Charleroi
Stanley
Talgarno
Tallangatta
Tallangatta Group
Tallangatta Valley
Tawonga
Tintaldra
Wahgunyah
Walwa
Wodonga
Wodonga Group
Wodonga West
Wooragee
Yackandandah

District 27

Boolarra
Callignee
Churchill
Driffield
Flynn
Glengarry
Hazelwood North
Hyland Group
Maryvale
Merton Group
Moe
Moe South
Morwell
Newborough
Tanjil
Toongabbie
Traralgon
Traralgon East
Traralgon South
Traralgon West
Tyers
Yallourn North
Yinnar
Yinnar South

Director's Report

30 June 2023

The consolidated financial statements include the consolidated results and activities for Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Welfare Fund (the Group). The board members submit the financial report of the Group for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

(a) General information**Board members**

The names of each person who has been a director during the year and to the date of this report are:

Name	Position
Samantha Collins	State President
Andy Cusack AFSM	State Vice President
Jan Cleary	
Libby Hay	Treasurer
Greame Jilbert	
Nev Jones AFSM	Resigned 1/10/2022
Bill Maltby	
David Sidebottom	
Howard Smith	
Greg Walcott	
Darren Wallace	Appointed 1/10/2022

Principal activities

The principal activities of the Group during the financial year were:

1. To function as a non-profit association whose Members comprise Volunteer Fire Brigades registered by the Country Fire Authority under the Country Fire Authority Act (1958) and its Regulations.
2. To liaise and consult on the operation of the "Volunteer Charter" in the interests of CFA volunteers about all matters which might reasonably be expected to affect them. The Volunteer Charter is an agreed tripartite commitment between the State of Victoria, the CFA and CFA Volunteers, committing the State of Victoria and the CFA to consultation with volunteers about all matters which might reasonably be expected to affect volunteers. VFBV represents its Members and CFA Volunteers in that consultation process.
3. To assist in maintaining high morale, ongoing health and welfare of CFA volunteer members and their families.
4. Support CFA volunteers experiencing personal financial hardship/crisis by providing small welfare grants that may assist in alleviating stresses impacting on the individual's ability to maintain their involvement as a volunteer.
5. Preserve and strengthen CFA's community and volunteer based foundations by enabling members of CFA brigades to consider and bring to the notice of CFA all matters affecting their welfare and efficiency (other than questions of discipline and promotion).
6. To promote to CFA volunteers the comprehensive support services available to them including but not limited to: legal assistance, OH&S, equity and diversity, counselling and welfare, training, employment support and compensation for accidents, injuries and illness.
7. To develop awareness, respect and support for CFA volunteers and their fundamental and pivotal role in the CFA as a community based, volunteer based fire and emergency service of the people of Victoria.
8. To take any other action as determined by the Association Board consistent with these purposes.
9. To maintain and pursue a balanced focus on issues affecting CFA volunteers across all brigades from all risk profiles.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Director's Report

30 June 2023

Significant changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

Operating results and review of operations for the year**Operating result**

The surplus of the Group for the financial year amounted to \$408,885 (2022: \$436,426)

Signed in accordance with resolution of the Members of the Board:



Board member:

Samantha Collins - State President



Board member:

Andrew Cusack AFSM – State Vice President

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Auditor's Independence Declaration

In accordance with the requirements of section 60.40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, as the auditor for the audit of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities for the year ended 30 June 2023, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit, and;
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



Seward Dawson



Matthew Crouch
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 11 September 2023

