



VFBV | VOLUNTEER FIRE
BRIGADES VICTORIA



ANNUAL REPORT

2024 – 2025

2025 marks the 80th Anniversary for CFA, an organisation quite literally – forged by fire. VFBV pays tribute to each of the amazing men and women of not only today's CFA, but all those past and future.

The Country Fire Authority was forged by fire. Created by an Act of Parliament following a Royal Commission into the devastating bushfires of 1939, the architects sought more effective control of the prevention and suppression of fires. A simplicity that remains in our legislation to this day.

But from a volunteer perspective, Victorian fire brigades existed long before. CFA's origin story over its first year involves 185 brigades transferring from the Country Fire Brigades Board, and 776 brigades from the Bush Fire Brigades Committee. The volunteer associations predate CFA also, with our genesis grounded by the formation of the Country Fire Brigades Association in 1885, and the Bush Fire Brigades Association in 1928. These associations would become the Urban (VUFBA) and the Rural (VRFBA) associations, which merged to form the VFBV of today.

And while many volunteers were cautious of centralised organisation and the perceived loss of their brigade identity and equipment, CFA's early successes would prove resounding. CFA benefited from the skill and local knowledge of its volunteers, and brigades benefited from the shared leadership and resources of the authority. Over time, each has contributed to the evolution of the other, forever establishing that CFA as a united force in defence of its communities would always be greater than the sum of each of its individual parts.

The innovation and ingenuity of CFA volunteers has led CFA to be amongst the preeminent fire services in the world, the contributions of its members central to its success.

Countless innovations pursued, such as the first 800-gallon tanker followed by the 400-gallon composite small town tanker - both born from brigade experiments, a tradition that continues to this day. So too was the introduction by volunteers of field radio's, leading to CFA adopting mobile radio and base stations that revolutionised comms. The grassland fire spreader plotter invented by a CFA volunteer was the precursor to today's fire prediction modelling, with even the term 'Total Fire Ban' adopted after volunteer insistence that the precursor term 'Acute Fire Danger Day' did not properly capture the imperative intended.

And while fires have significantly impacted CFA's history, legislation and operating model, it is impossible to quantify the positive impact CFA, and its brigades have had on our communities and the people of Victoria. And while history only captures the losses, the 'saves' are no doubt exponentially higher still.

Thank you to all the generations that have come before, and those who will succeed us. For surely the true value of the organisation is found within its people - the brave and selfless CFA men and women who not only stand in defence of their communities when required but tirelessly educate, plan and prepare for the prevention of fire and other disasters in the first place. This rich legacy is cause for optimism that the next 80 years will be just as profound as the first.

Adam Barnett

Chief Executive Officer, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria



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 2024 - 2025

For the year ended 30 June 2025

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Some photographs courtesy of: *Martin Flanagan, Echuca Fire Brigade, Uniform Photography 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 pre-dates 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.

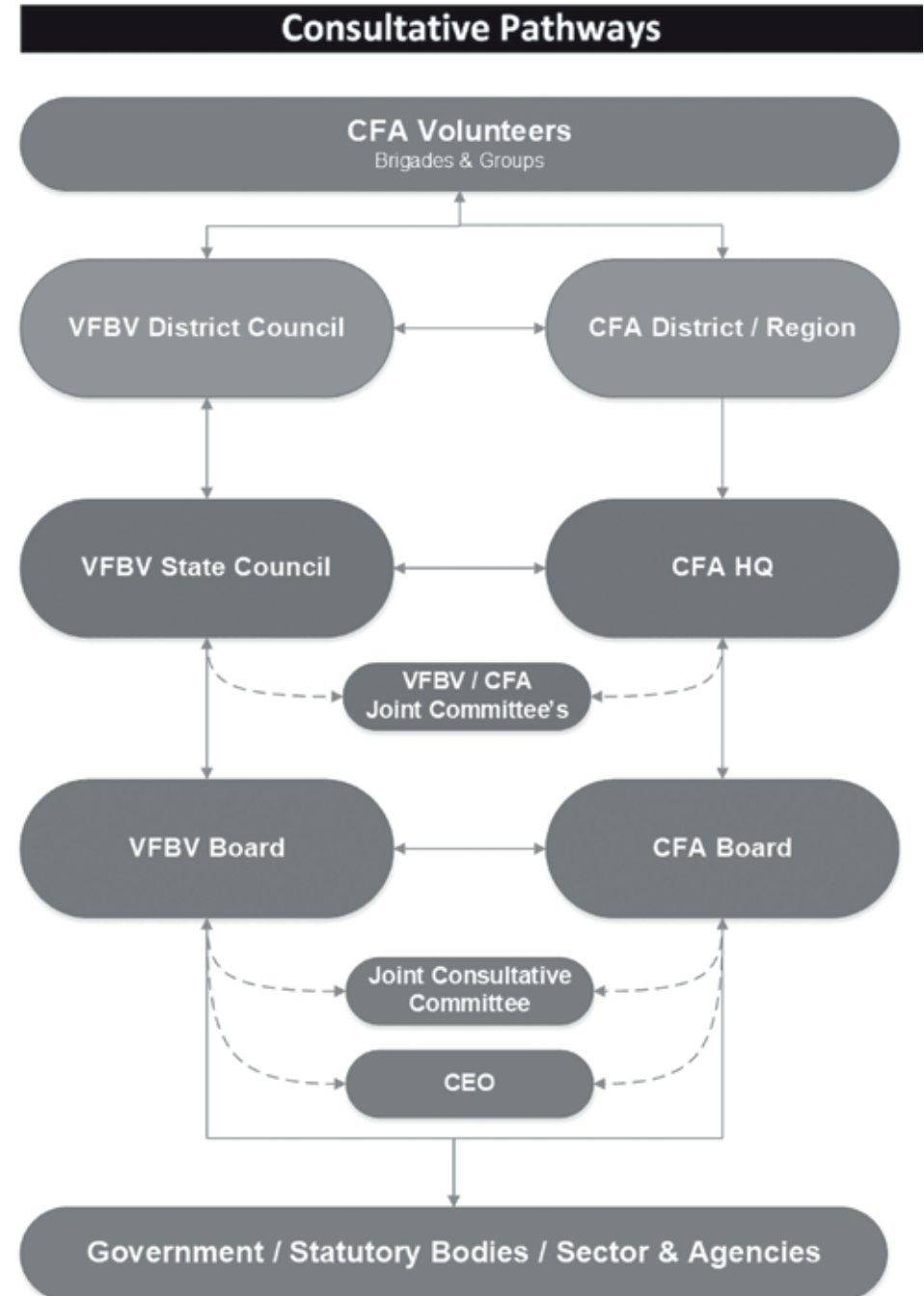
OUR VISION

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.





This year we have welcomed Kelvin Bateman from District 4 to the VFBV board. An experienced State Councillor and strategic thinker, Kelvin will continue to advocate and represent volunteers well on the board. I would like to acknowledge outgoing board member Greg Walcott, who had been a board member since 2018 and has made valuable contributions during this time.

Congratulations to Howard Smith who was appointed as State Vice President, and whom I look forward to working with closely. I pass on my heartfelt thanks to Andy Cusack AFSM our previous State Vice President for his support and guidance, especially in my role as president. Andy's expertise and knowledge has been invaluable.

VOLUNTEER CONSULTATION

VFBV has fought hard to secure a genuine consultation process, one where volunteer voices are not only heard but respected and acted upon. Genuine consultation is more than being informed; it means volunteers having a real opportunity to contribute, influence, and shape the decisions that affect them and their brigades.

Thank you to the many volunteers who provided comments and feedback over the past year. Your input is invaluable and ensures volunteer perspectives remain front and centre in CFA decision-making.

As in previous years, we have been engaged to consult on a wide range of matters, including SOPs, guidelines, and draft CFA Regulations. While this is positive, it is vital that consultation remains genuine, transparent, and not just a "tick-the-box" exercise.

I encourage members to take up opportunities to get involved, including: joining one of the eight VFBV/CFA Joint Committees; becoming a brigade VFBV Delegate; or serving as a VFBV State Councillor, Board Member, or executive member of a VFBV District Council.

Another powerful way to contribute is by completing the **VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey** each year. This survey is one of the most effective tools we have to measure the experiences, views, and wellbeing of CFA volunteers. The results provide a clear benchmark for CFA and government, and results directly influence decisions about future improvements. I urge every member to take the time to complete it this year as your voice truly matters.

Together, by insisting on genuine consultation and by participating in these opportunities, we can ensure CFA's future continues to be shaped by the people who know it best, its volunteers.

DISAPPOINTMENTS

Over the past year, VFBV's strong advocacy on the controversial Emergency Services Tax has not gone unnoticed. We have consistently highlighted the devastating impact this increased tax will have on everyday Victorians, particularly in rural and regional communities, where people can least afford such a burden.

Despite repeated warnings, the government pushed the legislation through with last-minute crossbench deals. This cash grab to fund additional government services that is already paid for through consolidated revenue has left many feeling betrayed.

The Fire Services Implementation Monitor's fourth Annual Report has confirmed serious systemic failures with the CFA-FRV secondment arrangements, including chronic vacancies that sometimes exceed 20% of CFA's paid operational workforce. This severely disrupts CFA's chain of command and volunteer support. While not a criticism of the secondees themselves, the report makes clear that the flawed arrangements are unworkable, unsustainable, and leave CFA unable to effectively manage its people or meet its operational needs.

VFBV is continuing to closely monitor arrangements under CFA's Volunteer Compensation Scheme following recent cases that have raised serious concerns about how some claims are being handled. These cases have highlighted inconsistencies, delays, and a lack of transparency that risk undermining volunteer confidence in the system.

Our priority is clear, every CFA volunteer who is injured in the line of duty must be treated with fairness, dignity, and compassion. Volunteers should never face unnecessary stress or hardship while recovering from injury, nor

should they be burdened by red tape, bureaucracy, or questionable decisions that jeopardise their entitlements.

We deeply appreciate the many brigades and members who have contacted us in support of this advocacy. Your voices strengthen our push to ensure all injured volunteers are treated with the respect they deserve and that their entitlements are fully protected.

VFBV will continue to fight for a system that puts volunteers first, ensuring their service to the community is honoured with care, fairness, and genuine protection when they need it most.

HIGHLIGHTS

I would like to acknowledge the 80th anniversary since CFA was officially established. This milestone has given us the opportunity to reflect on and celebrate our proud history, our achievements, and most importantly the vital contribution of more than 52,000 members across over 1,200 brigades statewide. These members, past and present, have worked tirelessly to protect lives, property, and the communities we serve. The passion, dedication, and commitment of our volunteers truly deserves to be recognised and celebrated.

Over the last eight decades, CFA has evolved significantly. VFBV is proud to continue working and advocating alongside CFA and government to ensure our volunteers have the resources and support they need.

In my role, I am continually inspired by the passion and dedication of CFA volunteers across the state. It has been a privilege to attend brigade meetings, dinners, and community events to share the work of VFBV, listen to the highlights from brigades and groups, and better understand the challenges members may be facing. These conversations are invaluable; they remind us of the strength of our volunteer spirit and the importance of ensuring volunteers have a strong and independent voice.

Brigade dinners and award presentations are always a highlight for me. It is inspiring to see volunteers recognised for their service in front of family, friends, and community. These moments capture the heart of CFA, ordinary people doing extraordinary things for the benefit of others. Regardless of role or rank, every member plays a fundamental part in CFA's success and in building safer, stronger, and more resilient communities.

To all our dedicated volunteers, thank you for your unwavering commitment, courage, and service. And to the families who stand beside you, thank you for your support and sacrifices. You carry the extra load so our members can serve, and your contribution is deeply valued.

As we celebrate 80 years of CFA, let us honour the legacy of those who came before us and look with confidence to the future as we continue to grow, adapt, and protect the communities of Victoria.

THANK YOU

As State President, and on behalf of the Board, I would like to once again thank and acknowledge all our VFBV Delegates, District Council Executives and State Councillors for their invaluable contributions over the past year. You continue to be the voice and advocates of VFBV, providing wise advice and strong support to our members and brigades.

I also extend my sincere thanks to my fellow Board members for their guidance and support throughout the year. Your commitment to leading and governing our organisation is deeply appreciated.

To our dedicated team at VFBV, I thank you for your tireless commitment to supporting and guiding CFA volunteers. Your efforts consistently go above and beyond, and I remain grateful for the professionalism, passion and care you bring to your work.

Finally, I wish to especially recognise the outstanding contribution of our CEO, Adam Barnett. Adam's tireless efforts, unwavering dedication, and deep understanding of CFA volunteers in an ever-changing environment continues to be a source of inspiration. Your leadership, wisdom and commitment have been central to many of our achievements this past year. On a personal note, I remain grateful to Adam for his generous support and guidance in my role as State President.

Samantha Collins
VFBV State President



With CFA celebrating its 80th Anniversary, this year was destined to be historic, or at the very least - memorable. And it was.

While the 80th anniversary has provided a time to reflect on the many wonderful successes of CFA, it was not lost on us that 961 of the volunteer brigades that formed CFA existed well before its formation. CFA's origin story aptly demonstrates the unbroken line of community service and the volunteer spirit that selflessly dedicates itself to protecting life and property across Victoria. The important role of the association is not lost on me either, with this year marking the 140th year of VFBV and our predecessor volunteer associations.

Throughout our entire shared history – the story of the pioneering spirit and the dedication and loyalty of volunteers ring loud.

It is therefore fitting that this year we have achieved the highest level of affiliations in our history. Similarly, the VFBV Welfare Fund also recorded its highest subscription level.

None of this is possible without strong volunteer advocacy, and the dedicated work of volunteers and delegates alike. And this year has required stronger volunteer advocacy than most. Not since the early days of Fire Services Reform in 2017 have brigades been rocked by rushed and ill-thought-out government policy, this time in the guise of the new Emergency Services Tax.

Replacing the existing Fire Services Property Levy, the new tax extended itself to fund government departments and entities previously funded through consolidated revenue. And unlike the levy it replaced, there was no community or volunteer consultation, and no transition.

At a time when Victorians were dealing with a cost-of-living crisis, and farmers were being stretched thin by extended drought conditions, the new tax significantly increased rates by between 99% and 189% inflicting incredible pain on communities and Victorian's alike. Under the false narrative that this new tax would benefit volunteers and emergency services more generally, volunteers were aghast that despite collecting an extra half a billion dollars in revenue each year, CFA's share of the funding would continue to drop, with only 20 cents in the dollar collected under the new tax making its way back to fund CFA.

It fell upon VFBV to provide significant analysis and public education to combat the governments mischievous spin that tried to position this new tax as a boon for volunteers and emergency services.

We have been required to argue not for CFA volunteer self-interest, but rather for the needs of our communities who rely on us. While CFA's funding is inextricably tied to the new tax, the moral imperative that communities could simply not afford the impost and the unfairness of a tax burden that disproportionately impacted those who use their land to derive their income (such as primary producers) was acute.

Given the disproportionate impacts of the new tax policy, volunteer views were also diverse. The duty to represent all volunteers weighed heavily on delegates as they navigated a complex issue where it was clear the differing impacts provoked different responses among our membership. In line with our values and purpose, VFBV supported the principle that every brigade and every volunteer have the right to speak out on the issues impacting their own communities and brigades are best placed to make decisions on what is in the best interests of their community. VFBV's focus was to minimise divisiveness among volunteers, ensure actions did not pit volunteer against volunteer or brigade against brigade, and no actions exposed volunteers to adverse legal or discipline consequences or do anything that risked community safety. Our efforts were designed not to undermine genuine community action, with the knowledge that the issues caused by the new tax were not fire service related per se, and would require strong collective advocacy by farmers bodies, municipal councils, business and rate payer groups and captains of industry to highlight the widespread inefficiency and unfairness of the new tax burden being placed on everyday Victorian's and businesses with the extra funds not boosting emergency service budgets as was claimed.

As custodians of the volunteer ethos and spirit, VFBV worked hard on practical next steps and kept true to our promise that each of us carries the volunteer reputation with us and the importance of protecting and defending it at all times. Leaning into our commitment to remain apolitical to ensure we can dutifully represent all volunteers but still speak with candour and honesty on all matters impacting upon them, this unity of purpose won considerable community respect and appreciation and preserved CFA volunteers' high standing in the community. And while some may have wanted us to go harder, and others may have wanted us to go softer – we are proud of our unflinching advocacy and analysis that went far beyond slogans and ensured discussions and commentary were fact based. No other body or organisation has provided the overwhelming body of evidence, research and analysis that has informed public commentary and debate on the new arrangements. We were also the only organisation that built a coalition of minor parties to oppose the new legislation in Parliament, and submitted and advocated for solutions, amendments and alternate policies.

We take great pride in our corresponding achievements. A reduction and freeze to the primary producer rates, streamlined and more inclusive volunteer rebate arrangements, increased drought relief community support, and additional CFA capital funding marked significant milestones. And while there remains much still to do, such concessions over a relatively small amount of time in an era where governments rarely admit they got it wrong, are significant none the less. There is still much to do.

The fury over the emergency services tax, along with other issues impacting on regional communities in particular, such as renewable energy infrastructure, power line transmission, drought and mining rights has left a very large scar and has had a devastating impact on morale across some brigades.

Other longer-term impacts such as the impact on local brigade fundraising caused by the new tax, and the increasing administrative and regulatory burden falling upon brigade leaders has resulted in a marked shift in sentiment among many brigades who have developed a strong resentment to current government actions and policies. These tensions are testing the resilience of volunteer brigades to withstand what can only be described as unusually high levels of government interference. This represents a significant strategic risk. As a statutory authority, CFA was designed by Parliament to be independent and self governing in order to encourage and support a volunteer and community led service. This independence is fast being eroded and presents a significant risk.

The model we inherited and have built that sees citizens willingly and voluntarily put up their hand to share responsibility with government for their fire safety is being tested. As CFA becomes more corporatised, and the influence of government over it becomes stronger - there is a tipping point. The rise of politics infiltrating our emergency services is a very large concern. The risk is it will create a marked shift in people's motivations and their willingness to be involved.

And with an ageing CFA fleet, insufficient CFA budgets, widening gaps in presumptive legislation cover for cancer, secondment arrangements that are not fit for purpose, and the challenges in CFA's training, compensation and disciplinary processes to just name a few, the importance of volunteers continuing to work together has never been more acute.

And while there are plenty of issues weighing us down and keeping us busy, a final reflection on CFA's 80th anniversary gives us cause for optimism. Our history documents the adversity that has tested us over the decades and from which volunteers have always overcome. A cursory look at many of the advancements and progress made on issues critical to volunteers and brigades over the past 12 months documented in this annual report should provide comfort of all the positive work that has occurred despite the difficult environment.

To each and every single delegate, friend and supporter that has contributed to VFBV's advocacy over the past year I say a heartfelt thank-you. And to my fellow CFA volunteers I say keep your head up and be proud of what we have all achieved together. Just as steel is forged by fire to make it strong, our collective efforts and unity of purpose to improve arrangements across our fire service is among some of the most important things we may each do in life. Be proud of those efforts and your legacy and know that your association is working tirelessly for you and your community's collective interests.

