

Welcome

Brigade Captain / Officer in Charge

07 May 2014

Dear Captain / Officer in Charge,

Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to read this Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) Brigade Delegates information pack.

This pack is designed to inform and support you and your VFBV Brigade Delegates to engage with your local VFBV District Council for the benefit of your members. **Four (4) copies are enclosed**, one intended for yourself, Brigade Secretary and your two VFBV Brigade delegates.

Affiliation with VFBV brings with it many advantages for your Brigade and its members. VFBV is enacted in legislation under the CFA Act, and represents all CFA volunteers. VFBV maintains direct links with grass roots volunteers, understanding their issues, needs and concerns through a state-wide network of District Councils and elected volunteer representatives.

VFBV provides CFA with a direct connection to volunteers, from the benefits of their experience and practical advice on many issues through a range of Joint CFA/VFBV Committees. Affiliation gets your Brigade a seat at this very important table, and gives your members a voice.

Affiliation entitles you to send two delegates from your Brigade to be represented at your local District Council, and entitles your Brigade to two votes on all matters raised for endorsement. Your delegates are able to influence policy and decisions, as well as represent your Brigade's views and concerns at regional and district levels, and at a State level through VFBV State Council. Your Brigade can also apply for representation on Joint Committees, Working Parties and Reference Groups by getting involved in your District Council.

Active and engaged delegates are essential in order to provide informative communication to Brigades, through their various forums including BMT's, Brigade meetings and information displayed on your Brigade noticeboards. Not only do your delegates represent your Brigade's opinions, concerns and initiatives to your VFBV District Council, they can also be a great asset to your Brigade in keeping members and yourself informed on important issues, including the views and opinions of other Brigades from your District or throughout the State. For this reason alone, it is often very advantageous for you yourself to consider being one of your Brigade's delegates.

The role of Brigade Delegate to VFBV District Council is a very important one. I hope that the information contained in this pack will better enable you to support your Brigade's Delegates to be effective and engaged, and also assist your Brigade in engaging with your local District Council.

Thankyou in anticipation of your support for this important role in your Brigade.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hans van Hamond'.

Hans van Hamond AFSM
STATE PRESIDENT

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Ford'.

Andrew Ford
CEO

Welcome

VFBV Brigade Delegate

07 May 2014

Dear Delegate,

Welcome, and congratulations on being elected as your Brigade's Delegate to your Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) District Council.

VFBV has an important role as "the voice & ears of CFA volunteers" and has been enacted in the CFA Act to engage with CFA on behalf of volunteers to look after their welfare and efficiency. VFBV represents approximately 60,000 volunteers and consequently has developed a strong profile with key decision makers both within CFA, as well as Government and other agencies. VFBV provides CFA with a direct connection to volunteers, who are able to provide advice on a wide range of issues, through an extensive state-wide network of representatives, District Councils and Committees.

Through their affiliation with VFBV, your Brigade is able to influence policy and present their views on the issues that affect volunteers and their Brigades. Your Brigade's affiliation with VFBV can be seen as an investment, in building the CFA of tomorrow into a more effective Emergency Service that makes use of the knowledge and experience of its volunteers and looks after their needs.

As a Brigade Delegate you play a key role in shaping the direction, focus and effectiveness of your District Council. To be truly effective, VFBV needs to be well connected to our members on the ground; we need to have the right people actively engaged in leadership roles and we need to be thinking ahead about the issues that affect the welfare and efficiency of volunteers. VFBV can then proactively influence our future directions – and you are vital to this being achieved. Your work and the strong relationships you build as a Brigade Delegate to your District Council establish critical links with our members, identifying their views and their needs. Issues raised may be pro-active and constructive as well as complaints and problems.

The information in this VFBV Brigade Delegate Pack sets out details and processes that will help support you navigate the VFBV system. As you use these documents, remember that not only are you a critical component of this system, but you are also vitally important to VFBV as a whole.

A wide range of information designed to further support you in your role as a Brigade Delegate can be found on the VFBV website www.vfbv.com.au, pg 2 of The Fireman newspaper, regular emails from your District Council Executive and regular mail outs from VFBV to your Brigade Secretary. Further information and support can be obtained from District Council Executive Members, State Councillors and Brigade Delegates who have been nominated on to VFBV Committees. The VFBV State Office, including our small staff team, are also available to assist you perform your role effectively.