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Statement of Income and Expenditure and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Income		
Affiliation Fees	169,940	141,916
Grant Income	1,829,696	1,775,065
Championships	22,097	19,444
Interest Income	214,807	35,951
Special Projects Funding	107,382	45,396
Merchandise Sales	26,378	17,491
Donations Income	10,881	11,919
Other Income	42,647	5,798
	<u>2,423,828</u>	<u>2,052,980</u>
Expenditure		
Employment Costs	1,039,503	889,996
Project Salaries and Other Project Fees	9,860	11,206
Welfare Grants	166,948	109,000
Travel, Accommodation and Meals	322,184	208,773
Office & Administration Expenditure	114,484	72,687
Advertising	22,380	23,283
Rent & Outgoings	89,368	86,873
Depreciation	69,257	59,028
Printing, Postage and Stationery	103,925	92,102
Communications	24,985	20,729
Accounting and Audit Fees	13,882	13,729
Championships & Championships Equipment	17,295	14,095
Merchandise	20,872	15,053
	<u>2,014,943</u>	<u>1,616,554</u>
Surplus for the year	<u>408,885</u>	<u>436,426</u>
Other comprehensive income		
Other Comprehensive Income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>408,885</u>	<u>436,426</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2023

	Note	2023	2022
		\$	\$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	1,320,245	2,204,861
Trade and other receivables	4	361,813	136,173
Financial assets	5	7,948,171	6,411,758
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>9,630,229</u>	<u>8,752,792</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Plant and equipment	6	249,617	207,824
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		<u>249,617</u>	<u>207,824</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>9,879,846</u>	<u>8,960,616</u>
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	7	247,938	169,794
Employee benefits	8	221,095	194,523
Deferred income	9	1,169,189	773,835
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>1,638,222</u>	<u>1,138,152</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Employee benefits	8	20,024	9,749
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>20,024</u>	<u>9,749</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>1,658,246</u>	<u>1,147,901</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>8,221,600</u>	<u>7,812,715</u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Accumulated surplus		8,221,600	7,812,715
TOTAL MEMBERS' EQUITY		<u>8,221,600</u>	<u>7,812,715</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

2023

	VFBV Inc. \$	Welfare Fund \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2022	3,645,312	4,167,403	7,812,715
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	387,190	21,695	408,885
Balance at 30 June 2023	4,032,502	4,189,098	8,221,600

2022

	VFBV Inc. \$	Welfare Fund \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2021	3,180,102	4,196,187	7,376,289
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	465,210	(28,784)	436,426
Balance at 30 June 2022	3,645,312	4,167,403	7,812,715

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	Note	2023 \$	2022 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:			
Receipts from customers		2,762,847	2,209,853
Payments to suppliers and employees		(2,080,226)	(1,791,865)
Interest received		39,803	59,205
Net cash provided by operating activities	12	722,424	477,193
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:			
Purchase of plant and equipment		(131,537)	(116,465)
Redemption/ (Placement) of term deposit		(1,536,413)	(151,377)
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		60,910	32,726
Net cash used by investing activities		(1,607,040)	(235,116)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		-	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		(884,616)	242,077
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		2,204,861	1,962,784
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	3	1,320,245	2,204,861

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial report is aggregated to include the numbers of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc. and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Welfare Fund (the Group).

Other entities that are associated with the Group have not been included in this financial report and are reported independently as the VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria - Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses Awareness and Protection Fund.

This financial report is a special purpose financial statement prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC), the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the basis of accounting and disclosure requirements specified by all Accounting Standards and Interpretations.

Statement of Compliance

These special purpose financial statements do not comply with all the recognition and measurement requirements in Australian Accounting Standards. The recognition and measurement requirements that have not been complied with are those specified in AASB 16 Leases and AASB 10 Consolidation.

The board has determined that the not-for-profit Group is not a reporting entity.

The financial report with the exception of the cash flow statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated specifically, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

(a) Income tax

The Group is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Welfare Fund are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

(b) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are presented as operating cash flows included in receipts from customers or payments to suppliers.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(c) Revenue and other income

The core principle of AASB 15 is that revenue is recognised on a basis that reflects the transfer of promised goods or services to customers at an amount that reflects the consideration the Group expects to receive in exchange for those goods or services. Revenue is recognised by applying a five-step model as follows:

1. Identify the contract with the customer
2. Identify the performance obligations
3. Determine the transaction price
4. Allocate the transaction price to the performance obligations
5. Recognise revenue as and when control of the performance obligations is transferred

Generally, the timing of the payment for sale of goods and rendering of services corresponds closely to the timing of satisfaction of the performance obligations, however where there is a difference, it will result in the recognition of a receivable, contract asset or contract liability.