Adam Barnett
VFBV Chief Executive Officer

During the past year, VFBV has continued to advocate for CFA volunteers on various issues and contribute to the continuous improvement of Victoria's fire service in many ways. 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 \$141,379 to assist 36 volunteers and their families during this financial year with close to \$2.85 million dollars distributed since the Welfare Fund was established in 1913.
- The annual VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey received responses from 2,115 CFA volunteers, cementing our survey as the largest of its kind across Australia. Results are studied by VFBV, CFA, EMV and government to better understand volunteer opinions and drive investment and attention to issues that matter the most.
- 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 with delegates attending more than 400 individual meetings in the last 12 months.
- VFBV provided assistance to Brigades and Groups applying for VESEP grants throughout the year, with an updated VFBV Application Help Pack distributed along with tips and case studies of successful grants from previous years to support applications.
- The VFBV Quarterly Supplement continued to be published in partnership with *Fire Wise* four times throughout the year. The 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 2-Minute Briefings.
- The 2025 State Championships were again run as a combined event with the Urban Senior and Rural State Championships held in Mooropna on the same weekend and the Urban Junior State Championship conducted the weekend prior at the same location.
- VFBV continued to advocate for a further expansion of the prescribed cancers included in Victoria's presumptive legislation cancer legislation as well as the inclusion of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Victoria is falling behind other states including Queensland, Tasmania, Northern Territory and Western Australia with the Federal legislation also covering additional cancers when compared to Victoria. VFBV has also assisted our national body CAVFA in advocating for changes nationally.
- VFBV continued to highlight the ongoing reductions to the CFA budget and lack of funding provided by government for the renewal of CFA's rapidly ageing firefighting fleet.
- VFBV was required to advocate strongly on the State Government's changes to the Fire Services Property Levy. The new emergency services tax created significant community angst, with VFBV advocating for reductions to the primary producer rates, removal of public service bodies that used to be funded from consolidated revenue, removing "Volunteer Fund" from the new tax's name, and a fairer and more equitable volunteer rebate scheme.
- VFBV analysis and advocacy has highlighted the sequential reductions to CFA budget and the devastating impact of vacancies across CFA's seconded workforce.
- 2024-25 marked the 80th Anniversary of CFA formed by an Act of Parliament following the 1939 Stretton Royal Commission which investigated the devastating Black Friday bushfires. While volunteer fire brigades have existed in Victoria since the 1850's it was a good opportunity to celebrate the achievements of volunteer fire brigades.
- Significant fires over the past year have highlighted the importance once again of CFA's volunteer surge capacity which included responses to Kadnook in November, Grampians National Park in December and Little Dessert Fire in January which all required significant volunteer resources to contain. There were also other large fires at The Gurdies in South Gippsland, Bullengarook west of Gisborne, Creswick and the Sheffield/Montrose fire which also drew on the states surge capacity. The fire season extended into April and May in many parts of the state due to the lack of rainfall.
- As drought conditions continued across much of the state, VFBV developed a Drought Relief Resource Fact sheet to assist members and their communities to provide a single document which details the support available from multiple sources and how to access relief available.
- Throughout the year, VFBV conducted formal consultation on 24 revised draft Standard Operating Procedures and one revised CFA policy, draft CFA regulations and on the government's emergency services tax volunteer exemption; gathering over 4,300 items of formal feedback from our members.

**VFBV AFFILIATED MEMBERS
CONTINUE TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT**

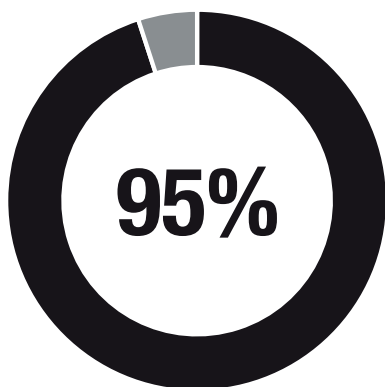
CFA brigades across the state once again showed their unity and support with 95% of brigades affiliating with VFBV in the 2024-25 year. This strong commitment of support from brigades amplifies VFBV's collective voice and highlights the critical role that CFA volunteers play in Victoria's emergency management sector.

This strong support for VFBV is the highest level of affiliation in our history from CFA brigades and groups. The commitment from Brigades and Groups to VFBV can be in part attributed to the hard work and good local representation of each VFBV District Council, Brigade and Group VFBV delegates and State Council delegates.

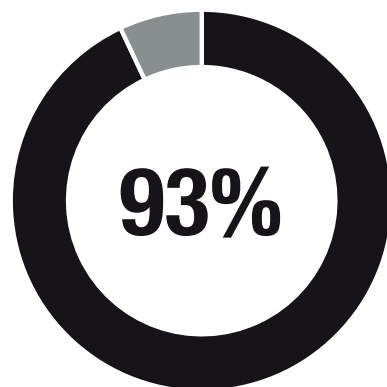
The high level of brigade and group affiliation with VFBV assists us in our commitment to championing the needs and interests for all CFA volunteers and brigades across Victoria. Our advocacy is centred on driving positive change and delivering practical, volunteer-informed solutions that remove barriers and empower brigades to protect and strengthen Victorian communities.

Again in 2024-25 as a gesture of appreciation for brigade support, all brigades and groups who paid their 2024-25 affiliation fees prior to 30th June 2024 were automatically entered into a prize draw to win their choice of one of four great prizes generously donated by GAAM Emergency Products and Powdersafe. The prize winners were Merring West Fire Brigade (District 20), Hardies Hill Fire Brigade (District 15), Yarrk Fire Brigade (District 12) and Tallangatta Group (District 24).

Brigade VFBV Affiliation and Welfare Fund Subscription



of CFA brigades affiliated with VFBV in 2024-25



of CFA brigades subscribed to the VFBV Welfare Fund in 2024-25

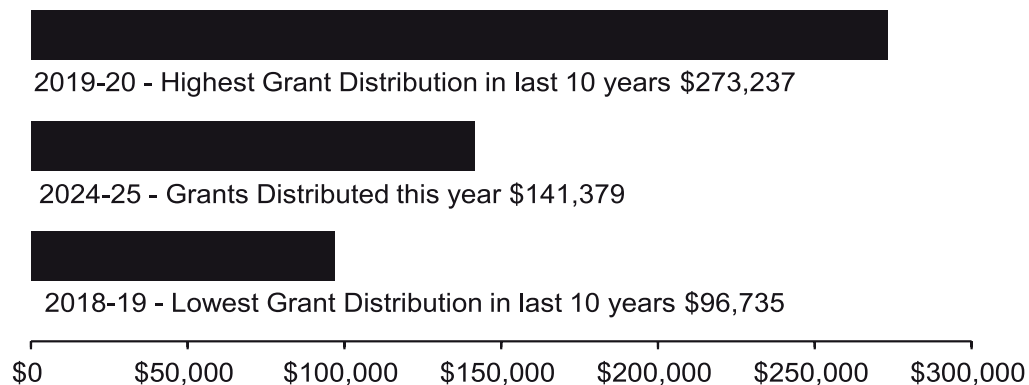
**VFBV WELFARE FUND
SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS IN A TIME OF NEED**

Subscriptions to the VFBV Welfare Fund from CFA brigades reached record levels once again in 2024-25 with 1,106 or 93% of CFA brigades subscribed to the fund to ensure their members were able to access financial assistance when needed. In the past year, the fund has distributed \$141,379 to 36 CFA volunteers and their families who were experiencing personal financial hardship.

Since the Welfare Fund was established in 1913, more than \$2.85 million in grants have been distributed to members and their families. The Welfare Fund typically aids members who find themselves experiencing financial difficulty due to prolonged illness, bereavement, loss of earnings or costs associated with supporting a family member undertaking medical treatment or hospitalisation as well as assisting members who may have been impacted by natural disasters. The fund has been designed to alleviate stresses that can impact on CFA members, their family, and their ability to continue protecting their community.

The Welfare Fund is run as an 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 met 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.

Being able to support 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.



The CFA/VFBV Joint Committees provide a forum for consultation, collaboration and the provision of advice between CFA and VFBV. The Joint Committees are an important part of VFBV's and CFA's consultative framework where both organisations consult and work collaboratively within the spirit of the Volunteer Charter which is enshrined in section 6G of the CFA Act 1958. Each of the eight Joint Committees meet quarterly and operate under common terms of reference with an overarching governance structure in place to encourage a focus on genuine engagement, transparency and accountability.

Collectively the Joint Committees meet an average of 32 times per year and involve 85 volunteer delegates drawn from each of the 21 VFBV District Councils. These commitments conservatively account for more than 10,000 individual volunteer hours contributed to working with CFA to solve issues of common interest.

In addition to the eight Joint Committees there are also numerous working parties which meet as needed to work on specific issues or topics and report back to the relevant Joint Committee. These working parties are made up of Joint Committee members as well as other CFA volunteers who have specific interest or knowledge in the area of focus of the working party. The working parties each operate for as long as required, some running for a month or two while others have been running for several years.

VFBV sincerely thanks all Joint Committee and working party 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.

Community Safety	Samantha Ackland Phil Lind	Wayne Austen Katie McKenzie	Sue Bull Shaun Robyns	Mary Anne Egan	Katrina Garraway	Elissa Jans
Equipment & Infrastructure	Kim Anderson Stephanie McGeehan	Noel Austin Toddy Small	Geof Bassett Alan Tyson	Jason Kerr Darren Wallace	Mark Jones Peter White	David Lumsden Trevor Wyatt
Member Services	Robert Clark Glenn Mercer	Wayne Draper David Peterson	Maurice Dumesny Roger Smith	Graeme Jilbert Ross White	Max Johnson	Michael McLaughlan
Operational Capability	Bradley Coulter Peter Shaw	Paul Denham Adrian Straw	Timothy Desmond Greg Walcott	Cara Disint Marelle Whitaker	Lachlan Gales	Ryan O'Shannessy
Operational Performance	Eric Collier Jamie McFarlane	Phillip Davidson Peter Solly	Finn Deacey Mandy Straw	Peter Hannan Bryan Walpole	Mark King Matt Webb	Katrina Lee
People, Culture & Safety	Steven Atkinson Michael O'Mara	Kelvin Bateman Eric Smith	Brehanna Cole Howard Smith	Mark Gravell Michelle Terray	Allie Guegan Jennifer Tonkin	Vickie Linaker
Technology & Innovation	Andrew Bath James Mullins	John Cowan George Northey	Peter Dillon Robert O'Connor	Tony Hallworth Gary Taylor	Neil Irving-Dusting Danielle Watkins	Nathan Jolly
Training	Craig Aiton Neil Hillas	Noel Arandt Harold Jochs	John Brodie Raymond McGeehan	Victoria Clarke Kimberley McMahon	Samantha Collins Rod Taylor	Andy Cusack

OVERVIEW

Some key issues that were addressed by our consultative forums, working parties and other committees during the 2024-25 year:

MOBILE DATA CAPABILITY PROJECT

The Mobile Data Capability Project, funded mostly by the CFA and Brigades Donations Fund has continued over the past 12 months. The project will eventually see the allocation of 950 tablets to brigades across the state to assist with better resources when turning out to incidents. The VFBV delegates to the Joint Technology and Innovation Committee raised concerns with early methodology developed by CFA in relation to the allocation of the tablets as there are more than 2,300 emergency vehicles across 1,200 brigades across the state. The early allocation methodology relied on brigade classification however brigade classifications have not been reviewed for many years now. The project instead moved to providing an allocation of tablets to each CFA district and District catchment teams in consultation with brigades and District Planning Committees will determine the final allocations to brigades of tablets to brigades. The delegates were also pleased to learn that their concerns about non-compliance with the Australian Design Rules were being taken seriously by CFA and that options were being reviewed to ensure that the tablets were securely mounted in all CFA vehicles. Committee members also requested options be worked through to assist with the ease and speed of logging into tablets without the need to input long passwords during the initial stages of an incident. This project will continue into the 2025/26 year and VFBV look forward to the tablets rolling out to brigades.

OFFROAD DRIVER TRAINING

VFBV continued to receive complaints from volunteers about the lack of offroad driver training courses across the state over the past 12 months. This course is one of the more sought-after courses in CFA's training catalogue. Given this, VFBV delegates to the Joint Training Committee were extremely disappointed to learn that since the course was handed over to Districts to deliver the training at the end of 2023 - a very limited number of courses were delivered since then due to track availability. CFA advised this low number was due to there only being one fully operational offroad driving track in the state where the course could be delivered. VFBV acknowledge the lack of appropriate government funding and unsuccessful funding bids have significantly affected CFA's ability to make the necessary repairs to the other offroad tracks at training campuses around the state. The VFBV delegates to the Committee however are equally frustrated that each District did not make contingency plans for where the courses could be carried out given the issues with these tracks have been known for some time having been raised by VFBV on numerous occasions in recent years. CFA have consequently advised that the course does not have to be carried out on a purpose-built track, but can be delivered at any location that has been risk assessed and has the required inclines, declines, cross slopes, etc. Identifying and documenting local sites where the Drive Offroad course can be delivered also has the

added benefit of enabling members to undertake the course in their local area, rather than having to travel to a training campus. VFBV continues to raise this issue about inadequate course availability and have requested CFA provide updates at each Joint Training Committee meeting as to the number of locations the Drive Offroad course can be delivered and how many courses have been completed.

VOLUNTEER EXIT SURVEYS

The Joint People, Culture and Safety and the Joint Member Services Committees have continued to discuss the importance of exit surveys which are provided to any volunteer transferring brigades or leaving CFA. These survey's provide valuable information to CFA about why members are leaving the organisation or moving between brigades and allows CFA to respond accordingly. Unfortunately the current survey completion rate is very low which makes it difficult to obtain statistically accurate information as to the real reasons members are leaving the organisation or moving around within the organisation. Currently the limited exit survey data shows that members leaving CFA feel that they are not valued and brigade culture and management are the top reasons why members are leaving. Understanding the circumstances of such moves enables CFA to respond and improve accordingly. Delegates to both Joint Committees continue to encourage members to complete an exit survey if provided to them and also work with CFA to determine what can be done to improve the response rate.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

The VFBV delegates to the Joint Member Services Committee have continued to receive adverse comments from brigades regarding the Volunteer Recruitment Hub (VRH) for volunteers trying to join or transfer between brigades. While CFA has continued to release updates to the VRH which assisted in resolving some issues there are still continued issues with members transferring between brigades and the transfer of members from junior to senior membership. A common complaint from prospective members is the waiting times during many aspects of the application process including the medical review, police check and working with children check and some brigades feel that at times prospective members are giving up and instead volunteering with other organisations. Following feedback from VFBV, CFA released an update to the VRH which includes better reporting to brigades on where prospective members are at in the application process to allow brigades to support their new members in joining CFA. VFBV will continue to advocate for further refinements to the VRH to ensure that joining CFA is as seamless process as possible.

Alongside the recruitment of new members, VFBV delegates to the Joint Member Services Committee have also been highlighting issues with volunteer retention as the number of members being recruited into CFA dwarfs the number of members exiting CFA. The current trends show that members are leaving CFA after having been a member for three to five years. CFA's Volunteer Sustainability team are

looking to develop pulse surveys to understand better where there are pinch points or barriers in a member's service so improvements can be made. The Joint Member Services Committee look forward to reviewing the survey data to assist in identifying fixes.

ARDUOUS FIREFIGHTING TRIAL

The Joint Operational Capability Committee are working with CFA to consider the introduction of an Arduous Firefighter (AFF) role within CFA similar to what exists in some other states around Australia. This role can be physically demanding and requires high levels of physical exertion over extended periods in dynamically challenging environments meaning that members will need to undergo additional medical assessment to determine their suitability for the program. A new training pathway is being developed which outlines the qualifications that members would be required to hold. This new capability for CFA is being piloted with a small group of volunteers from the Corio brigade in District 7 with the intent of having a AFF crew ready for deployment by December 2025. The joint committee looks forward to reviewing the pilot and working with CFA on rolling out this capability across the state.

TAP AND GO CARD PAYMENTS

For some years now, VFBV has been pursuing via the Joint Members Services Committee and the former Joint Volunteerism Committee, a modernisation of approved methods for brigades to accept payments when running fundraising events. CFA committed to trailing different "Tap and Go" card payment methods, reviewing the different terminals available and also the contract arrangements to ensure that they were compatible with tax donation receipt reporting and the different fee schedules. Following this trial period, CFA distributed tap and go terminals to all District offices and the terminals can be loaned to brigades for fundraising activities including barbeques, open days and other authorised activities. The Joint Member Services Committee will continue to work with CFA to review the success of this program and the impacts of the fees charged and terminal connectivity in different areas of the state.

SECTION 29 AUDITS

The Joint Operational Performance Committee delegates have been highlighting for some time the inconsistencies and frustration felt across the state by brigades undergoing the Section 29 process. Section 29(b) of the CFA Act 1958 states that the Chief Officer "... from time to time inspect or arrange for the inspection of all brigades and report on their state of efficiency or otherwise, and make such recommendations as he thinks fit." Across the state there have been many comments about how the Section 29 inspection differs from brigade to brigade, district to district and region to region. There were also other audits being used across CFA including the Annual Brigade Review process and the Brigade Capability Review in addition to the Section 29 audit that was at times being undertaken remotely with no input from brigades. CFA engaged KMPG to undertake an audit of this

process and of no surprise to the VFBV delegates found that the most notable finding was the variability of Section 29 audits undertaken. While there were some systems and process put in place by CFA they were not being consistently applied. Delegates to the Joint Operational Performance Committee will continue to work with CFA to review the audit findings and consult on changes that CFA may wish to implement that will make the process for brigades consistent, less of a burden and provide an avenue to discuss the results openly with their district management teams.

STATION BUILDS

VFBV delegates to the Joint Equipment and Infrastructure Committee have continued to advocate on behalf of brigades who are awaiting planned station builds or modifications. The majority of the concerns being raised in relation to ongoing delays are projects managed by the Government's Community Safety Building Authority (CSBA). CSBA was originally created to address what the Government perceived as CFA delays and cost overruns, with the CSBA promising to address these issues and deliver projects on time and at a lower cost. Unsurprisingly to VFBV, these grandiose commitments do not appear to have been achieved and timeline blowouts and cost overruns appear to be worse than ever. As a result of the delays to station modifications and builds, CFA has developed a revised two-year station modification plan which it hopes will address the issue of scheduled appliance replacements not being coordinated with necessary station improvements or modifications.

To assist with some of these issues, VFBV delegates have worked with CFA to develop terms of reference for a Station Design Working Party. This working party will be investigating and creating a new set of station designs to bring improved safety, technology and volunteer amenities. Delegates have discussed the development of a procedure for simplifying brigade funded works approvals which should improve timelines for brigades.

PLANNED BURNING

The Joint Community Safety Committee was encouraged to learn that the 2024-25 year was the second busiest year for CFA's Planned Burn Taskforce since it was formed in 2019. The Planned Burn Taskforce was established by CFA to partner with local brigades in conducting planned burns. The Taskforce consists of more than 700 CFA volunteers who can be deployed anywhere in the state, for a single day and up to five days, depending on availability of the members. When deployed the Taskforce works alongside Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMV), local brigades, indigenous groups and landholders to conduct burns. This year the Taskforce was deployed on 43 occasions, with 383 CFA volunteers involved in conducting 68 planned burns, this included deployment to the Grampians fires where members conducted burns around properties to protect assets and reduce fuel loads.

BOOT AND GLOVE TRIALS

The Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing (PPE&C) sub-committee of the Joint Operational Capability Committee has been working over the past 12 months on trials for new structural boots, structural gloves and flash hoods. In addition to the sub-committee many CFA volunteers across the state have also volunteered to be involved in the trials at various training grounds during the evaluation process. As part of these trials, CFA have been working to improve the fit and design of other items including gloves and boots specifically for female firefighters after receiving feedback that many of items available on the market are not designed for women's bodies.

DRIVERS LICENSE UPGRADES

In reviewing service delivery performance and monitoring of the increased numbers of heavy vehicles being introduced into CFA's fleet, VFBV has been advocating for greater support from government and CFA to ensure that funding is available for members to upgrade their driver's license to heavy vehicle licenses where required. VFBV had continued to be made aware of members who were paying for licence upgrades themselves or brigades fundraising to try and cover the costs of privately provided courses. This is an unacceptable scenario and there should not be any instances where a volunteer or brigade is being forced to pay for license upgrades.

As a result of VFBV and CFA advocacy on this issue, additional government funding was provided to CFA to increase the number of license upgrades available to members. Members are now able to apply online for a medium-rigid or heavy-rigid license upgrade via the learning hub and once endorsed by their Captain the District office will arrange for training with one of CFA's contracted driver license training and testing partners with no out of pocket costs for the volunteer.