Please ensure that you provide your current contact details to your District Council Secretary. Contact details for your local District Council Officials can be found in your CFA District Contact Book or the CFA Diary.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if we can be of assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hans van Hamond'.

Hans van Hamond AFSM
STATE PRESIDENT

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Ford'.

Andrew Ford
CEO



VFBV Brigade Delegate

Role Statement

What is the role of our VFBV Brigade Delegates?

The strength of VFBV as an effective organization ultimately relies on the participation of our members at Brigade level. If our volunteers have regular contact with information and policies of VFBV then they are more likely to see the relevance of the Association to the welfare and efficiency of volunteers. Subsequently they are more likely to become involved in processes to develop policy.

You have a vital role in assisting with developing this participation.

As your Brigade's VFBV Delegate to the District Council your effectiveness is likely to be greatly increased if you have regular contact with VFBV information, submissions and position papers as well as issues relevant to your Brigade. This information can be obtained by attending District Council meetings and forums, visiting the VFBV website www.vfbv.com.au, regularly reading "The Fireman" Newspaper (particularly P2) and visiting CFA websites (CFA Connect, CFA Online).

Regular contact with other Brigade members will help you to inform them about VFBV positions on various issues and current action on their behalf as well as hearing of their concerns and points of view. When you are informed about VFBV issues, as well as your Brigade's issues you will be better able to actively contribute to the discussions at Brigade level and be more effective representing your Brigade at your local District Council.

Ways to engage your Brigade with VFBV

1. Attend District Council meetings – Two delegates per affiliated Brigade/Group can attend.
(use the space below to jot down the dates when your District Council next meets)

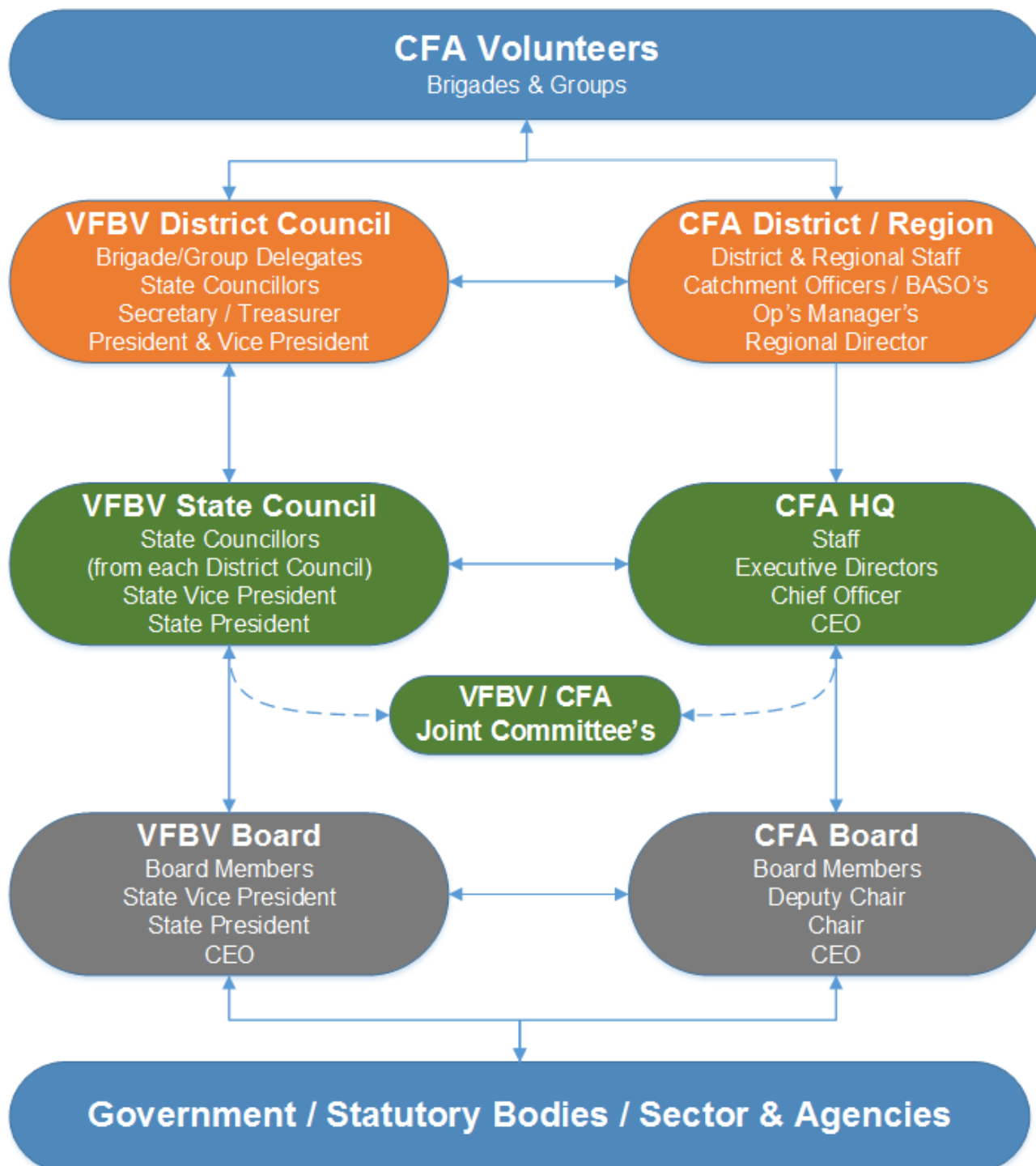
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2. Request a regular time slot in your Brigade meetings to report on VFBV concerns and initiatives. Elaborate on correspondence where necessary and use the Speakers Notes to assist you if required.
3. Obtain a space on the Brigade Notice Board for VFBV notices and information and keep it up to date.
4. Keep in touch with your VFBV District Council Executive between meetings.
5. Be available whenever possible to answer queries or give advice to your District Council Executive when requested.
6. Assist the Brigade in promoting initiatives, sharing ideas or escalating concerns, following good issue resolution process with your District Council.
7. Ensure that your email address to District Council and to VFBV are current, to ensure that you receive all relevant information.
8. Encourage other Brigade members to attend District Council meetings with you as observers

