



MATTERS AFFECTING THE WELFARE AND EFFICIENCY OF VOLUNTEER MEMBERS OF CFA

REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) commissioned the Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Project in April 2012 and engaged Dawson McDonald and Associates Pty Ltd to conduct research to establish the perceptions of CFA volunteers on matters affecting their welfare and efficiency. An initial workshop with some 60 CFA volunteers, established key themes affecting welfare and efficiency which was then used in devising an online survey.

805 valid responses to the survey were obtained which provides a very robust sample of the views of CFA volunteers across Victoria, representing all CFA Regions, brigade types, age, gender and tenure. Respondents were asked to score each of 33 statements on a 10 point scale; firstly on how Important they believe it is for the statement to be true and secondly the extent to which actual Performance on the ground, in their perception, matches their Importance score.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide qualitative comments.

Results of the survey have identified the most important priorities for volunteers and the gaps between scores for Importance and Performance. Importance is synonymous with the Expectations of CFA volunteers.

It is important to note that in the months leading up to and during the period of this survey there were no major issues of concern, relevant to the survey in the public arena generally. In particular the survey closed before the release by CFA of the Joy report into the use of chemicals at Fiskville.

No statement scored lower than 8.0 for Importance, indicating that all 33 statements referenced issues that are of significance to the welfare and efficiency of CFA volunteers. Only 9 of the statements scored 7.0 or above for Performance on a 10 point scale. Of the remaining 22, 12 scored below 6.0. The Expectations of volunteers measured by Importance were not fully met on any of the 33 statements. For analysis the statements have been grouped in seven clusters of like matters, briefly summarised below.

Respect and Professionalism - Perceptions of mutual respect by the CFA to volunteers and vice versa are not strong although the CFA is seen to be doing a reasonable job in promoting the public understanding of community confidence in the role and professionalism of CFA volunteers and their brigades.

My role as a volunteer - Volunteers largely regard the time they devote to CFA as productive and worthwhile but are looking to the CFA to help improve their volunteer/life balance, utilisation of their skills and experience, provision of opportunities to progress and better support in transitioning to non operational roles.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Co-operation- Volunteers feel strongly that they are not effectively consulted and involved in decision making at CFA corporate level and also want more consultation at local District/Regional level. They also want better arrangements to allow paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as an integrated team and improved cooperation with CFA staff at all levels.

Support from CFA - CFA corporate policies and leadership are not seen to be supporting an effective volunteer based and fully integrated organisation. Otherwise support from CFA to volunteers is generally regarded as positive, although Expectations are not being fully met.

Training by CFA - Volunteers are looking to CFA to provide better leadership training and also more general training opportunities in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy for them to participate.

Recruitment and Retention - A strong positive here is a lack of discrimination at brigade level on gender, cultural backgrounds, different religious, political and personal beliefs. The environment across the wider CFA is seen to be volunteer friendly and welcoming to new members, with good support for new volunteers.

There are clearly difficulties in recruiting and retaining younger people as volunteers.

People Management – My Brigade - People management at brigade level is generally regarded as fairly positive. However it appears that some brigade leaders need support or additional training to deal effectively with human resource, conflict resolution and morale issues at brigade level.

SATISFACTION

79% are satisfied with their role as a CFA volunteer and 86% intend to continue their membership. Of serious concern is the fact that only 54% are satisfied with the way volunteers are treated by CFA, with 26% actively dissatisfied and 19% unsure or ambivalent.

80% of volunteers are prepared to recommend being a CFA volunteer to people they know. 15% are uncertain whether they would do so and 5% would not.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite concerns about their treatment by CFA, satisfaction levels with their roles as volunteers are high even though their Expectations are not being met. Satisfaction levels appear to be strongly influenced by the fact that 94% of volunteers join and remain in order to support and protect their own community.

86% of volunteers intend to continue but of those under 40 years age, 29% are unlikely to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

10 recommendations have been put forward commencing on page 65. These recommendations focus on specific issues of concern to volunteers.

This body of some 55,000 men and women provide the State with a **highly valuable but completely unpaid volunteer firefighting force** who risk injury and death to protect their communities and state assets. In our opinion, given the risks they undertake, they have a higher right to have their Expectations fully met than volunteers in most other organisations. Therefore our first recommendation is that a commitment must be made by CFA, VFBV and the State government to meet or exceed the Expectations of CFA volunteers on all 33 statements in this survey which affect their welfare and efficiency.

We have recommended that the principles enshrined in the Volunteer Charter should be used as a basis for developing a set of Standards to be followed in recruitment, retention, leadership and management of volunteers. We have summarised in this report three Standards for volunteering organisations from Australia, Canada and the UK which may be useful in establishing a framework.

VOLUNTEER WELFARE AND EFFICIENCY PROJECT

The Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) has a legislative responsibility to “enable members of brigades (other than industry brigades) to consider and bring to the notice of the Authority all matters affecting their welfare and efficiency (other than questions of discipline and promotion”.

To assist the VFBV to undertake its legislative and general duty effectively, the VFBV Board commissioned the *Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Project*.

In April 2012, the VFBV engaged Dawson McDonald & Associates Pty Ltd (DMcD) to conduct research in Australia and overseas and consult with a representative sample of VFBV members and others and use the results to devise a methodology that will allow the VFBV to regularly sample the perceptions of its members on matters affecting the welfare and efficiency of CFA volunteers, with the results being summarised in an appropriate Dashboard.

The Principals of DMcD, John Dawson and Carmel McDonald both hold qualifications in the social sciences, are Fellows of the Australian Institute of Management and are two of only three people in Australia to have achieved accreditation by the International Society for Performance Improvement as Certified Performance Technologists. DMcD is affiliated with the worldwide consulting group of Persona Global and has been conducting research for and providing consulting services to the public and private sector in Australia, New Zealand and Asia for the past 20 years. This has included a number of assignments for emergency services organisations in Queensland, NSW and Victoria and for AFAC. John Dawson is a past President of the Australian Fire Protection Association (now the FPA).

PROJECT PHASES

The project has been divided into three phases:

- Phase 1 – Desk Research to explore measures to test the welfare and efficiency of volunteers in other organisations.
- Phase 2 – Research Among CFA Volunteers
- Phase 3 – Production of a Dashboard Model which will allow the VFBV to test the perceptions of volunteers at intervals.

Phases 1 and 2 have been completed and are the subject of this report. Phase 3 is anticipated to be completed within the coming month.

In Phase 1 no clear measures were found to be in use in other organisations to test the welfare and efficiency of volunteers in a way that would allow a direct transposition to CFA volunteers. Therefore this report deals first of all with research conducted among CFA volunteers and this is followed by the results of the desk research.

OBTAINING VIEWS OF CFA VOLUNTEERS

Given that there are more than 55,000 volunteers spread across Victoria it was decided that the most effective way to sample opinions would be through the use of a survey instrument so the first task was to design this instrument.

Constructing the Survey Instrument:

It has been our experience over many years that conducting research into the perceptions of any group is much more effective when a sample group of research subjects is engaged in developing the research instrument. This yields much better results than when the project sponsors and consultants jointly devise the research instrument and then invite responses to it.

A group of over 60 volunteers agreed to assist in identifying key issues of concern to CFA volunteers in relation to their welfare and efficiency. This group was drawn from the VFBV State Council, the VFBV Board, volunteer representatives on the CFA Board and VFBV DARLEY Leadership program participants.

These volunteers assembled at Fiskville on the 21st of April 2012 and were allocated to six syndicates. Each syndicate was asked to identify a list of matters affecting the welfare and efficiency of CFA volunteers and to rank these in order of importance. The results from each syndicate were then presented to the entire group and ranked on importance. At both the syndicate and entire group level Nominal Group Technique was used to provide a clear ranking order.

DMcD then took the key themes emerging from the Fiskville workshop and used these to construct a survey instrument. As far as possible the language used by the Fiskville participants to describe matters affecting the welfare and efficiency of volunteers was employed in constructing the survey.

The next step was a review of the draft instrument by the VFBV CEO and Board. This was followed by a field test of the instrument. This was done by asking the Fiskville participants to complete the draft survey. Following this some minor modifications were made to ensure clarity.

OBTAINING VIEWS OF CFA VOLUNTEERS

Expectations v Performance:

It is important to understand two aspects on the perceptions of volunteers on matters that they believe affect their welfare and efficiency so this survey instrument was designed with this in mind:

Importance – Respondents were asked to score each statement in the survey on how important they believe it was for the particular statement to be true (1 = not at all important, 10 = very important) – scores for Importance indicate the Expectations of Volunteers

Performance – next they were asked to rate the extent to which current performance matched these statements (1 = strongly disagree, 10 = strongly agree)

Where scores for Performance are lower than those for Importance, this indicates that the Expectations of volunteers have not been met.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide qualitative comments.

Collection of Data:

Invitations to complete the survey were sent to those volunteers for whom the VFBV holds an email address and a link to the survey was also provided on the VFBV website.

Letters were sent by the VFBV to each brigade captain explaining the purpose of the survey and how to access the instrument. They were asked to share this information with members of their brigades. An article from the CEO of the VFBV also appeared in The Fireman explaining the project and inviting participation. Many brigades would not have met over the period of the survey and therefore many brigade members would not have been aware of the survey through their normal brigade communications. If the survey is repeated at regular intervals then awareness will become much higher which should lead to even higher levels of response.

As well as online access provision was also made to issue paper based surveys should these be required. In fact, all surveys were completed online.

Access to the survey was open to volunteers from 8th June until 4th July 2012.

It is important to note that in the months leading up to and during the period of this survey there were no major issues of concern, relevant to the survey in the public arena generally. In particular the survey closed before the release by CFA of the Joy report into the use of chemicals at Fiskville.



OBTAINING VIEWS OF CFA VOLUNTEERS

Data Integrity:

The tool used by DMcD to run the online survey has encryption level security (SSL). In order to ensure integrity from bias we also chose to limit each IP Address/Computer to one response thus preventing multiple responses from one PC even if used by different individuals.

DMcD monitored the responses to the survey daily and observed no response spikes that might have been indicative of individuals or groups attempting to bias the results. Questions were presented to respondents online in random order to avoid sequence bias.

Confidentiality

Volunteers were given the option of responding anonymously or leaving their email address if they wished to be kept informed on progress with this project. 338 provided email addresses, while many others knew that VFBV already had their email addresses.

Sample Size:

In all there were 805 valid responses to the survey. This included respondents from all districts and good representation across all requested demographics (777 provided all the requested demographic data and others provided this in part). This represents a very robust sample of the views of CFA volunteers.

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) provided a generalised scientific guideline for sample size decisions when undertaking research. This stated that for a population of 75,000 (CFA volunteers 55,000+), a sample of 382 valid responses “*ensures a good decision model*”.

Data provided by the Melbourne University Mathematics & Computing Department shows that where the population size is infinite, then –

A sample of 400 delivers a standard error rate of $\pm 2.5\%$

A sample of 1,000 delivers a standard error rate of $\pm 1.6\%$

OBTAINING VIEWS OF CFA VOLUNTEERS

More precisely, calculations by research software specialists, Creative Research Systems, show that a sample of 805 CFA volunteers from a total population of 55,000 provides a Confidence Interval of ± 3.43 at 95% Confidence Level, which is very robust. By way of comparison here are three sample sizes for well known surveys that aim to reflect the views of the Australian population.

SURVEY	POPULATION	SAMPLE	%
The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AuSSA)	22,659,000	4,300	0.02
Lowy Institute Poll	22,659,000	1,005	0.004
Grey's Eye on Australia	22,659,000	1,000	0.004
VFBV July 2012	55,240	805	1.46

The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes is used as a resource by teachers, researchers, policy makers and others interested in understanding the social dynamics of contemporary Australia. The Lowy Institute poll provides information about opinions on foreign investment in Australia, uranium sales to India, relations with Fiji, climate change, the war in Afghanistan and so on. Grey's Eye on Australia has been running for 21 years and is used by major Brands for key business decisions based on population attitudes to social issues and consumption habits.

When the total population under investigation is small then the required sample size will be a high percentage of the total population. For example: using Krejcre and Morgan's method, if the total population under investigation is 200 then we would need a sample size of 132 whereas for a population of 1 million, we would only need a sample of 384. The VFBV sample of 805 out of a total population of 55,240 is highly satisfactory.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATA

The 33 statements in the survey were derived directly from the matters identified by CFA volunteers at the Fiskville workshop as being the most important matters affecting the welfare and efficiency of CFA volunteers.

As noted above, respondents were asked to score each of these statements twice: firstly on how important it is for the statement to be true and secondly how they perceive performance against that statement. Scores for Importance can be regarded as the Expectations of CFA volunteers and wherever scores for Performance are lower than those for Importance, then clearly the Expectations are not being met.

In none of the 33 statements are the Expectations of CFA volunteers being fully met.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide qualitative comments. Some 250 comments were received. A complete copy of all comments has been provided to the VFBV for review and action. In this report we have given a brief summary of the overall flavour of comments under the section to which these relate (e.g. Respect and Professionalism, My Role as a Volunteer etc). It is important to note that in our experience respondents are more inclined to record a comment where they have a criticism to offer than if they feel positive about an issue.

The following table records the six statements where the Expectations of volunteers are closest to being met and the six where Expectations are furthest from being met.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATA

PERFORMANCE STRENGTHS

These are the top 6 statements that had the smallest gap between Importance and Performance.

		PERFORMANCE	IMPORTANCE	GAP
19	There are no barriers to the roles women can occupy in my brigade	8.6	9.3	0.7
18	People from all cultural backgrounds, different religious, political and personal beliefs are all made welcome at my brigade	8.1	9.2	1.1
4	I feel the time I devote to CFA is productive and worthwhile	7.6	8.8	1.2
27	Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my brigade level	7.7	9.1	1.4
23	The environment at my brigade is volunteer-friendly, welcoming to new members and creates good morale	7.7	9.1	1.4
16	Workplace bullying is not tolerated in brigades that I have been a member of.	7.7	9.3	1.6

OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATA

PERFORMANCE WEAKNESSES

These are the top 6 statements that had the largest gap between Importance and Performance.

		PERFORMANCE	IMPORTANCE	GAP
26	Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at CFA Corporate level.	4.3	8.4	4.1
13	CFA provides enough training opportunities in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy for me to participate.	5.2	8.5	3.3
25	Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my local District/Regional level.	5.5	8.7	3.2
11	CFA's workforce arrangements allow the paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as an integrated team.	5.5	8.5	3.0
10	CFA provides good leadership training for volunteers in people management, brigade management, conflict resolution and mentoring.	5.5	8.5	3.0
15	CFA corporate policies and leadership supports an effective volunteer based and fully integrated organisation.	5.5	8.5	3.0

These Strengths & Weaknesses show volunteers largely satisfied with circumstances at their brigade level but much less so in relation to the broader CFA.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE DATA

Meeting Volunteer Expectations – A Higher Responsibility:

Volunteers in any organisation are in a different category to paid employees. Paid employees are remunerated for their services and may choose to concede some of their Expectations not being met because their monetary rewards offset the shortfall. Volunteers give up their time with no financial reward and therefore, in our opinion, it is even more important that their Expectations be met than those who are in fully paid workforce environments.

The above is true in all volunteer organisations but the obligations on those responsible for CFA volunteers are even greater because these volunteers risk serious injury and even death. This means that all those involved in the management, training and leadership of CFA volunteers must strive hard to ensure that the delivery of performance fully meets Expectations.

Of the 33 statements none was ranked lower than 8.0 for Importance. This reflects the fact that the output from the workshop at Fiskville was a sound representation of the matters of most importance to volunteers in relation to their welfare and efficiency.

While the statements were presented to respondents in random order to avoid sequence bias, for the purpose of analysis we have grouped the statements into seven clusters of related matters. The presentation of data in graphic form for each cluster commences on page 14 of this report. These clusters are:

- Respect and professionalism
- My role as a volunteer
- Co-operation
- Support from CFA
- Training by CFA
- Recruitment and retention
- People management – My brigade

Our comments on each cluster follow.



RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM

Perceptions of mutual respect by the CFA to volunteers and vice versa are not strong. CFA is seen to be doing a reasonable job in promoting the public understanding of community confidence in the role and professionalism of CFA volunteers and their brigades, however this does vary with rural brigades rating it 6.5, urban brigades at 5.7 and volunteers in integrated brigades at 7.1.

Qualitative Comments

The bulk of the comments received on respect and professionalism expressed concern at disrespect from CFA Headquarters and District staff, as well as career firefighters.

Most of those responding with comments in this area felt that CFA staff and management either did not listen to volunteers or treated them with open disrespect.”

Some felt the United Firefighters Union has excessive influence and a lot of this concern centred on the way volunteers are treated at integrated stations.

Some respondents remarked that CFA paid lip service to VFBV and volunteer concerns, but only as a veneer over the realities.

Many remarked that the situation had built up or significantly worsened in recent years. There were comments such as “paid CFA members look down on us”.

The overall perception seems to be that there is a lack of respect from paid staff to volunteers and that paid staff believe the volunteers role is to support them when required. Volunteers believe it is the role of paid staff to support them. These perceptions seem strongest in integrated stations.

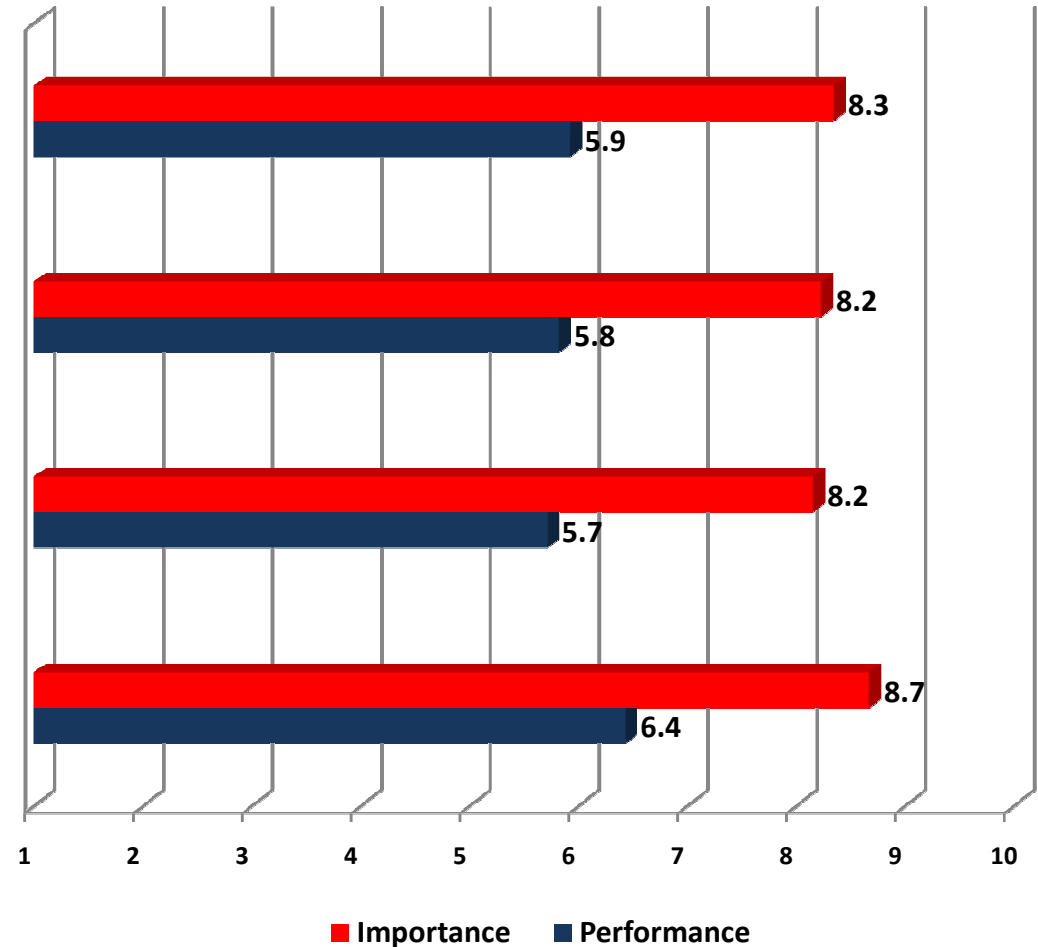
There are also concerns that paid staff receive preferential treatment by CFA in regard to equipment, training and facilities compared to volunteers.