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

In the past 12 months, CFA have again restructured the human resource (HR) business partner resources to allow for five dedicated HR Issue Resolution Business Partners based at CFA Headquarters to concentrate solely on dealing with CFA members involved in CFA's complaints process. The Issue Resolution staff work closely with each district headquarters to resolve matters at a district level where possible and assist to escalate to a more formal arena where necessary. VFBV delegates to the Joint People, Culture and Safety Committee continue to advocate for more support and ongoing training and development for these roles in order for more effective case management delivered in a timely manner to ensure that volunteers complaints are resolved as quickly as possible. Positively since this change at CFA there appears to be a new approach to resolving complaints which is less punitive and instead more common sense and restorative approach which VFBV welcomes.

VFBV has also continued to highlight to CFA the imbalance of power and punitive effects of persons progressing through the discipline

system. Delegates have advocated for equal support to all members involved and consistent support for those charged with an offence throughout the hearing process. The aim of these improvements is to ensure that members are supported through the hearing process and that each member receives natural justice and procedural fairness throughout their hearing. While initially CFA met this idea with some resistance, in the past 12 months CFA have agreed to revisit the concept and work with VFBV to review the concept further.

TRAINING PATHWAYS

For many years members have had difficulty navigating what training was required for a particular role and the order that it needed to be completed in. Often members would find out that they were missing a prerequisite for a course only when they were attempting to enrol in the training. Over the past year, CFA have been developing, consulting on and now implementing a set of training pathways for a number of roles including Crew Leader, Strike Team Leader and internal urban firefighter. VFBV delegates to the Joint Training Committee spent a considerable amount of time providing feedback to CFA on the proposed pathways and identifying future requirements. The delegates were also frustrated that CFA was developing pathways to roles that had no formal definition or role statement and therefore assumptions had been made as to what skills were operationally required for the role. The roles and pathways will be further refined as CFA works through its Operating Model Review process being led by the Chief Officer. This review may formally define further roles and provide for formal endorsement of some roles.

STORZ CONVERSION

Over the years, VFBV has regularly reported on the slow progress of the rollout of the storz coupling retrofit program within CFA. VFBV delegates to the Joint Equipment and Infrastructure Committee have continued to seek updates from CFA on the snail-paced progress of converting the fleet to storz. While there has been some progress, with 13 of 21 CFA Districts having completed 100% conversion of all brigades and appliances the data provided to the Committee indicated that some districts were reporting 100% conversion of "brigades nominated" being completed. VFBV delegates are concerned that some districts are not nominating every brigade or appliance for conversion and requested an update on who is making the decision regarding whether a brigade receives storz conversion. This is particularly concerning as the funding provided for this program on multiple occasions was marked for all brigades and all appliances across the organisation to be converted to storz couplings.

CFA & BRIGADES DONATIONS FUND

The CFA and Brigades Donations Fund was established in 2004 to raise and receive money and donations of goods and services from the public for distribution to brigades to assist with costs of purchasing and maintaining firefighting equipment, facilities, training and administrative expenses which are associated with firefighting

functions. The Fund is overseen by seven trustees, five of which are nominated by VFBV and two by CFA, who meet at least four times a year.

The CFA and Brigades Donations Fund has continued to work with CFA and brigades to distribute the donations received following the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires. The trustees to the Fund have continued to oversee a number of projects including the brigade pick list program; breathing apparatus (BA) sets and additional cylinders; defibrillators for CFA vehicles; and the mobile data capability project to fund the purchase of tablets for CFA vehicles. In total the Fund has allocated \$19 million to fund these projects with \$8.3 million paid to date as many of the projects are multi-year initiatives. The Fund also oversees the distribution of funds donated to brigades to remove the administrative and reporting burden on brigades.

The VFBV Board in June 2025 appointed Jan Cleary, Andrew Howlett AFSM, Graeme Jilbert, Eric Smith and Howard Smith as the VFBV Trustees to the Fund for the next two years. VFBV thanks Andy Cusack AFSM for his service as a VFBV Trustee between 2023 and 2025.

MULTI FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

The Joint Technology and Innovation Committee have been monitoring the rollout of Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) for CFA members when accessing Members Online or their members email address. While the process is relatively simple, it does add another step to logging on which members may find annoying but is required for the protection of CFA's IT system and the data within it. The committee delegates worked for some time to ensure that members who have no, or unreliable mobile connection are able to use methods other than text messages to receive a multifactor authentication code when logging in to Members Online.

CONTEMPORARY VOLUNTEER MEMBERSHIP MODEL

CFA embarked on a project to contemporise the volunteer membership model which included reviewing CFA's current membership model and reviewing what changes brigades and members would like to see to it. VFBV engaged in the project through representation on the Steering Committee, Working Party and via the Joint Member Services Committee. At each level VFBV expressed concern about the direction of the project, governance and the lack of genuine consultation and member engagement. VFBV expressed concern that many of the ideas being raised to fix potential issues were being moved forward without an understanding of why changes had been made previously or without considerable analysis and validation of what is being proposed. Concerns were also raised that assumptions may have been made about interpretation of CFA Regulations relating to membership which were perhaps incorrect and were being interpreted and implemented by each CFA District differently. VFBV also raised concerns about any proposals that would

seek to restrict a member's voting rights without robust consultation. After careful consideration VFBV withdrew from any involvement in the Contemporary Volunteer Membership Model project in 2024.

In early 2025 CFA determined that the project had not met its objectives or scope and reset the project under new leadership. VFBV was reinvited to the program, and resumed its involvement. VFBV concerns around the lack of robust volunteer engagement were addressed, and the project was resumed.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

For many years now VFBV has been highlighting member frustrations to CFA about not being able to access Incident Management Training (IMT) and has been actively pursuing CFA to implement solutions to this problem. Currently most IMT courses are delivered primarily by Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) and rarely seem to be scheduled at times or locations that are convenient for volunteers. VFBV was pleased to hear that CFA were committing to delivering all IMT courses in house and later engaged an external contractor to develop 30 courses with a view to having the courses completed by late 2024 to early 2025. Disappointingly, CFA later advised that the external contractor engaged to complete this work severed their relationship with CFA and will not be completing the project. The work completed by the contractor was handed over to the CFA training development department and they will be completing the course development. Unfortunately, this means that the delivery of these courses will be significantly delayed but CFA has committed to incrementally delivering a full number of IMT courses over the next 18 months to 2 years. CFA informed the Joint Training Committee they are seeking short term solutions to build capacity in on ground operational roles such as Sector Commander in the meantime.

BA CYLINDER EXCHANGE

The BA Cylinder Exchange working party, with delegates from both VFBV and CFA, continued to meet regularly to explore ways of enhancing the member experience when dealing with BA cylinder exchange and refilling. The working party has been working on a mapping process and identifying contact points when a cylinder is exchanged. While the physical aspect of the cylinder exchange appears to be a straightforward process, tracking cylinders to ensure that testing and quality requirements are met is proving to be more challenging. VFBV delegates from both the Joint Equipment and Infrastructure Committee and the Joint Technology and Innovation Committee continue to work with CFA on the implementation of this process to assist brigades and cut down the time spent on tasks such as refilling and tracking BA cylinders while ensuring essential safety reviews are completed.

FIRE WISE KIDS

Work has been underway to update CFA's school-based education program over the past 18 months with VFBV delegates from the

Joint Community Safety Committee contributing to the program redevelopment. The previous program, Fire Safe Kids was developed in 2011 and has remained unchanged since. During this time there have been changes in fire risk and the way children are educated.

The new program, Fire Wise Kids, has been designed for children from Kindergarten through to Year 4. The program consists of five 30-60 minute lessons, which are customised for the school year group, with topics such as basic hazards at home, calling triple zero and outdoor fire safety. The new program has been tested at schools in both more urban/built up areas and areas with a higher bushfire risk to assist with refining the program materials. Fire Wise Kids will replace Fire Safe Kids from 2026 with training packages now available for members who wish to deliver the new program.

TRUCK TIME

To complement the new Fire Wise Kids program CFA have developed an additional program called Truck Time. It is designed to support brigades in safely engaging children in and around fire trucks and associated equipment. In addition to school settings, this program can also be delivered at open days, fetes, and other community events. New e-learning modules have been developed for members to complete with input from VFBV delegates to the Joint Community Safety Committee.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

VFBV delegates from the Joint Member Services Committee have for a few years now have been receiving feedback from CFA members encouraging CFA to reintroduce the schools program that was run in secondary schools. CFA over the past couple of years have been working on a refresh of the junior and cadet programs and part of this work will include the reintroduction of a schools program which will enable students to participate in CFA training and gain nationally recognised competencies that can be used to further their CFA journey. The Joint Member Services Committee continues to monitor the progress of this work which has the potential to provide another recruitment avenue for brigades.

SINGLE USE SPLASH SUIT TRIAL

VFBV has been long advocating for the need to replace CFA's older splash suits that are being retired from service, with a disposable suit that will better cater for different sizing to support greater diversity among members. The new splash suits were chosen after a long period of testing and include a neoprene rubber face grommet to ensure there is a safe seal around BA masks as well as protective gloves that are welded to the suit and an integrated sock for use with rubber splash suit boots. The new suits are a single use item which have a shelf life of 10 years, and after use, the suits are sealed in a decontamination bag and disposed of alongside other contaminated products. The new suits were trialled by brigades in Districts 8 and 9 in late 2024. Delegates to the PPE&C sub-committee and volunteers

across the state are keen to see the outcomes of the trials and for the new splash suits to be delivered to brigades to replace the older splash suits.

ALLEN & CLARKE REVIEW INTO CULTURE AND ISSUES MANAGEMENT IN CFA

In 2021, Dr Helen Szoke AO and Allen + Clarke led an independent review into culture and issues management at CFA. This review was initiated to assess the organisation's management practices, organisational culture, and response to workplace grievances, with the aim of fostering a safer and more inclusive environment. In 2022, when the report into the review was released, 10 recommendations were made to make improvements for CFA's future. CFA then developed an action plan to address the reviews recommendations which contained hundreds of actions. Since then progress on the action plan has stalled within CFA. As part of CFA's commitment to strengthen support for its operational resilience, CFA re-engaged Allen + Clarke and Dr Szoke to evaluate progress made against the reviews recommendations since its release in 2022. The evaluation work will take place predominantly in the 2025-26 financial year and VFBV look forward to engaging with the evaluation team and will monitor its findings.

PAGER REPLACEMENT

CFA continues to remind members that pagers are the primary alerting method for incidents. The pager system is the most reliable method of alerting members to incidents across the network. To assist with this CFA have begun an Alpha Legend (enhanced pager) replacement program. Amongst the features on the new pagers are an adjustable volume via an external speaker, flashing LED visual alert, improved battery life and better coverage in some areas of low reception. The project being run by the Department of Justice and Community Service (DJCS) is expected to replace 25,000 end of life pagers over the coming year to assist with improved alerting.

Alongside the pager replacement program, the Supplementary Alerting System (SAS) App has continued to increase its uptake among CFA members. Volunteers on the SAS working party continue to meet with the CFA Project team to refine the app and new releases in the past year have included the option for a colour-coded timer that can be used by brigades to track their response times, ability to search for members contact details, better connectivity and other minor enhancements.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO TRAINING GROUNDS

The Joint Training Committee delegates receive regular updates from CFA regarding their ongoing commitment to increase the usage of the eight Victorian Emergency Management Training Centres (VEMTC) managed by CFA across the State. VFBV delegates have raised feedback from some brigades who have expressed frustration at what was deemed to be a quite convoluted process to organise

a training session at one of these centres. Based on this feedback, CFA committed to undertake work to make it easier for brigades to organise, book and attend a training session at a training centre. The VFBV delegates to the Joint Training Committee were pleased to receive reports from brigades that the process for organising training at the centres had been made significantly easier and the training staff had been working with brigades to create training sessions which suited their needs.

FIRE MEDICAL RESPONSE

Extensive consultation has continued with volunteers and brigades in relation to the option of participating in the Fire Medical Response (FMR) Program. The first brigades to be involved in FMR response completed their training and became available to be responded to certain serious "Priority Zero" events alongside Ambulance Victoria in December 2024. CFA's project team continues to meet and consult with additional brigades to roll out the program to more brigades with the initial statewide target of 50 brigades. As at the end of June, 20 brigades had completed their training and were available to respond to calls and another 16 brigades have agreed to participate in the program and are undertaking extensive training to prepare for their involvement. There have also been a number of brigades that declined to take part in the program after being invited to participate by CFA. As FMR has been rolled out the Joint Technology and Innovation Committee has also been monitoring updates to CFA's electronic Patient Care Records (ePCR) portal which is used for both FMR and Emergency Medical Response (EMR). This portal automatically creates draft Patient Care Records from Triple Zero Victoria data and transfers it to Ambulance Victoria for reporting and allow brigades to request stock replenishment. This replaces the previous processes where confidential information was being shared by email or post as well as a separate process for ordering of replacement stock.

FIRE EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

The Fire Equipment Maintenance (FEM) Advisory Committee has continued to work on addressing the barriers that CFA's old paper-based FEM systems are having on brigades and the clients they service. CFA has been working with FEM Brigades to developing a new FEM Field Management app to notify members of jobs, site and maintenance tasks, contacts and to allow for service logs to be completed electronically. The FEM App will eliminate the manual process and significant associated costs and time with the outdated manual system. The information will then be sent directly to CFA for invoicing customers and providing them with a log of the work performed. CFA volunteers including VFBV's delegates have been consulted on the changes and have been working with CFA to ensure the app is practical for volunteers to use.

FIRS UPDATES

Both the Joint Technology and Innovation Committee and the Joint Operational Performance Committee have been working with CFA

on updates to CFA's Fire Incident Reporting System (FIRS). VFBV has continued to advocate for updates which support more accurate volunteer activity records which are essential if a member needs to submit an injury or compensation claim for presumptive legislation. One change requested via a VFBV District Council for the Joint Technology and Innovation Committee to pursue was the ability to create reports in FIRS to log planned burn activities which will enhance the reporting of resources and hours committed to planned burns as well as recording which members were involved in the planned burns.

The Joint Operational Performance Committee has also continued to request that CFA investigate further the opportunity for the Service Delivery Reporting Centre (SDRC) to remain open outside of standard business hours to support CFA members in completing their FIRS reports correctly. The VFBV delegates have suggested that the SDRC be available on a single weeknight and a Sunday morning time period each week for a few hours which would cater to peak times when volunteers are usually attending to CFA related paperwork. CFA have agreed to investigate how this could potentially be achieved.

CREDIBLE CRITICAL INCIDENTS

In 2020, CFA engaged external consulting firm R2A to identify the credible critical safety issues which CFA is exposed to. The consultants identified 27 Credible Critical Incidents (CCI) that have fatality potential within CFA. The top 10 incidents were identified some of which included rollover; entrapment; hazardous trees; air crash; and heart attack. Following this workshops were held with over 30 CFA volunteers nominated by VFBV and CFA including members from the Joint People, Culture and Safety Committee. The workshops discussed various strategies that could be used to mitigate the risk including revised training, changes to policies and procedures and modifications to equipment and infrastructure. CFA continues to work through the remaining identified incidents and volunteers will be involved in more workshops addressing additional CCI including electrical, explosions, smoke hazards and fatigue.

AFTER ACTION REVIEWS / OBSERVATION COLLECTION TOOL

VFBV delegates to the Joint Operational Performance Committee have continued to call for CFA to provide timely opportunities for volunteers to provide feedback following deployments both within Victoria and interstate. VFBV has been reporting on impending changes to the system for some time now to ensure that the feedback being provide by members during the After Action Review (AAR) process is being reviewed and considered by CFA. CFA have reported that they have developed an Observation Collection Tool to allow volunteers to submit feedback on deployments or large incidents in real time before the more formal AAR may be conducted at a later date. The Observation Collection Tool will feed into the Lessons Management Centre to provide case studies that will be available for brigades across the state to use for training.

WHOLE OF LIFE ASSET PLAN

Members of the Joint Operational Capability Committee have continued to review CFA's progress on the Whole of Life Asset Plan (WOLP). The WOLP is a resource to risk model that is designed to create a baseline process for the allocation of appliances and resources and to guide the asset management requirements of CFA. A new service risk delivery model has also been developed to identify the environmental risk for each brigade which will inform the base service delivery classification for that brigade. As with any change introduced within CFA, volunteer consultation is a key element in the allocation of resources and VFBV delegates have continued to push that District Planning Committees across the state need to remain heavily involved in forming district priorities for the allocation of resources.

COLLECTION OF DRIVERS LICENCE DETAILS

Delegates to VFBV State Council raised concerns on behalf of brigades about CFA's decision to collect and store volunteer's drivers licence numbers and expiry dates. Particularly given the attention to data breaches involving large companies such as Optus and Medibank and the cyber breach on FRV which has had ongoing impacts. Members were understandably concerned and anxious about CFA's storage of personal information that could potentially be used to commit identity fraud against them if the system was breached. While VFBV was aware of CFA's pursuit of exemptions under the National Heavy Vehicle Law which resulted in CFA needing to record licence numbers of drivers of fatigue regulated vehicles (trucks 12 tonne or more) it was surprising to learn that the Chief Officer was insisting that he wanted to be provided with the licence details of every single driver regardless of whether they drove a fatigue regulated vehicle or not.

VFBV formally requested details from CFA on how this information is being collected, stored and protected including what cyber security measures have been put in place to ensure this information is safe (encryption) and who has access to this information. VFBV also sought information on whether CFA had conducted an independent security audit on the system that is being used to store this information to reassure members about the security of their personal data.

While the Chief Officer provided assurances about the safeguards and privacy controls that CFA has put in place, CFA did not agree an external security review or audit was required.

FLEET WORKING PARTIES

Each year VFBV delegates from the Joint Equipment and Infrastructure Committee along with other CFA volunteers spend many hours contributing to a number of working parties to update and modernise CFA's fleet. In the past 12 months, the Joint Equipment and Infrastructure Committee has agreed to create a standard Terms of Reference for all future vehicle-related working parties which will outline clear objectives, define roles, ensure proper representation between

VFBV and CFA and strive for an outcome that includes input from the operations and training committees when required.

Over the last year the new Ultra-Light Tanker working party have spent some time comparing the prototype Ford Ranger unit with the current Toyota Landcruiser format and testing operational capabilities. The Big Fill working party has also made steady progress and configurations of the vehicle are being worked through. The Next Gen Pumper working party has been reviewing cabin stowage to ensure secure placement of helmets as well as investigating new branch designs.

COMMUNITY SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Since 2020, CFA has produced a bi-annual Community Safety Newsletter. These newsletters are a valuable resource for brigade Community Safety Offices and Captains providing all the latest news on projects being undertaken by CFA to improve community engagement, information on programs and resources available for brigades to use as well as ideas that brigades can use for more effective engagement of their community. The Joint Community Safety Committee has long advocated that this newsletter should be accessible through Members Online and available to all CFA members not just those on the mailing list. As of the beginning of 2025, the current issue, and all back issues were made available on Members Online.

Some additional key issues each Joint Committee worked on over the past year included:

Community Safety

- Joint Fuel Management Program
- Business fire safety
- Public fire predictions project
- Post-season community survey
- 2024 Pomonal fire research
- CFA plan and prepare website redevelopment

Equipment and Infrastructure

- One fuel card
- Quality assurance process – station and appliance builds
- Spare tankers and shortages
- Workwear for new members
- Cab chassis standards change
- Station break ins
- Helmet stowage on 4.4 tankers
- Crew protection retrofit for Ultra Light tankers

Member Services

- Championships
- Social media page registration
- Container deposit scheme

- Pocketbook app
- Honours and awards
- Give us a hand campaign

Operational Capability

- Remote pilot aircraft systems (RPAS)
- Fire investigation
- Decontamination process
- ACFO/Commander vacancies
- Specialist response
- Flight simulator
- Tree hazard assessors
- PV stop trials

Operational Performance

- DPC consistency
- JSOP review
- SOP consultation
- Role of Group
- Fire District Review Panel

People, Culture and Safety

- KPMG fit for duty review
- Working with children checks
- Potentially traumatic event exposure tracker
- Diversity and inclusion
- Behavioural standards
- Psychological first aid for leaders

Technology and Innovation

- Starlink satellite replacement rollout
- Cessation of 3G mobile network
- FOV/MCV update
- Renewable energy innovations
- Radio replacement project
- Pocketbook app

Training

- Operational endorsements
- Recognition of external qualifications & recognition of prior learning
- Volunteer leadership development
- First aid training
- Training complaints and feedback
- LPG flare off
- Volunteer instructor development and utilisation
- Training delivery issues

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 Brigade, Group, District Council and State Council level on a number of important issues during the last year.