None of the revenue streams of the Group have any significant financing terms as there is less than 12 months between receipt of funds and satisfaction of performance obligations.

Operating grants and donations

When the Group receives operating grant revenue and donations, it assesses whether the contract is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance to AASB 15.

When both these conditions are satisfied, the Group:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to the grant;
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement; and
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(c) Revenue and other income

Where the contract is not enforceable or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligation, the Group:

- recognise the asset received in accordance with the recognition requirements of other applicable Accounting Standards (for example AASB 9, AASB 16, AASB 116 and AASB 138);
- recognises related amounts (being contributions by owners, lease liability, financial instruments, provisions, revenue or contract liability arising from a contract with a customer) and;
- recognises income immediately in profit or loss as the difference between the initial carrying amount of the asset and the related amount.

If a contract liability is recognised as a related amount above, the Group recognises income in profit or loss when or as it satisfies its obligations under the contract.

Interest income

Interest income is mainly on interest-bearing cash and cash equivalent balances. It is recognised using the effective interest method.

Merchandise revenue

Merchandise revenue is recognised on transfer of goods to the customer as this is deemed to be the point in time when control of the performance obligations are transferred.

Affiliation fees

Affiliation fees are recognised as income over the life of the membership it relates to.

Championship revenue

Championship revenue is recognised when the event has occurred. When the event has not yet occurred, this will result in unearned income.

Special projects revenue

The Group receives funding solely designated for capital purchases. Revenue is recognised when the capital items have been purchased and becomes available for use in accordance with AASB 1058.

Other revenue

Other revenue is recognised on a basis that reflects the transfer of promised goods or services to customers at an amount that reflects the consideration the Group expects to receive in exchange for those goods or services.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(d) Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all plant and equipment is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the Group commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

Depreciation

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable asset are shown below:

Fixed asset class	Depreciation rate
Office Furniture & Equipment	3-5 years
Motor Vehicles	5 years

At the end of each annual reporting period, the depreciation method, useful life and residual value of each asset is reviewed. Any revisions are accounted for prospectively as a change in estimate.

Gain and losses on disposal are determined by comparing proceeds with the carrying amount. These gains and losses are included in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

(e) Employee benefits

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting year. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

Employee benefits expected to be settled more than one year after the end of the reporting period have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits. In determining the liability, consideration is given to employee wage increases and the probability that the employee may satisfy vesting requirements.

(f) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

(g) Leases

Operating leases - expense on straight-line basis over lease life

Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all of the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease term.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(h) Financial instruments

Initial recognition and measurement

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Group becomes a party to the contractual provisions to the instrument. For financial assets, this is the equivalent to the date that the Group commits itself to either the purchase or sale of the asset (i.e. trade date accounting is adopted).

Financial instruments (except for trade receivables) are initially measured at fair value plus transactions costs.

Trade receivables are initially measured at the transaction price.

Classification and subsequent measurement

Financial instruments are subsequently measured at either fair value, amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, or cost. Fair value represents the amount for which an asset could be exchanged or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties in arm's length transaction.

The classification of financial instruments depends on the purpose for which the investments were acquired. Management determines the classification of its investments at initial recognition and at the end of each reporting period for held-to maturity assets.

The Group did not hold financial assets at fair value through profit or loss either in the current or comparative financial years.

Derecognition

Financial assets are derecognised where the contractual rights to receipt of cash flows expires or the asset is transferred to another party whereby the entity no longer has any significant continuing involvement in the risks and benefits associated with the asset. Financial liabilities are derecognised where the related obligations are either discharged, cancelled or expired. The difference between the carrying value of the financial liability extinguished or transferred to another party and the fair value of consideration paid, including the transfer of non-cash assets or liabilities assumed, is recognised in profit or loss.