There were a number of comments expressing concern that the CFA Senior Management and staff do not do enough to support the volunteers in meeting their practical needs.

RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM

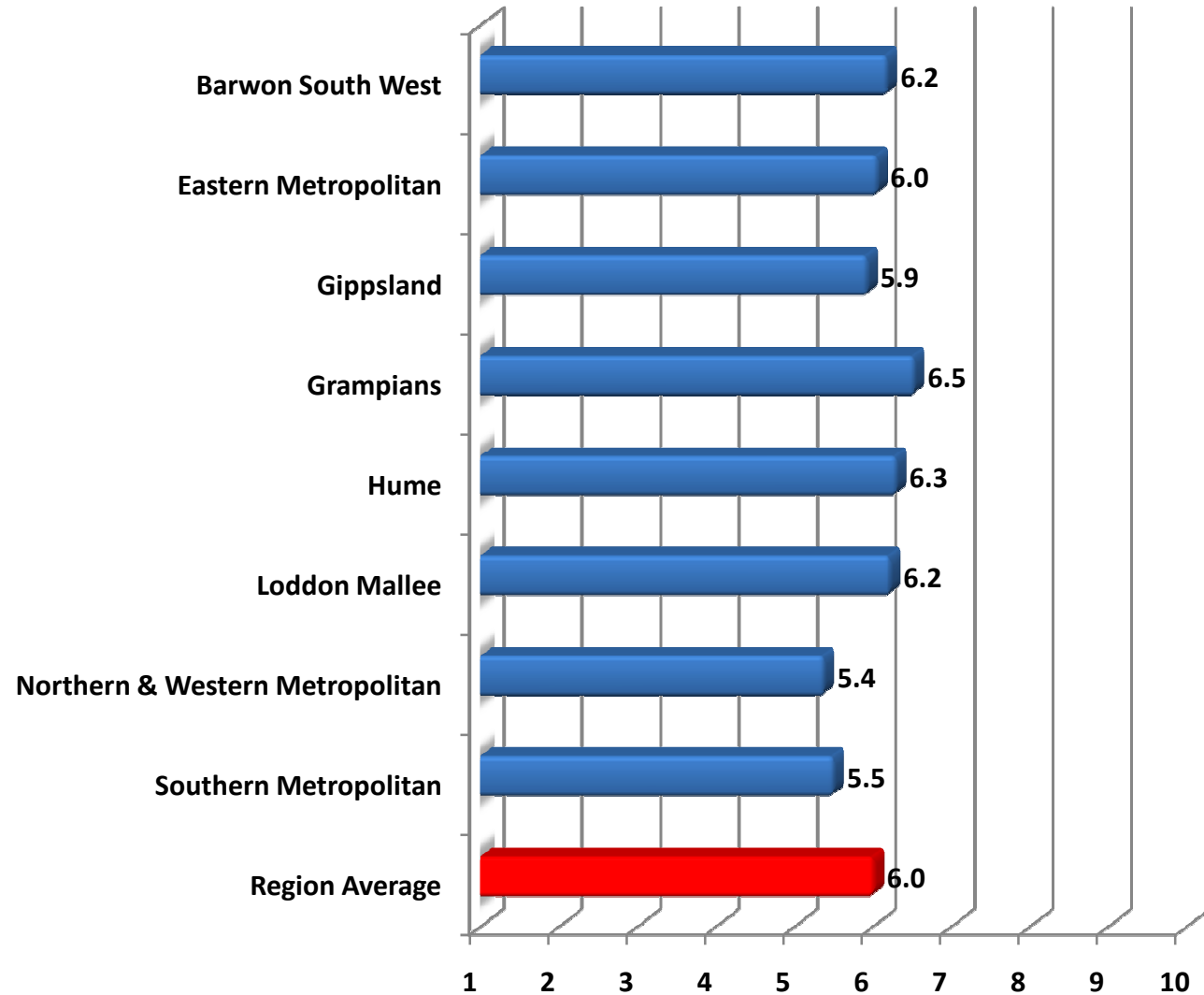
This chart shows the average of the ratings awarded for each of the 4 statements in this section by all respondents.

1. I respect and appreciate the effort made by CFA to support me as a volunteer.
2. The respect and value of the contribution of volunteers is evident in CFA's actions and culture.
3. In general, CFA staff accept and recognise the professionalism of volunteers.
32. CFA consistently and proactively promotes the public understanding of community confidence in the role and professionalism of CFA volunteers and their brigades.



RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM – BY REGION

This graph represents the mean score for *performance* by region across the 4 statements comprising Respect and Professionalism



MY ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

My Role As A Volunteer encompassed Work/life balance and career opportunities.

Volunteers largely regard the time they devote to CFA as productive and worthwhile but are looking to the CFA to help improve their volunteer/life balance, utilisation of their skills and experience, provision of opportunities to progress and better support in transitioning to non operational roles.

Qualitative Comments

Comments on the individual's role as a volunteer were, on the whole, positive.

There was praise for the attitude and hard work of younger volunteers, and the value of mentoring to both CFA and VFBV.

A key concern here is what appears to be a requirement by CFA of volunteers that they commit even more of their time to the role of volunteer and the difficulty of balancing this with the other demands of their personal lives and work.

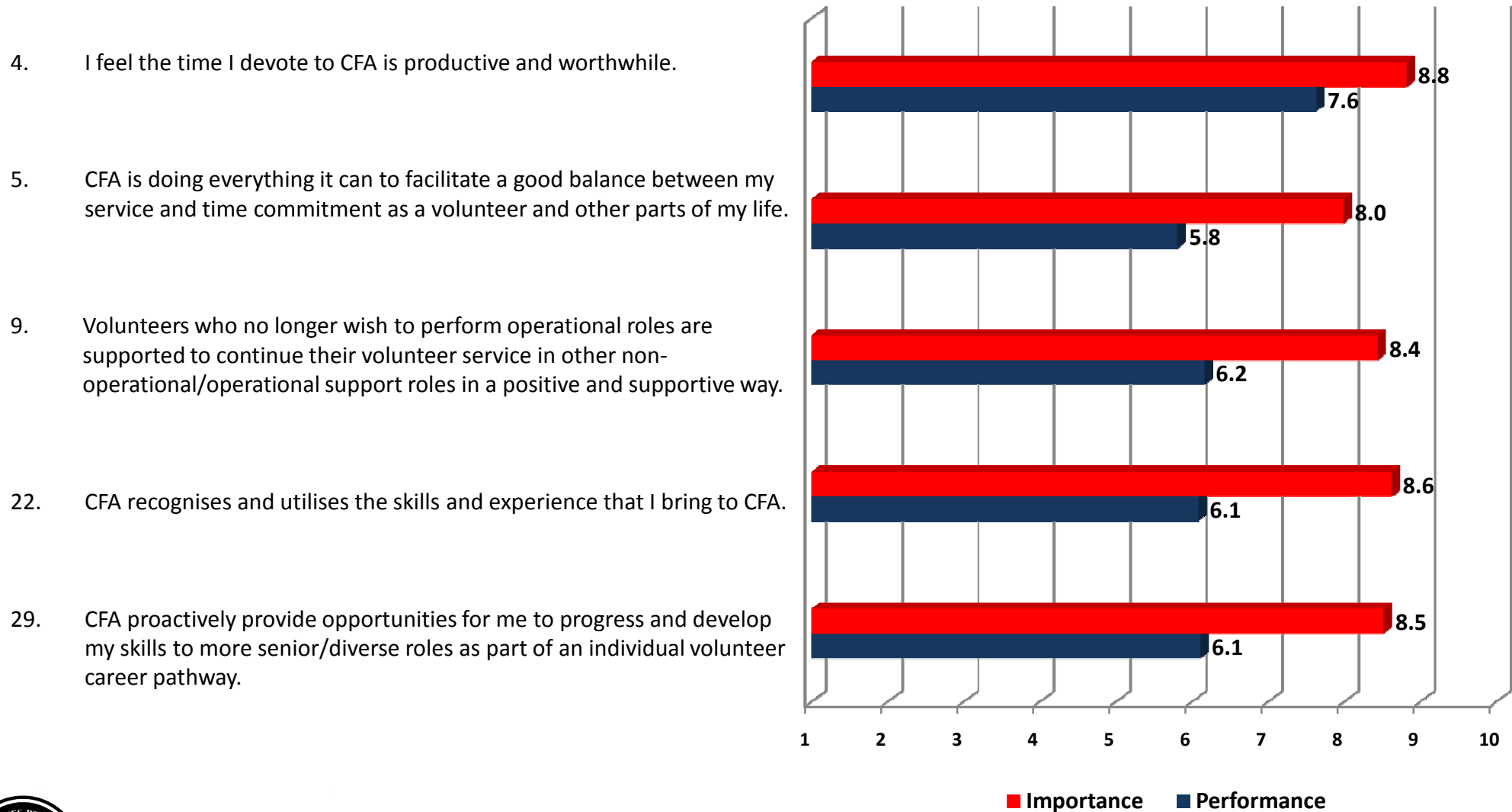
The concerns expressed also included the need for more focus on non-operational volunteers such as those in auxiliaries and the fact that many members of the public, especially those arriving from the city, do not realise their local fire brigade is all volunteer.

Rising workloads and the scheduling of meetings at times that don't suit volunteers were also raised as concerns.

Many recorded their experiences as volunteers in very positive terms, with specific examples saying they have been welcomed and encouraged at their brigades without any feelings of discrimination or barriers.

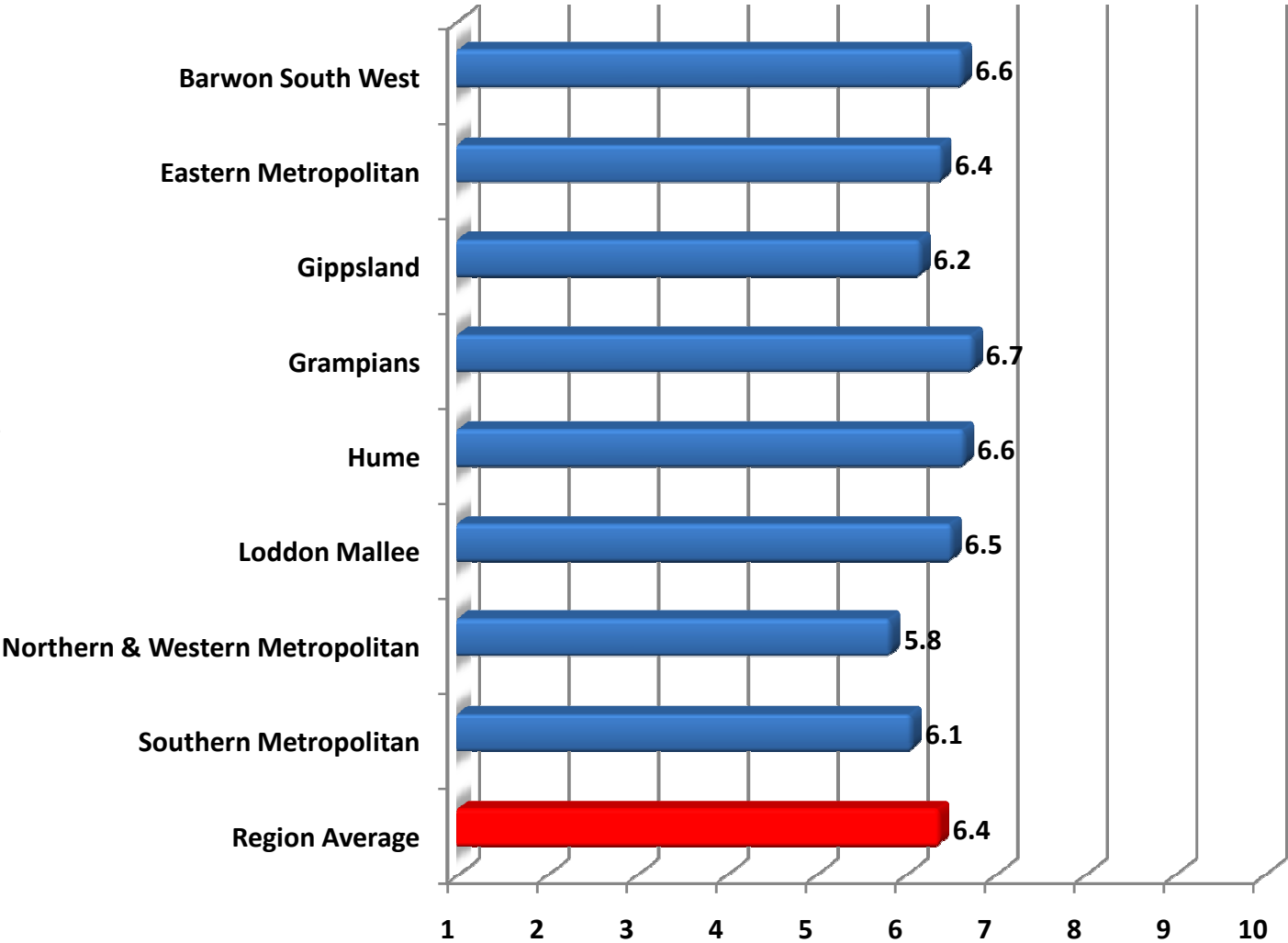
MY ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

This chart shows the average of the ratings awarded for each of the 5 statements in this section by all respondents.



MY ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER – BY REGION

This graph represents the mean score for *performance* by region across the 5 statements comprising My Role as a Volunteer



CO-OPERATION

Volunteers feel strongly that they are not effectively consulted and involved in decision making at CFA corporate level and also want more consultation at local District/Regional level. They also want better arrangements to allow paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as an integrated team and improved cooperation with CFA staff at all levels.

Qualitative Comments

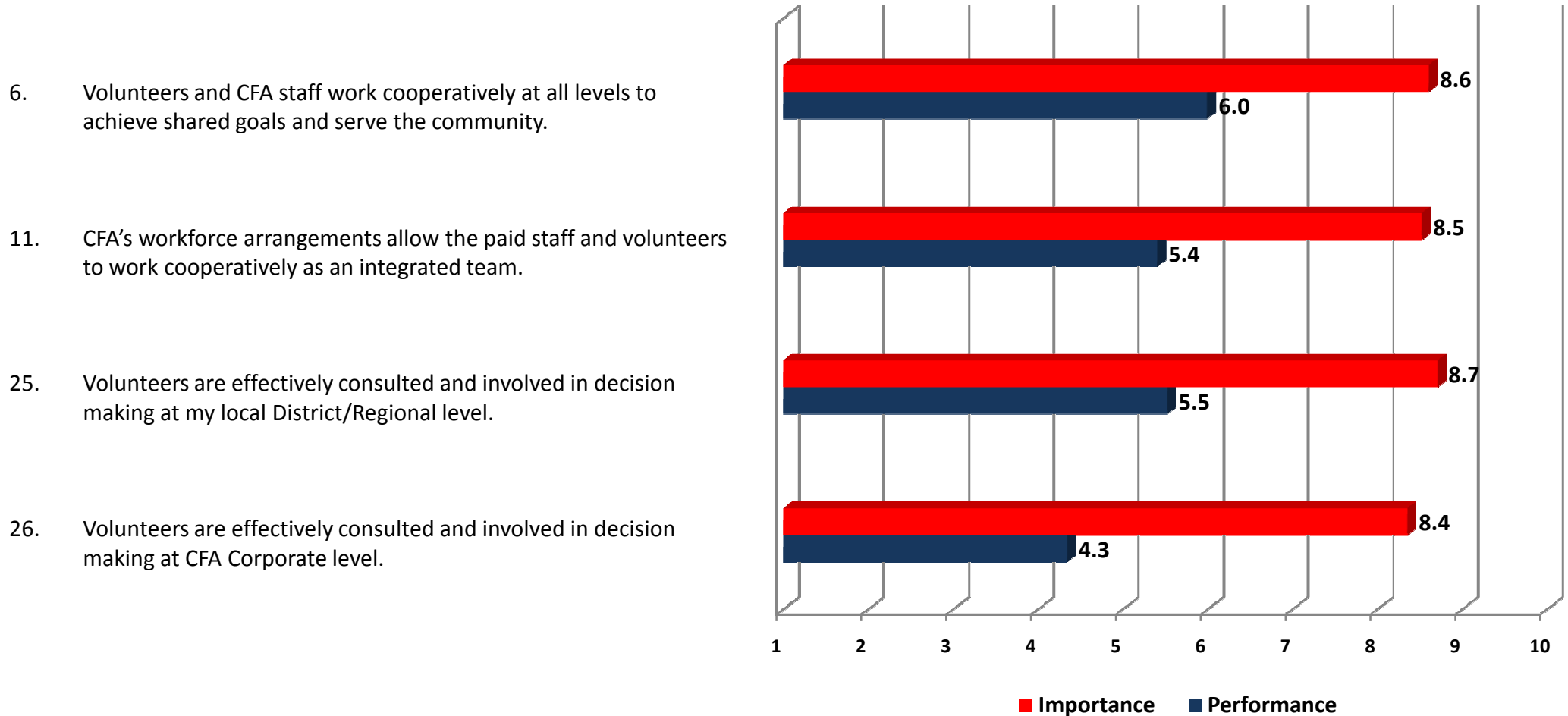
Comments were almost evenly divided between those who were critical of the way staff treat volunteers and those who welcomed the support and co-operation they receive from paid firefighters in their areas.

One observation was that recent changes by CFA have improved relationships between volunteers and staff at the top level but these have yet to spill down to District and local levels.

Others commented on an increasing volume of work being put on volunteers, the need for more consultation between CFA and brigades and for CFA to do more to support volunteers to overcome the perception that more favourable treatment is given to staff.

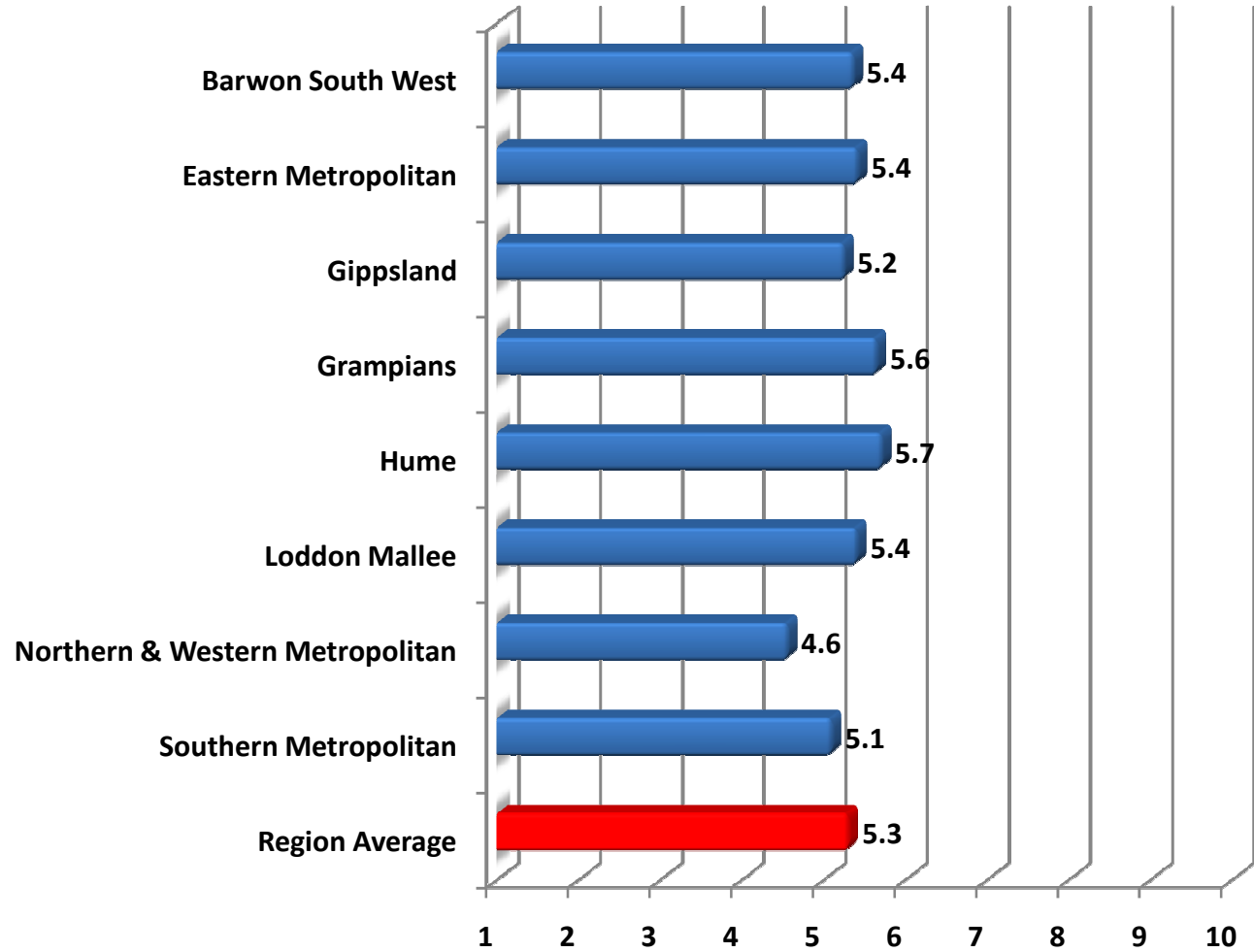
CO-OPERATION

This chart shows the average of the ratings awarded for each of the 4 statements in this section by all respondents.