2024-25 VFBV VOLUNTEER WELFARE AND EFFICIENCY SURVEY

The annual VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey opened in November 2024 and ran until early April 2025 attracting responses from 2,115 CFA volunteers. The 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 standard 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. This year, VFBV worked with the Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry to conduct the survey for their volunteers to provide an update on volunteer satisfaction since their last volunteer welfare and efficiency survey was conducted in 2017 as part of the wider Victorian Emergency Management Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Project. VFBV have also been working with our colleagues from the Victorian SES Volunteers Association (VicSESVA) to offer the survey to VICSES members in 2024-25 in recognition of the shared respect between CFA and VICSES volunteers.

Detailed results from the 2024-25 Survey can be found on pages 25 to 28 of this report.

CFA POLICY AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE CONSULTATION

One of the key pillars of the Volunteer Charter is to ensure that volunteers are consulted on all matters which may reasonably be

expected to affect them. To achieve this VFBV uses a number of different mechanisms to seek feedback on changes to new or revised Standard Operating Procedures or new CFA policies. Feedback is sought from volunteers via VFBV's monthly newsletter, the Quarterly Supplement distributed with the Fire Wise newspaper, District Councils, State Council, VFBV Board and also via specifically designed surveys for some topics.

Standard Operating Procedures

Over the past 12 months while consulting on the large number of new or revised draft SOP's VFBV detected a significant level of change fatigue among CFA volunteers and experienced a decrease in the number of members providing feedback. VFBV cautioned CFA that while we attempted to counter this decrease in feedback provided through other measures there was potentially a risk that unintended consequences of the proposed changes may only come to light after the SOP's are implemented.

There were 24 new or revised SOP's circulated for consultation in the last year. The majority of these SOP's only had minor changes or amendments and were therefore generally accepted by the volunteers who provided feedback to VFBV. However as some of these SOP's hadn't been reviewed for close to 20 years the feedback received by VFBV indicated that members may have been unaware how some of the SOP's operated within CFA. Some of the SOP's consulted on over the past 12 months which elicited significant feedback and comments from members included:

- **3.01 – Management of Junior Members:** volunteer feedback generally focused on the new procedure for Junior leaders to be endorsed by their respective ACFO. The feedback indicated that there was a level of in-principle support for a more rigorous endorsement process for junior leaders but members requested that this not be unreasonably onerous and any endorsements should be on the recommendation of the brigade captain to the respective ACFO.
- **5.05: - Use of CFA Equipment:** this revised SOP included new wording which provided a very narrow definition of when CFA equipment could be used. This elicited significant volunteer feedback and pushback to the new wording and a perception it was too restrictive and ignored the fact that a lot of the small equipment used by brigades was bought and fundraised by volunteers themselves. Members felt that this change didn't recognise that the brigade and its members are significant contributors to the funding, maintenance and care of equipment owned by brigades and VFBV advocated for revised wording to recognise the vital contribution that volunteers make to the purchase of new equipment.

- **7.01 – Local Procedure Development:** this was a new SOP combining the old brigade and group operating procedures SOP and regional operating procedures – preparation of SOP to form a new SOP which informs what local (district or regional) procedures can be developed and the approval processes to take place. On the whole this SOP was generally well received by members and the reference to consulting with VFBV at a local level during the development of procedures to ensure that volunteers are consulted was welcomed. Members did however raise some concerns with the length of time for consultation to occur with members suggesting that consultation periods should be informed by the frequency at which the different audiences to be consulted with meet at, which is often quarterly.
- **Driving Doctrine:** VFBV provided a detailed response to CFA on the driving doctrine consulted on in late 2023-24. While most of the doctrine was reasonably well received the feedback in relation to SOP 12.08 Driver Endorsement garnered a lot of mostly negative and contentious feedback. The most significant issue by far, was concern for new and additional mandated training requirements. Particularly given that CFA has not been able to meet existing driver training demand for a number of years now. Given the feedback received from volunteers on this SOP, VFBV advised that it was not able to support SOP 12.08 in its current format until such time as CFA is adequately funded for driver training and flexible training delivery methods are established and readily available to volunteers.

At the end of the financial year, VFBV was reviewing feedback provided by volunteers on another 8 revised SOPs. Feedback on these SOPs will be provided to CFA in the next financial year.

Brigade Finance Policy

During the 2023-24 financial year VFBV sought feedback from members on a revised CFA Finance Policy suite which was proposed to streamline the various financial management policies and clarify processes for the management of brigade and group finances. This revised policy suite comprised of 6 separate policies totalling 21 pages.

The detailed feedback provided by VFBV to CFA was carefully reviewed by CFA's new Chief Financial Officer and his team to understand the impacts of the proposed policies and how VFBV's feedback could be incorporated. The result was the development of one policy, rather than a suite of policies, which was just 6 pages long with much of VFBV's feedback taken on board. This included: inclusion of different tiers of reporting depending on the quantum of funds held by the brigade or group; changes to fundraising requirements to state that any fundraising should be consistent



with the brigades financial plan to ensure brigades can take up any opportunities which may arise at short notice; removal of the ban on brigades and groups being able to enter in lease agreements for standard office equipment and a change to allow brigades and groups to make donations to VFBV charitable funds via resolutions at meetings.

The amendments made to the finance policy outlines the benefits of brigades and members providing feedback via VFBV's consultation processes to allow VFBV to advocate on behalf of members to ensure improved policy is developed and delivered within CFA.

VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES EQUIPMENT PROGRAM (VESEP)

VESEP is an ongoing program funded by the Victorian Government. The annual program was established almost 25 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 2024-25 program successful applicants were announced in October 2024 with CFA Brigades and Groups sharing in almost \$8.9 million in grants. Of the 167 successful grants for CFA brigades and groups, 48 were for the replacement or upgrade of firefighting or specialist vehicles, 71 for volunteer amenities improvements or minor works projects and 48 for operational equipment. Included in this was 19 brigades and groups who received a Special Access Grant which assisted in reducing or eliminating entirely the brigade or group contribution, these grants assisted with the purchase of new vehicles or upgrades to station amenities.

Unfortunately due to the change in Euro 6 emissions standards no Medium Tanker cab chassis were available for the 2024-25 VESEP program. CFA consulted with each brigade who applied for a Medium Tanker and provided them the option of instead applying for a light tanker or waiting for the 2025-26 VESEP program to apply again for a Medium Tanker. This resulted in a reduction of appliances funded through VESEP as many brigades elected to wait for the next VESEP program.

The 2025-26 program was opened by the Minister for Emergency Services Vicki Ward MP in June 2025 with applications closing in the 2025-26 financial year. The 2025-26 program includes a doubling of the funding available through VESEP as part of the Government's funding commitments announced at the same time as the emergency services tax. As with previous years, VFBV

provided an Application Help Pack for the 2025-26 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 combines CFA information sheets and application forms as a one stop shop of information.

CFA BOARD NOMINEES

The CFA Act recognises that it is important that the CFA Board has strong volunteer expertise, knowledge and understanding of CFA volunteers. To support this, four of the nine skills-based CFA Board members are appointed by the Minister for Emergency Services from a panel of names submitted by VFBV. In addition to volunteer experience or knowledge, the Board members also need to have "knowledge of, or experience in, commercial, technical, operational, legal or financial matters; or expertise in fire or emergency management, land management or any another field relevant to the performance of the functions of the Authority".

In mid-June 2025 Ross Coyle AFSM was re-appointed to the CFA Board for three years. Alongside Ross, Bryce Morden was appointed to the Board for a three-year term. Bryce is a member of the Timboon brigade in District 6 and an experienced board director who brings extensive leadership in emergency services, regional development and community engagement. Bryce and Ross join Dawn Hartog AFSM and Peter Shaw AFSM as the volunteer nominees to the CFA Board.

Beth Davidson OAM elected to step down as a CFA Board member at the end of her term in June 2025, after serving as a volunteer nominee to the CFA Board since 2019. Beth had also previously served as a CFA Board member as a local government nominee for three years and was a staunch advocate for volunteer empowerment and community safety.

PRESUMPTIVE LEGISLATION

Victoria has continued to fall behind other states with the states Presumptive Legislation scheme covering just 15 cancers and not including any presumption for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or asbestos-related diseases. In conjunction with the Council of Australia Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA), VFBV has continued to campaign for an expansion of the number of cancers covered by presumptive legislation in Victoria.

During the last 12 months, Queensland became the latest state to update its firefighter presumptive legislation scheme and became the first jurisdiction in Australia to cover 22 cancers as well as providing presumption for PTSD and asbestos-related diseases.

Tasmania is the next best scheme with 21 cancers and PTSD recognised as likely being a result of their firefighting service. Firefighters employed by the Commonwealth Government at Australian airports are covered if diagnosed with one of 20 cancers or PTSD and the Western Australia Government recognises 20 cancers also. The Northern Territory has 15 cancers included in its legislation as well as presumptive coverage for PTSD and asbestos-related diseases. The South Australian parliament also has two private members bills tabled which will expand the number of cancers covered under their scheme to 22 as well as covering asbestos-related diseases and PTSD for firefighters.

VFBV continues to publish a comparison table showing how far behind Victoria is compared to other states and continues to seek the support of all members of Victoria's parliament to support the expansion of Victoria's presumptive legislation scheme so that Victoria does not continue to fall behind the other states.

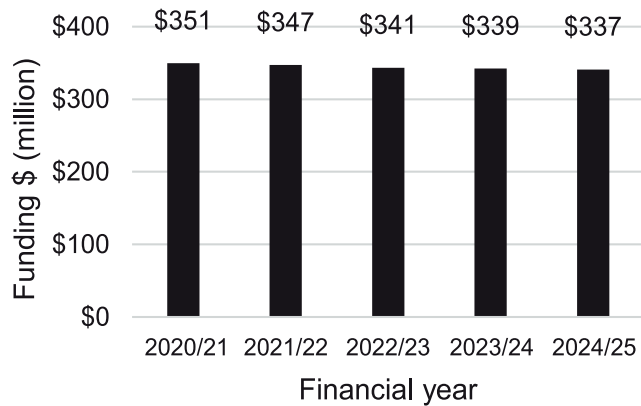
Another aspect of VFBV's advocacy in the past 12 months has been to monitor how the 10-year sunset period is being dealt with and the special advisory committee. This committee is a unique quirk of Victoria's legislation and only applies to assessing volunteer applications for compensation. VFBV have been supporting members through the application process and monitoring decisions being made for any negative or unintended consequences. Through supporting members through the application process VFBV has been able to assist in demonstrating significant errors in some cases leading to the case being re-evaluated and have also started to highlight some reoccurring issues in this compensation scheme. VFBV has been engaging in constructive conversations with the Victorian Government on some of the issues confronting volunteers as they navigate the presumptive legislation compensation scheme and remain hopeful that common sense amendments may be considered.

VFBV have also been supporting CFA volunteers who have been applying for redress under the State Government's Fiskville Redress Scheme. As with presumptive legislation the application process can be difficult for volunteers to navigate in part due to poor recording keeping by CFA in the past. VFBV have been working with the Fiskville Redress Scheme to advocate on behalf of CFA volunteers and to ensure that the scheme is accessible to volunteers.

The 2024-25 year has brought with it some challenges for VFBV and CFA volunteers. From campaigning for CFA to receive an increased budget from government to support volunteers, the State Government's Emergency Services Tax being announced and passing parliament, volunteer compensation concerns highlighted by the Supreme Court of Victoria and the sunsetting of the 2014 CFA Regulations.

CFA BUDGET & EMERGENCY SERVICES TAX
CFA Budget

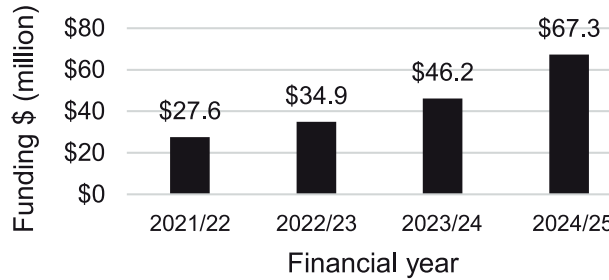
One of the biggest focuses of VFBV's advocacy over the past year has been the inequity of CFA's budget and the government's prolonged attack on CFA's resourcing and support. By tracking the government's investment in CFA over the past five years, analysis showed there is less and less base funding provided to CFA year after year. This is despite increased costs and high inflation.



Annual Government Funding (Grants) to CFA

The decrease in funding from government, coupled with one-off funding commitments for the provision of CFA workwear, structural helmets or next-generation Bushfire PPC means that CFA is having to figure out how to do more with less funding each year.

Further analysis of the CFA Annual Report's reveal that in addition to the decrease in government grants, there were also tens of millions of dollars being diverted to public service bodies and the Department of Justice and Community Safety representing a further cut to CFA's budget. In 2014 this amount was just \$10 million and has been increasing ever since.



Funding withheld from CFA Budget

The department claimed that "every dollar of these quarantined amounts is spent on CFA – directly benefiting the CFA and its volunteers". However, VFBV lodged a Freedom of Information request which revealed that far from the stated purpose, these funds were being diverted to other government bodies such as EMV and the Inspector-General Emergency Management in effect funding public service bureaucracies which is far from every dollar paying for vital CFA "equipment".

On top of CFA funds being diverted to government departments, the then Treasurer Tim Pallas also confirmed to Parliament in August 2024 that just 25% of the then Fire Services Property Levy went to CFA, with the remaining 75% of funds collected were directed to funding FRV illustrating the disproportionate allocation of resources.

Emergency Services Tax and CFA fleet funding

In December 2024, the Government announced that the former Fire Services Property Levy will be rebadged to be called the "Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund" and the cost to property owners will be increased again. The announcement also detailed that the new levy will not only fund CFA and FRV, but for the first time will also provide funding for VICSES, Triple Zero Victoria, the State Control Centre, EMV, Emergency Recovery Victoria and Forest Fire Management Victoria. With the inclusion of additional departments previously funded through consolidated revenue this additional tax burden is instead being passed onto property owners across the state resulting in savings to the Government's budget.

When first announced, the new tax was set to increase from collecting \$1.033 billion in the 2024-25 financial year to \$1.649 billion in the next financial year. Of the extra \$600 million to be collected just \$50 million per year for the next five years has been set aside for "supporting our emergency services and volunteers". This promise of an additional \$50 million for volunteers each year is made up of \$10 million for CFA's fleet, \$15 million to double the amount available under VESEP which includes CFA, VICSES, LSV, Coast Guard and marine search and rescue where volunteers co-fund the purchase

of new trucks or equipment. The remaining \$25 million has been allocated to VICSES and includes a provision for fleet funding for VICSES also.

Based on CFA's fleet of 1,707 tankers and 218 pumpers and a maximum tanker age of 20 years and 15 years for pumpers – VFBV estimated that CFA needs at least \$55 million per year to replace 100 trucks a year. Currently CFA allocates between \$10 to \$15 million each year to replacing vehicles. Therefore the boosting of CFA's fleet budget to at best \$25 million per year is still less than half of what is needed to stop the fleet getting older. CFA's rapidly aging fleet has occurred through decades of government neglect – VFBV campaigned for increased fleet funding for CFA back in 2014 when CFA was forced to remove the 20-year age limit as they were no longer able to afford replacement vehicles. The issue of CFA's aging fleet is further amplified by the lack of capital investment in new or updated fire stations, with many CFA stations unable to accommodate newer fire trucks and many also do not even have a bathroom.

When the rebadged levy was announced it soon became clear that primary producers across the state would be bearing the burden of the proposed increased levy. With the proposed variable rates first published by the government showing that the variable rate would increase from 28.7c per \$1,000 Capital Improved Value (CIV) to 83c per \$1,000 CIV for primary producers – a 189% increase. While the variable rate for residential properties increased by 99%, industrial properties by 64% and commercial properties by 100%.

VFBV commenced a public education campaign following the Government's announcement to ensure that the community understood the changes that the government was seeking to make and VFBV began calling out the untruths being propagated in the name of volunteers. VFBV aimed to ensure that farmers and primary producers were the focus of our advocacy and VFBV was one of the first organisations to recognise the devastating impacts this tax would have on rural communities. VFBV also encouraged CFA members and the community to engage with their local MPs from all parties and both houses of parliament to ensure that they were aware of the impact this tax was going to have on those who could least afford it.

The public debate around the Emergency Services Tax was intense with rallies held at Parliament House and around the state protesting the increase to the levy as it was being debated in Parliament and following the debate in Parliament. Municipal Councils across the state also campaigned against the introduction of the rebadged tax producing data showing that the tax burden was largely on rural and regional communities. Councils also requested that the state government take over the collection of the tax as this is a state government tax.

Legislation passes Parliament

Ultimately while the Government was forced to make some amendments to the tax for the legislation to pass Parliament it did pass with the support of the Victorian Greens, Legalise Cannabis party and the Animal Justice Party. While the Liberal, National, Libertarian, Pauline Hanson’s One Nation, Shooters, Fishers and Farmers parties and one independent Upper House MP all opposed the new tax in a late night sitting of Parliament.

To pass the legislation through parliament prior to the State Budget in May changes made to the original proposed legislation included: modifying FRV’s budget contribution from the legislation from 87.5% to 90%; change the words “not exceeding” to “is” for CFA (95% of budget), VICSES (95% of budget) and FRV (90% of budget); and adopted wording similar to an opposition amendment requiring the Minister to table each year an estimate of the amount of funding for each funding recipient and the percentage of the funding requirements and an estimate of the levy to be collected by land use classification.

Other amendments tabled in Parliament to the legislation which did not pass included removing “volunteer fund” from the levy name tabled by Jeff Bourman from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers party and an opposition amendment to restrict funding from the levy to only be for CFA, FRV and VICSES.

Levy Name

VFBV received considerable feedback from volunteers around the state via our District Councils that including the word “volunteer” in the fund name was disingenuous as very little additional funding was being directed to volunteers at either CFA or VICSES. State Council determined that VFBV will no longer refer to the new levy as the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund but instead will refer to the new tax as the “Emergency Services Tax” until such time as the words “volunteer fund” is removed from the name of the levy. State Council unanimously adopted this recommendation at its June 2025 meeting.

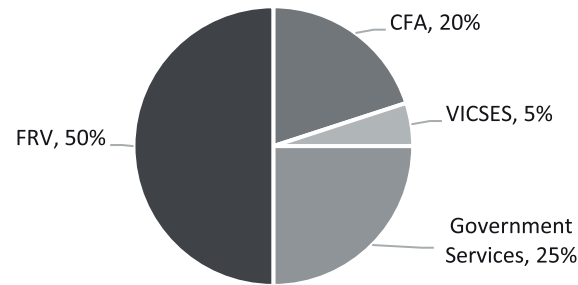
Calling this new tax a volunteer fund is divisive, inflammatory and significantly erodes the morale of CFA volunteers who are frequently engaging with the communities as volunteers. VFBV believes that calling it a volunteer fund is mischievous and misleading and the government has only done this to try and play on the community’s respect for volunteers in an attempt protect themselves from backlash over this new tax which failed miserably.

Community outrage

After the levy passed parliament community outrage continued particularly in the more rural and regional areas of Victoria especially in areas of the state impacted by drought with many brigades expressing their disappointment by making themselves unavailable to respond to emergencies. The government ultimately provided a one year moratorium on the increase for primary production land as part of the Government’s Drought Relief Package announced on 30th May 2025. While this reduction has been welcomed many are still concerned that it is only a one year moratorium and the increased rate may be implemented in the 2026-27 year.

Funding allocations

The Government Gazette published on 30 May 2025 detailed the amount to be collected through the new tax and where the funding will be directed.