(i) Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting year, the Group reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the statement of income and expenditure and other comprehensive income.

(j) Comparative Figures

Where required by Accounting Standards, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform with changes in presentation for the current financial year.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

2 Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgments

The directors make estimates and judgements during the preparation of these financial statements regarding assumptions about current and future events affecting transactions and balances.

These estimates and judgements are based on the best information available at the time of preparing the financial statements, however as additional information is known then the actual results may differ from the estimates.

The significant estimates and judgements made have been described below.

Key judgements - Performance obligations under AASB 15

To identify a performance obligation under AASB 15, the promise must be sufficiently specific to be able to determine when the obligation is satisfied. Management exercises judgement to determine whether the promise is sufficiently specific by taking into account any conditions specified in the arrangement, explicit or implicit, regarding the promised goods or services. In making this assessment, management includes the nature, cost, quantity and the period of transfer related to the goods or services promised.

Key estimates - receivables

The receivables at reporting date have been reviewed to determine whether there is any objective evidence that any of the receivables are impaired. An impairment provision is included for any receivable where the entire balance is not considered collectible. The impairment provision is based on the best information at the reporting date.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

3 Cash and cash equivalents

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
General Cheque Account	1,008,225	330,327
Travel reimbursement account	21,444	14,469
Debit card	4,837	7,769
Cash at call	118,281	117,804
Welfare Fund	132,916	199,608
Valuing Volunteers Cheque Account	34,542	34,423
Term Deposits	-	1,500,461
5a	<u>1,320,245</u>	<u>2,204,861</u>

4 Trade and other receivables

CURRENT

VFBV

Trade Debtors	111,407	68,038
Accrued Interest	104,043	9,550
Other Receivables	18,356	4,084
	<u>233,806</u>	<u>81,672</u>

Welfare Fund

Trade Debtors	38,145	45,150
Accrued Interest	89,862	9,351
	<u>128,007</u>	<u>54,501</u>
	<u>361,813</u>	<u>136,173</u>

5 Financial assets

CURRENT

Term Deposits - VFBV	(b)	3,176,709	2,415,234
Term Deposits - Welfare Fund	(c)	4,771,462	3,996,524
		<u>7,948,171</u>	<u>6,411,758</u>

a) In the 2022 financial year, as the term deposit had a maturity period of 3 months or less, the term deposit has been classified in the statement of financial position as cash and cash equivalents.

b) In the current year, as the term deposits have maturity periods of 4 to 12 months, the term deposits have been classified in the statement of financial position as financial assets.

c) Welfare Fund operates on a capital balance from donated funds used to support volunteers in times of personal hardship/crisis.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

6 Plant and equipment

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Motor vehicles		
At cost	260,262	244,162
Accumulated depreciation	(86,265)	(113,879)
Total motor vehicles	173,997	130,283
Office equipment		
At cost	144,524	124,769
Accumulated depreciation	(68,904)	(47,228)
Total office equipment	75,620	77,541
	249,617	207,824

7 Trade and other payables

CURRENT		
Trade creditors	61,044	17,242
Accrued expenses	32,418	20,875
GST payable	84,961	84,742
Other payables	69,515	46,935
	247,938	169,794

8 Employee Benefits

CURRENT		
Long service leave	146,114	133,130
Annual leave	74,981	61,393
	221,095	194,523
NON-CURRENT		
Long service leave	20,024	9,749

9 Income in Advance

CFA Grants Received in Advance - VFBV	979,599	558,653
Deferred Affiliation Fees - VFBV	100,490	100,570
Income Received in Advance - VFBV	-	31,382
Deferred Affiliation Fees - Welfare Fund	89,100	83,230
	1,169,189	773,835

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

10 Capital and Leasing Commitments

Operating lease commitments

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Non-cancellable operating leases contracted but not capitalised in the financial statements.		
- not later than one year	113,451	63,298
- between one year and five years	352,400	31,732
	465,851	95,030

Operating leases have been taken out for the rental of premises and the rental of a photocopier. Lease payments for the premises are increased on an annual basis to reflect market rentals.