CO-OPERATION – BY REGION

This graph represents the mean score for *performance* by region across the 4 statements comprising Co-operation



SUPPORT FROM CFA

CFA corporate policies and leadership are not seen to be supporting an effective volunteer based and fully integrated organisation. Otherwise support from CFA to volunteers is generally regarded as positive, although Expectations are not being fully met.

Qualitative Comments

Support from CFA drew mixed reaction, though it was predominantly critical;

- Perception of favoured treatment of staff, particularly paid firefighters, by CFA compared to volunteers
- Time consumed and frustration experienced in resolving administrative matters with CFA staff
- Problems in obtaining equipment and facilities e.g. lack of toilets and other facilities at volunteer stations, impossibility of conducting brigade banking at some post offices; having to devote time to fund raising to buy specialist equipment such as CFA standard torches
- Some concerns were also expressed about lack of support by employers for volunteers. One respondent has been told by his employer that any time off to undertake operational activities will come out of his annual leave

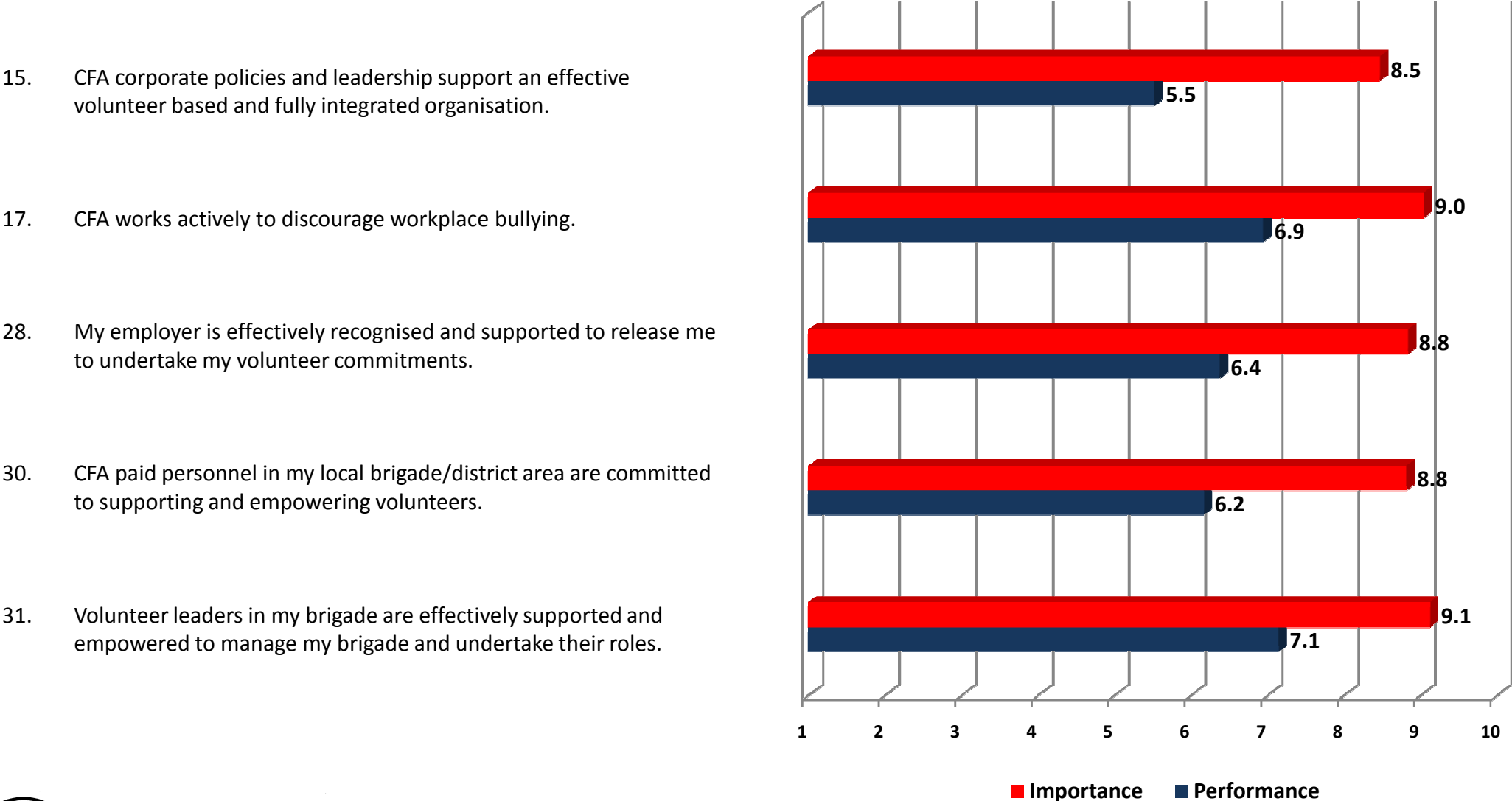
There was strong displeasure with the amount of red tape and paperwork, the lack of support from Districts to Brigades, and the lack of training for Brigade members who shouldered the administrative burden.

There were also concerns with need to keep brigades better informed and more involved in decisions that affect them.

Support from both CFA and VFBV received strong praise from individuals who had dealt with personal issues such as serious illness and much broader issues in their local area.

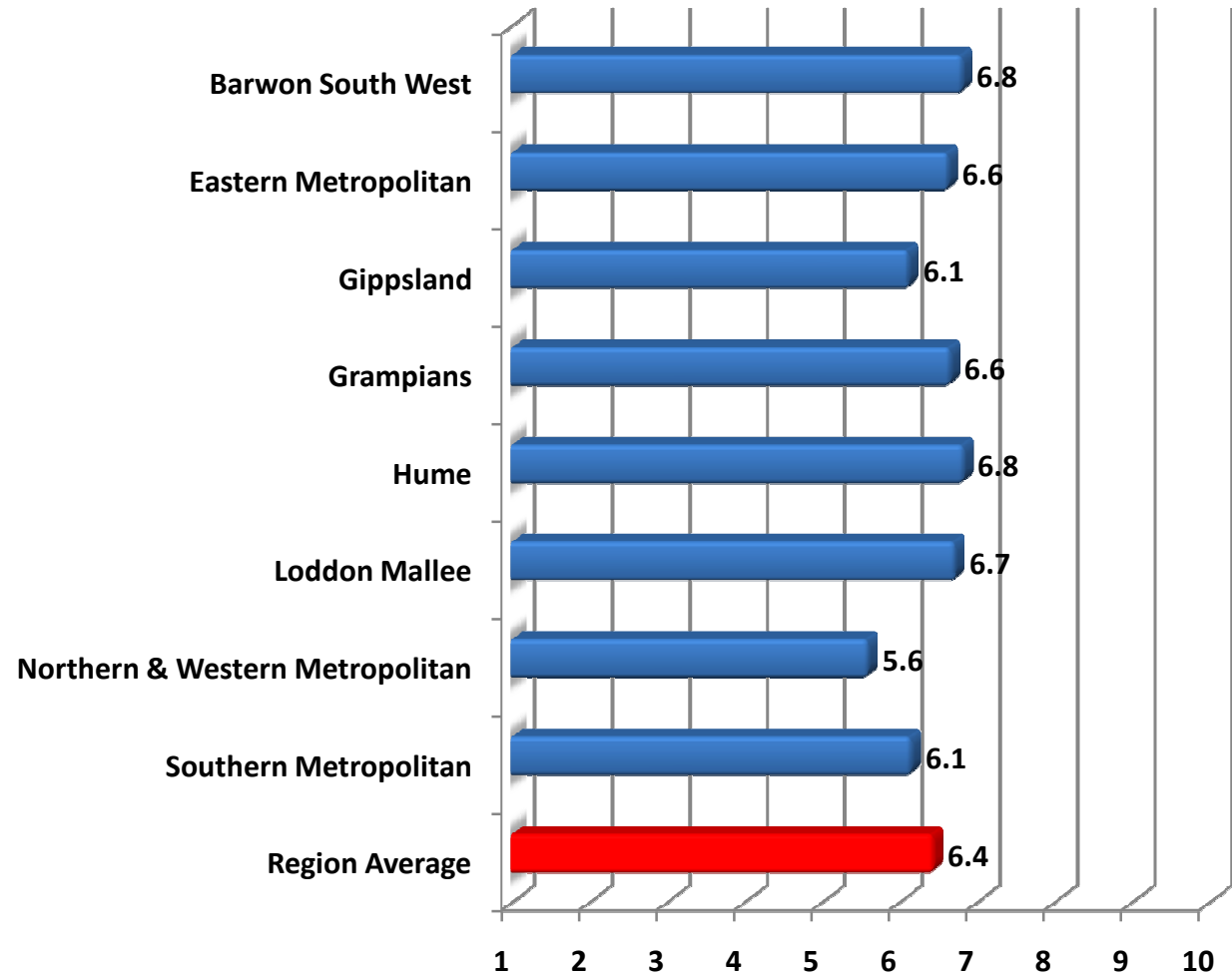
SUPPORT FROM CFA

This chart shows the average of the ratings awarded for each of the 5 statements in this section by all respondents.



SUPPORT FROM CFA – BY REGION

This graph represents the mean score for *performance* by region across the 5 statements comprising Support from CFA



TRAINING BY CFA

Volunteers are looking to CFA to provide better leadership training and also more general training opportunities in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy for them to participate.

Qualitative Comments

The main thrust of qualitative comments focused on the need for more training opportunities to be available but in ways that recognise the competing demands on the time of volunteers.

There was a perceived lack or shortage of training.

Other issues included;

- The tendency for courses to be too long, too far away or shrouded in red tape
- Different standards and approaches between Districts
- Courses not recognising previous experience

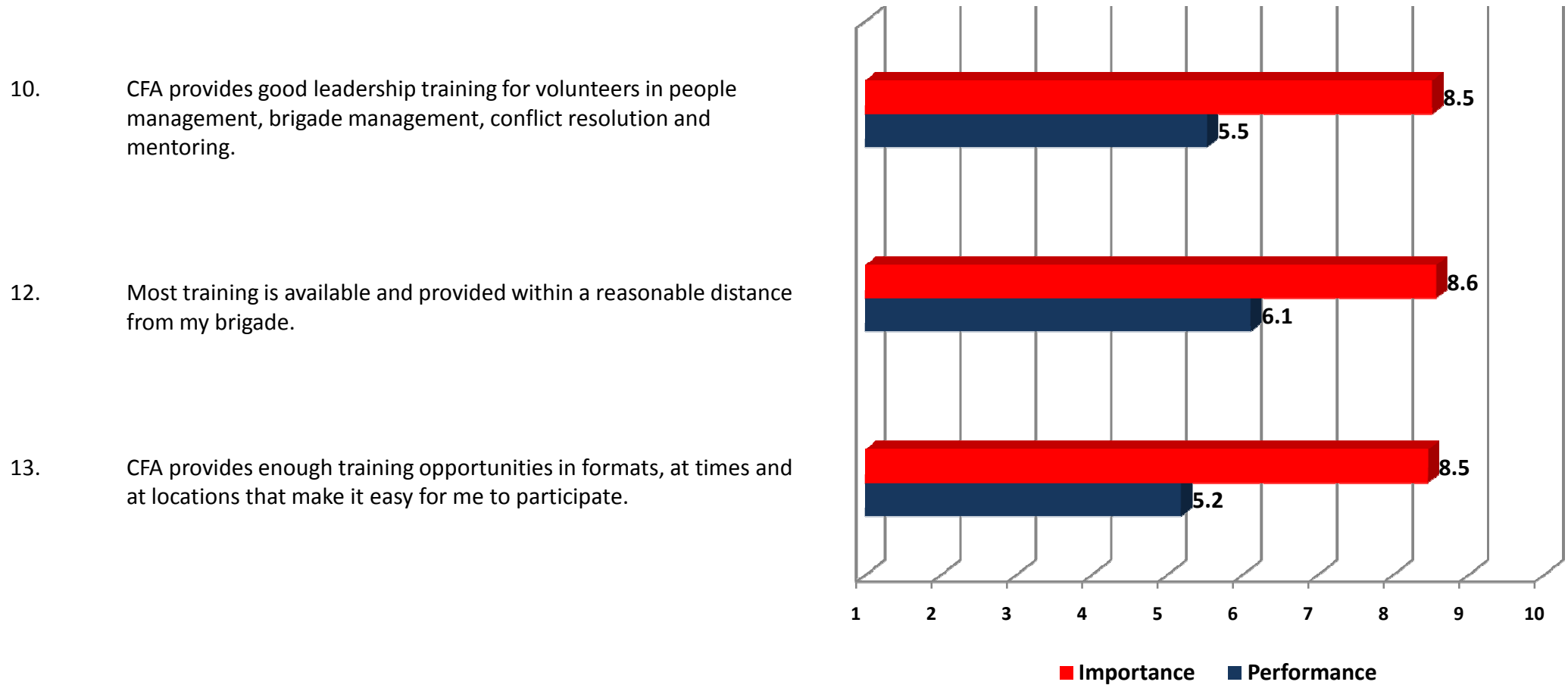
There were positive comments for;

- E-learning
- The Chief Officer making recent improvements

One suggestion was to increase the use of online e-learning so that volunteers could absorb the theory of topics and be assessed on these online, thus freeing up time for more practical training.

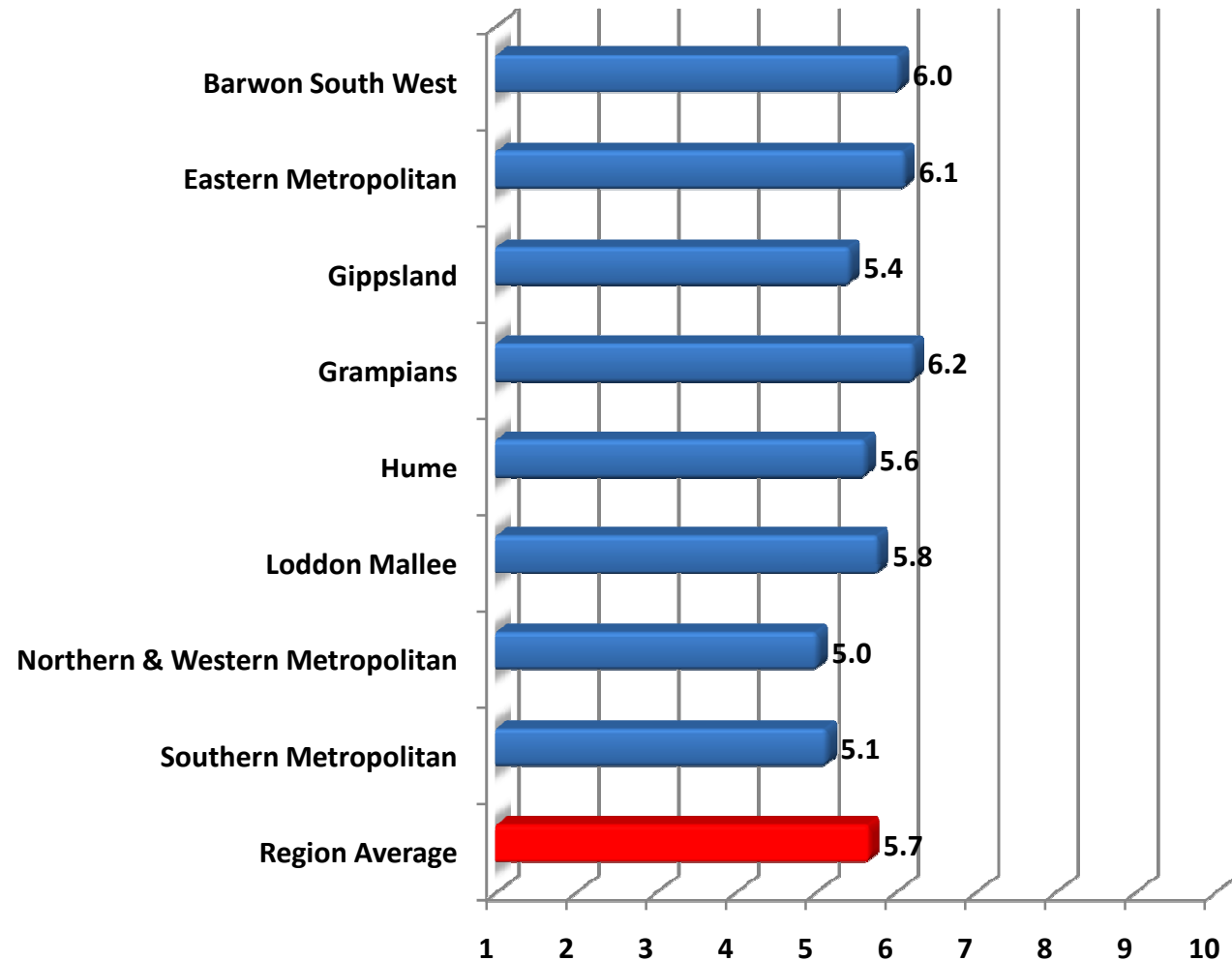
TRAINING BY CFA

This chart shows the average of the ratings awarded for each of the 3 statements in this section by all respondents.



TRAINING BY CFA – BY REGION

This graph represents the mean score for *performance* by region across the 3 statements comprising Training by CFA



RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

A strong positive here is a lack of discrimination at brigade level on gender, cultural backgrounds, different religious, political and personal beliefs. The environment across the wider CFA is seen to be volunteer friendly and welcoming to new members, with good support for new volunteers.

There are clearly difficulties in recruiting and retaining younger people as volunteers.