VFBV & CFA Structure

Flow Chart

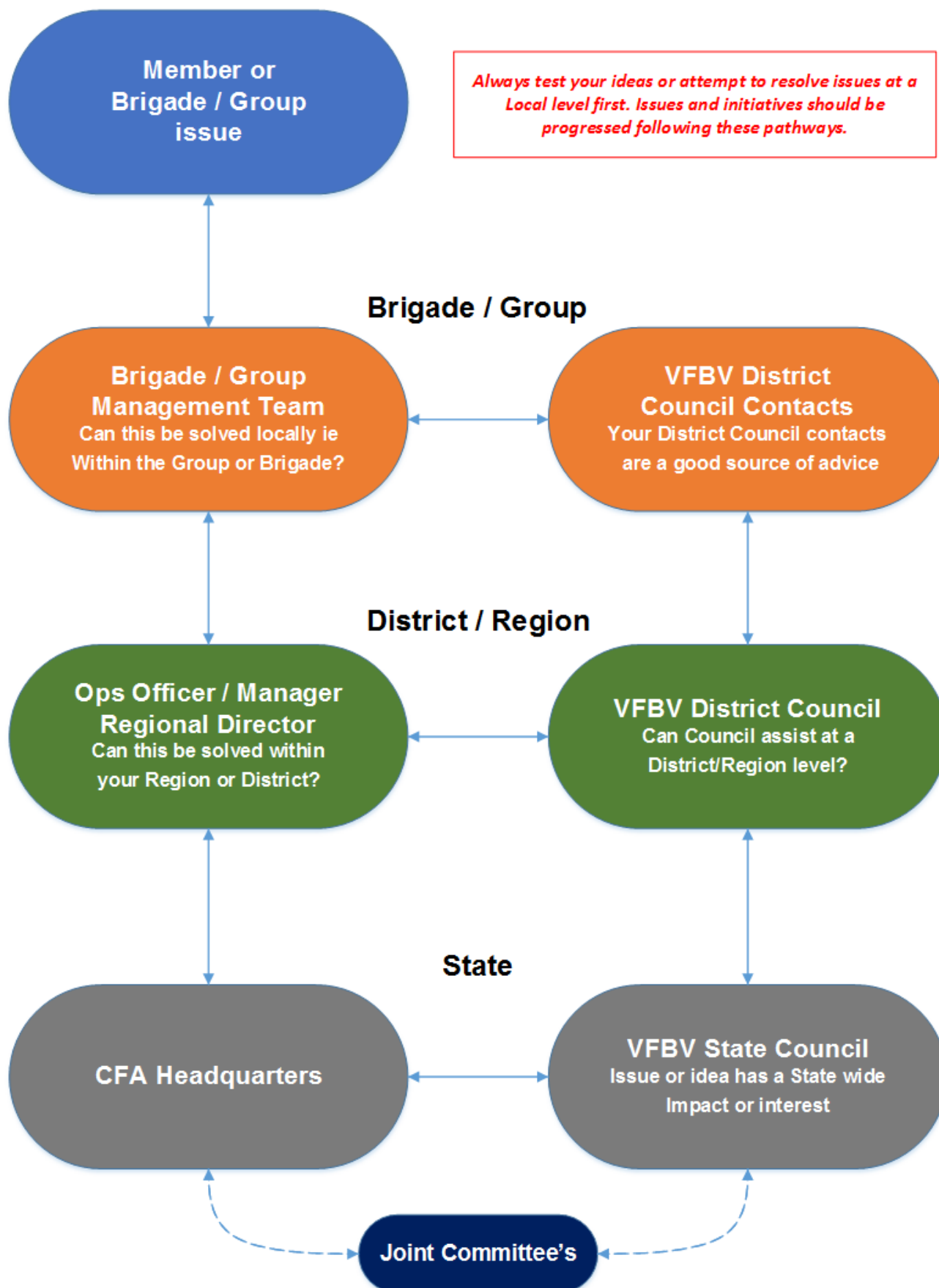
The following diagram illustrates the main VFBV & CFA Structures, and how they interrelate.