The 9/24 Lakeside Drive premises lease has been renewed for a further 4 years commencing 1 January 2024.

A new 3-year term premises lease for 7/24 Lakeside Drive was entered into commencing 15 May 2023 and rent commencing 15 August 2023.

11 Related Parties Transactions

During the year, the Group entered into contracts with the following brigades of which Board members were also involved:

VFBV Board Member	Brigade	Membership Paid
Andrew Cusack	Mumbannar	Yes
Nevyn Jones	Moorooduc	Yes
Graeme Jilbert	Swan Hill	Yes
Samantha Collins	Maryborough	Yes
Janette Cleary	Lakes Entrance	Yes
Libby Hay	Barwon Heads	Yes
Gregory Walcott	Dist 5 HQ	Yes
David Sidebottom	Mooroolbark	Yes
Bill Maltby	Castlemaine	Yes
Howard Smith	Barnawartha	Yes
Darren Wallace	Trafalgar	Yes

All contracts for membership fees were provided in accordance with the fee schedule.

Board members are reimbursed for their travel cost incurred.

Key management personnel includes the Board members and the CEO. Apart from reimbursement of their travel costs incurred the Board members were not remunerated for their role as directors.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

12 Cash Flow Information

Reconciliation of net income to net cash provided by operating activities:

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Surplus for the year	408,885	436,426
Cash flows excluded from surplus/(deficit) attributable to operating activities		
Non-cash flows in surplus/(deficit):		
Depreciation	69,257	59,028
Profit on disposal of non-current assets	(40,423)	(5,788)
Changes in assets/liabilities		
- (increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(225,640)	(10,135)
- increase/(decrease) in income in advance	395,354	34,539
- increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	78,144	16,878
- increase/(decrease) in provisions	36,847	(53,755)
Cashflow from operations	722,424	477,193

13 Events Occurring After the Reporting Date

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or could significantly affect the operations of the Group, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Group in future financial years.

14 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc. Welfare Fund

(a) Statement of Income and Expenditure and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2023

INCOME		
Affiliation fees	76,090	48,455
Interest Received	101,701	19,846
Donations	10,881	11,919
	188,672	80,220
EXPENSES		
Grants	166,948	109,000
Bank Fees	29	4
	166,977	109,004
Surplus/(deficit) from operations	21,695	(28,784)

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

14 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc. Welfare Fund

(b) Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	132,916	199,608
Trade and other receivables	128,007	54,501
Financial assets	4,017,284	3,996,524
TOTAL ASSETS	4,278,207	4,250,633
LIABILITIES		
Deferred Income	89,100	83,230
Trade and other payables	9	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	89,109	83,230
NET ASSETS	4,189,098	4,167,403
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Accumulated surplus	4,189,098	4,167,403
Total Equity	4,189,098	4,167,403

15 Association Details

The registered office of the association is:
 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities
 9/24 Lakeside Drive
 Burwood East VIC 3151

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

True and Fair Certification by Members of the Board

The Board has determined that the Group is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Board the financial report as set out on pages 4 to 18:

1. Give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30 June 2023.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.
3. Satisfies the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Regulations 2022.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board and is signed for and on behalf of the Board by:

Board Member 

Board Member 

Dated 8 September 2023

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Independent Audit Report to the board of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report being a special purpose financial report, of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023, the statement of income and expenditure and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the board's assertion statements for the Group.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC), including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended on that date; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 to the financial statements, Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022 and the Association Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Group in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the board's financial reporting responsibilities under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Independent Audit Report to the board of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

Responsibilities of Board Members for the Financial Report

The board members of the Group are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The board members' responsibility also includes establishing and monitoring such internal control as the board members determine necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the board members are responsible for assessing the Group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the board members either intend to liquidate the Group or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Group's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Group.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Independent Audit Report to the board of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Group's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Group's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Group to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.


