



# VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES VICTORIA

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## BEYOND BLUE FUNDRAISER

This year's fundraising effort at the 2018 State Urban Championships was in support of Beyond Blue, with monies raised from the auction of the Victorian team's Challenge Event competition shirts and other donations over the weekend totalling \$2,395.00.

The final event of the Championship is the hotly contested "W.A./Victoria Challenge event", a Hose & Reel 8s event between Western Australia and Victorian competitors, with both states choosing their competitors from their own State's competing teams at the Championship.

The Victorian competitors competing in the Challenge event are presented and wear a "2018 Challenge Event" competition shirt, with these shirts jointly sponsored by VFBV Board Member Graeme Jilbert and the Firefighters Credit Co-operative.

Four additional Challenge Event shirts were provided by Graeme Jilbert and the Firefighters Credit Co-operative which were auctioned after the final event on the Sunday, and this year the outcome of the auction added with monies collected from spectators, brigades and competitors over the weekend totalled \$2,395.00 with a presentation by VFBV to be made to Beyond Blue in the coming months.

Beyond Blue works to raise awareness of depression, anxiety and suicide prevention, as well as tackling the stigma surrounding these issues and to encourage people to seek support when they need it.

VFBV is proud to support such a worthy cause, and thanks Graeme Jilbert and the Firefighters Credit Co-operative for this initiative.

## GOVERNMENT FIRE SERVICES REFORM LEGISLATION UPDATE

by Andrew Ford, VFBV Chief Executive Officer

### SUMMARY

On Friday 30 March (Good Friday) the Victorian Upper House voted to reject the Government's Fire Service restructure legislation. This is an extremely good outcome for CFA, Victoria's Fire Services and all Victorians.

Despite the Government's spin - the proposed restructure provided no additional resources, capacity or flexibility for Victoria's fire services than exists today and, in fact, the proposed changes to dismantle the CFA integrated model, further fragment the fire services, erode the CFA Chief Officer's powers and ability to manage CFA operations and posed a dire threat to Victoria's future capacity to deal with major fires and sustain the volunteer surge capacity required for major fires and emergencies.

### BRIEF RECAP

To recap, this proposed leg-

islation change was announced by Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister James Merlino in May 2017 and subsequently received wide spread condemnation for being ill-conceived, driven by an industrial interference agenda, diminishing and discouraging volunteer capacity, dismantling the CFA integrated model and eroding the CFA Chief Officer's power and control of CFA resources.

Despite Government spin, the proposed legislative changes provide no additional service capacity or service interoperability than exists today and in fact the proposed changes further fragment the fire services.

During the past year, the Government's own messaging indicates the proposed changes were motivated by a Government and United Firefighters Union desire to find a way to push ahead with an over reaching EBA that limits how CFA supports, equips, recognises, respects and consults with volunteers.

People will recall that the proposed legislation was introduced in May 2017 without consultation with volunteers, and without involvement of representatives from Emergency Management Victoria, the Country Fire Authority or the Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

### PRESUMPTIVE LEGISLATION

Appallingly, the proposed legislation combined two totally separate issues, one being firefighter's presumptive compensation rights for cancer illness caused by firefighting duties and the other being the proposed fire services structure and arrangements changes that essentially carve up CFA, one as a ransom note for the other.

There was a motion put by Daniel Young on behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party to split the Bill and appropriately separate the firefighter's presumptive compensation rights for cancer illness aspects of the Bill from the proposed fire services restructure, allowing the presumptive compensation aspects of the bill to proceed, and be put to a vote.

This motion was supported by the Coalition and Vote 1 Local Jobs member, James

Purcell.

This motion was defeated by one vote, with Labor, the Greens and Reason Party MP's voting against a motion that would have allowed Presumptive Legislation for firefighters to have been passed that day.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ALL-NIGHT SITTING

Friday's final vote at 11am in the Upper House came on the back of an unprecedented all night sitting of the Upper House on Easter Good Friday. The Legislative Council began at approximately 9.30am on the Thursday morning, and was forced to sit for almost 26 hours, with the all night sitting forced to push through to continue sitting well into Good Friday, and was heavily criticised by many MPs and was clearly driven by the Government seizing on the misfortune of a sick MP, Dr Rachel Carling-Jenkins and thinking that without her vote opposing the Bill they could sneak the vote through.

Once again, the rejection of this ill-conceived legislation is well received and volunteers and communities across Victoria have already started actively voicing their gratitude for the sustained effort and support from those MPs who rejected the Bill and prevented the destruction of CFA.

### NEXT STEPS

There will be further information forwarded during the coming weeks, with more details of the debate and next steps.

On the day of the proceedings VFBV officers received dozens of calls from volunteers asking for their comments of appreciation and thanks to be passed on to MPs, particularly to the MPs from the Coalition and independent MPs James Purcell (Vote One Local Jobs), Jeff Bourman and Daniel Young (Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party) and also to Dr Rachel Carling-Jenkins, who has previously made public comment on her concerns and opposition to the proposed fire service restructure legislation, and despite being unable to attend the Upper House committee debate released public statement confirming her position with regard to the Bill had not changed. People wishing to pass messages to these MPs are encouraged to this directly with them.