Funding allocation from new Emergency Services Tax

The breakdown shows that just 20 cents in every dollar collected through this new tax goes to CFA and CFA will still rely on the communities goodwill and support to fund essential equipment that protects their communities. Despite publishing the forecast funding for each agency the government has refused to publicly provide a figure for what CFA’s budget will be for the 2025-26 year and deny any cuts despite the forecast funding published in the Gazette showing a decrease in CFA’s funding for the sixth consecutive year. The new tax is just shifting the cost of funding emergency services and some government departments to taxpayers freeing up funds in consolidated revenue to fund other government overspends. The increased tax will collect an additional \$517 million dollars each year.

Volunteer rebate

VFBV has long argued that it was immoral for volunteers to pay for the very fire service they were providing free of charge and then to also be taxed for the privilege. VFBV had floated options to introduce a volunteer rebate when the Fire Services Property Levy

was first introduced and has continued to advocate for recognition that CFA volunteers were in effect paying for a service they were providing to their communities for free.

VFBV therefore welcomed the Government’s announcement that CFA and VICSES volunteers and life members would be exempt from the new levy. However, they were shocked at how inappropriately the rebate had been designed, and the complexity that not only excluded many – but also created significant administration costs. To assist in our advocacy with CFA and government, VFBV developed a survey to understand how volunteers felt about the new levy and how the volunteer exemption may or may not operate.

Following our advocacy, the Government modified its original criteria and determined that volunteers would be eligible for the rebate if they have served as a volunteer for at least 12 months; there would be no differentiation between operational and non-operational volunteers; completed their initial probation period; were not suspended on disciplinary grounds; and had not taken a leave of absence for the whole preceding 12 months. With all criteria to be assessed on 31 May each year for the next financial year.

VFBV also distributed a guide to assist CFA members in accessing their volunteer rebate. To access the rebate, volunteers will be required to navigate through CFA’s Members Online Portal to determine their eligibility before then accessing the rebate via the Government’s Service Victoria portal. Members are then provided a rebate of the Emergency Services Tax portion of their rates notices on an eligible property with a cap placed on the rebate. Unfortunately, the government confirmed that only members who were listed on the property title would be eligible for the rebate - contrary to initial government messaging that all volunteers would be exempt.

State budget

The state budget in May contained very little good news for CFA despite more than \$500M extra tax being collected from Victorians. There was only an additional half a million dollars for “building more Country Fire Authority stations” and an additional \$13.4 million to be allocated to CSBA to build more regional fire stations. However to date the CSBA seems to have been collecting funding but not producing many new fire stations. Another entry included in the budget was for “further supporting our emergency services and volunteers (statewide)” which was allocated \$13.1 million with no further description or explanation for what this funding is for.

VOLUNTEER COMPENSATION

As part of VFBV's advocacy efforts on behalf of CFA volunteers is a commitment to work cooperatively together with CFA where possible but also to be able to disagree with CFA where required. For the most part, VFBV has these disagreements with CFA behind closed doors but there comes a time where those efforts are unsuccessful and VFBV have to become more public in the advocacy required. This was the case in the past year in relation to a decision to cut volunteer compensation payments to a former CFA volunteer.

In July 2024 Supreme Court Judge The Hon. Melinda Richards handed down her finding against CFA who had terminated a volunteer firefighter's compensation for PTSD. This volunteer had joined CFA at the age of 19 and served as an active first responder for 24 years. His brigade was a busy structural brigade and also an accredited road accident rescue brigade, where he attended countless incidents including house fires, motor vehicle accidents and responded to major bushfire events.

Over time, he started to suffer from depression and anxiety and as things got worse he sought treatment from his general practitioner and psychologist before being referred to a psychiatrist who in 2018 diagnosed him to be suffering from major depression, anxiety and PTSD. The psychiatrist believed that his PTSD was directly related to his service with CFA and the repeated trauma he had been exposed to.

When he made a claim under CFA's volunteer compensation scheme, CFA arranged for him to be assessed by their own independent psychiatrist, who confirmed the PTSD with delayed onset diagnosis and that his service to CFA as a volunteer firefighter was a significant contributing factor to his PTSD. CFA accepted this diagnosis and his claim for compensation and commenced payments for ongoing reasonable medical expenses and weekly payments for labour replacement. Between 2019 and 2022 two more psychiatrists confirmed the diagnosis, with one of these appointed by CFA to perform another independent medical examination.

Then again in 2023 CFA engaged yet another psychiatrist to examine the member. This psychiatrist provided a controversial opinion after a single consultation that not only did the volunteer not suffer from PTSD, but that it was impossible because there was no such thing as 'delayed onset PTSD'. In his view PTSD cannot by definition occur where the traumatisation of symptoms are not present within the first six months. This was completely at odds with all the other psychiatrists, yet based on this single report, CFA then proceeded to write to the volunteer advising they "preferred their psychiatrists opinion" and advised they would be terminating his entitlements.

The volunteer responded and undertook yet another medical examination with a fifth psychiatrist who confirmed the diagnosis of PTSD which was caused by the members CFA volunteer service. Following receipt of this report and choosing not to engage with any of the previously engaged psychiatrists who all diagnosed PTSD, CFA again wrote to the volunteer advising they still preferred the outlier opinion and terminated his compensation payments.

Under the CFA Regulations there is no appeal mechanism for volunteers who disagree with CFA's assessment of their compensation claim. Therefore the member had to proceed with requesting a judicial review of his case in the Supreme Court of Victoria. In court the member argued that it was unreasonable for CFA to "cherry pick" the medical evidence – something which CFA denied. The Court when examining this chain of events was scathing of CFA, with the judge determining: *"the CFA's decision to terminate [the volunteer's] entitlements to compensation was legally unreasonable. As the sole arbiter of the merits of the [volunteer's claim], it changed its mind about his entitlement to compensation on the basis of a single medical opinion that was contrary to all of the opinions it had previously accepted. It did so without engaging with the reason why A/Prof Doherty held a different opinion, and without considering whether it should accept the premise of his opinion. The CFA's reasons for decision disclosed no intelligible foundation for preferring A/Prof Doherty's opinion and its underlying premise."*

In response to CFA's defence and explanation the judge said in her summary: *"With respect, this explanation entirely missed the point of difference between A/Prof Doherty's and all other experts. A/Prof Doherty's departure from the previous opinions was not due to a different or more thorough assessment of [the volunteer's] medical history and clinical records. It was because of his asserted premise that there is no such condition as delayed onset (or delayed expression) PTSD..."*

Her Honour found that CFA's determination to terminate the volunteer's entitlement to compensation was legally unreasonable and warned: *"another dimension of the unreasonableness of the CFA's decision arises from the fact that the CFA administers the compensation scheme for the benefit of all volunteers, and to support the viability of the CFA as a volunteer fire service. It is a significant matter for the administration of the scheme for the CFA to deny liability for compensation for delayed onset PTSD, on the basis that may not reflect the general consensus of psychiatric opinion. If the CFA takes a consistent approach in other similar cases, its unquestioning acceptance of A/Prof Doherty's opinion that there is no diagnosable and recognised condition of delayed onset PTSD may have consequences for the ongoing capacity of the CFA to provide*

fire services in country Victoria." Her Honour then made an order setting aside CFA's decision.

Following this decision, VFBV demanded that CFA issue an apology to the volunteer and immediately reinstate his compensation and support. VFBV also strongly advocated for the introduction of independent medical panels of three or more independent doctors to deal with controversial or outlier medical views similar to current practices for Workcover appeal processes. CFA reinstated the members entitlements and provided in principle support for the introduction of medical panels.

VFBV also pursued changes to the CFA Regulations throughout the regulation review process to explore what appeal mechanisms could be put in place to ensure that a volunteer does not have to go all the way to the Supreme Court of Victoria just to overturn what is blatantly a miscarriage of justice. VFBV has also previously called for the implementation of a Volunteer Ombudsman which could potentially assist in this scenario.

This case highlighted that proving PTSD as a result of a member's firefighting service is not like proving a broken bone as a result of the member's service. The emergency services sectors' understanding of PTSD is still evolving. VFBV has continued to advocate for the inclusion of PTSD for presumptive legislation in Victoria similar to what has occurred in Commonwealth, Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Queensland and Tasmanian legislation.

Injury Recovery Review

As a result of VFBV's advocacy and the outcome of the Supreme Court case VFBV requested that CFA undertake a review of CFA's volunteer compensation operating model and related processes to ensure current arrangements are adequate and meet volunteer expectations. CFA initiated a review of their Injury Recovery and support services conducted by an external contractor. The reviews data gathering phase included 90-minute interviews conducted with four injured employees, three injured volunteers put forward by CFA, and three injured volunteers put forward by VFBV. The review team also undertook interviews with stakeholders including VFBV and distributed a number of surveys.

The outcomes of the review suggest that from the volunteer perspective CFA is challenged with case management and complex claims due to staff turnover. CFA has committed to reviewing how it can improve the recruitment and retention of staff dealing with volunteer compensation claims, how the medical reimbursement process can be simplified as well as improving the adverse decision resolution process.

FIRE SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION MONITOR ANNUAL REPORT

In the fourth Fire Services Implementation Monitor's (FSIM) annual report tabled in parliament in November 2024 the monitor, the Hon. Niall Blair provided a thorough assessment of progress against the Government's fire services reform implementation plan. The findings detailed by the monitor were particularly damning and deal with long-standing systematic issues within FRV's complex consultation and industrial arena, the impacts this has on all joint interoperability initiatives between CFA and FRV, and the devastating impact of the secondment arrangements that have resulted in the CFA Chief Officer's inability to manage his seconded workforce and resulting long-term vacancies.

The report details that in the monitors opinion and also the unanimous opinion of senior leaders of both CFA and FRV the arrangements put in place through fire services reform are not working, have not worked for some time and in fact will never work.

Under the secondment agreement between FRV and CFA, FRV are contractually required to supply CFA with 45 Assistant Chief Fire Officers and 96 Commanders. The monitor reported that on average each week there are least 17 vacancies and that at its worst there were up to 33 vacancies in a week which accounts for more than 20% of CFA's paid operational workforce. Confirmation of the widespread gaps and vacancies came as little surprise to many brigades and volunteers who have been consistently and frequently reporting these shortages and gaps in support. One of the largest impacts on volunteers has been the cascading flow on effects from these vacancies which has created significant churn and upheaval across the ACFO and Commander pool. With some brigades advising VFBV that their district has cycled through up to eight different ACFOs in a single calendar year. It can not be underestimated the disruption and havoc this causes across a District and damage that is done to relationships and business continuity.

In addition to the ACFOs and Commanders FRV is required to supply to CFA, the secondment agreement also outlines that 53 instructors and 29 training ground supervisors are also to be supplied to CFA. Despite being contractually obliged to fill the 223 seconded positions, when they are not filled FRV pocket the savings and redirect the funds to funding their own cost blowouts leaving CFA completely in the lurch. To combat this, VFBV has been advocating for the full budget for the seconded workforce to instead be provided to CFA which will then pay FRV for the seconded workforce provided and any savings from unfilled positions can then be directed instead to CFA's fleet budget to replace aging firefighting

trucks. This would create an incentive for FRV to meet its contractual obligations while also providing CFA with compensation for unfilled positions.

The monitors annual report also documented the long-standing systemic issue of the operation of the "consult and agree" arrangements within FRV which act as a significant barrier to progressing actions jointly led by CFA and FRV. The report outlines the significant delays and the result of no clear pathways for resolution. This was an issue that was raised close to 20 years ago by Judge Gordon Lewis in 2008 who warned that these processes can be abused and lead to the complete deterioration and paralysis of decision making.

While these findings did not come as a surprise to VFBV who have warned about these issues for years, these findings from an independent monitor herald a crossroads moment for the Victorian Government. The monitor has provided the government with an opportunity to save face and course correct. The Government needs to work towards restoring the CFA Chief Officer's control of his operational workforce. VFBV have also called on the Victorian Government to implement transparency measures including the public reporting on the number of weekly vacancies.

CFA REGULATIONS REVIEW

The CFA Regulations 2014 were due to sunset in October 2024 however the government extended the 2014 regulations to August 2025 to allow more time for consultation to take place on the revised regulations.

The draft CFA Regulations were released in March 2025 for public consultation which closed in May 2025. As the draft regulations were not provided to VFBV prior to the public consultation period VFBV impressed upon members the importance of providing feedback to the government on any items they did not feel comfortable with.

VFBV published a change matrix of the issues that were most likely to be of interest to volunteers, brigades and groups. The issues of most concern to VFBV was the removal of brigade and group model rules from the regulations and that these rules would be converted to a CFA Board instrument which could be subject to change more frequently than the 10 year regulation review cycle.

While the regulations were being drafted for public consultation, VFBV requested changes to the regulations to address the serious imbalance of power between CFA and volunteers on matters such as injury compensation and also advocated strongly for changes to ensure that volunteers have the same rights and protections as

any other Victorian worker claiming for injury through WorkSafe. The changes included in the draft regulations did not address all of VFBV's concerns and VFBV continued to advocate for additional changes to support volunteers.

VFBV had a number of opportunities to engage with the Minister for Emergency Services Vicki Ward MP and the Department of Justice and Community Safety on volunteer concerns with the draft regulations and were able to clearly indicate the issues for volunteers and which aspects of the regulations may negatively impact volunteers.

The updated CFA Regulations 2025 were due to be finalised in August 2025 and VFBV will monitor the implementation of the new regulations.

FIRE DISTRICT REVIEW PANEL

In March 2025, the Minister for Emergency Services the Hon. Vicki Ward MP announced that after receiving the report prepared by the Fire District Review Panel under section 4L of the Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958 that she determined that no change be made to the Fire Rescue Victoria district. This announcement came as a relief to the 13 brigades identified by the initial report and affirmed VFBV's strong representations to Government and the Panel.

The Minister's determination also highlighted that there is still no clear or transparent guidelines or process that CFA and brigades can work with to determine how brigades may be identified in the future. The VFBV delegates to the Joint Operational Performance Committee was pleased to learn that some CFA districts had held after-action reviews to review the actions taken during the first review to identify how to support brigades during future reviews. While the Ministers decision was welcomed, there is still some disappointment about how this morale sapping process will work in the future.

As an outcome of the review, CFA has committed to undertaking some changes to assist some of the identified brigades in meeting their service delivery standards. VFBV will continue to call for greater support for the brigades identified by the review to help them with their next steps to ensure they can continue to support and protect their communities.

More than 900 competitors from 159 teams took part in the 2025 State Championships across two weekends in Mooroopna. It was the fifth year in a row that Mooroopna has hosted all four State Championships.

The State Championships are the culmination of a series of local competitions held each year and are an opportunity for members to compete against Brigades from across Victoria as well as visiting interstate teams to showcase their firefighting skills. These competitions provide an opportunity for members to keep fit and improve their firefighting skills in a competitive environment. The competitions provide a different recruitment stream to get members involved in CFA and help to develop teamwork and camaraderie within brigades and with other brigades.

On the weekend of 22 and 23 March the 52nd State Urban Junior Championship was contested. The following weekend, 29 and 30 March the 141st State Urban Senior Championship, the 68th State Rural Senior Championship and the 46th State Rural Junior Championship all took place. Two teams from Western Australia, Harvey and Norseman, also travelled across the Nullarbor to compete in the State Urban Senior Championship.

The popular Torchlight Procession took place on the second weekend of competition with teams from the Urban Senior Championship, the Rural Championships and a number of non-competing brigades marching through Mooroopna. Knox Group was judged the winning team with 91.00%, in second place was Diamond Creek with 88.00% and third place was awarded to Hoppers Crossing with 87.00%. More than 400 CFA members took part in the procession which was watched by approximately 1,000 spectators.

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 dedication of these judges and officials the State Championships and competitions held in the lead up to the State Championships would not be possible.

VFBV also passes on appreciation to CFA's State Championships Committee and the local District 22 host committee for the hard work and efforts in preparing the venue for the Championships for the fifth year in a row.

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 for their work and efforts prior to, during and following the Championships and for their support of local competitions across state in the lead up to the State Championships;
- The Greater Shepparton City Council for their continued support of the Championships, this being the 13th occasion that the State Championships have been held in the region;
- Members of VFBV's state competition committees, the State Rural Championships Committee and the Urban Competition and Rules Committee, who seek ways to improve the events each year and oversee the events, rules, judges and officials;
- Our major sponsor Hino, silver sponsors Code3, GAAM Emergency Products and PacFire, 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 held around the state each year.

After five years in Mooroopna the State Championships will be moving to a new location. Stawell has been announced as the new State Championships venue for the 2026 championships. Planning is well underway with the Annual Championships Planning Committee made up of CFA, VFBV and local brigade representatives meeting to finalise the venue layout along with working closely with the Northern Grampians Shire to prepare the competition venue.

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 dominant at the State Rural Junior Championship claiming all three aggregates. They won the Champion Team Aggregate with 122 points, the 11-13 years aggregate with 58 points and the 11 – 15 years aggregate with 64 points.

A countback was required to determine second place in the 11-13 years aggregate as both Ascot and District A and Miners Rest A finished with 40 points. Both teams finished with one first placing each, two second placings each and Ascot and District A inched ahead with a fourth place in event 5.

In the 11-15 years aggregate, Beazley’s Bridge B took second place with 36 points and Miners Rest B was third with 22 points.

Ascot and District A was second in the Champion Team aggregate with 58 points and Miners Rest A was third with 46 points.

The VFBV State President Encouragement Award was given to Pearcedale brigade and the Stan Ross Conduct trophy was awarded to Eldorado brigade.

2025 AGGREGATE RESULTS CHAMPION TEAM

1st	Napoleons-Enfield A	122 points
2nd	Ascot & District A	58 points
3rd	Miners Rest A	46 points

11-13 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Napoleons-Enfield A	58 points
2nd	Ascot & District A	40 points
3rd	Miners Rest A	40 points

11-15 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Napoleons-Enfield A	64 points
2nd	Beazley’s Bridge B	36 points
3rd	Miners Rest B	22 points

VFBV STATE PRESIDENT ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD: Pearcedale

STAN ROSS CONDUCT TROPHY: Eldorado

FIREFIGHTER SPRINTS

11-13 YEARS

Female: Josephine Robers, Napoleons-Enfield
Male: George Milligan, Gapsted

11-15 YEARS

Female: Tilly McLain, Ascot & District
Male: Tom Griffiths, Gapsted



Champion Team – Napoleons-Enfield A



Stan Ross Conduct Trophy Winners – Eldorado

SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Leopold A won their first State Championship title scoring points in all six events to win the Division 1 Aggregate with 56 points. In second place was Eldorado A with 42 points while in equal third place was Springhurst A and Hurstbridge A with 38 points each.

In Division 2 Moorooduc A was the winner with 68 points, closely followed by Dunrobin-Nangeela A with 62 points with both teams winning three events each. Mannerim A was third with 30 points.

Napoleons-Enfield B took home another trophy winning Division 3 with 84 points, taking out first place in four of the six events. Second place was another close finish with Miners Rest A eventually taking the honours with 40 points just ahead of Springhurst B with 38 points.

The Outstanding Female Team trophy was awarded to the Mannerim C team and the Elaine brigade was awarded Conduct Award at the closing ceremony.

2025 AGGREGATE RESULTS

DIVISION 1 AGGREGATE

1st	Leopold A	56 points
2nd	Eldorado A	42 points
=3rd	Hurstbridge A & Springhurst A	38 points

DIVISION 2 AGGREGATE

1st	Moorooduc A	68 points
2nd	Dunrobin-Nangeela C	62 points
3rd	Mannerim A	30 points

DIVISION 3 AGGREGATE

1st	Napoleons-Enfield B	84 points
2nd	Miners Rest A	40 points
3rd	Springhurst B	38 points

CONDUCT AWARD: Elaine brigade

OUTSTANDING FEMALE TEAM Mannerim C

WINNERS OF THE SPRINTS: Female: Caitlin Muecke, Dunrobin-Nangeela
Male: Jacob Wiffen, Mannerim



Division 1 Aggregate – Leopold A



Outstanding Female Team – Mannerim C

JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Melton A has continued its success at the State Urban Junior Championship winning their sixth Grand Aggregate in seven years with 80 points. Only seven points behind in second place was Echuca A with 73 points while Grovedale took third place with 48 points.