Qualitative Comments

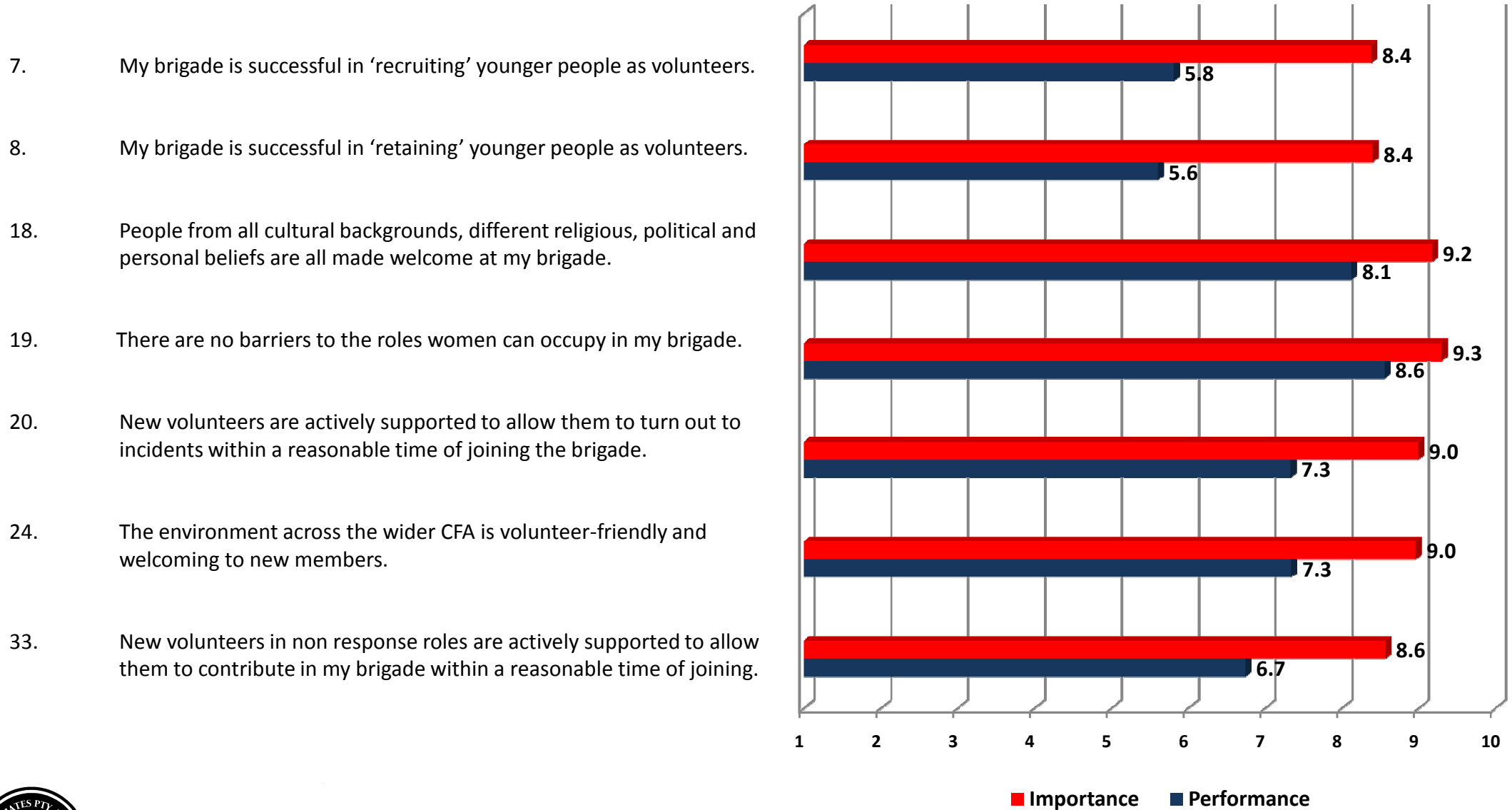
There were only six comments related to recruitment and retention, they came down to two themes;

- The danger of losing new members because of long waits for PPC and equipment, and an unwillingness to let them gain the front line experience that can maintain their enthusiasm.
- The loss of experienced members due to CFA's organisational attitude.

One respondent remarked “the brigade is good at attracting new members but we are losing them as they are losing interest.”

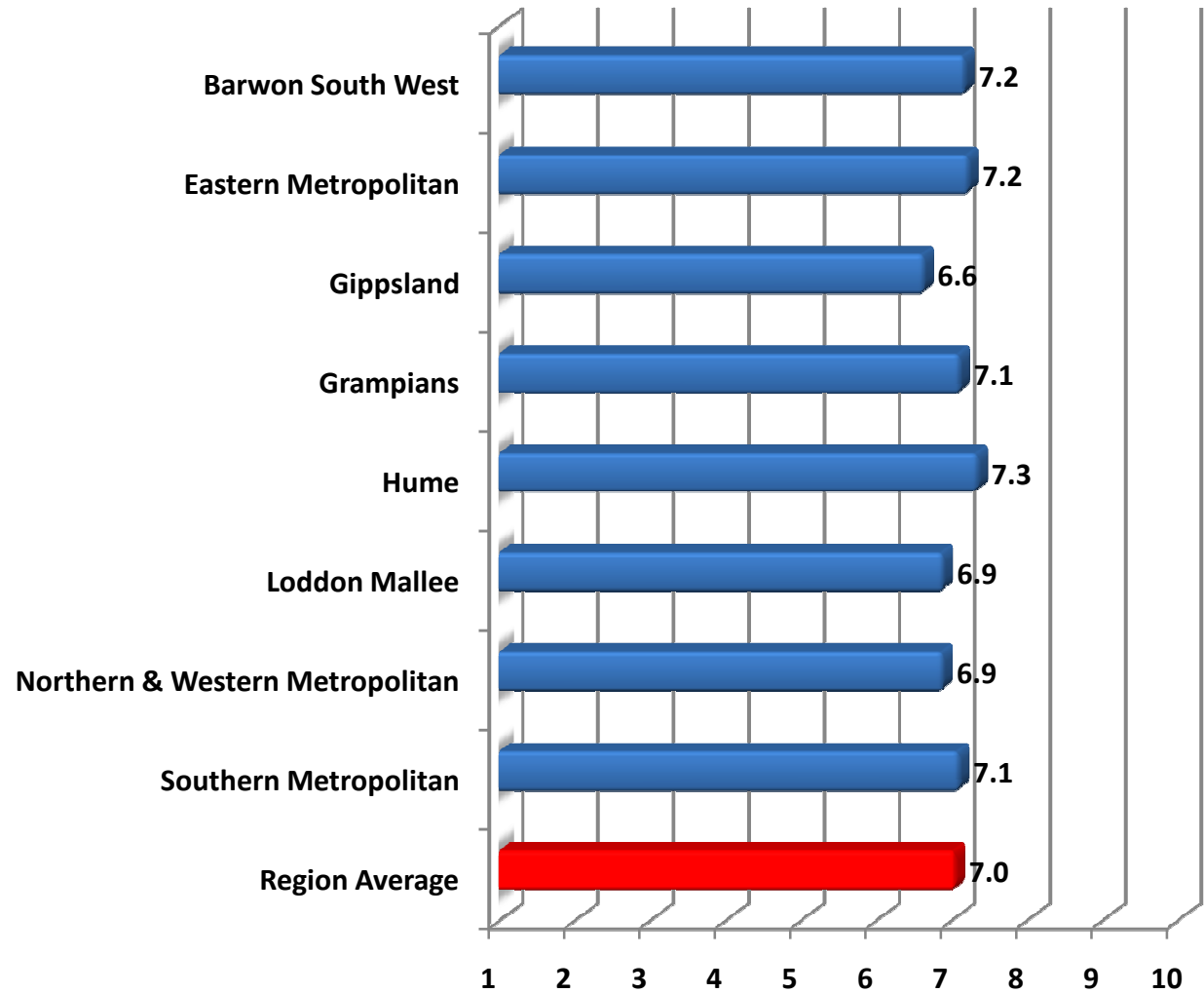
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

This chart shows the average of the ratings awarded for each of the 7 statements in this section by all respondents.



RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION – BY REGION

This graph represents the mean score for **performance** by region across the 7 statements comprising Recruitment and Retention



PEOPLE MANAGEMENT – MY BRIGADE

People management at brigade level is generally regarded as fairly positive, however there are some areas of concern particularly around the issue of bullying.

It also appears that some brigade leaders need support or additional training to deal effectively with human resource, conflict resolution and morale issues at brigade level.

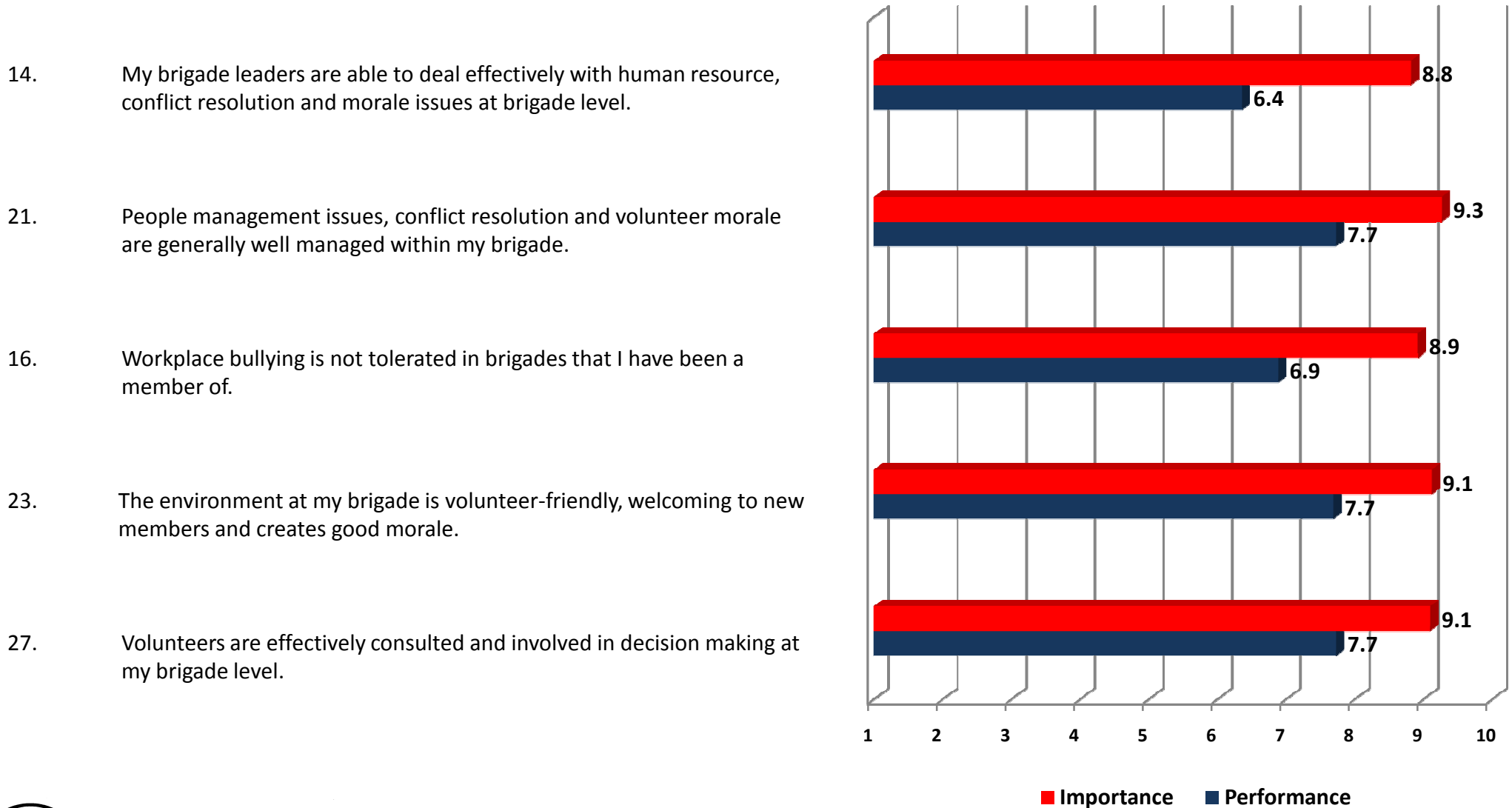
The statements 14 and 21 are very similar but score differently on Performance. The different scores suggest that volunteers think their brigade leaders (statement 14) are reasonably competent in handling these matters but that the entire brigade team (statement 21) handles these more effectively as a unit.

Qualitative Comments

Some respondents commented positively on the quality of leadership in their brigades. Many more expressed disappointment at a lack of professional leadership skills at their own brigade. Some view the election of brigade leaders as a “*popularity contest*” rather than the selection of those with sound leadership skills.

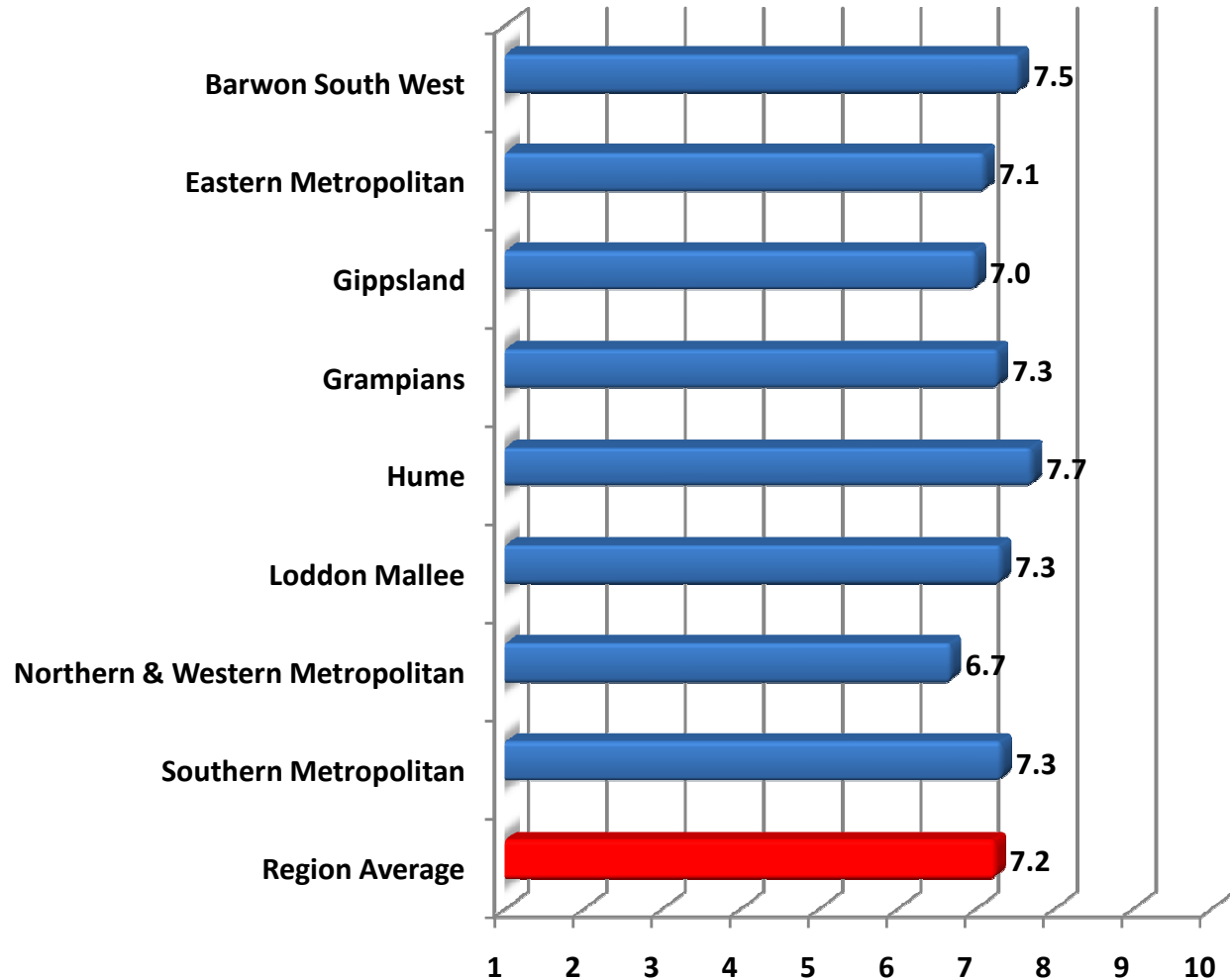
PEOPLE MANAGEMENT – MY BRIGADE

This chart shows the average of the ratings awarded for each of the 5 statements in this section by all respondents.



PEOPLE MANAGEMENT – MY BRIGADE – BY REGION

This graph represents the mean score for **performance** by region across the 5 statements comprising People Management – My Brigade



SATISFACTION LEVELS

Having reflected on and scored all statements in the survey respondents were then asked to indicate their levels of satisfaction.

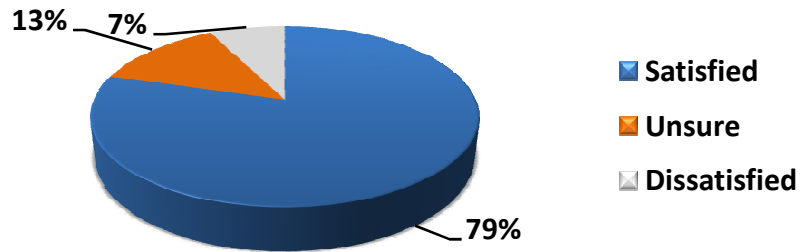
79% are satisfied with their role as a CFA volunteer and 86% intend to continue their membership. Of serious concern is the fact that only 54% are satisfied with the way volunteers are treated by CFA, with 26% actively dissatisfied and 19% unsure or ambivalent.

80% of volunteers are prepared to recommend being a CFA volunteer to people they know. 15% are uncertain whether they would do so and 5% would not.

The breakdown by region has analysed by those who scored between 1 and 4, 5 and 6, 7 and 8 and 9 and 10. Obviously 1 to 4 is negative, while 5 and 6 are fence sitting. 7 & 8 are clearly positive, but those who score 9 and 10 are the only group likely to feel fully satisfied.