Saward Dawson


Matthew Crouch
Partner

Blackburn, VIC

Date: 11 September 2023

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Revenue		
Donations	-	340
Interest income	1,208	294
	<u>1,208</u>	<u>634</u>
Expenses		
Grant distributions	(249,320)	-
	<u>(249,320)</u>	<u>-</u>
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>(248,112)</u>	<u>634</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank balances	100,221	348,333
Cash on hand	100	100
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>100,321</u>	<u>348,433</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>100,321</u>	<u>348,433</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>100,321</u>	<u>348,433</u>
EQUITY		
Settled Sum	100	100
Retained Surplus	100,221	348,333
	<u>100,321</u>	<u>348,433</u>
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>100,321</u>	<u>348,433</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

2023

	Retained Surplus	Settled Sum	Total
	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2022	348,333	100	348,433
Deficit for the year	(248,112)	-	(248,112)
Balance at 30 June 2023	<u>100,221</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100,321</u>

2022

	Retained Surplus	Settled Sum	Total
	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2021	347,699	100	347,799
Surplus for the year	634	-	634
Balance at 30 June 2022	<u>348,333</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>348,433</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Donations distributed	(249,320)	-
Donations received	-	340
Interest received	1,208	294
Net cash provided by operating activities	(248,112)	634
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents held	(248,112)	634
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	348,433	347,799
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	100,321	348,433

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**(a) Basis of Preparation**

The Trustees believe the Trust is a non-reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial reports. These financial statements are therefore a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in order to meet the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, the trust deed and the information needs of stakeholders. The trust is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the mandatory Australian Accounting Standards applicable to entities reporting under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the significant accounting policies disclosed below which the Trustees have determined are appropriate to meet the purposes of preparation. Such accounting policies are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated.

Statement of Compliance

These special purpose financial statements comply with all the recognition and measurement requirements in Australian Accounting Standards.

The Trust has concluded that the requirements set out in AASB 10 and AASB 128 are not applicable as the initial assessment on its interests in other entities indicated that it does not have any subsidiaries, associates or joint ventures.

The financial statements, except for cash flow information have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. The accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of this report are as follows:

(b) Income Tax

The Trust is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The entity is a registered charity with the Australian Charity and Not-for-profits Commission. The Trust is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

(c) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**(d) Revenue and other income**

Revenue from Contracts with Customers

The core principle of AASB 15 is that revenue is recognised on a basis that reflects the transfer of promised goods or services to customers at an amount that reflects the consideration the Trust expects to receive in exchange for those goods or services. Revenue is recognised by applying a five-step model as follows:

1. Identify the contract with the customer
2. Identify the performance obligations
3. Determine the transaction price
4. Allocate the transaction price to the performance obligations
5. Recognise revenue as and when control of the performance obligations is transferred

Generally, the timing of the payment for sale of goods and rendering of services corresponds closely to the timing of satisfaction of the performance obligations, however where there is a difference, it will result in the recognition of a receivable, contract asset or contract liability.

None of the revenue streams of the Trust have any significant financing terms as there is less than 12 months between receipt of funds and satisfaction of performance obligations.

Donations which do not have an enforceable contract are recognised as revenue when received.

2 Related Parties

The ultimate parent entity, which exercises control over the Trust, is Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc which is incorporated in Australia and has significant influence over VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund.

There were no related party transactions during the year.

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

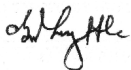
Trustees' Declaration

The Trustees declare that the Trust is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

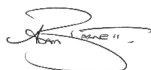
The directors of the trustee company declare that the financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 1 to 6:

1. are in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards, as described in Note 1 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.
2. in the Trustees' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Trust will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2022.