Echuca A secured the Under 17 Years Aggregate with 45 points ahead of Melton A in second place with 39 points. Sharing third place was Grovedale and Melton B with 17 points each.

Melton A's success continued in the Under 14 Years Aggregate winning with 41 points. Grovedale was second with 31 points and Echuca A was third with 28 points.

The Dry Aggregate and Wet Aggregate were also both won by the Melton A team. Echuca A was second in the Dry Aggregate six points behind Melton A and Grovedale took second place in the Wet Aggregate three points behind Melton A who won the final wet event of the weekend to clinch this title.

2025 STATE URBAN JUNIOR AGGREGATE RESULTS**GRAND AGGREGATE**

1st	Melton A	80 points
2nd	Echuca A	73 points
3rd	Grovedale	48 points

UNDER 14 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	41 points
2nd	Grovedale	31 points
3rd	Echuca A	28 points

DRY AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	46 points
2nd	Echuca A	40 points
3rd	Grovedale	22 points

UNDER 17 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Echuca A	45 points
2nd	Melton A	39 points
=3rd	Grovedale & Melton B	17 points

WET AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	34 points
2nd	Grovedale	31 points
3rd	Echuca A	28 points

SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

For the fourth year in a row Melton A won the Grand Aggregate at the Urban Senior Championship with 91 points. In second place was the Osborne Park Orange team with 69 points and Patterson River was third with 56 points. Melton A also won the A Section Appliance Aggregate and the Wet Aggregate.

Swan Hill A was successful in the B Section Aggregate taking first place with 75 points just ahead of Warracknabeal with 61 points and Melton B were third with 30 points.

The Female Aggregate continued the Melton brigade's success with Melton B winning with 23 points, ahead of Tatura with 19 points and the Narre Warren A/B team with 16 points. Tatura won the Dry Aggregate with 26 points ahead of Osborne Park Orange and Melton A.

The Champion Competitor was awarded to Bailey Rhodes from the Melton A team for the fourth year in a row with 27 points, second was Aiden Couzens from Osborne Park Orange with 21 points and Jack Geysing from Melton A was third with 18 points.

2025 AGGREGATE RESULTS**A SECTION**

1st	Melton A	91 points
2nd	Osborne Park Orange	69 points
3rd	Patterson River	56 points

A SECTION APPLIANCE AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	42 points
=2nd	Osborne Park Orange & Patterson River	18 points

DRY AGGREGATE

1st	Tatura	26 points
2nd	Osborne Park Orange	19 points
3rd	Melton A	13 points

FEMALE AGGREGATE

1st	Melton B	23 points
2nd	Tatura	19 points
3rd	Narre Warren A/B	16 points

B SECTION

1st	Swan Hill A	75 points
2nd	Warracknabeal	61 points
3rd	Melton B	30 points

B SECTION APPLIANCE AGGREGATE

1st	Swan Hill A	42 points
2nd	Warrnambool	16 points
=3rd	Maffra & Melton B	14 points

WET AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	78 points
2nd	Swan Hill A	62 points
3rd	Warracknabeal	58 points

2025 GRAND AGGREGATE

Melton A

2025 CHAMPION COMPETITOR

Bailey Rhodes (Melton)

VIC/WA CHALLENGE EVENT WINNER: Victoria

Grand Aggregate Winners – Melton A



Echuca A



Grand Aggregate Winner – Melton A



B Section Aggregate Winner – Swan Hill A

AUSTRALIAN FIRE SERVICE MEDAL (AFSM)

This year 10 CFA members received the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM), the highest award for members of the Australian fire services, for their distinguished service.



Di Billingsly AFSM (Boolarra Fire Brigade) – in acknowledgment of her contribution to CFA as an experienced volunteer trainer and assessor and for her mentoring of new leaders in CFA.



Colin Brown AFSM (Warrandyte Fire Brigade and District 13) – in acknowledgment of his service in developing town protection plans and improvements in Incident Control Centres over more than 40 years of service to CFA.



Fiona Burns AFSM (Hillcrest Fire Brigade) – in acknowledgment of her service to CFA as a leader and for her work in developing leadership programs to enhance the diversity of membership, knowledge and practice of CFA members.



Mark Gunning AFSM (West Region) – in acknowledgment of his contribution to the safety, wellbeing and recovery of communities during times of emergency.



Lisa Hicks AFSM (Pakenham Upper Fire Brigade) – in acknowledgment of her sustained and dedicated service through leadership roles within her brigade and group as well as her role in the development of the Cardina Group Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus refilling station.



Mark King AFSM (Yallourn North Fire Brigade) – in acknowledgment of the instrumental role he played in introducing the South East Region's first Health Monitoring and Rehabilitation Unit.



Sharon Merritt AFSM (Macclesfield Fire Brigade) – in acknowledgment of her leadership in establishing a large animal rescue unit at Macclesfield brigade.



Peter Landridge AFSM (Yellingbo Fire Brigade and CFA Headquarters) – in acknowledgment of his contribution in transforming CFA's health monitoring and firefighter rehabilitation through the establishment of rehabilitation units across the state.



Tony Scicluna AFSM (Clonbinane Fire Brigade and District 12) – in acknowledgment of the instrumental role he has played in developing and rolling out training packages within CFA.



Tim Smith AFSM (Hurstbridge Fire Brigade CFA Headquarters) – in acknowledgment of his contribution to CFA as both a volunteer and staff member in a range of leadership roles and for his mentoring of fellow CFA members to develop new skills.

VFBV GOLD STAR AWARDS

Since first being introduced in 1969, there have been 1,574 Gold Stars awarded in recognition of 30 or more years' service to the Association.

This year, 21 long serving volunteers from 7 Brigades were awarded the VFBV Gold Star, and congratulations are extended to:

Barongarook West

- B. Ackerly
- G. Benallack
- M. Evans

Echuca

- W. Dwyer
- R. Farrow
- M. Hooper
- C. Munro
- P. Nicoll
- S. O'Callaghan
- L. Rosenow
- D. Stephens
- S. Stevens
- A. Trevena
- L. Waterson
- J. Wills

Hallam

- L. Milner

Kiewa

- M. Dunlop

Narre Warren

- A. Jones

Pakenham

- J. Kelsey
- A. McDonald

Traralgon

- S. Hill



Echuca Fire Brigade VFBV Gold Star recipients with VFBV State Councillor Greg Murphy (left) and VFBV Board Member Graeme Jilbert (right)

VFBV BOARD

At the VFBV Annual General Meeting held on 6 October 2024, 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 2024 of new board member Kelvin Bateman and re-appointment of Bill Maltby, Howard Smith and Darren Wallace for two years.

The VFBV State Council meeting on the same day elected Andy Cusack AFSM and Graeme Jilbert as the two State Council ex officio VFBV Board members for 2024-25.

VFBV BOARD ELECTIONS

At the first meeting of the VFBV Board held in October members re-elected Samantha Collins as State President and Libby Hay as Treasurer for the 2024-25 year. Howard Smith was elected as State Vice President for 2024-25 replacing Andy Cusack AFSM in this role.

Andy was State Vice President for over two years, initially being elected to the role by the VFBV Board in June 2022 and we thank him for his service in this role.

NEWLY APPOINTED VFBV BOARD MEMBER

Kelvin Bateman was appointed as a VFBV Board member at VFBV Annual General Meeting in October.

Kelvin is a member of the Dunrobin-Nangeela brigade in District 4 and has been captain of the brigade for the last 31 years as well as serving as a Deputy Group Officer with the Casterton Group. Outside of CFA Kelvin runs a family farming business and is active in his local community as a member of the Dunrobin Hall Committee as well as being involved in local sporting clubs.

RETIRED VFBV BOARD MEMBER

Greg Walcott retired from the VFBV in October 2024. Greg was appointed to the VFBV Board in December 2018 and during his time as a board member was a member of the Joint Operations and Joint Operational Capability Committees.

VFBV State President Samantha Collins acknowledged the contribution of Greg at the VFBV Annual General Meeting in October 2024 and recognised his service to the Board and volunteers.

NEW VFBV LIFE MEMBERS

The VFBV Board and State Council awarded two new VFBV Life Memberships in the past year to two long serving members. Nominations were received from the District 5 Council nominating current State Councillor Malcolm Bishop and retiring State Councillor Greg Walcott for VFBV Life Membership at the October 2024 State Council Meeting.



CEO Adam Barnett with new VFBV Life Members Malcolm Bishop and Greg Walcott, and State President Samantha Collins

STATE COUNCIL RETIREMENTS

Ex Captain Greg Walcott (District 5)

Greg retired as a District 5 State Councillor in October 2024, having served as a VFBV State Councillor since 2018. Greg had also previously served as a member of the VRFBA Central Council representing then Region 17 for 5 years.

Firefighter Terry Riggs (District 6)

Terry served as a State Councillor for District 6 for two years from July 2023 until May 2025.

Ex Captain Garry Morgan (District 9)

Garry was elected as a VFBV State Councillor for District 9 in 2022 and retired in October 2024. While serving as a State Councillor Garry was a member of the State Council Executive Committee and the Joint Operational Performance Committee. Garry will continue to be involved with VFBV as the District 9 Council President.

Lieutenant Phil Lind (District 11)

Phil served as a State Councillor first with VRFBA and then with VFBV from 2003 until October 2024 representing District 11. Phil was a long-standing member of the Welfare Fund Committee of Management from October 2015 and a member of the State Council Executive Committee, numerous joint committees and the State Rural Championships Committee. Phil was awarded VFBV Life Membership in 2013 in recognition of his service to the Association and volunteers. Phil will continue to be involved in VFBV having taken on the role of District 11 Council President.

DGO Neil Hillas (District 24)

Niel retired as a State Councillor representing District 24 in August 2024. Neil was formally elected to the role of State Councillor in May 2021 after acting in the role from August 2020. Neil served as a member of the joint volunteerism (now member services) and training committees during his service as a State Councillor. Neil was elected as the District 24 Council President in August 2024.

STATE COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

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

Firefighter Travis Coon (District 5)	elected June 2025
Captain Ken O'Brian (District 6)	elected May 2025
Ex Captain Mark Fox (District 9)	elected October 2024
Lieutenant Gavin Lind (District 11)	elected October 2024
Lieutenant Matt Webb (District 17)	elected July 2024
DGO Marelle Whitaker (District 24)	elected August 2024

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 2024-25 were: Geof Bassett, Kelvin Bateman, Malcolm Bishop, John Brodie, Timothy Desmond, Cara Disint, Mark Jones, Katrina Lee, Trinsa Lewis, Vickie Linaker, Bill Maltby, Greg Murphy, Jim Parsons, Eric Smith, Howard Smith, Leigh Tomlinson, Darren Wallace and Tony Winsall.

The two State Council delegates to the VFBV Board, Andy Cusack and Graeme Jilbert, also attend and chair the committee as ex officio members.

DISTRICT COUNCIL RETIREMENTS

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

District 8	Vice President Eddie Matt (August 2024)
District 8	Secretary Jeremy Bergstrom (August 2024)
District 11	President Des Ryan (August 2024)
District 12	President Carly Ficheroux (May 2025)
District 22	President Leonard Balfour (passed away Aug 2024)
District 23	Secretary Jim Buchan (passed away Nov 2024)
District 24	President Max Wood (August 2024)

2024-25 VFBV VOLUNTEER WELFARE & EFFICIENCY SURVEY

VFBV's annual Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency survey was conducted predominantly between November 2024 and early April 2025 for the 13th year and received responses from 2,115 CFA volunteers. This continues to be the highest response rate of any similar survey of volunteer firefighters across Australia.

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 results shape and drive the important work that is done in the background to support volunteers.

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 (VoWEL) outcome. A high VoWEL is a sign that things are not working well, and while a low VoWEL is a sign that things are working well. Any VoWEL over 2.0 indicates a large to critical gap is emerging and volunteers are highly dissatisfied with arrangements requiring priority attention.



WE LISTENED TO
2,115
CFA VOLUNTEERS

GENDER



18.7%



79.5%

The results from this year's survey show a decrease in volunteer satisfaction with the VoWEL outcome increasing for six of the seven survey themes. Unfortunately the survey results show that many of the improvements in volunteer satisfaction that have been demonstrated in the survey results since 2021 have now been reversed. Among the individual questions there has been very little improvement with the majority of the survey questions recording a worse VoWEL outcome than last year.

The People Management: My Brigade theme continues to record the best VoWEL outcome of the survey themes, with a small increase when compared to the 2023 results. This result along with the Recruitment and Retention theme result which remained the same as 2023 show that volunteers are the most satisfied with their role and activities that are occurring at their brigade level. Both the People Management: My Brigade and Recruitment and Retention themes are classed as a mid-range gap indicating that there is still a need for improvement as volunteers are experiencing low levels of dissatisfaction.

In comparison, the Training by CFA theme has recorded a VoWEL outcome of 3.4 indicating that there is a critical gap between volunteer expectations and how CFA is performing. Volunteers are the most dissatisfied with the provision of training in formats at times and at locations that make it easy for volunteers to participate as well as training being available within a reasonable distance from their brigade. Drilling into the comments provided by respondents it was clear that issues relating to local delivery and scheduling of training are the most frequent friction points for volunteers. There was also strong feedback indicating that the lack of First Aid training caused by the poor transition to a new first aid provider when CFA's procurement arrangements were unable to be completed prior to the previous contract expiring left many members in limbo without the training they needed.

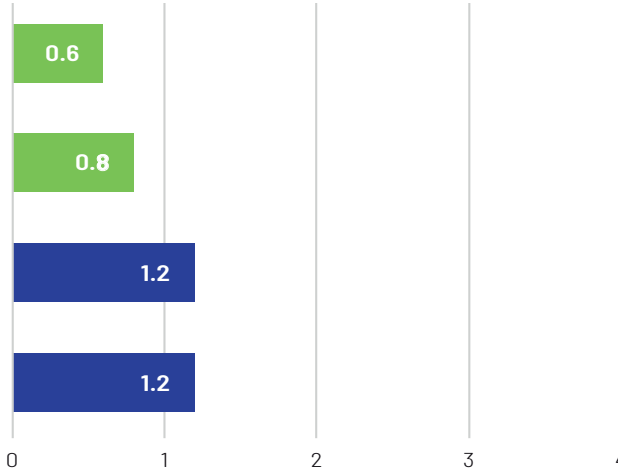
The Cooperation Across CFA theme has also recorded a critical VoWEL outcome of 3.0. Volunteers indicated that they were particularly dissatisfied with the involvement of volunteers effectively in consultation and decision making at CFA corporate (headquarters) level. The results also indicate that there are issues with CFA's workforce arrangements allowing paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as a team which links the findings of the Fire Services Implementation Monitor who indicated that there many issues with the secondment model which is preventing it from operating as intended and leaves CFA volunteers feeling unsupported at times.

The 2024-25 survey also included 3 questions on issues which were topical within CFA over the past year. Respondents were asked whether they feel the Victorian State Government provides sufficient funding to support the adequate replacement of CFA trucks and stations. The results show that volunteers are extremely dissatisfied with the funding provided from government with this question recording the worst VoWEL outcome ever recorded in the survey of 5.2. Participants were also asked whether the changes CFA is making to its policies and procedures are making it easier for them to volunteer. The results again show a VoWEL outcome of a critical gap indicating they are highly dissatisfied with the changes. The third question tested volunteer comfort levels with how they currently perceive CFA's volunteer compensation arrangements and if they had confidence in CFA's volunteer compensation looking after them if they get sick or injured while performing CFA duties. Justifying VFBV's strong advocacy in this area in the past year, the VoWEL outcome was 2.7 indicating a significant level of concern among volunteers that shows they are not confident that these arrangements are currently sufficient

MOST POSITIVE VoIWEL OUTCOMES

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

There are no barriers to the roles women can occupy in my brigade.



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.

CFA provides enough training opportunities in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy for me to participate.

Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at CFA Corporate (headquarters) level.

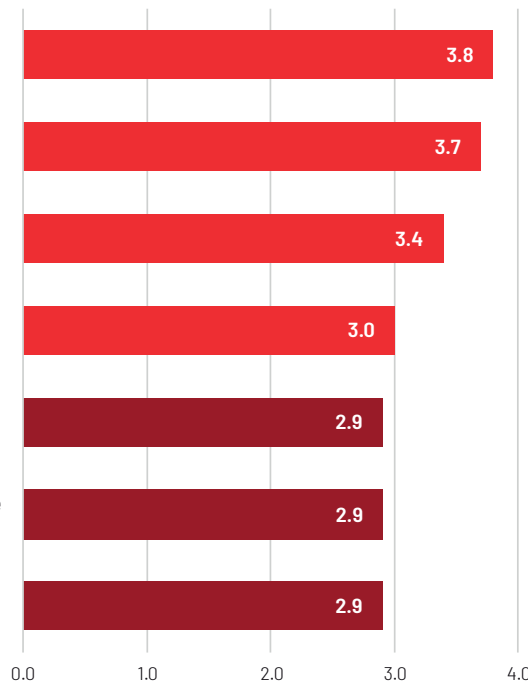
Most training is available and provided within a reasonable distance from my brigade.

CFA's workforce arrangements allow the paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as a united team.

CFA provides adequate support for recruitment activities for my brigade.

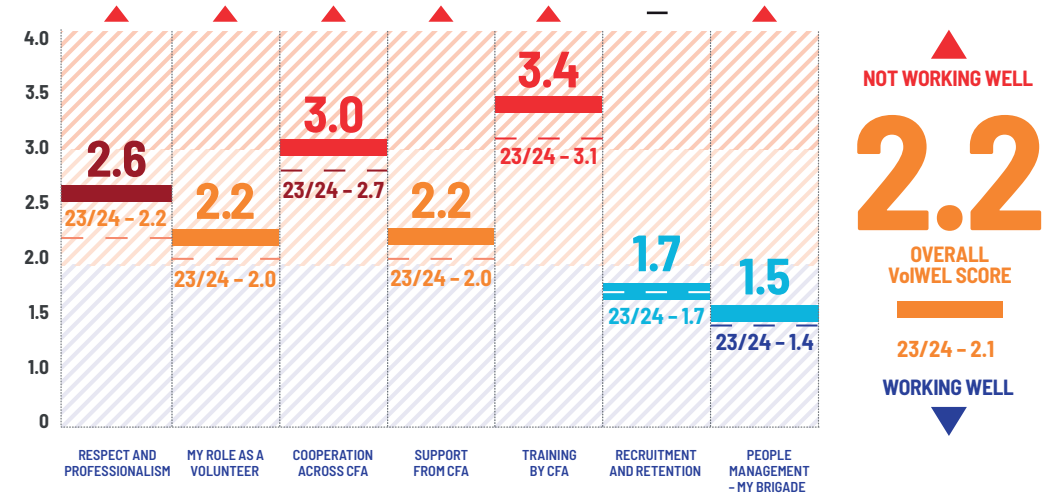
CFA provides good leadership training for volunteers in people management, brigade management, conflict resolution and mentoring.

The respect and value of the contribution of volunteers is evident in CFA's action and culture.