Volunteers are also encouraged to contact Labor, Greens and the Reason Party MPs who were pushing for the Bill to be supported, to see what can be done to build their understanding of how CFA actually operates, the profes-



sionalism and first class services provided by volunteers and to correct numerous incorrect comments they made during the Upper House committee debate. VFBV will be reviewing the Upper House committee debate transcript in detail and will provide volunteers with further briefing as soon as possible on some of the comments, assertions and propositions that need follow up.

### THANK YOU

Thank you to the huge number of volunteers and supporters who are tuned into this vitally important issue. It is unclear what the Government will do next but for now the flawed legislation to carve up the CFA has been rejected by Parliament. Great news for all Victorians.

It is also worth reflecting on the fact, that whilst the Upper House was debating the carve up and destruction of the world renowned fully integrated CFA, volunteers along with our paid colleagues, were out selflessly raising money for the Royal Children Hospital's Good Friday Appeal.

In an outstanding result, CFA is reported to be the biggest contributor to a record breaking Good Friday Appeal, with CFA members raising in excess of \$1.67 million dollars for the appeal. CFA members have been participating in this appeal for 67 years, with over \$30 million raised over the years by CFA members for the Royal Children's Hospital.

Werribee Fire Brigade, celebrating the raising of over \$1 million for the appeal over the last 40 years, presented the CFA cheque for \$1,677,628.35 to this year's appeal during the Channel 7 live telecast.

In closing, please be respectful to one another, including those who were driving an agenda that we disagree with. For now, our focus should be about everyone getting on with keeping CFA the great organisation it has always been, making it even stronger into the future and continuing to do what we are all motivated by, serving and protecting our communities.

## Maryvale, 2018 champion brigade

Maryvale won its third successive Grand Aggregate at the 2018 State Urban Championships held at Bendigo last month, and remains as the most successful competing Brigade in urban competitions in being named the Champion Brigade 17 times in the history of urban competition.

Maryvale was clearly in the lead at the start of the final day's events, and continued its success finishing with 92 points overall. Second placed was Kangaroo Flat with 72 points, and equal third Dandenong and Drouin/Bunyip with 34 points.

Maryvale also won the Wet Aggregate with 74 points. The Dry Aggregate was closely contested with equal winners Maryvale and Kangaroo Flat on 18 points.

Sale easily won the B Section aggregate and Harvey B won the C Section Aggregate.

Jon Murphy of Dandenong won both the Ladder Race and the Hydrant Race, and Matt Royal from Maryvale was named the Champion Competitor for the third year in a row.

The 2018 State Urban Championships was again held at Bendigo and VFBV thanks the Bendigo & Districts Fire Brigades Championships Committee and the City of Greater Bendigo for its continued interest and support in hosting our State Championships. VFBV also thanks the CFA and its officers and staff for their continued support.



### INVITATION TO APPLY: Board Members of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) INVITATION OPEN TO ALL VOLUNTEERS TO APPLY

Current VFBV Board vacancy, and forthcoming vacancies, for which applications are invited from interested volunteers include:

- **Current VFBV Board vacancy** (retired member not eligible to apply), with term of appointment until 1st October 2019. Closing date for applications **25th May 2018**.
- **Forthcoming VFBV Board vacancies** will arise when the terms of Andy Cusack, Nev Jones, Bill Maltby and Bruce Pickett expire on 1st October 2018; all members are eligible for re-appointment. The four terms of appointment will be for two years, expiring 1st October 2020. Closing date for applications **1st August 2018**.

VFBV advances the interests of all Victorian fire brigade volunteers and advocates on their behalf to CFA and other key stakeholders. The VFBV Board drives policy development based on volunteer input and is involved in management of issues of central importance to all CFA volunteers.

The role of a VFBV Board Member involves contributing to VFBV direction, policy determination and monitoring the performance and governance of the Association. Also actively contributing to policy discussion at Board Meetings, networking with others about policies and issues management, and not only making decisions but being prepared to actively advocate for the benefit of all CFA volunteers and ultimately the Victorian community.

A Board Member Role Statement including the key selection criteria is available from the VFBV office or from the VFBV website.

This is an honorary position; no honorarium is paid.

If you are motivated by the prospect of making a difference for CFA volunteers, then send your written application addressing the key selection criteria in the role statement, plus an outline of your CFA activity including the names of two referees.

It is requested that your application clearly states whether you are applying for the casual vacancy (term until 1st October 2019), or the forthcoming vacancies (terms until 1st October 2020), or both. Applications can be for both if received by 25th May 2018.

Applications must be lodged for these vacancies with VFBV by **Friday 25th May 2018** and/or **Wednesday 1st August 2018** to:

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