Trustee



Trustee

Dated 8 September 2023

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Auditor's Independence Declaration

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2023, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



Seward Dawson
Blackburn VIC



Matthew Crouch
Partner

Dated: 11 September 2023

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Independent Audit Report to the members of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund**Report on the Audit of the Financial Report****Opinion**

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund (the Trust), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2023, the statement of income and expenditure for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the trustees' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Trust is in accordance with the Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the financial position of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund as at 30 June 2023, and its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund in accordance with the auditor independence requirements and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund to comply with the trust deed's financial reporting responsibilities under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Independent Audit Report to the members of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance

The trustees of the Trust are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act) and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the trustees are responsible for assessing the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fund's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Fund's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Fund to cease to continue as a going concern.

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Independent Audit Report to the members of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.


Seward Dawson


Matthew Crouch
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 11 September 2023

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Revenue		
Interest received	90	29
Expenses	-	-
Surplus for the year	<u>90</u>	<u>29</u>
Retained surplus at the beginning of the financial year	<u>25,984</u>	25,955
Retained surplus at the end of the financial year	<u><u>26,074</u></u>	<u><u>25,984</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank balances	26,074	25,984
Cash on hand	100	100
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>26,174</u>	<u>26,084</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>26,174</u>	<u>26,084</u>
NET ASSETS	<u><u>26,174</u></u>	<u><u>26,084</u></u>
EQUITY		
Settled sum	100	100
Retained Surplus	26,074	25,984
TOTAL EQUITY	<u><u>26,174</u></u>	<u><u>26,084</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of Preparation

The trustees believe the Trust is a non-reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial reports. These financial statements are therefore a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in order to meet the requirements of the trust deed and the information needs of stakeholders.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the significant accounting policies disclosed below which the Trustees have determined are appropriate to meet the purposes of preparation. Such accounting policies are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated.

Statement of Compliance

These special purpose financial statements comply with all the recognition and measurement requirements in Australian Accounting Standards.

The Trust has concluded that the requirements set out in AASB 10 and AASB 128 are not applicable as the initial assessment on its interests in other entities indicated that it does not have any subsidiaries, associates or joint ventures.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. The accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of this report are as follows:

(b) Income Tax

The Trust is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The entity is a registered charity with the Australian Charity and Not-for-profits Commission.

(c) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(d) Revenue and other income

Revenue from contracts with customers

The core principle of AASB 15 is that revenue is recognised on a basis that reflects the transfer of promised goods or services to customers at an amount that reflects the consideration the Trust expects to receive in exchange for those goods or services. Revenue is recognised by applying a five-step model as follows:

1. Identify the contract with the customer
2. Identify the performance obligations
3. Determine the transaction price
4. Allocate the transaction price to the performance obligations
5. Recognise revenue as and when control of the performance obligations is transferred

Generally, the timing of the payment for sale of goods and rendering of services corresponds closely to the timing of satisfaction of the performance obligations, however where there is a difference, it will result in the recognition of a receivable, contract asset or contract liability.

None of the revenue streams of the Trust have any significant financing terms as there is less than 12 months between receipt of funds and satisfaction of performance obligations.

2 Related Parties

The ultimate parent entity, which exercises control over the Trust, is Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc which is incorporated in Australia and has significant influence over The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund.

There were no related party transactions during the year.

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964


Trustees' Declaration

The Trustees declare that the Trust is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

The directors of the trustee company declare that the financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 1 to 4:

1. present fairly the Trust's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements;
2. in the Trustees' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Trust will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Trustees.

Trustee 

Trustee 

Dated 8 September 2023

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Independent Audit Report to the members of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund (the Trust), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2023, the statement of income or expenditure for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the trustees' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Trust gives a true and fair view of the financial position of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund as at 30 June 2023, and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with their accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial report.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Trust in accordance with the auditor independence requirements and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund to comply with the trust deed's financial reporting provisions. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Independent Audit Report to the members of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

Responsibilities of Trustees for the Financial Report

The trustees of the Trust are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the trustees are responsible for assessing the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fund's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by responsible entities.

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Independent Audit Report to the members of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Fund's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Fund to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.


Seward Dawson


Matthew Crouch
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 11 September 2023

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