VOLUNTEER WELFARE & EFFICIENCY LEVEL (VOLWEL)

Overall Results

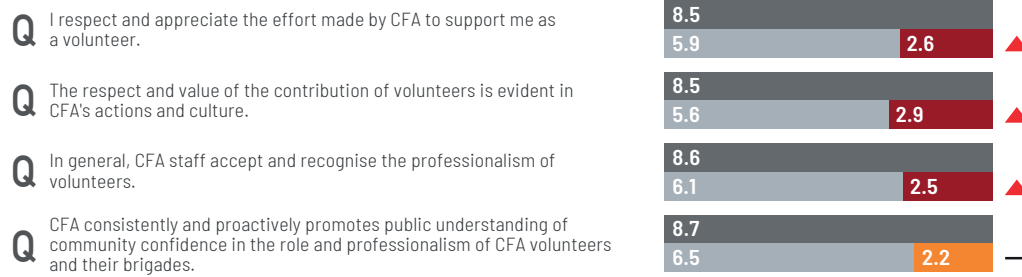


VOLUNTEER WELFARE & EFFICIENCY LEVEL (VoIWEL) DESCRIPTIONS

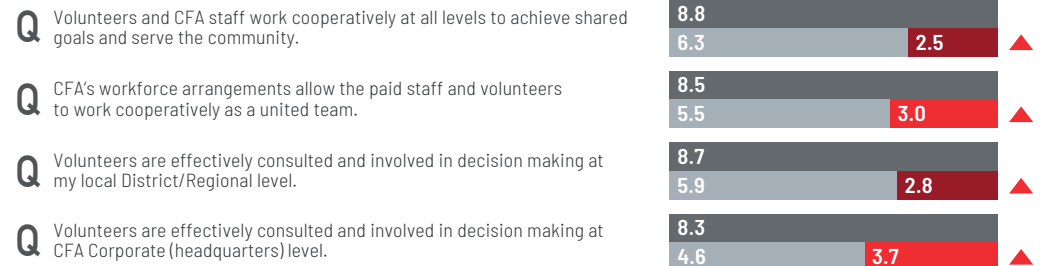
>3.0	Critical need for priority attention	A Gap of 3.0 or more indicates that there is a critical gap between volunteer expectations and performance and volunteers are highly dissatisfied. Priority attention is needed.
2.5 - 2.9	Significant Gap – immediate attention required	A Gap between 2.5 and 2.9 indicates there are significant issues that need to be addressed. Immediate action should be put in place to rectify areas of concern.
2.0 - 2.4	Large Gap – remedial action to be taken	A Gap between 2.0 and 2.4 indicates these issues are impacting volunteer welfare and efficiency and will be causing dissatisfaction with the volunteering experience. Action to address volunteer concerns should be implemented.
1.5 - 1.9	Mid-range Gap – need for improvement	A Gap between 1.5 and 1.9 indicates that volunteer expectations are not being met and should be addressed in both action and strategic plans, in the shorter term. Volunteers are indicating lower levels of satisfaction.
1.0 - 1.4	Small Gap – potential for improvement	A Gap between 1.0 and 1.4 indicates longer term planning should include addressing volunteer concerns. Volunteers are reasonably satisfied.
0 - 0.9	Meeting Expectations	A Gap of less than 1.0 indicates that on the whole, volunteer expectations are being met. These results would be evidence of high levels of satisfaction.

SURVEY QUESTION RESULTS

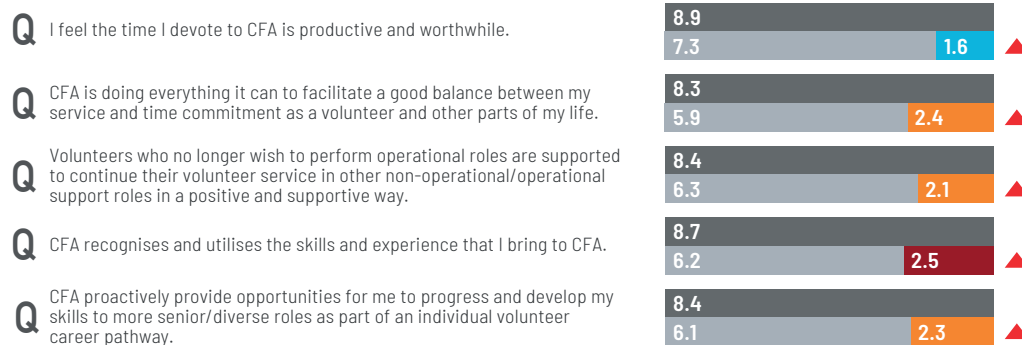
RESPECT & PROFESSIONALISM



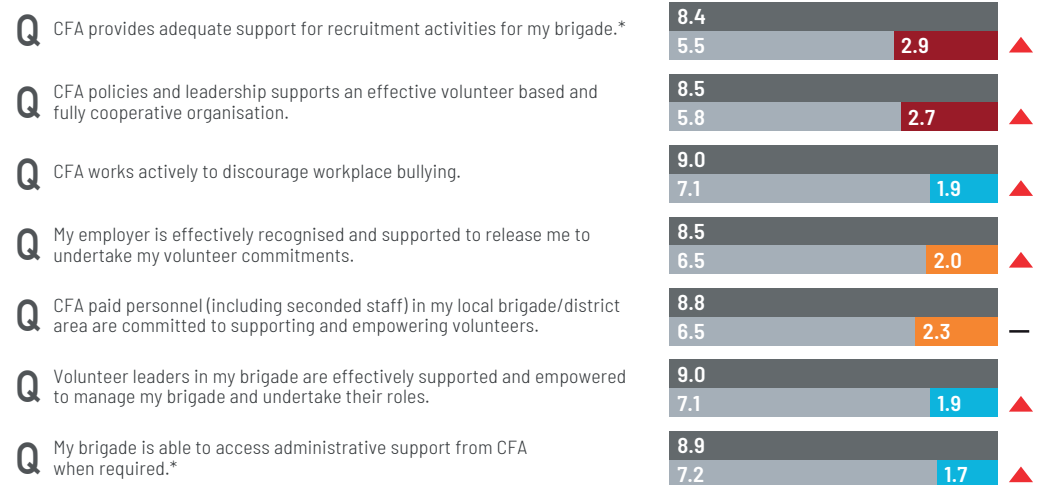
COOPERATION ACROSS CFA



MY ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

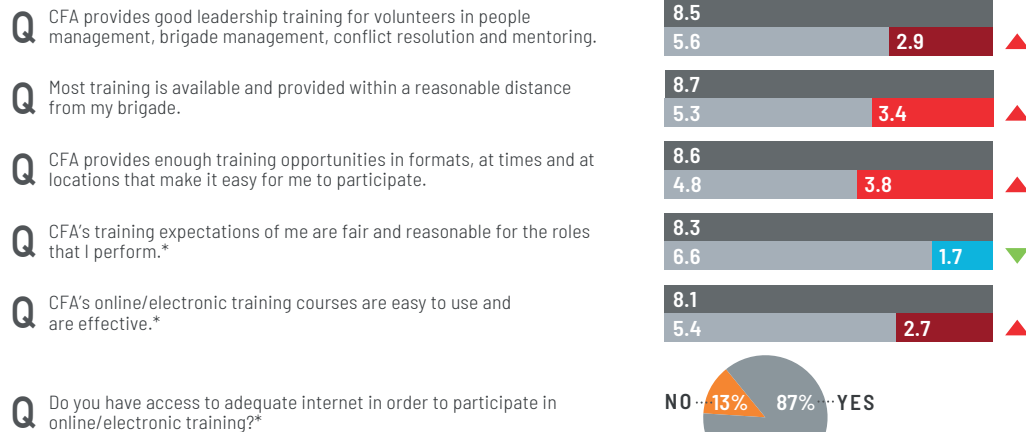


SUPPORT FROM CFA

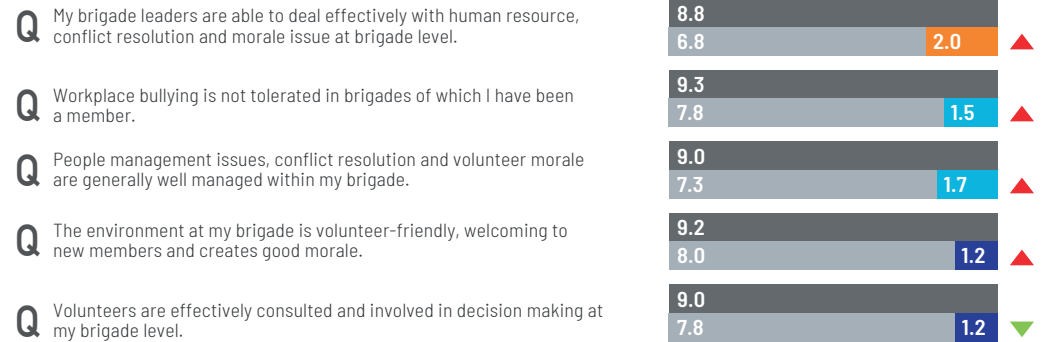


SURVEY QUESTION RESULTS (CONT)

TRAINING BY CFA



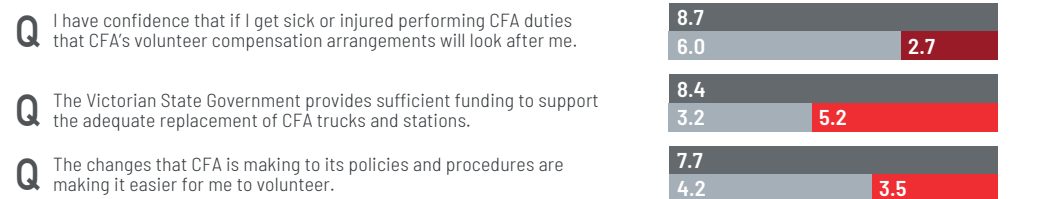
PEOPLE MANAGEMENT: MY BRIGADE



RECRUITMENT & RETENTION



2024-25 SPECIFIC QUESTIONS



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

	STATE COUNCILLORS	DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICERS		STATE COUNCILLORS	DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICERS
District 2	Firefighter Sue Bull Secretary Peter Dillon Ex Captain Bill Maltby Captain Darryl Wagstaff AFSM Firefighter Ross White	President Lorraine Leask Secretary Peter Dillon	District 13	Firefighter Vickie Linaker Ex Captain Rod Stebbing	President Frank Whelan OAM Secretary Carolyn Moorshead
District 4	Captain Kelvin Bateman Captain Andy Cusack AFSM	President Gary Taylor Secretary Andrew Lawrence	District 14	DGO Justin Rees DGO Leigh Tomlinson	President Mark Gravell Secretary Stephanie McCall
District 5	Ex Captain Malcolm Bishop Firefighter Travis Coon	President Malcolm Bishop Secretary Tom Woodhams	District 15	Brigade Member Trinsa Lewis Captain Ryan O'Shannessy	President Anthony McGrath Secretary Jim Ricketts
District 6	Secretary Andrew Bath Captain Ken O'Brian	President Mike Evans Secretary Terry O'Brian	District 16	Secretary Katrina Lee Captain Mal Nicholson	President Peter Hannan Secretary Prue Cosgriff
District 7	Ex Captain Robert Clark Ex Captain Rod Taylor Ex Captain Tony Winsall	President Gerry Neyenhuis Secretary Eddy Rees	District 17	Firefighter Maurice Dumesny Lieutenant Matt Webb	President Peter Irving Secretary Bronwyn McIntrye
District 8	Firefighter Eric Collier Secretary Timothy Desmond Firefighter Max Johnson	President Stephen McDonald Secretary Robyn Coutts	District 18	Firefighter Graeme Jilbert Captain Shaun Thompson	President Trevor Wyatt AFSM Secretary Katrina Garraway
District 9	Ex Captain Mark Fox Ex Captain Darren Wallace	President Garry Morgan Secretary Marion Byrne	District 20	Ex Captain Greg Murphy Lieutenant Jim Parsons	President Greg Murphy Secretary Jo Guthrie
District 10	Ex Captain Mark Jones DGO Bryan Walpole	President Mark Jones Secretary Terry King	District 22	Firefighter John Brodie Lieutenant Cara Disint	President Paul Verbeek Secretary Bec Noye
District 11	Ex Captain Geof Bassett Lieutenant Gavin Lind	President Phillip Lind Secretary Ian Ashcroft	District 23	Lieutenant Glenn Mercer Firefighter Mick Jones	President Garry Nash Secretary Melinda Pentreath
District 12	Captain Paul Denham AFSM Captain Eric Smith	President Peter Sharman Secretary Elisha Remfrey-Swift	District 24	Ex Captain Howard Smith DGO Marelle Whitaker	President Neil Hillas Secretary Chris Wingard
			District 27	Secretary Mark King AFSM Ex Captain Brendan Jenkins	President Ray Mackie Secretary Ashton Smith

1946	M.W. Carver	1984	D.E. Gow (Leitchville) K.W. Talbot OAM (Dandenong)	2007	G.N. Lyttle AFSM (Cardigan) S.M. O Callaghan (Warracknabeal)
1951	J.K. Stokes	1985	R. Collier OAM (Portarlinton) G.T. Evans OAM QFSM (Echuca) M.E. Johnson QFSM (Traralgon) J. McLeod AFSM (Boronia) P.G. Mullins QFSM (Maryborough) R.K. Patterson AFSM (Portland) H.W. Stewart (Broadford)	2009	T.J. Brodie AFSM (Longwood) P. Downes (Mandurang) O.T. O'Keefe (Winslow) W.R. Rodda AFSM (Korumburra) J.I. Thomson (Sunbury)
1952	C. Ford (Miners Rest)	1986	E.J. Baynes OAM AFSM (Indigo Valley) M.W. Dawson OAM (Avoca)	2010	B. Conboy (Mt Martha) R. MacDonald (Carlsruhe) W.T. Pressey AFSM (Mortlake)
1953	D.M. Cameron	1987	L.J. Baillie (Warrnambool) B.C. Condick AFSM (Tarnagulla)	2011	B.L. Vine AFSM (Tawonga)
1955	J.L. Allen	1988	D.A. Austin QFSM ED L.V. Winsall AFSM (Warracknabeal)	2012	B. Pyke (Whanregarwen) P.R. Denham AFSM (Boronia) M.R. Jones (Stratford) R.B. Snell (Hamilton)
1956	W.B. Richardson BEM (Wangaratta)	1990	G.H. Baxter AFSM (Freshwater Creek) K.H. Larsen AFSM (Belmont) J.N. McEachern (Wodonga)	2013	A.J. Cusack AFSM (Mumbanner) T.G. Desmond (Dromana) M.J. Evans (Barongarook) R.P. Lind (Mount Taylor) W.I. Maltby (Castlemaine) C. Pomroy (Longford)
1959	J.R.C. Plante (Lilydale) M. Steward OBE (Warragul) J. Reilly (Tarndale) H.M. O'Rorke MBE (Lake Bolac)	1991	W.E. Davies AFSM (Walmer) W.H. Royal AFSM (Bairnsdale) M.J. Taylor AFSM (Mornington) L.L. Thomason AFSM (Woodend)	2014	C.W. Dennis (Frankston) M. Nunweek (Stawell) D.J. Wagstaff AFSM (Maryborough) T.J. Wyatt AFSM (Murrayville)
1961	H.W. Wade (Natimuk)	1992	G.A. Ellis (Bendigo)	2015	G.W. Bassett (Lakes Entrance) P.J. Slender (Tatura)
1962	Hon. I.A. Swinburne GMC MLC	1993	M.J. Sanderson AFSM (Seymour) Q.T. Turner AFSM (Creswick)	2016	F.J. Grove (Lara)
1966	W.H. Barnes OAM (Chelsea) H. Brown (Golden Square) S.G.W. Burston OBE (Casterton) T.F. Hayes (Violet Town) W.J. Jones BEM AFSM (Moorooduc) L.J. Slattery (Kyabram) A.E.J. Turton (Wodonga)	1994	P.R. Bishop AFSM (Mildura) G.C. Dare (Colac) R.D. Walker (Kerang)	2017	J.M. Austin (Drouin) K. Clough (Lake Charm) R.C. Cole (Romsey) M.A. Egan (Maidample) A.J. Ford
1967	E.E. Allen (Kaniva) S.M. Begley (Colac) Hon. T.H. Grigg CBE MLC (Maldon) Dr P.S. Lang	1995	R.G. Jacobs OAM AFSM (Chelsea) B.M. Maher AFSM (Lubeck) J.C. McMillan (Moe) H.B. Morris (Avoca)	2018	G. Neyenhuis (Wallington)
1968	F.C.B. Minchin J.S. Tabuteau (Moe)	1997	R.D. Gartside (Castlemaine)	2020	S.R. Brittan (Werribee) G.L. Fithall (St Arnaud)
1970	D. Campbell (Springvale) S.C. Diffey MBE MC OAM (Springhurst) H. Lester-Smith MBE (Kerang) L.J. Maguire (Boronia) W.M. Reid (Mooroopna)	1998	A.J. Hooper AFSM (Winnindoo) R.A. Horner AFSM (Sassafras/Ferny Creek)	2021	R.M. Auchterlonie (Dumbalk) G.I. Browning (Kangaroo Flat) M. Dumesny (Laharum) J. Davies (Horsham) G. C. Jilbert (Swan Hill) N.R. Jones AFSM (Moorooduc) A. Barnett
1971	H.L. King (The Fireman)	1999	R.A.C. McDonald (Bowser)	2023	D. S. Cramer (Greendale) V.C. Linaker (The Basin) B. D. Walpole (Woodside)
1972	E.J. Barrett (Geelong City) R.A. Dore BEM (Carrum) W.H. Rowe (Maldon)	2000	D.W. Adams (Carrum) R.E. Schultz AFSM (Benalla) P.J. White AFSM (Casterton)	2024	M. D. Bishop (Warrnambool) G. K. Walcott (District 5 HQ)
1973	H.G. Kyle AFSM (Bengworden)	2001	H.A. van Hamond AFSM (Wendouree)		
1975	N.H. Jenkins (Kyneton)	2003	P.E. Davis AFSM (Carrum) L.C. Doye (Golden Square) J.L. Laing		
1976	C.J.H. Drife BEM (Clunes) W.G. Wilson OAM (Shepparton)	2004	R.W. Waterson AFSM (Cohuna)		
1979	A.I. Laidlaw BEM AFSM (Willaura) C.T.N. Stone (Diamond Creek)	2005	B.A. Pickett AFSM (Geelong West)		
1980	R.J. Jilbert BEM (Swan Hill) A.E. King AFSM (The Fireman) D.J. McEachern OAM (Wodonga)	2006	R. Hill (Paynesville) J.S. Kennedy (Loch)		
1981	E.C. Caddy QFSM (Drouin) L.W. Peters				
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
 Fryerstown
 Fortuna Group
 Gisborne
 Goldfields Group
 Golden Square
 Goornong
 Guildford
 Harcourt
 Heathcote
 Heskett-Kerrie
 Hunter-Diggora
 Huntly
 Junortoun
 Kamarooka
 Kangaroo Flat
 Knowsley
 Kyneton
 Lake Eppalock Coast
 Guard
 Lancefield
 Langley-Barfold
 Macedon
 Maiden Gully
 Maldon
 Malmsbury

Mandurang
 Marong
 Maryborough
 Metcalfe
 Mia Mia
 Moolort & Joyces Creek
 Mosquito Creek
 Mount Macedon
 Mount Macedon Group
 Mt Camel
 Mt Cameron
 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
 Lake Mundi
 Lindsay
 Lyons
 Merino
 Merino Group
 Milltown
 Morven
 Mumbannar
 Myamyn
 Narrawong
 Nelson
 Paschendale
 Portland
 Portland Coast Guard
 Sandford
 Strathdownie
 Strathdownie Group
 Tahara
 Wallacedale
 Wando Bridge
 Wando Vale

District 5

Abbey Hills
 Allansford
 Ardachy
 Ardonachie
 Balmoral
 Balmoral Group
 Belfast Group
 Bessiebelle
 Bochara
 Branxholme
 Broadwater
 Buckley Swamp
 Bulart
 Burn Brae
 Byaduk
 Caramut
 Cavendish
 Codrington
 Coleraine

Croxtan East
 Cudgee
 Culla
 District 5 Headquarters
 Dundas Group
 Dunkeld
 Eilerslie
 Framlingham
 Garvoc
 Gazette
 Glenthompson
 Grange
 Gringe
 Hamilton
 Hawkesdale
 Hawkesdale Group
 Hexham
 Hilgay Settlers
 Hopkins-Curdies Group
 Karabeal
 Kirkstall
 Kolora
 Konongwootong
 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 Byaduk
 North Hamilton
 Nullawarre
 Panmure
 Peshurst
 Peterborough
 Pigeon Ponds
 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 & Yarpurk
 Woodford
 Woodhouse
 Woolsthorpe
 Wooriwyrite
 Wootong Vale
 Yambuk
 Yulecart

