

# Country Fire Authority Amendment (Volunteer Charter) Bill 2011

## Introduction Print

### EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

#### Clause Notes

- Clause 1 sets out the purpose of the Bill, which is to amend the **Country Fire Authority Act 1958** (the Principal Act)—
- to recognise the Country Fire Authority (CFA) as a volunteer-based organisation;
  - to recognise the Volunteer Charter; and
  - to require the CFA to have regard to the Volunteer Charter and make other amendments in relation to the CFA's responsibility to volunteers.
- Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the Bill. The clause specifies that the Act is to commence operation on the day after the Bill receives Royal Assent.
- Clause 3 inserts in section 3(1) of the Principal Act a definition of ***Volunteer Charter***, which means the Volunteer Charter as agreed by the Government of Victoria, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Incorporated (VFBV) and the CFA, signed on 27 February 2011 and as amended from time to time.
- Clause 4 inserts new sections 6F, 6G, 6H and 6I into Part I of the Principal Act to recognise the CFA as a volunteer-based fire and emergency service, recognise the Volunteer Charter, require the CFA to have regard to the Volunteer Charter and outline the CFA's responsibility to encourage, maintain and strengthen the capacity of volunteers.

New section 6F recognises that the CFA is first and foremost a volunteer-based organisation, where volunteers are supported by paid staff in a fully integrated manner.

New section 6G(a) recognises that the Volunteer Charter is a statement of the commitment and principles that apply to the relationship between the Government of Victoria, the CFA and volunteers.

New section 6G(b) recognises that the Volunteer Charter requires that the CFA actively recognise, value, respect and promote the significant contribution of CFA volunteers to the well-being and safety of the people of Victoria.

New section 6G(c) recognises that the Volunteer Charter requires that the Government of Victoria and CFA consult with VFBV on behalf of CFA volunteers, prior to making a decision on any matter that might reasonably be expected to affect them. This would include matters such as recruitment, training and support programs but is intended to exclude operational matters such as the deployment of brigades in a fire or emergency incident.

New section 6H requires the CFA, in performing its functions, to have regard to the commitment and principles set out in the Volunteer Charter.

New section 6I creates a responsibility on the CFA to develop policy and organisational arrangements that encourage, maintain and strengthen the capacity of volunteers to provide the CFA's services. This is intended to include the provision of administrative, training, operational and infrastructure support to ensure that volunteers will have the necessary resources to enable them to deliver CFA services now and into the future.

Clause 5 provides for the automatic repeal of this amending Bill on the first anniversary of its commencement. The repeal of this Bill will not affect in any way the operation of the amendments made by this Bill (see section 15(1) of the **Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984**).

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

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**Country Fire Authority Amendment (Volunteer  
Charter) Bill 2011**

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PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

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Introduced in the Assembly

**Country Fire Authority Amendment  
(Volunteer Charter) Bill 2011**

A Bill for an Act to amend the **Country Fire Authority Act 1958** and  
for other purposes.

**The Parliament of Victoria enacts:**

**1 Purpose**

The purpose of this Act is to amend the **Country  
Fire Authority Act 1958**—

- 5
- (a) to recognise the Authority as a volunteer-based organisation; and
  - (b) to recognise the Volunteer Charter; and
  - (c) to require the Authority to have regard to the Volunteer Charter; and
  - 10 (d) to make other amendments in relation to the Authority's responsibility to volunteer officers and members.

## 2 Commencement

This Act comes into operation on the day after the day on which this Act receives the Royal Assent.

## 3 Definitions

In section 3(1) of the **Country Fire Authority Act 1958** insert the following definition—

*"Volunteer Charter* means the Volunteer Charter agreed by the Government of Victoria, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Incorporated and the Authority, signed on 27 February 2011 and as amended from time to time;"

## 4 New sections 6F to 6I inserted

After section 6E of the **Country Fire Authority Act 1958** insert—

### **6F Recognition of Authority as a volunteer-based organisation**

The Parliament recognises that the Authority is first and foremost a volunteer-based organisation, in which volunteer officers and members are supported by employees in a fully integrated manner.

### **6G Recognition of the Volunteer Charter**

The Parliament recognises that the Volunteer Charter—

- (a) is a statement of the commitment and principles that apply to the relationship between the Government of Victoria, the Authority and volunteer officers and members; and

5 See:  
Act No.  
6228.  
Reprint No. 13  
as at  
6 May 2010  
and  
amending  
10 Act Nos  
6/2010,  
29/2010,  
54/2010,  
64/2010,  
73/2010 and  
78/2010.  
LawToday:  
www.  
legislation.  
vic.gov.au

5 (b) requires that the Authority recognise, value, respect and promote the contribution of volunteer officers and members to the well-being and safety of the community; and

10 (c) requires that the Government of Victoria and the Authority commit to consulting with Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Incorporated on behalf of volunteer officers and members on any matter that might reasonably be expected to affect them.

15 **6H Authority to have regard to Volunteer Charter**

The Authority must, in performing its functions, have regard to the commitment and principles set out in the Volunteer Charter.

20 **6I Authority's responsibility to encourage, maintain and strengthen capacity of volunteers**

25 The Authority has a responsibility to develop policy and organisational arrangements that encourage, maintain and strengthen the capacity of volunteer officers and members to provide the Authority's services."

**5 Repeal of this Act**

30 This Act is **repealed** on the first anniversary of its commencement.

**Note**

The repeal of this Act does not affect the continuing operation of the amendments made by it (see section 15(1) of the **Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984**).

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**ENDNOTES**

By Authority. Government Printer for the State of Victoria.

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