Issue and Initiative Pathway

Flow Chart

The following diagram illustrates a good issue & initiative pathway & resolution process.



Two way communication MUST occur at all stages.



VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES VICTORIA

On the role of CFA volunteers and VFBV

On behalf of the Government of Victoria, I thank CFA volunteers and their Association, VFBV, for the contribution you make to the community of Victoria.

CFA's vast volunteer capacity and community-embedded Brigades are fundamental to emergency management in Victoria so it is vitally important that volunteers are effectively engaged in planning and decision making about matters that affect them.

I applaud the work of VFBV, performing a key role in ensuring CFA and Government are aware of matters affecting the welfare and efficiency of volunteers.

The contribution of volunteers in times of emergency, and in preparation for emergency, is well known, but the contribution of volunteers' knowledge and experience through the work of VFBV is also vitally important to maintaining and strengthening emergency volunteering into the future.

Hon Kim Wells MP

Minister for Police and Emergency Services



Volunteers are at the core of Victoria's emergency management capability. They represent large scale response, professional capability and community leadership in every corner of the state. VFBV is their effective connection with the state's decision makers, providing the experienced advice and frontline knowhow that help to make strategic decisions into local implementation and successes.

Since my appointment to the position of Fire Services Commissioner, I have greatly appreciated the professional approach of VFBV and the willingness of their representatives and volunteers across the state to work at every level to strengthen the effectiveness of the fire and emergency services sector for the benefit of all Victorian communities.

Craig Lapsley PSM
Fire Services Commissioner

CFA relies on the skills, dedication and hard work of our tens of thousands of volunteers to deliver the vital emergency services it provides to the people of Victoria.

In order to maintain and strengthen that essential volunteer capacity, CFA works to make good decisions about matters that affect them through good engagement of volunteers in the decision making process.

I consider VFBV to be a key partner to CFA and a great asset in maintaining and strengthening the vital volunteer resource for Victoria.

Beyond VFBV's formal legislated role to support CFA and Government consultation with volunteers, VFBV networks and forums provide a valuable conduit for ideas, advice and practical solutions.

Claire Higgins
Chair, CFA

CFA's great strength is our people, not just on the fireground but in leadership, command and management roles, and local knowledge networks.

Empowering and supporting CFA members and local level decision making is one of my fundamental aims, and activating CFA's statewide volunteer leadership and knowledge network is essential to achieving this aim.

VFBV's extensive volunteer networks and representative processes are at the core of CFA's ability to effectively involve volunteers.

I deeply value CFA's relationship and partnership with VFBV and its ability to offer effective two way engagement, collaboration, consultation or sharing with volunteers as appropriate for each issue as it arises.

Euan Ferguson AFSM
Chief Officer, CFA