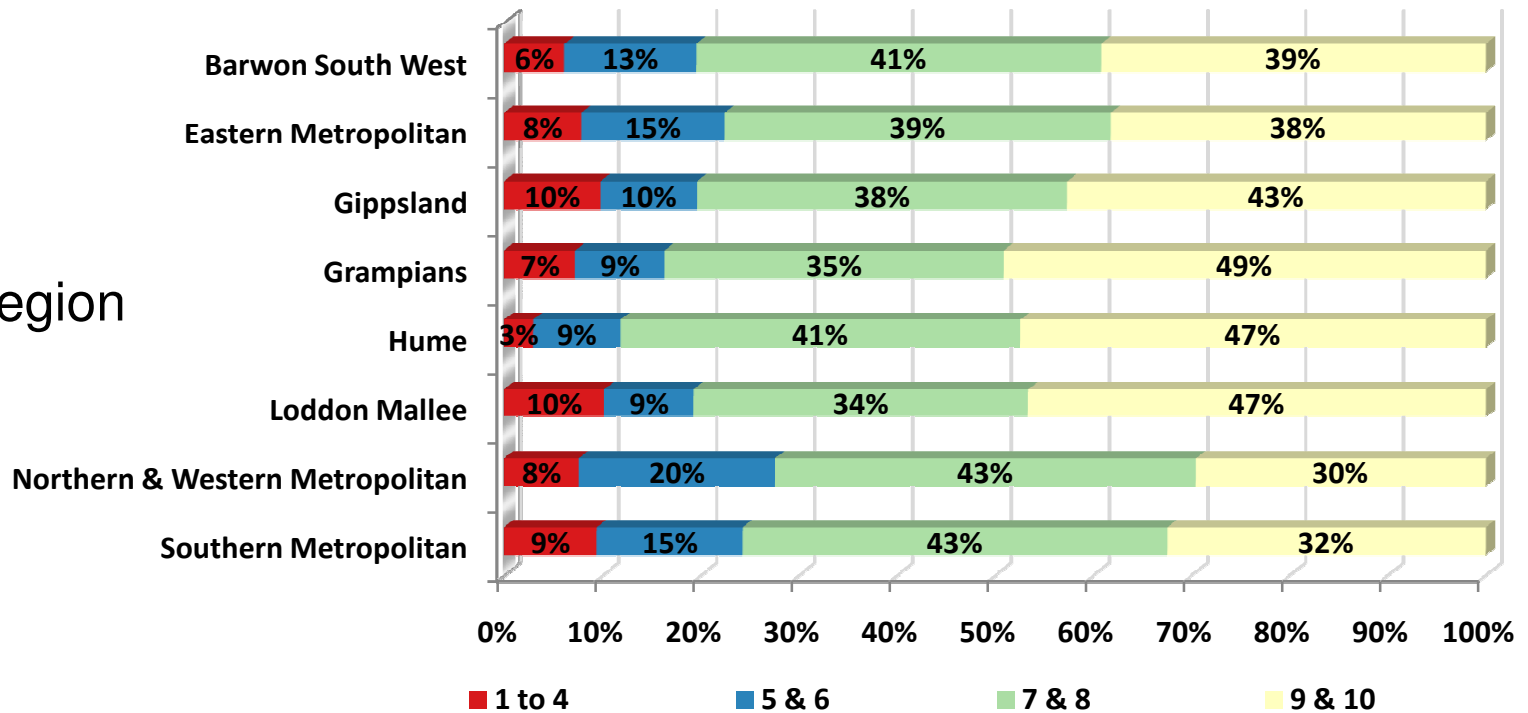
SATISFACTION LEVELS

34. Overall how satisfied are you with your role as a CFA volunteer?



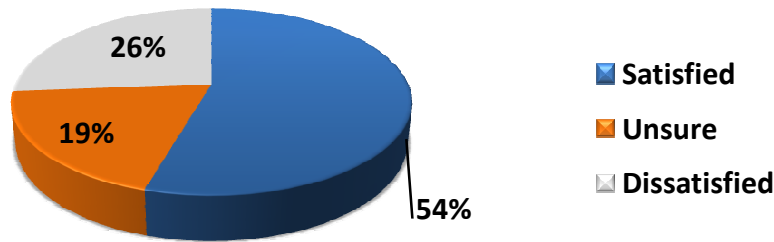
Overall results

Results – By Region



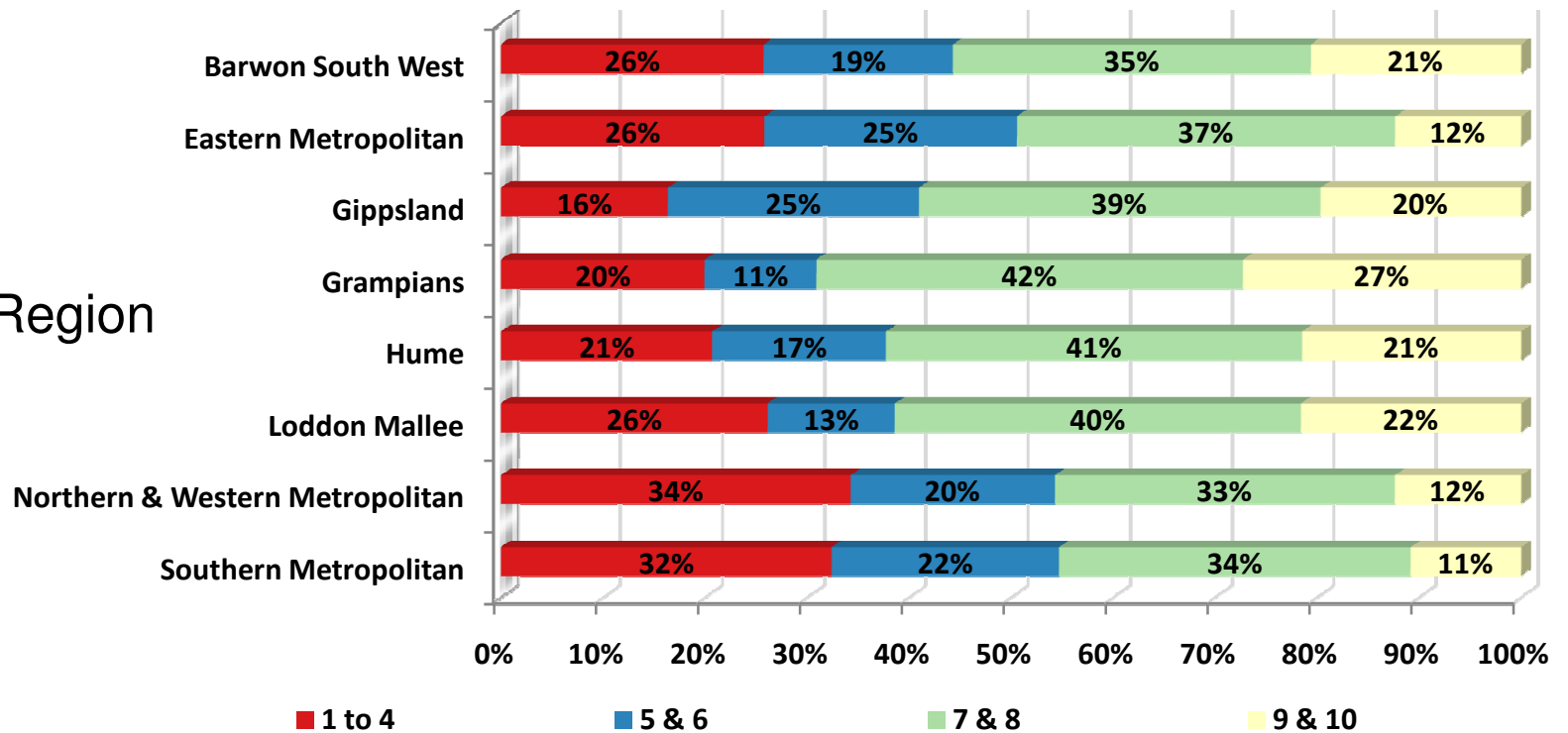
SATISFACTION LEVELS

35. Overall how satisfied are you with the way volunteers are treated by CFA?



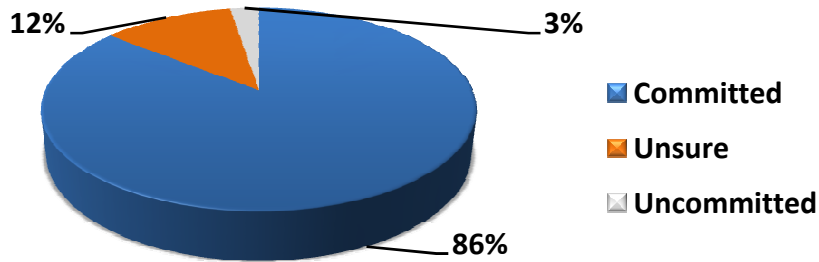
Overall results

Results – By Region



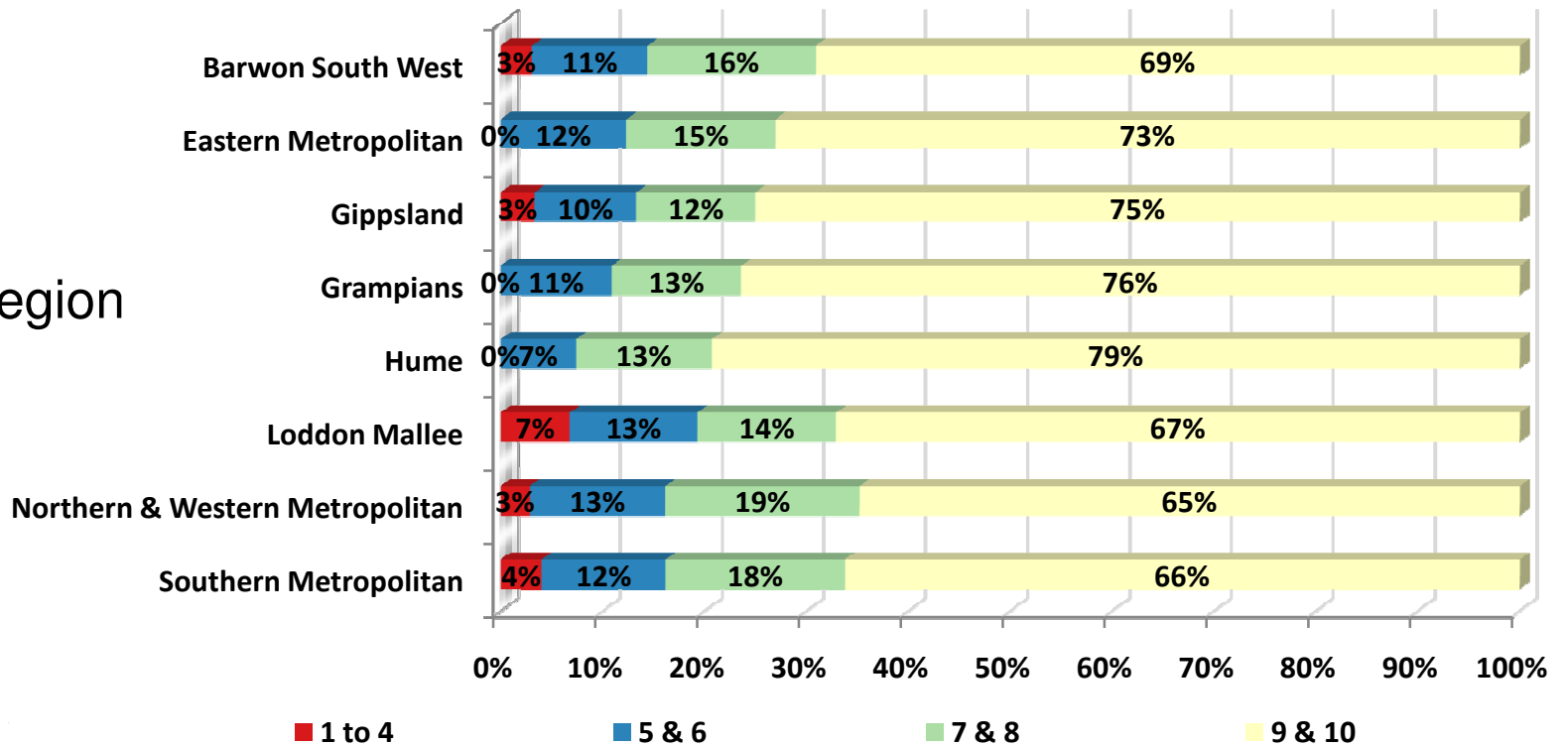
SATISFACTION LEVELS

36. I intend to continue my membership with CFA.



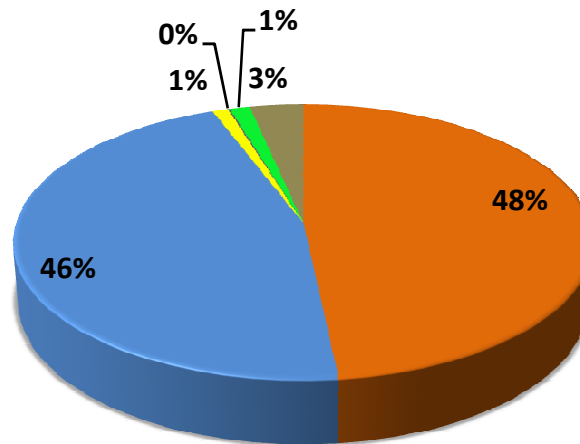
Overall results

Results – By Region



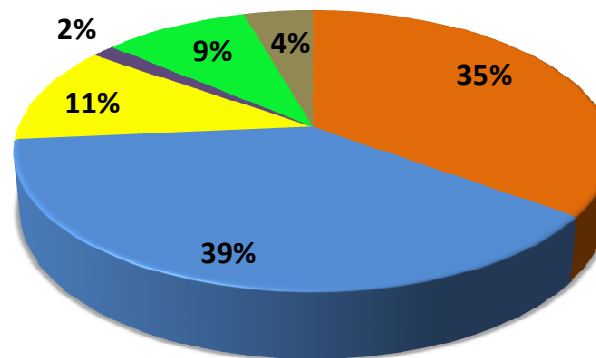
WHY AM I A CFA VOLUNTEER?

Volunteers were given five choices from which to select the single most important reason they have chosen to become a CFA volunteer. 94% said this was either “to help protect the community I live in” or for “a sense of fulfilment in supporting my community in a meaningful way”.



- To help protect the community I live in
- A sense of fulfilment in supporting my community in a meaningful way
- To learn new skills
- To meet new people
- To enjoy social contact with other volunteers
- Other

Asked to select from the same five options the next most important reason they volunteer, 74% chose the two reasons mentioned above. 22% said their second most important reason for being a CFA volunteer is either to learn new skills, meet new people or enjoy social contact with other volunteers.



- To help protect the community I live in
- A sense of fulfilment in supporting my community in a meaningful way
- To learn new skills
- To meet new people
- To enjoy social contact with other volunteers
- Other

WHY AM I A CFA VOLUNTEER?

These Respondents Cited Other Factors as the Main Reason for being a CFA Volunteer:

8 volunteers said “*all of the above*”

Been here 39 years its in the family and the blood

Personal philosophy

Being a member helps me define myself as a useful member of the local community.

Enjoy being a member of a High performance work team

To assist in fundraising

Small community its what we do

If I expect a tanker to help me, then I need to help the CFA help others

Both to protect the community and empower the community through education about fire behaviour and to do something meaningful within the community.

For something to do and to get me out of the house

All of the above, I can't specify only one important reason.

to help those that are in need regardless of where I live and protect life and property

to help the juniors take the next step into becoming volunteers/staff for next gen of CFA.

At 38 years old and 20 + years service could say its in my blood

Partner was a volunteer - to support his brigade role

I enjoy the challenge and involvement

To help protect the community and surrounding community and brigades

Competitions

To Promote Aspects And Desires To Make Our Environment Safe

I committed myself to be a volunteer/ I am fulfilling that commitment



WHY AM I A CFA VOLUNTEER?

These Respondents Cited Other Factors as the 2nd Most Important Reason for being a CFA Volunteer:

To protect and serve the entire state of Victoria

I am good at being a CFA Volunteer, and proud of it.

Not sure why I am still here

To put into practice the skills that I am trained in

Junior and Senior Competitions, Working with Juniors

To support my husband in all he did , and to be by his side whenever needed and help and protect our community

Fire management

8 volunteers said “*all of the above*”

be part of my community

Participate in Championships

To follow in my grandfathers footsteps as he was the captain of my brigade for 42 years

Fun

Family involvement, 3rd Generation.

This is my hobby/sport which I love to do and to have a sense of pride in along with my team mates

To help all and any community that needs the help of CFA

To give something back to the community in which I live.

support community needs and resilience

It's a family thing

to help newer members with ongoing in the field training, which the CFA does not do.

Be part of a family

To apply my relevant worklife skills and experience to delivering fire protection and emergency management services to support my community

To help support the community

To provide myself with effective skills and knowledge to protect my own property.

Compete in championships

To support my partner as it is an important social outlet for him

To impart my Knowledge and Skills obtained in my professional capacity as an Emergency Service Worker on others in my Brigade

A commitment to my crews/ to pass on experience and keep them safe



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEGMENTS

Age of Volunteers:

There were some differences between age groups relative to intention to continue as a CFA volunteer. Overall 86% intend to continue but of those under 40 years of age, 29% scored this statement at 6 or below suggesting they are unlikely to continue. This should be checked against CFA data to see if it is consistent with long term trends.

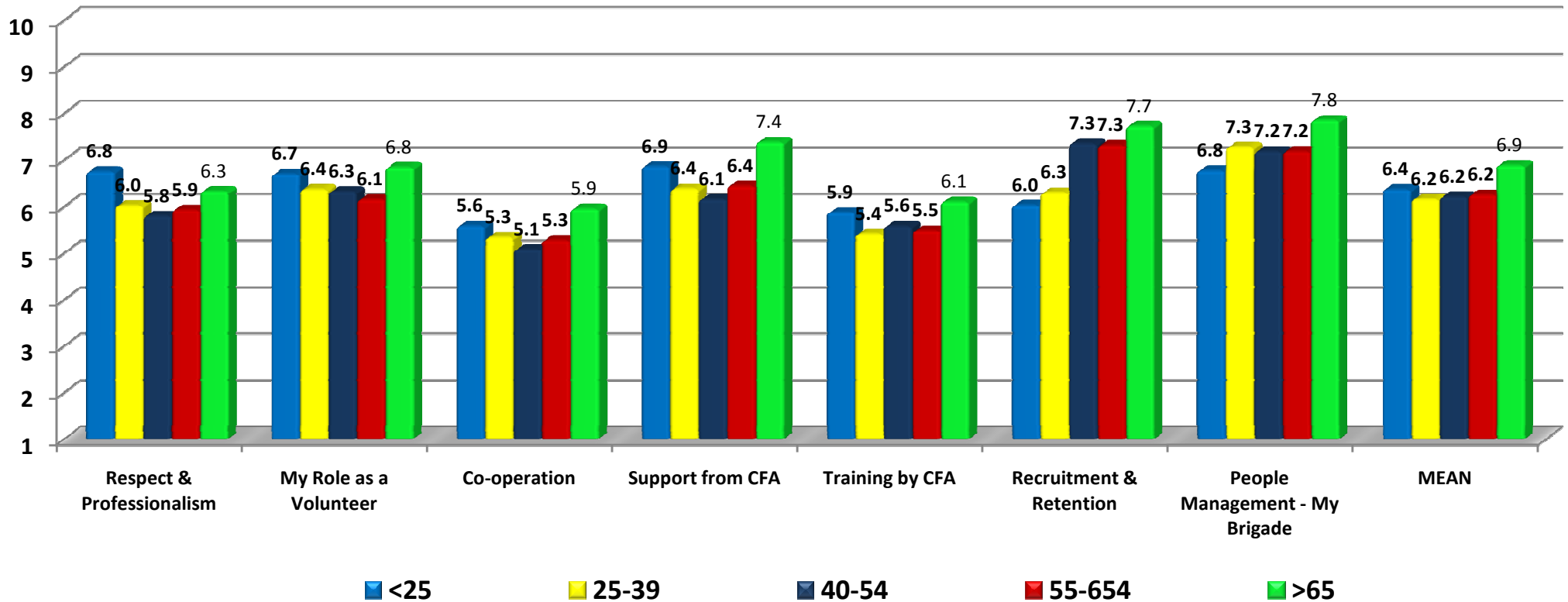
We understand that CFA data shows the median age of volunteers rose from 40 to 46 between 2001 and 2006. If this trend has continued since 2006 then the possibility of losing 29% of those under 40 should be of serious concern.

There were two statements where younger volunteers had a significantly different view of performance from those in the oldest category –

No	Statement	<25	25-39	40-54	55-64	65+
20	New volunteers are actively supported to allow them to turn out to incidents within a reasonable time of joining the brigade.	6.8	7.2	7.2	7.2	8.0
33	New volunteers in non response roles are actively supported to allow them to contribute in my brigade within a reasonable time of joining.	6.0	6.7	6.6	6.8	7.4

ALIGNMENT – AGE

This chart shows **variation between age bands of volunteers** of the **perceived performance** against each cluster in this survey.



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEGMENTS

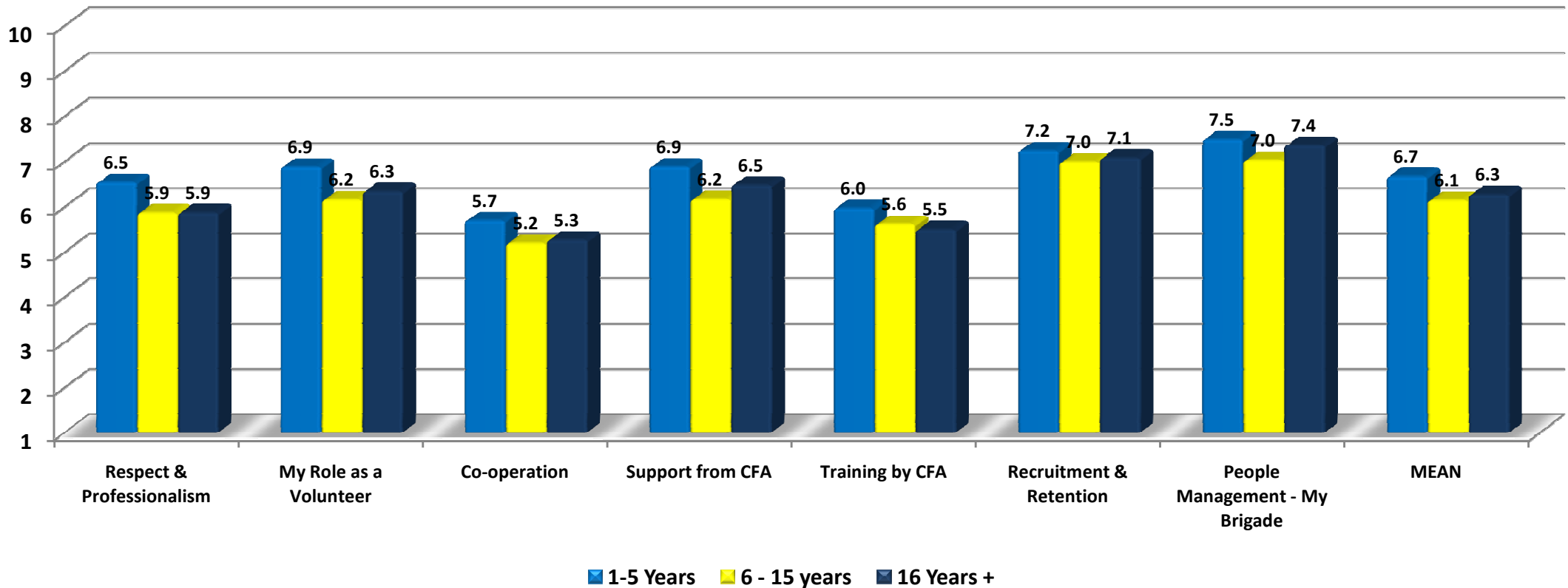
Length of Service:

The less time a person has spent as a volunteer the better their opinion is about CFA's efforts to facilitate volunteer/life balance.