District 6

Apollo Bay
 Barongarook West
 Barwon Downs
 Beeac
 Beeac Group
 Berrybank
 Birregurra
 Boorcan
 Bostocks Creek
 Brucknell-Ayrford
 Bungador
 Camperdown
 Camperdown Group
 Carlisle River
 Carpendeit-Sth
 Purrumbete
 Chocolyn
 Cobden
 Cobden Group
 Cobrico

Colac
 Cororooke
 Cressy
 Darlington
 Derrinallum
 District 6 Headquarters
 Dixie
 Dreeite South
 Duverney
 Ecklin & District
 Forrest
 Gellibrand
 Gerangamete
 Irrewarra
 Irrewillipe
 Jancourt
 Kawarren
 Kennedy's Creek
 Larpent
 Leslie Manor
 Lismore
 Lismore Group
 Lower Heytesbury
 Mingay & District
 Nalangil
 Noorat & District
 Otway
 Pomborneit & District
 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
 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 Coast Group
Baxter
Bayles
Beaconsfield
Beaconsfield Upper
Berwick
Bittern
Boneo
Bunyip
Cardinia Group
Carrum Coast Guard
Carrum Downs
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
Narre Warren
Narre 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
District 9 Headquarters
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
Meeniyah & 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
Banksia 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
Willung South
Winnindoo
Won 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 & District
Mallacoota
Marlo
Marlo Coast Guard
Metung
Mitchell Group

Mossi - Tambo
Mount Delegate Group
Mount Taylor
Newmerella
Omeo
Orbost
Orbost Group
Paynesville
Sarsfield
Swift's Creek
Tambo Group
Toorloo
Wairewa

District 12

Acheron
Alexandra
Alexandra Group
Beveridge
Broadford
Buxton
Clonbinane
District 12 Headquarters
Eildon
Flowerdale
Glenaroua
Glenburn
Highlands-Caveat
Hilldene
Homewood
Kilmore
Kinglake District
Kinglake West
Koriella
Limestone
Marysville
Mitchell Shire Group
Molesworth
Murrindindi &
Woodbourne
Narbethong
Nulla Vale
Seymour
Strath Creek-Reedy
Creek
Taggerty
Tallarook
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
Lilydale
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 Headquarters
District 14 HQ East
Doreen
Eltham
Epping
Eyensbury
Greenvale
Hoppers Crossing
Hume Group
Hurstbridge
Kal Kallo
Kangaroo Ground
Melton
Mernda
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
Franklinford
Glen Park
Glendaruel & Mt
Beckworth
Glenlyon
Glenlyon Group
Gordon
Greendale
Haddon
Hardies Hill
Hepburn
Invermay
Kingston
Learmonth-Addington
Leonards Hill & District
Linton
Mannibadar
Millbrook

Miners Rest
Morrison & District
Mt Buninyong
Mt Egerton
Mt Warrenheip
Musk
Myrning
Napoleons-Enfield
Newlyn Dean
Parwan
Pentland Group
Porcupine Ridge
Rokewood Junction &
District
Rowsley
Sebastopol
Smeaton
Smythesdale
Trentham
Ullina
Wallace
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
Coonooer Bridge
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
Tatyoan
Wallaloo East
Warrak
Warrenmang & District
Westmere
Westmere Group
Wickliffe
Willaura
Woorndoo
Yalla Y Poora

District 17

Antwerp
Apsley Group
Areegra
Bangerang
Benayeo
Boolite
Brim
Brimpaen
Bringalbert South
Broughton
Cannum
Charam
Chetwynd
Clear Lake
Connewirricoo
Coromby
Crymelon
Dergholm
Diapur
Dimboola
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
Neuarcurr
Nhill
North Wimmera
Ozenkadnook
Patyah
Peronne
Pigick
Pimpinio
Poolajelo
Propodollah
Rainbow
Rainbow Group
Rupanyup
Sandsmere
Sheep Hills
South Lillimur
Tarranyurk
Telangatuk
Teloepa Downs
Ullswater
Vectis
Warracknabeal
Warracknabeal Group
Werrap
Wilkur South
Willenabrina
Winiam & District
Wonwondah
Woorak
Yanac
Yearinga-Yarrook

District 18

Annuello
Beulah
Beverford & District
Birchip
Boundary Bend
Buckrabanyule
Buloke West Group
Carwarp
Charlton
Charlton Group
Chinkapook
Cope Cope
Corack
Corack East
Cowangie
Curyo
Donald
Dumosa
Glenloth East
Goschen
Hopetoun
Hopetoun West
Irymple
Jeffcott
Kooloonong
Laen East
Lake Boga
Lascelles
Manangatang
Merbein
Mid Murray Group
Mildura
Mittyack
Murrayville
Nangiloc
Narraport
Natya
Nullawil
Nyah Nyah West
Ouyen
Ouyen and District Group
Patchewollock
Piangil
Red Cliffs
Reedy Dam
Robinvale
Robinvale and District
Group
Rosebery

Sea Lake
Speed
Swan Hill
Teddywaddy
Tempy
Turriff
Ultima
Underbool
Waitchie
Walpeup
Warmur
Watchem
Watchupga
Wemen
Woomelang
Woorinen South
Wooroonook
Wycheproof
Yaapect
Yeungroon

District 20

Appin South
Bamawm 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
 Northern Campaspe
 Group
 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
 Yarrowalla

District 22

Almonds
 Arcadia
 Avenel
 Bailieston
 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
 Karamomus
 Katamatite
 Katandra
 Katunga
 Kelvin View
 Kialla & District
 Koonda
 Kotupna
 Locksley
 Longwood
 Marraweeny
 Merrigum
 Miepoll
 Molka
 Moorilim
 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
 Violet Town Group
 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
 Mt Buller
 Myrrhee
 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
 Bullioh
 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

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Director's Report

30 June 2025

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 2025.

(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
Howard Smith	State Vice President
Libby Hay	Treasurer
Kelvin Bateman	Appointed 01/10/2024
Andy Cusack AFSM	
Greame Jilbert	
Bill Maltby	
Mandy Straw	
Greg Walcott	Resigned 30/09/2024
Darren Wallace	
Danielle Watkins	

Principal activities

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

- 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.
- 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.
- To assist in maintaining high morale, ongoing health and welfare of CFA volunteer members and their families.
- 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.
- 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).
- 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.
- 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.
- To take any other action as determined by the Association Board consistent with these purposes.
- 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 2025

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 \$502,696 (2024: \$382,744)

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

Board member:

Samantha Collins - State President

Board member:

Howard Smith – 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 2025, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- 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;
- no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.


Seward Dawson


Matthew Crouch
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 8 September 2025

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 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Income		
Affiliation Fees	167,357	176,057
Grant Income	1,959,198	1,959,198
Championships	15,010	16,139
Interest Income	412,227	393,673
Special Projects Funding	58,850	51,365
Merchandise Sales	20,373	23,193
Donations Income	13,414	5,426
Other Income	18,873	35,623
	<u>2,665,302</u>	<u>2,660,674</u>
Expenditure		
Employment Costs	1,143,554	1,134,780
Project Salaries and Other Project Fees	11,915	12,196
Welfare Grants	141,379	191,956
Travel, Accommodation and Meals	341,323	334,868
Office & Administration Expenditure	81,260	171,359
Advertising	24,615	24,000
Rent & Outgoings	149,529	141,285
Depreciation	77,444	76,106
Printing, Postage and Stationery	116,047	119,129
Communications	25,537	21,890
Accounting and Audit Fees	15,025	15,154
Championships & Championships Equipment	13,527	12,235
Merchandise	21,451	22,972
	<u>2,162,606</u>	<u>2,277,930</u>
Surplus for the year	<u>502,696</u>	<u>382,744</u>
Other comprehensive income		
Other Comprehensive Income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>502,696</u>	<u>382,744</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 2025

	2025	2024
Note	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	3 288,268	1,515,662
Trade and other receivables	4 1,418,444	382,336
Financial assets	5 8,870,696	8,160,594
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>10,577,408</u>	<u>10,058,592</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Plant and equipment	6 238,720	253,477
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	<u>238,720</u>	<u>253,477</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>10,816,128</u>	<u>10,312,069</u>
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	7 223,210	260,977
Employee benefits	8 267,926	273,800
Deferred income	9 1,191,186	1,158,799
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>1,682,322</u>	<u>1,693,576</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Employee benefits	8 26,766	14,149
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>26,766</u>	<u>14,149</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>1,709,088</u>	<u>1,707,725</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>9,107,040</u>	<u>8,604,344</u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Accumulated surplus	9,107,040	8,604,344
TOTAL MEMBERS' EQUITY	<u>9,107,040</u>	<u>8,604,344</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 2025

2025

	VFBV Inc.	Welfare Fund	Total
	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2024	4,331,531	4,272,813	8,604,344
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	349,428	153,268	502,696
Balance at 30 June 2025	4,680,959	4,426,081	9,107,040

2024

	VFBV Inc.	Welfare Fund	Total
	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2023	4,032,502	4,189,098	8,221,600
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	299,029	83,715	382,744
Balance at 30 June 2024	4,331,531	4,272,813	8,604,344

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 \$	2024 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:			
Receipts from customers		1,281,449	2,496,802
Payments to suppliers and employees		(2,207,962)	(2,360,281)
Interest received		453,036	317,712
Net cash provided by operating activities	12	(473,477)	454,233
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:			
Purchase of plant and equipment		(94,039)	(94,393)
Redemption/ (Placement) of term deposit		(710,102)	(212,423)
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		50,224	48,000
Net cash used by investing activities		(753,917)	(258,816)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:			
		-	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		(1,227,394)	195,417
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,515,662	1,320,245
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	3	288,268	1,515,662

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

1 Summary of Material 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 are 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

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the basis of accounting specified by all Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations, except as described below, and the disclosure requirements of Accounting Standards AASB 101: Presentation of Financial Statements, AASB 107: Cash Flow Statements, AASB 108: Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors, and AASB 1054: Australian Additional Disclosures.

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 material accounting policies adopted in the special purpose financial statements are set out in note 1(f) indicate how the recognition and measurement requirements in Australian Accounting Standards have not been complied with.

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 material 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.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

1 Summary of Material Accounting Policies

(b) Revenue and other income

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.

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.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

1 Summary of Material Accounting Policies

(b) Revenue and other 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).

(c) 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	5-8 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.

(d) 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.

(e) 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.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

1 Summary of Material Accounting Policies

(f) 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. A lease liability and right of use asset have not been recorded which does not comply with AASB 16 Leases.

(g) 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 material 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.

(h) 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.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

1 Summary of Material Accounting Policies

(i) Comparative Figures

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

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 material 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 2025

3 Cash and cash equivalents

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
General Cheque Account	34,415	1,120,111
Travel reimbursement account	29,091	31,940
Debit card	8,346	7,029
Cash at call	119,227	118,783
Welfare Fund	62,193	67,953
Valuing Volunteers Cheque Account	34,996	34,846
Term Deposits	5a -	135,000
	288,268	1,515,662

4 Trade and other receivables

CURRENT

VFBV

Trade Debtors	1,127,328	57,326
Accrued Interest	111,423	147,365
Other Receivables	16,519	16,144
	1,255,270	220,835

Welfare Fund

Trade Debtors	45,540	39,000
Accrued Interest	117,634	122,501
	163,174	161,501
	1,418,444	382,336

5 Financial assets

CURRENT

Term Deposits - VFBV	(b) 3,289,773	3,087,760
Term Deposits - Welfare Fund	(b) 5,580,923	5,072,834
	8,870,696	8,160,594

a) In the 2024 financial year a term deposit had a maturity period of 3 months or less, the term deposit was classified in the statement of financial position as cash and cash equivalents.

b) In the current year, the term deposits invested at interest rates ranging from 3.1% p.a. to 5.05% p.a., have maturity periods of 5 to 12 months and 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 2025

6 Plant and equipment

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Motor vehicles		
At cost	276,181	270,716
Accumulated depreciation	(93,702)	(83,483)
Total motor vehicles	<u>182,479</u>	<u>187,233</u>
Office equipment		
At cost	149,262	133,574
Accumulated depreciation	(93,021)	(67,330)
Total office equipment	<u>56,241</u>	<u>66,244</u>
	<u><u>238,720</u></u>	<u><u>253,477</u></u>

7 Trade and other payables

CURRENT

Trade creditors	30,756	77,485
Accrued expenses	32,828	47,773
GST payable	87,229	73,608
Other payables	72,397	62,111
	<u>223,210</u>	<u>260,977</u>

8 Employee Benefits

CURRENT

Long service leave	178,327	187,140
Annual leave	89,599	86,660
	<u>267,926</u>	<u>273,800</u>

NON-CURRENT

Long service leave	26,766	14,149
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9 Income in Advance

CFA Grants Received in Advance - VFBV	979,599	979,749
Deferred Affiliation Fees - VFBV	89,725	89,725
Income Received in Advance - VFBV	26,747	-
Deferred Affiliation Fees - Welfare Fund	95,115	89,325
	<u>1,191,186</u>	<u>1,158,799</u>

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

10 Capital and Leasing Commitments

Operating lease commitments

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Non-cancellable operating leases contracted but not capitalised in the financial statements.		
- not later than one year	115,883	119,840
- between one year and five years	116,677	232,560
	<u>232,560</u>	<u>352,400</u>

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 premise lease has a four year term which commenced 1 January 2024.

The 7/24 Lakeside Drive premise lease has a three year term which commenced 15 May 2023 and rent commenced 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
Danielle Watkins	Warragul	Yes
Graeme Jilbert	Swan Hill	Yes
Samantha Collins	Maryborough	Yes
Libby Hay	Barwon Heads	Yes
Gregory Walcott	District 5 HQ	Yes
Mandy Straw	Gazette	Yes
Bill Maltby	Castlemaine	Yes
Howard Smith	Barnawartha	Yes
Darren Wallace	Trafalgar	Yes
Kelvin Bateman	Dunrobin and Nangeela	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 2025

12 Cash Flow Information

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

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Result for the year	502,696	382,744
Cash flows excluded from surplus/(deficit) attributable to operating activities		
Non-cash flows in surplus/(deficit):		
Depreciation	77,445	76,103
Profit on disposal of non-current assets	(18,873)	(33,570)
Changes in assets/liabilities		
- (increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(1,036,108)	(20,523)
- increase/(decrease) in income in advance	32,387	(10,390)
- increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(37,767)	13,039
- increase/(decrease) in provisions	6,743	46,830
Cashflow from operations	<u>(473,477)</u>	<u>454,233</u>

13 Auditors' Remuneration

Audit services - Saward Dawson		
- audit of the financial statements	11,490	11,100
- other services	4,903	4,435
	<u>16,393</u>	<u>15,535</u>

14 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.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

15 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc. Welfare Fund

(a) Statement of Income and Expenditure and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Affiliation fees	82,875	81,600
Interest Received	198,360	188,645
Donations	13,414	5,426
	<u>294,649</u>	<u>275,671</u>
EXPENSES		
Grants	141,379	191,956
Bank Fees	2	-
	<u>141,381</u>	<u>191,956</u>
Surplus/(deficit) from operations	<u>153,268</u>	<u>83,715</u>

(b) Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2025

ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	62,193	67,953
Trade and other receivables	163,174	161,501
Financial assets	4,295,829	4,132,834
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>4,521,196</u>	<u>4,362,288</u>
LIABILITIES		
Deferred Income	95,115	89,325
Trade and other payables	-	150
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>95,115</u>	<u>89,475</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>4,426,081</u>	<u>4,272,813</u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Accumulated surplus	4,426,081	4,272,813
Total Equity	<u>4,426,081</u>	<u>4,272,813</u>

16 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 17:

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 2025.
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 22 August 2025

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 2025, 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 material 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 2025 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.



Seward Dawson



Matthew Crouch
Partner

Blackburn, VIC

Date: 8 September 2025

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Revenue		
Donations	10,550	30
Interest income	362	526
	<u>10,912</u>	<u>556</u>
Expenses		
Grant distributions	-	(17,200)
	<u>-</u>	<u>(17,200)</u>
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>10,912</u>	<u>(16,644)</u>

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank balances	94,489	83,577
Cash on hand	100	100
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>94,589</u>	<u>83,677</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>94,589</u>	<u>83,677</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>94,589</u>	<u>83,677</u>
EQUITY		
Settled Sum	100	100
Retained Surplus	94,489	83,577
	<u>94,589</u>	<u>83,677</u>
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>94,589</u>	<u>83,677</u>

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

2025

	Retained Surplus \$	Settled Sum \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2024	83,577	100	83,677
Surplus for the year	10,912	-	10,912
Balance at 30 June 2025	<u>94,489</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>94,589</u>

2024

	Retained Surplus \$	Settled Sum \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2023	100,221	100	100,321
Deficit for the year	(16,644)	-	(16,644)
Balance at 30 June 2024	<u>83,577</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>83,677</u>

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Donations distributed	-	(17,200)
Donations received	10,550	30
Interest received	362	526
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>10,912</u>	<u>(16,644)</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents held	<u>10,912</u>	<u>(16,644)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	83,677	100,321
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	<u>94,589</u>	<u>83,677</u>

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

1 Summary of Material Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of Preparation

The Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust (formerly Black Saturday Recovery Trust) was established by VFBV in 2009 following the Black Saturday Fires specifically to support VFBV provide extra assistance to CFA volunteers impacted by large campaign fires and natural disasters. It receives no government or CFA funding and is 100% dependent on donations and is only activated for specific emergencies.

It provides one-off grants to help CFA volunteers recover from loss of life, loss of home, and loss of outbuildings, fencing, stock, livelihood and any other impacts.

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 material 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.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2025

1 Summary of Material Accounting Policies

(d) Revenue and other income

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

Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method.

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.

3 Events Occurring After the Reporting Date

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

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.

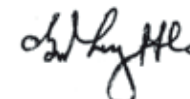
The directors of the trustee company declare that the financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 1 to 6:

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 22 August 2025

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 2025, 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

Matthew Crouch
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 8 September 2025

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 2025, the statement of income and expenditure for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of material 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 2025, 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 material 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: 8 September 2025

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 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Revenue		
Interest received	223	118
Expenses	-	-
Surplus for the year	<u>223</u>	<u>118</u>
Retained surplus at the beginning of the financial year	<u>26,192</u>	<u>26,074</u>
Retained surplus at the end of the year	<u><u>26,415</u></u>	<u><u>26,192</u></u>

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 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank balances	26,415	26,192
Cash on hand	100	100
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>26,515</u>	<u>26,292</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>26,515</u>	<u>26,292</u>
NET ASSETS	<u><u>26,515</u></u>	<u><u>26,292</u></u>
EQUITY		
Settled sum	100	100
Retained Surplus	26,415	26,192
TOTAL EQUITY	<u><u>26,515</u></u>	<u><u>26,292</u></u>

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 2025

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of Preparation

Volunteer Fire Fighters' Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund supports VFBV's campaign to achieve simpler and fairer compensation for CFA firefighters who suffer occupational illnesses, such as cancer.

The fund enables research and analysis about Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) and works with volunteer firefighters and members of the public to understand the effect of VFFOI on volunteers families and communities; to recognize VFFOI and to take necessary measures to protect, recognize and entrench their legal right to compensation where they suffer from VFFOI and where necessary fund test cases before the appropriate courts and tribunals to determine such rights.

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.

(d) Revenue and other income

Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method.

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 2025

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.

3 Events Occurring After the Reporting Date

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

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 2025 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 22 August 2025

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 2025, 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 2025, 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: 8 September 2025

YEARS OF LIFE-SAVING RELIABILITY.

THAT'S ANOTHER HINO **ADVANTAGE**

When every second counts, reliability is essential. That's why the CFA trusts Hino trucks to transport their volunteers and life-saving equipment safely through the toughest conditions. Built for durability, safety, and performance, Hino trucks deliver advanced technology, cabin comforts, and unwavering reliability—so you can count on Hino when it matters most. Hino – Trusted by Those Who Protect Us. Find out more at hino.com.au.



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