No	Statement	1-5 years	6-15 years	16+ years
5	CFA is doing everything it can to facilitate a good balance between my service and time commitment as a volunteer and other parts of my life.	7.1	5.8	5.4

ALIGNMENT – LENGTH OF SERVICE

This chart shows **variation between the length of service of volunteers of the perceived performance** against each cluster in this survey.



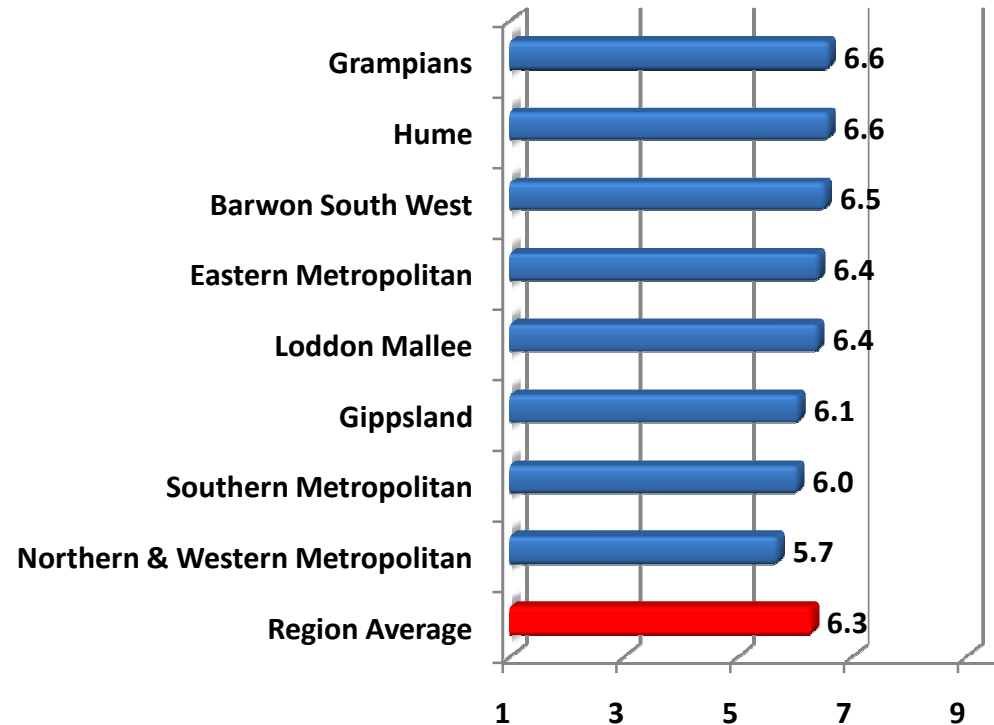
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEGMENTS

Regions:

Reviewing the performance scores by Region for each of the seven clusters (from Respect and Professionalism to People Management – My Brigade) shows that three Regions rank lowest of all on their mean scores for 5 of the seven clusters. These three are Northern and Western Metropolitan, Southern Metropolitan and Gippsland.

NB: Data was not collected at Brigade level.

This graph represents the mean score for *performance* for each region across all 33 statements



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEGMENTS

Rural/Urban/Integrated:

Volunteers in integrated brigades scored performance significantly lower than those in rural or urban brigades on some issues.

No	Statement	Rural	Urban	Integrated
	Mean of 7 statements affecting People Management – My Brigade	7.6	7.1	6.1
23	The environment at my brigade is volunteer-friendly, welcoming to new members and creates good morale.	8.0	7.5	6.9
27	Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my brigade level.	7.8	7.8	6.5
20	New volunteers are actively supported to allow them to turn out to incidents within a reasonable time of joining the brigade.	7.5	7.3	6.0

Performance scores between rural, urban and integrated brigades dealing with co-operation shows the following:

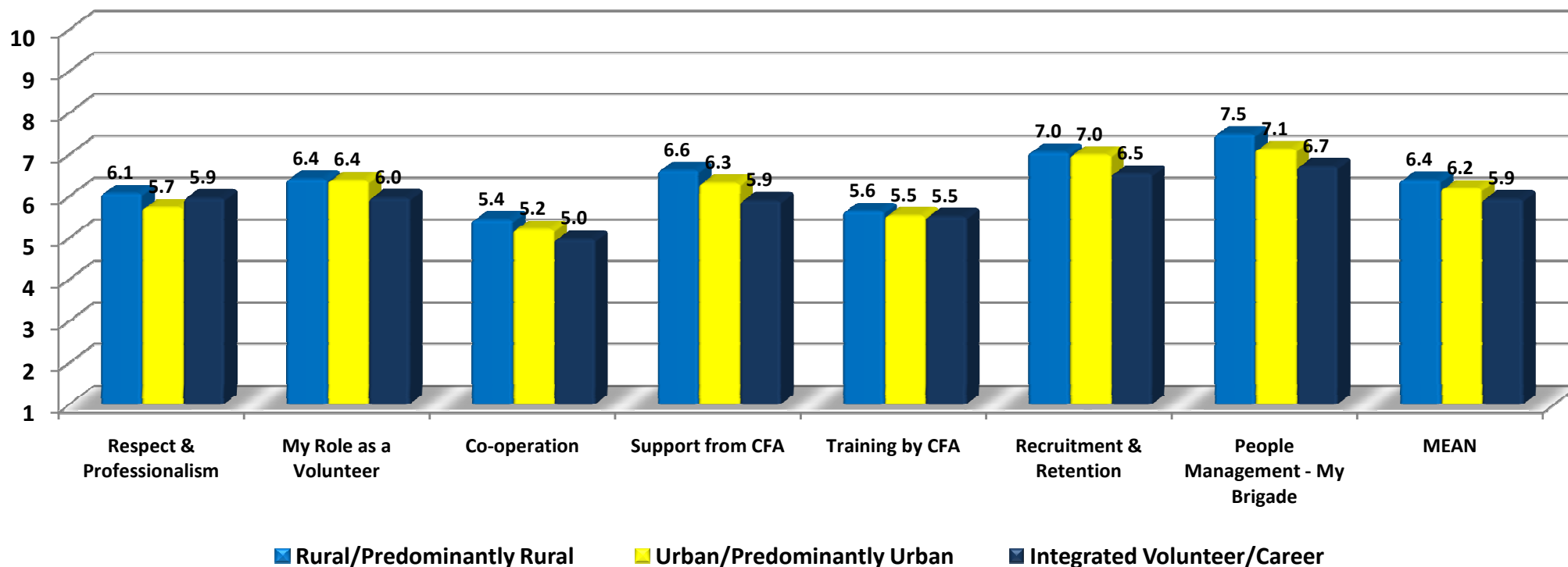
No	Statement	Rural	Urban	Integrated
6	Volunteers and CFA staff work cooperatively at all levels to achieve shared goals and serve the community.	6.1	6.0	5.6
11	CFA's workforce arrangements allow the paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as an integrated team.	5.4	5.3	5.5

Co-operation between volunteers and CFA staff appears to be less effective from a volunteer perspective in Integrated brigades but rural, urban and integrated volunteers seem united in the view that CFA's workforce arrangements fall well short of their Expectations in allowing paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively.



ALIGNMENT – TYPE OF BRIGADE

This chart shows **variation between the types of brigades that volunteers belong to** of the **perceived performance** against each cluster in this survey.



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEGMENTS

Leadership:

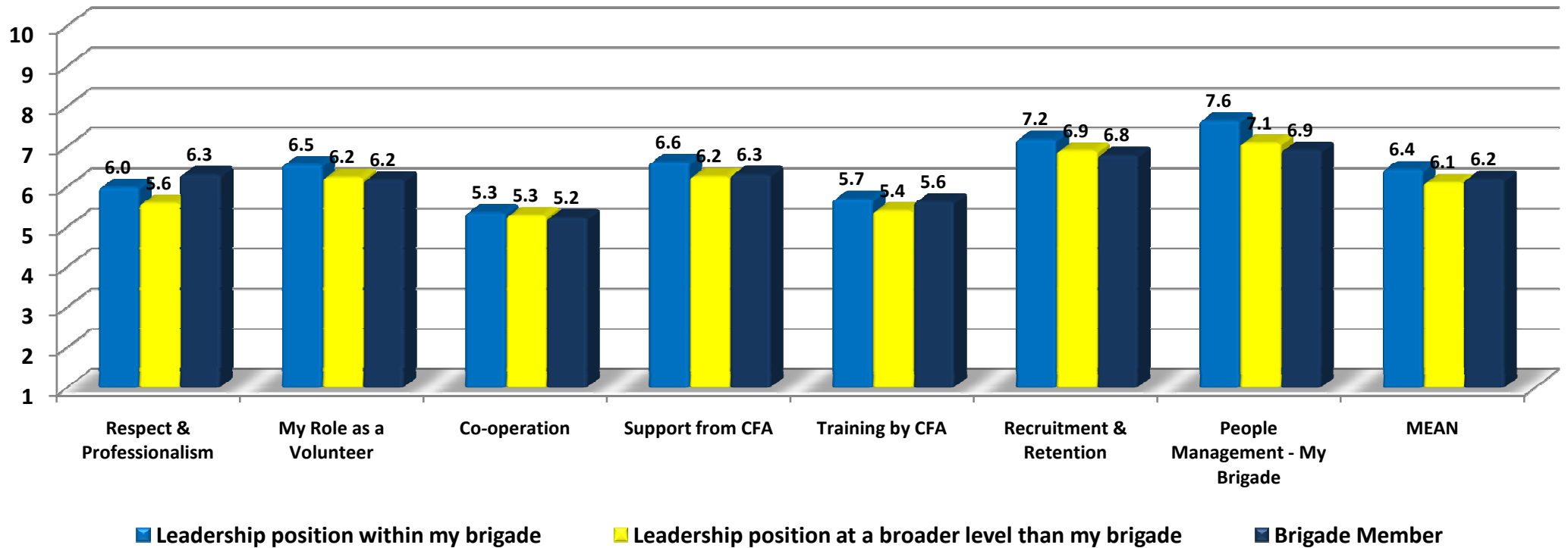
Brigade leaders scored performance on people management issues at brigade level higher than did other brigade members. This is very consistent with results wherever we test perceptions of leadership.

There was a stronger difference of view on consultation

No	Statement	Leadership position within my brigade e.g. Brigade Officer or Brigade Management Team	Leadership position at a broader level than by brigade e.g. Group, District or VFBV Delegate or Official	Brigade Member
27	Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my brigade level.	8.1	7.6	7.2

ALIGNMENT – POSITION AS A VOLUNTEER

This chart shows **variation between the leadership positions held by volunteers** of the **perceived performance** against each cluster in this survey.



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEGMENTS

Gender

The Overall response rate was 87% Males and 13% Females. We understand that CFA data shows females are approximately 20% of the total number of volunteers. Of the 33 statements where respondents were asked to score Importance and Performance, females only ranked statements 1, 3, 5, 9 and 19 higher than males and the differences in scores were marginal. Females ranked Performance higher than males in 22 of the 33 statements so overall their Expectations are marginally closer to being met than males.

There were only four statements where the differences in the performance scores between male and female respondents were 0.5 or greater.

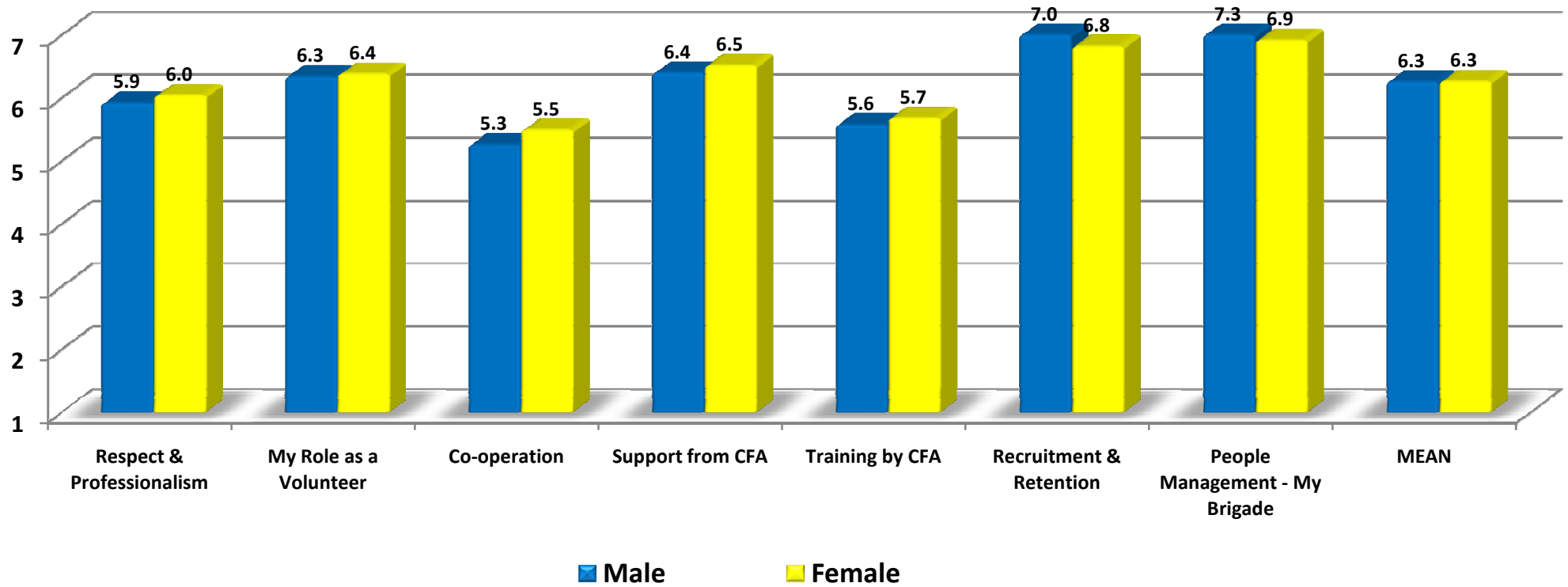
No	Statement	Male	Female
21	People management issues, conflict resolution and volunteer morale are generally well managed within my brigade.	7.0	6.4
16	Workplace bullying is not tolerated in brigades that I have been a member of.	7.8	7.3
19	There are no barriers to the roles women can occupy in my brigade.	8.6	8.1
8	My brigade is successful in 'retaining' younger volunteers	5.7	5.2

Overall females were marginally less satisfied than males with their roles as volunteers, marginally more satisfied with their treatment by CFA and slightly less likely to continue as a volunteer and to recommend being a CFA volunteer to others. In our opinion none of these differences were statistically significant.

There were some positive comments in the qualitative data from females but there were also some negative comments suggesting that there may be some pockets where attitudes towards females may need to be improved.

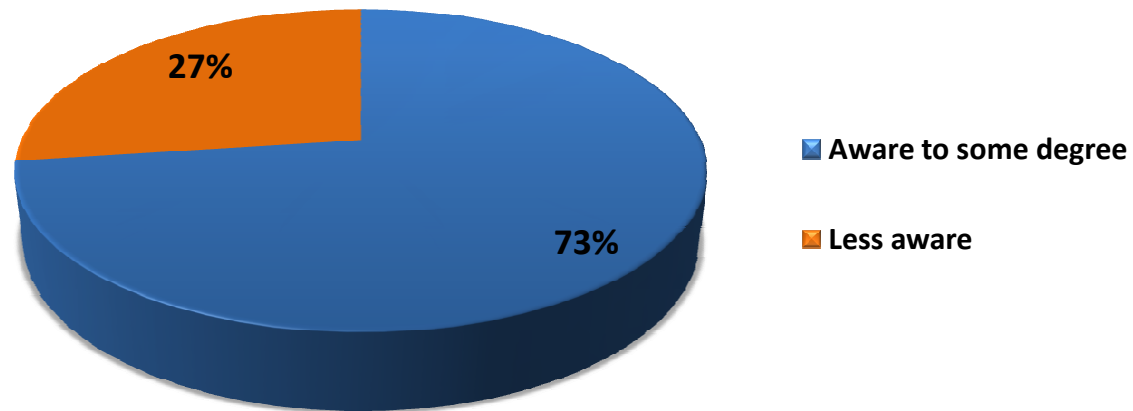
ALIGNMENT – GENDER

This chart shows **variation between the gender of volunteers** of the **perceived performance** against each cluster in this survey.



AWARENESS OF THE VFBV

73% of volunteers have varying degrees of awareness of the role VFBV plays in support of brigades and volunteers; 27% are less aware.



AWARENESS OF THE VFBV

Qualitative Comments

There was a range of comments both positive and negative about VFBV. Positive comments focused on the work VFBV does in representing the interests of volunteers to the CFA and the community and the support it has provided to individuals in times of need.

Positive comments described VFBV as essential, under resourced for the role it has and the source of important information that has not come via CFA.

Respondents who claimed VFBV was causing trouble by driving a wedge between volunteers and staff were matched by respondents who felt VFBV should take a harder line in situations to do with integration and the actions of the union.

Other criticisms included the lack of individual membership, unsatisfactory personal experiences and the perception that VFBV is run by older volunteers and too focused on championships.

A number of respondents felt there should be more communication with individual brigades and better explanation of VFBV's role and the work VFBV is doing that produces benefits at brigade level – several advised that they knew little about VFBV.

STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

In the course of our Desk Research for this project we have located three sets of Standards recommended for use for the involvement of volunteers. A summary of these Standards follows.

Full details of all elements of each of the three Standards can be accessed from the websites noted below.

Each Standard is intended to be applied by any organisation, such as CFA, that actively recruits and uses volunteers in the course of its activities.

VOLUNTEERING STANDARD AUSTRALIA

National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit Organisations – Volunteering Australia

STANDARDS	DESCRIPTION
1. Policies and Procedures	An organisation that involves volunteers shall define and document its policies and procedures for volunteer involvement and ensure that these are understood, implemented and maintained at all levels of the organisation where volunteers are involved.
2. Management Responsibility	An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that volunteers are managed within a defined system and by capable personnel with the authority and resources to achieve the organisation's policy goals
3. Recruitment Selection and Orientation	An organisation that involves volunteers shall plan and have clearly documented volunteer recruitment, selection and orientation policies and procedures that are consistent with non-discriminatory practices and guidelines
4. Work and the Workplace	An organisation that involves volunteers shall clearly specify and control the work of volunteers and ensure that their place of work is conducive to preserving their health, safety and general well-being
5. Training and Development	An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that volunteers obtain the knowledge, skills, feedback on work, and the recognition needed to effectively carry out their responsibilities
6. Service Delivery	An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that appropriate processes and procedures are established and followed for the effective planning, control, and review of all activities relating to the delivery of services by volunteers
7. Documentation and Records	An organisation that involves volunteers shall establish a system and have defined procedures to control all documentation and personnel records that relate to the management of volunteers
8. Continuous Improvement	An organisation that involves volunteers shall plan and continually review its volunteer management system to ensure that opportunities to improve the quality of the system are identified and actively pursued

For full details go to: <http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/Publications/The-foundation-documents/National-Standards-for-Involving-Volunteers-in-Not-for-Profit-Organisations.asp>



VOLUNTEERING CODE CANADA

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement

STANDARDS

DESCRIPTION

1. Mission-based Approach

The organisation's Board of Directors and senior staff acknowledge, articulate, and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organisation's purpose or mission. Volunteer roles are clearly linked to the organisation's mission.

2. Human Resources

Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valued and integral members of the organization's human resources team. The organization has a planned and integrated approach for volunteer involvement that includes providing appropriate resources to support volunteer involvement.

3. Policies and Procedures

A policy framework that defines and supports the involvement of volunteers is adopted by the organization.

4. Volunteer Administration

The organization has a clearly designated individual(s) with appropriate qualifications responsible for supporting volunteer involvement.

5. Risk Management and Quality Assurance

Risk management procedures are in place to assess, manage, or mitigate potential risks to the volunteers, the organization and its clients, members and participants that may result from the delivery of a volunteer-led program or service. Each volunteer role is assessed for level of risk as part of the screening process.

6. Volunteer Roles

Volunteer roles contribute to the mission or purpose of the organization and clearly identify the abilities needed. Volunteer roles involve volunteers in meaningful ways that reflect their skills, needs, interests, and backgrounds.

7. Recruitment

Volunteer recruitment incorporates a broad range of internal and external strategies to reach out to diverse sources of volunteers.

VOLUNTEERING CODE CANADA

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement

STANDARDS

DESCRIPTION

8. Screening

A clearly communicated and transparent screening process, which is aligned with the risk management approach, is adopted and consistently applied across the organization. See 10 Steps of Screening.

9. Orientation and Training

Volunteers receive an orientation to the organization, its policies, and practices, appropriate to each role. Each volunteer receives training specific to the volunteer role and the needs of the individual volunteer.

10. Support and Supervision

Volunteers receive the level of support and supervision required for the role and are provided with regular opportunities to give and receive feedback.

11. Records Management

Standardized documentation and records management practices and procedures are followed and are in line with current relevant legislation.

12. Technology

Volunteers are engaged and supported within the organization through the integration and intentional use of current technology. New opportunities to strengthen volunteer engagement and capacity through the use of technology are evaluated continually.

13. Recognition

The contributions of volunteers are acknowledged by the organization with ongoing formal and informal methods of recognition, applicable to the volunteer role. The value and impact of volunteer contributions are understood and acknowledged within the organization and communicated to the volunteer.

14. Evaluation

An evaluation framework is in place to assess the performance of volunteers and gauge volunteer satisfaction. The effectiveness of the volunteer engagement strategy in meeting the organization's mandate is also evaluated.

For full details go to: <http://volunteer.ca/files/CodeEngJune2006.pdf>

VOLUNTEERING STANDARD UK

Investing in Volunteers UK

Indicators

1. There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits volunteers and the organisation
2. The organisation Commits appropriate resources to working with all volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials
3. The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, which are of value to the volunteers
4. The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, which are of value to the volunteers
5. The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering
6. The organisation is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers
7. Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to their role, the organisation, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel
8. The organisation takes account of the varying support and supervision needs of volunteers
9. The whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition

For full details go to: www.investinginvolunteers.org.uk

VOLUNTEERING STANDARD UK

AUDITING COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS

The Australian Standard proposes self assessment by organisations to ensure compliance with the Standard and this appears to be the case in Canada.

In the UK however there is an independent accreditation process. More than 550 organisations have achieved this quality accreditation and these range from small community groups to large national multi-branch charities with thousands of volunteers. Obtaining accreditation can take 6-12 months and is valid for three years once the Standards have been met. Investing in Volunteers (iV) is owned by the UK Volunteering Forum which consists of the Chief Executives of volunteering organisations across the UK.

OTHER DESK RESEARCH

We have separately provided to the VFBV during Phase 1 of this project a report containing the results of our earlier Desk Research. Since then we have located other documents of relevance. Extracts from these documents follow together with links where complete copies are available.

Developing a Strategy to Nurture, Enhance and Expand the Volunteer Fire brigade in NZ

In October 2001, UMR Research issued a report under the above title. This reported on a project commissioned by the NZ Fire Service Commission (Research Report No. 23). The purpose of the project was to *“develop a profile of volunteers in the NZFS and to provide direction for strategies that will nurture, enhance and expand the volunteer fire brigade movement, including increasing the number of Maori and female volunteers.”*

Several focus groups and depth interviews were conducted followed by quantitative phase which was a phone survey of 500 volunteer fire fighters (300 urban, 150 rural and 50 from composite brigades). Challenges facing volunteers were listed as –

- Time demands
- Changing lifestyles
- Balancing work
- Balancing family
- Community acknowledgement
- Maintenance and non-emergency tasks

Relationships of volunteers with managers and paid fire fighters also presented challenges as the following quotes from the NZ Report demonstrate.

“Urban volunteers describe NZFS management as “bureaucratic” and out-of-touch with volunteers. As volunteers, they feel they are marginalised and at the very bottom of the organisational hierarchy. Volunteers say this often means they have to fight for funding and equipment from NZFS, and as volunteers they resent this added burden”.

OTHER DESK RESEARCH

“The relationship between urban volunteers and paid fire fighters varies substantially by location and brigade type. Tension between these two branches of the fire service is most likely to exist in urban areas with high concentrations of both volunteer and paid fire fighters. In these areas, both volunteers and paid fire fighters blame the contractual disputes between paid staff and NZFS management for ill will between the two groups. They note, that at one time, the presence of volunteer fire fighters was presented as a threat to paid fire fighters’ livelihoods. With the resolution of the contractual disputes, both paid and volunteer fire fighters are hopeful any remaining tensions will ease. But, both groups say a lot of work will need to be done to improve relationships in some areas.

- *Volunteer fire fighters can be put-off by their impression that paid fire fighters do not respect their skill levels.*
- *Paid fire fighters have mixed views of volunteers. They have very positive impressions of volunteers from small towns and rural areas where no paid brigades exist. They are most critical of volunteers they believe are only there to socialise and go on calls. They are wary of volunteers’ skill sets, believing one night of training per week makes volunteers less qualified.”*

The complete report may be viewed at <http://www.fire.org.nz/Research/Publishsed-Reports/Pages/Developing-a-Strategy-to-Nurture,-Enhance,-and-Expand-the-Volunteer-Fire-Brigade.aspx>

Office of the Fire Marshall of Ontario

In 2006 the Office issued a public fire safety guideline for consultation. This dealt with volunteer fire service personnel recruitment and retention. After consultation the completed resource package was to be distributed in November 2006. We have not been able to obtain a copy.

For full details go to:

<http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/FireMarshal/FireServiceResources/PublicFireSafetyGuidelines/VolunteerRecruitment/volRecrutimentGuideline.html>

OTHER DESK RESEARCH

US Fire Administration

This organisation produced a report on Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services in 2007.

This document was based on collaborative work carried out by the US Fire Administration, the Department of Homeland Security and the National Volunteer Fire Council. This revised edition states *“many of the original reasons for the recruitment problems remain: lack of time, apathy and excessive requirements. However, they appear to have become even greater issues with the passing of time...individuals who are still willing to give their time to volunteer emergency services organisations provided the following”*

- The experience is rewarding and worth their time
- The training requirements are not excessive
- The time demands are adaptable and manageable
- They are rewarded with a personal sense of value
- There is good leadership minimising conflict
- There is ample support for the organisation

This is a comprehensive paper of over 150 pages exploring the challenges of volunteering in the fire service and proposing solutions.

For full details go to: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-310.pdf>

National Volunteering Strategy – Australia:

In 2011 the Federal Government Minister for Social Inclusion and Minister for Human Services released a paper titled *“National Volunteering Strategy”*. This provides information about trends in volunteering, harnessing technology, better regulation of risk management, management training etc and sets out action the Federal Government proposes to take.

The VFBV may already be well tapped into this initiative. If not contact should be established with the Minister’s Office and the relevant bureaucrats.

OTHER DESK RESEARCH

Go Volunteer:

This website is an initiative of Volunteering Australia and claims to be the first Australian site facilitating the recruitment of volunteers. It offers free advertising for organisations seeking volunteers and is being used by some emergency service organisations but by very few brigades in Victoria – Bellarine is one of only two examples of CFA listings..

This appears to present an opportunity for all CFA volunteer brigades to promote their recruitment needs. This may be especially helpful in the metropolitan area where word of mouth and community contacts are less likely to produce results than in the country.

Recruiting and Retaining Volunteer Firefighters in Australia:

In 2011 the Bushfire CRC and Latrobe University produced a document under the above heading which provides “*an integrative summary of research*”. This 195 page report “*summarises the research findings from Australia’s largest ever research project investigating ways of enhancing the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. This project was conducted by the Bushfire Co-operative Research Centre (Bushfire CRC), Volunteerism Project Team between 2003 and 2010.*” The research included a survey of “*large samples of respondents across very large geographical areas. All six states and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) participated in at least one study.*”

Two significant findings from this report were –

- “*The most frequently reported barrier to participation by both serving volunteers and prospective recruits is the competing demands of work and business.*”
- “*Many former and current fire service volunteers reported dysfunctional behaviour among volunteers and poor relations between paid personnel and volunteers as reasons for their resignation and reduced participation respectively. Participants report suggest the need for leadership development, particularly at the brigade and middle management level, to minimise dysfunctional behaviour and cultivate improved morale.*”

The complete report may be viewed at <http://www.bushfirecrc.com/resources/research-report/recruiting-and-retaining-volunteer-firefighters-australasia-integrative-su>

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

Meeting Volunteer Expectations:

The 33 items scored for Importance and Performance in this survey were identified by volunteers themselves as fundamental to their welfare and efficiency and yet their Expectations are not being fully met on any of these matters.

Other research has shown that there is a continuing drift of young people to cities, less cultural commitment to volunteering among some migrant communities and overall an ageing population and increased work/life pressures. All of these impact on the number of volunteers available to the CFA.

If the CFA and State Government wish to retain what is a **highly valuable but completely unpaid volunteer fire fighting force** then the expectations of volunteers, identified by them through this survey, must be met

A commitment must be made by CFA, VFBV and State Government to meet or exceed the expectations of volunteers on all 33 items. This is fundamental to ensuring the welfare and efficiency of volunteers and their continuing availability as an unpaid emergency service.

The State Government, CFA and the VFBV have committed to the Volunteer Charter. Vigorous action is now needed by all relevant parties to ensure the implementation in full of the principles enshrined in the charter which can be expected to contribute significantly to closing the gaps between Expectations and Performance identified in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 2

Standards:

The principles enshrined in the Volunteer Charter should be used as the basis for developing a set of Standards to be followed in the recruitment, retention, leadership and support of volunteers. Once developed, the implementation of these Standards across all CFA regions should be monitored at regular intervals by an independent audit (the Standards for Volunteering in Australia and overseas referenced in this report provide a guide).

RECOMMENDATION 3

Investigation:

VFBV should establish formal contact with Investing in Volunteers UK to investigate Standards and audit procedures for volunteering further and follow through on developments in relation to volunteers since the issue of reports referred to above in relation to the NZFS, US Fire Administration and Office of the Fire Marshall of Ontario.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 4

Priorities of volunteers:

The mean Importance score across all 33 statements in the survey was 8.7. Volunteers gave 14 statements an Importance score higher than the mean of 8.7 and of these six had a gap between Importance (Expectations) and Performance of 2.0 or more. Improving Performance on these six items should be a priority.

		PERFORMANCE	IMPORTANCE	GAP
31	Volunteer leaders in my brigade are effectively supported and empowered to manage my brigade and undertake their roles.	7.1	9.1	2.0
17	CFA works actively to discourage workplace bullying.	6.9	9.0	2.1
21	People management issues, conflict resolution and volunteer morale are generally well managed within my brigade.	6.9	8.9	2.0
28	My employer is effectively recognised and supported to release me to undertake my volunteer commitments.	6.4	8.8	2.4
30	CFA paid personnel in my local brigade/district area are committed to supporting and empowering volunteers.	6.2	8.8	2.6
14	My brigade leaders are able to deal effectively with human resource, conflict resolution and morale issues at brigade level.	6.4	8.8	2.4

Note that three of these (31, 21, 14) suggest the need for greater support, empowerment and coaching for brigade leaders.



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 4 Continued

Largest Performance Gaps:

The six statements below had the largest gaps between Importance and Performance of any of the 33 statements in the survey. Action is also needed to close the gaps between the Expectations of volunteers on these statements and their perception of the Performance currently being delivered.

		PERFORMANCE	IMPORTANCE	GAP
26	Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at CFA Corporate level.	4.3	8.4	4.1
13	CFA provides enough training opportunities in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy for me to participate.	5.2	8.5	3.3
25	Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my local District/Regional level.	5.5	8.7	3.2
11	CFA's workforce arrangements allow the paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as an integrated team.	5.5	8.5	3.0
10	CFA provides good leadership training for volunteers in people management, brigade management, conflict resolution and mentoring.	5.5	8.5	3.0
15	CFA corporate policies and leadership supports an effective volunteer based and fully integrated organisation.	5.5	8.5	3.0

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 5

Co-operation and Consultation:

Performance scores for the 4 statements in the cluster Co-operation, consistently scored poorly across all segments - age, gender, location (rural, urban or integrated brigade), region and leadership position. Immediate steps need to be taken to improve genuine co-operation and consultation at all levels between the CFA, paid staff and volunteers. This must include actively engaging volunteers in the identification, design and delivery of all processes, procedures and training relevant to their needs.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Training:

Early action is needed to increase the level of leadership training available at Brigade level. This must embrace not just leadership on the fire ground but broader skills in people management, conflict resolution and building and sustaining morale. Action is also needed to increase the level of general training available to volunteers in formats, times and locations suitable to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 7

Drill Down:

We recommend more detailed investigation be undertaken into the following matters identified by the survey:

- a) What are the specific issues that hinder better integration and co-operation between the CFA paid workforce and volunteers?
- b) How can recruitment and retention of younger volunteers be improved?
- c) What can be done to improve the balance between commitments as a volunteer and other aspects of the volunteer's life?
- d) Why have the following three Regions recorded lower performance scores on 5 of the 7 clusters in this survey than the other 5 Regions
 - Northern and Western Metropolitan Region (District 14)
 - Southern Metropolitan Region (District 08)
 - Gippsland Region (District 09, 10, 11)

This will entail gathering deeper insights from volunteers initially. We recommend this be done by using a combination of a small number of face to face and a larger number of telephone interviews. Research has shown that, contrary to popular practice, more relevant information can be gathered in less time and at lower cost through one on one interviews than via focus groups.

RECOMMENDATION 8

VFBV Awareness:

The VFBV needs to act to increase the effectiveness of its communication to all volunteers so that a much higher proportion become fully aware of the role played by VFBV in support of brigades and volunteers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 9

Ongoing Survey:

At least until the audit referred to in the previous recommendation is running effectively this survey which we have just concluded should be re-run regularly to monitor any changes in the perceptions of volunteers. For the next 27 months we recommend this be run at intervals of nine months. After that, if results show that the Expectations of volunteers are increasingly being met then the interval could be extended to 12 or 18 months. The results will provide a Dashboard that can be monitored for changes in perceptions (we are providing the VFBV with the tools to run this survey themselves).

To facilitate the running of future surveys by the VFBV it is important for that organisation to accelerate the collection of email addresses of as many volunteers as possible.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Raising Awareness of Survey:

The survey referred to in recommendation 9 should become a routine part of the regular calendar of significant events in the cycle of activities at brigade level. This will build awareness and should result in even higher response rates than those received for the survey just completed.

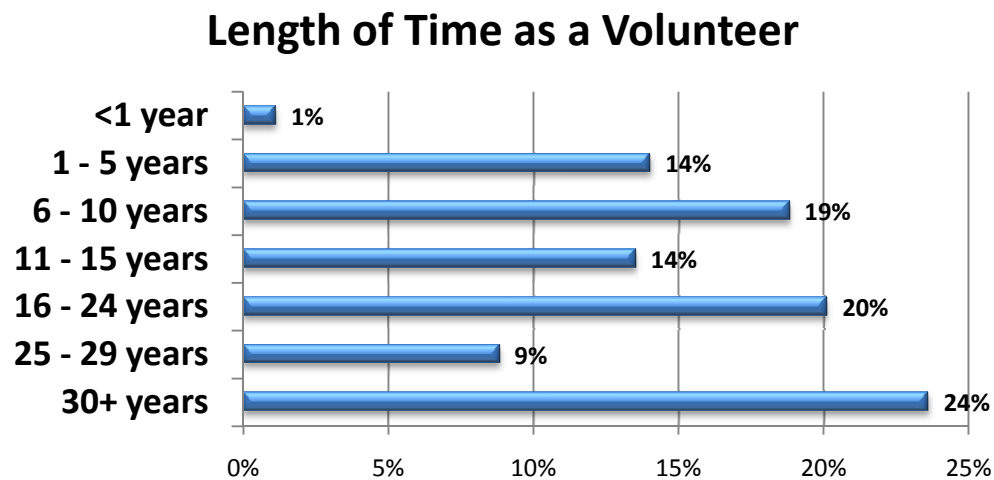
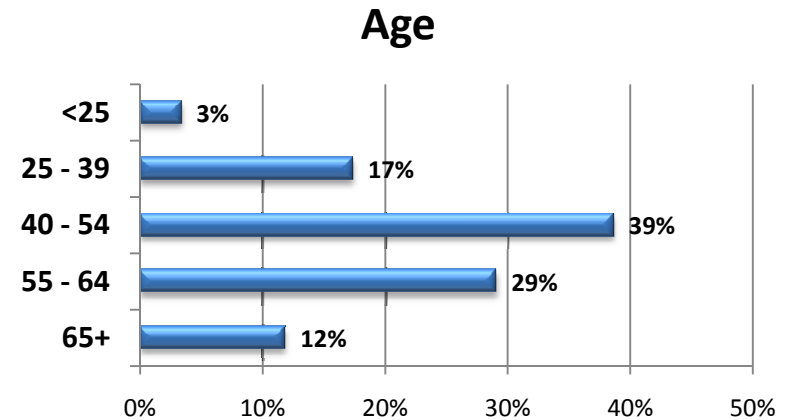
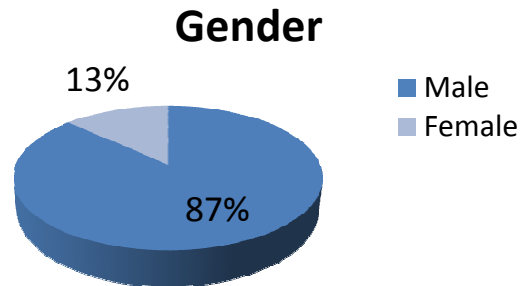
RECOMMENDATION 11

Feedback:

Early action needs to be taken to provide information to all volunteers about the survey results and what steps VFBV plans to take in response to the findings of this survey.

DEMOGRAPHICS

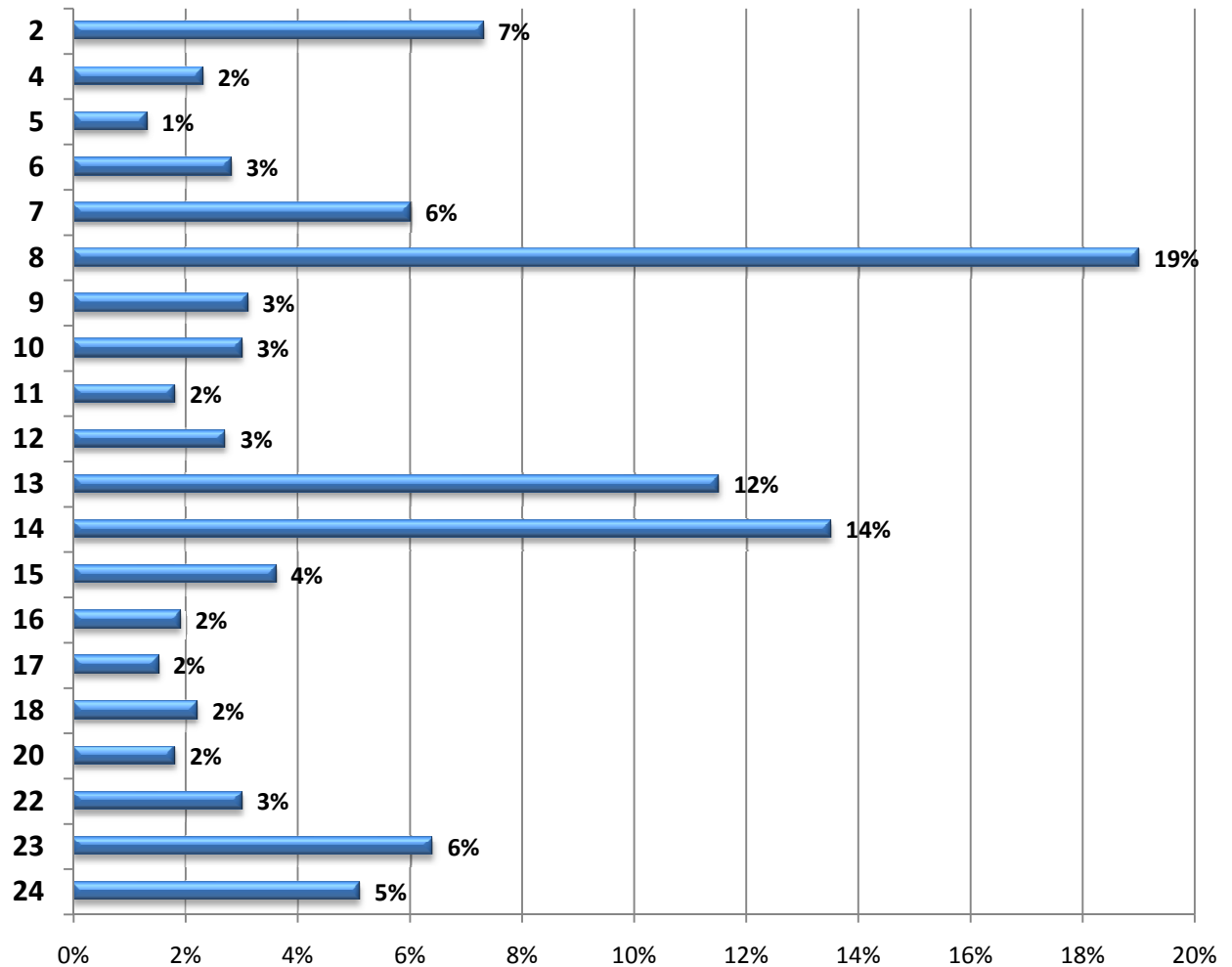
The following graphs show all respondents by gender, age and length of time as a volunteer.



DEMOGRAPHICS

The following graph shows the volunteers by District.

Of the total of 805 responses, only 29 people did not state which district they were from.



APPENDIX

SUMMARY DATA OF INDIVIDUAL RATINGS

SUMMARY GRAPHS

The following graphs are a summary of the way each statement was scored by all respondents from your organisation. The graph on this page is just an example to explain the scoring.

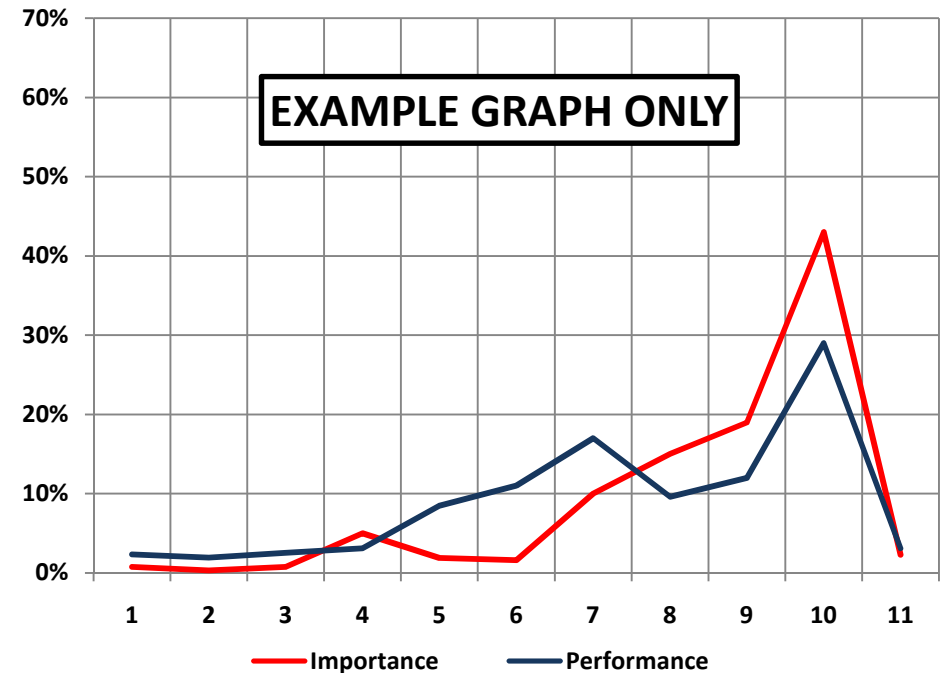
The Y Axis shows the percentage of people who scored the statement from 1 to 10 (with 11 being No Opinion/Don't know).

The X Axis shows the scores that respondents gave to this statement using a 10 point scale on

Importance :
1 = not at all important.
10 = very important
11 = no opinion/don't know

Performance:
1 = strongly disagree.
10 = strongly agree
11 = no opinion/don't know

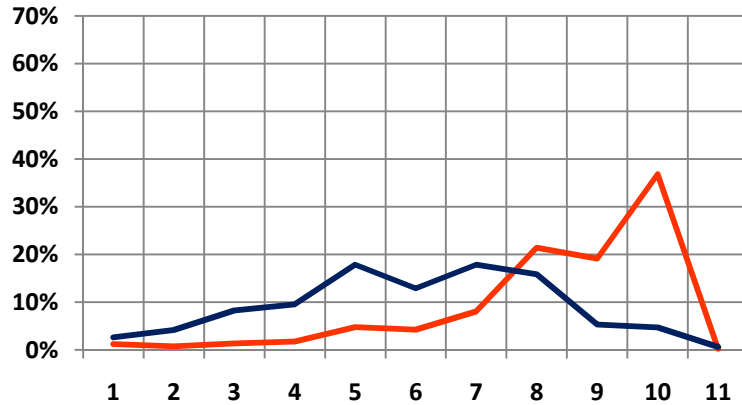
So in this example, 43% of respondents scored this statement at 10 (very important), but less than 29% strongly agree that the performance is good.



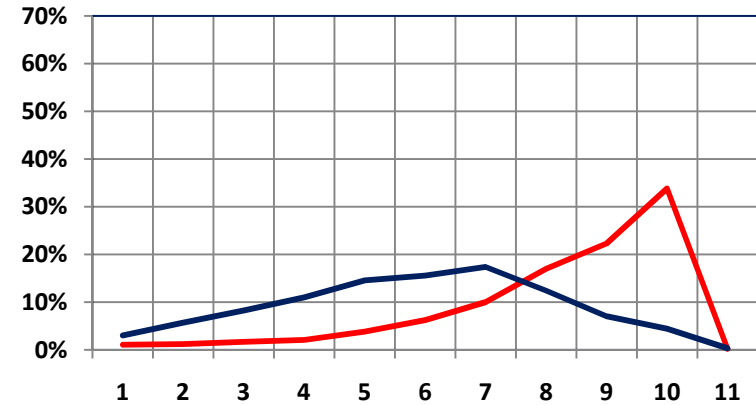
RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM

— Importance — Performance

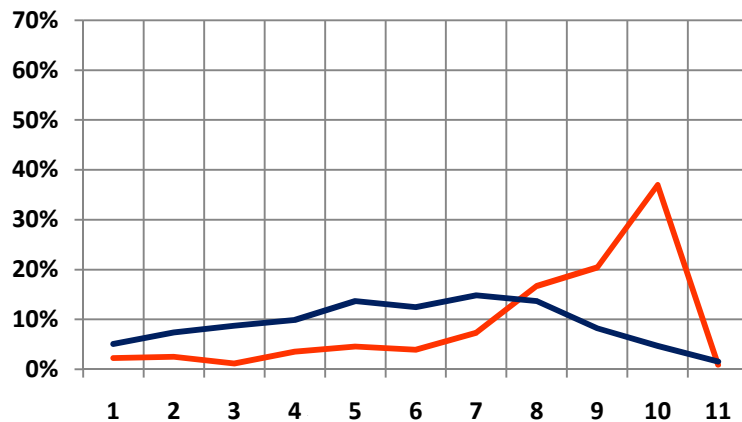
1. I respect and appreciate the effort made by CFA to support me as a volunteer.



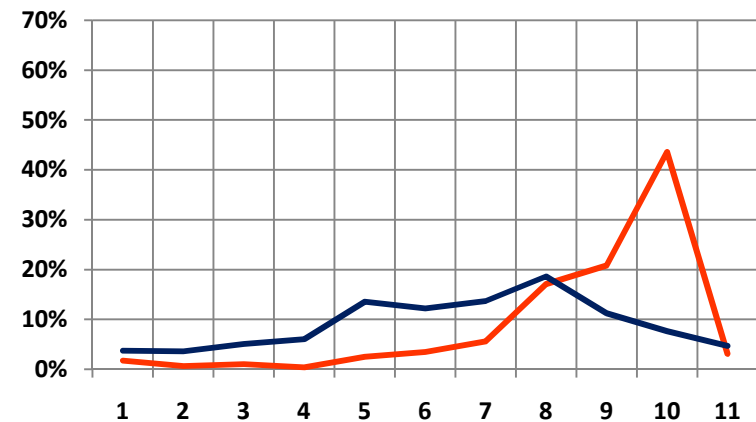
2. The respect and value of the contribution of volunteers is evident in CFA's actions and culture.



3. In general, CFA staff accept and recognise the professionalism of volunteers.



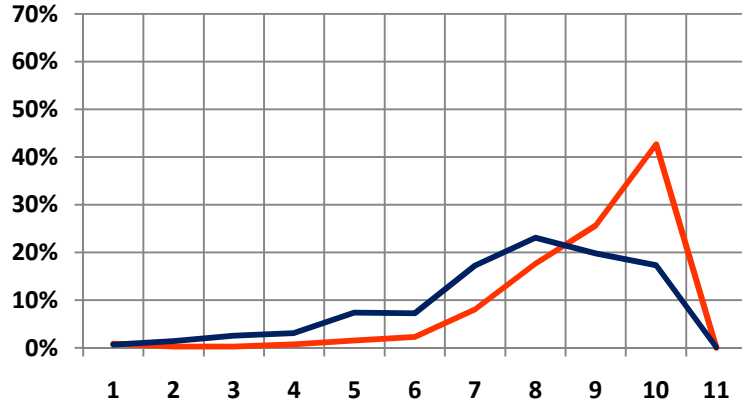
32. CFA consistently and proactively promotes public understanding of community confidence in the role and professionalism of CFA volunteers and their brigades.



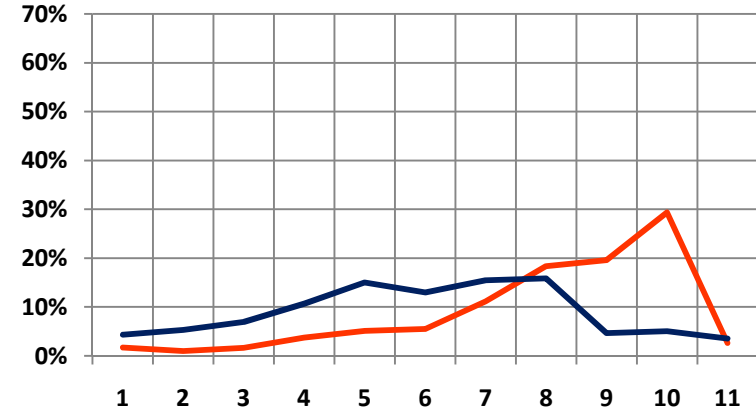
MY ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

— Importance — Performance

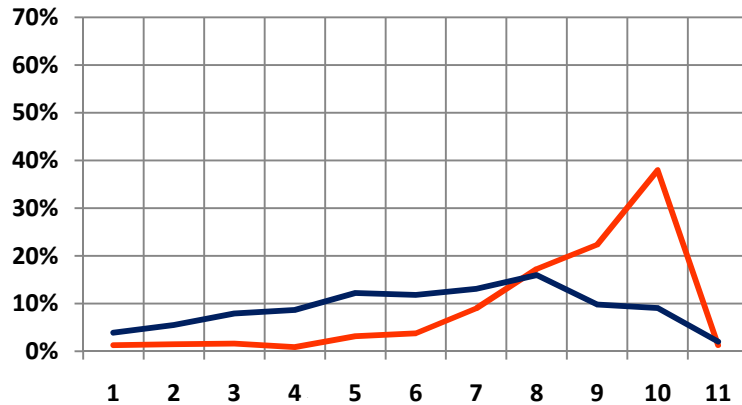
4. I feel the time I devote to CFA is productive and worthwhile.



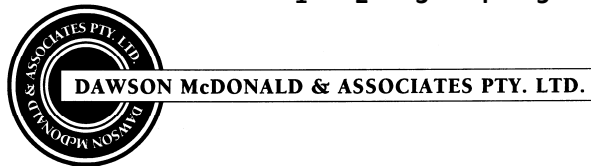
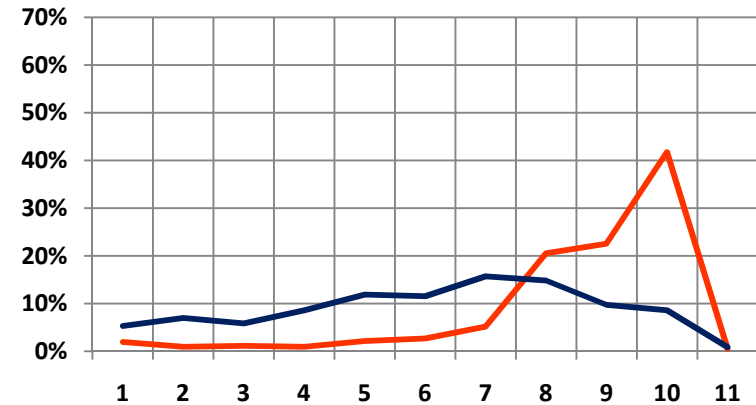
5. CFA is doing everything it can to facilitate a good balance between my service and time commitment as a volunteer and other parts of my life.



9. Volunteers who no longer wish to perform operational roles are supported to continue their volunteer service in other non-operational/operational support roles in a positive and supportive way.



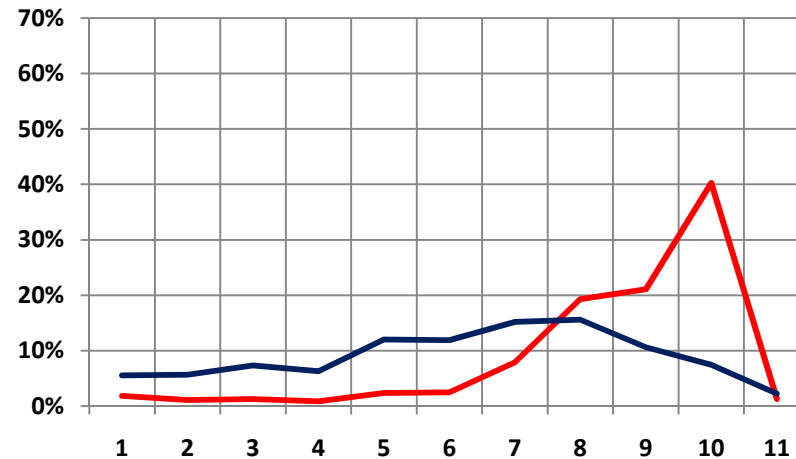
22. CFA recognises and utilises the skills and experience that I bring to CFA.



MY ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

— Importance — Performance

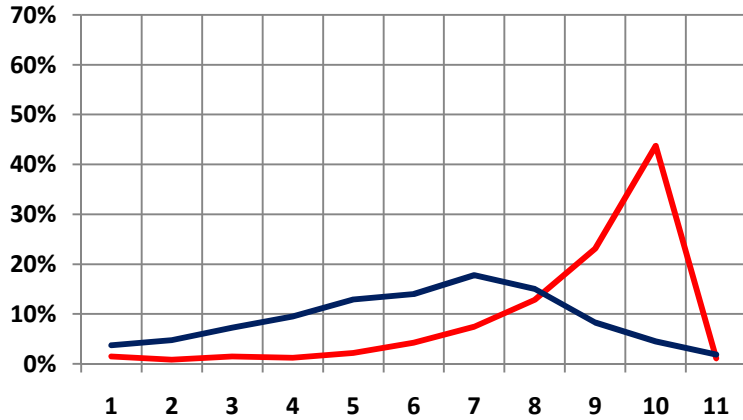
29. CFA proactively provide opportunities for me to progress and develop my skills to more senior/diverse roles as part of an individual volunteer career pathway.



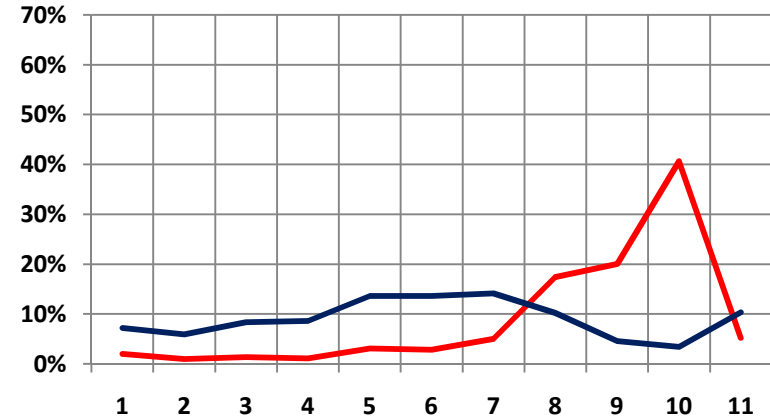
CO-OPERATION

— Importance — Performance

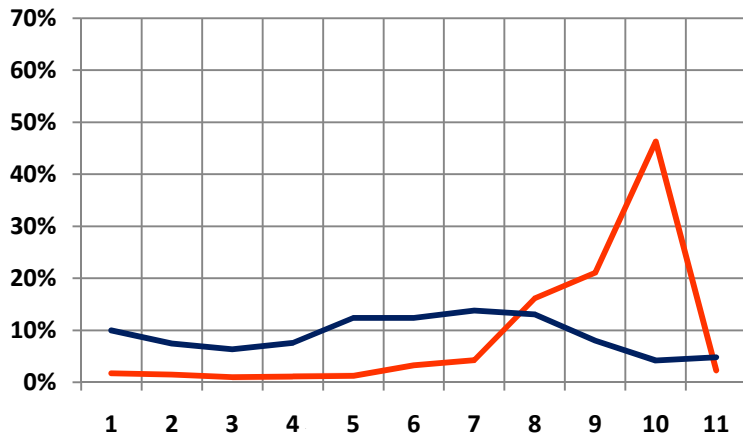
6. Volunteers and CFA staff work cooperatively at all levels to achieve shared goals and serve the community.



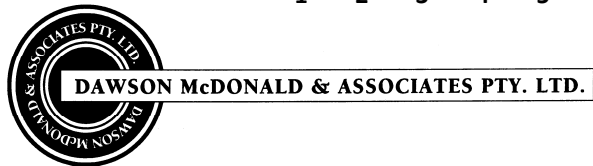
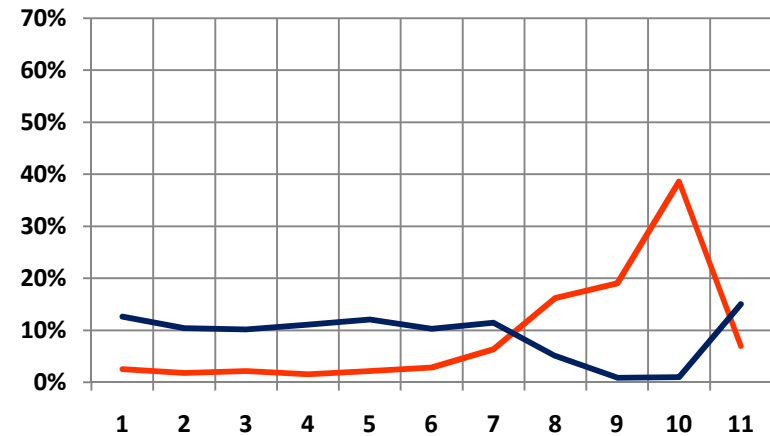
11. CFA's workforce arrangements allow the paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as an integrated team.



25. Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my local District/Regional level.



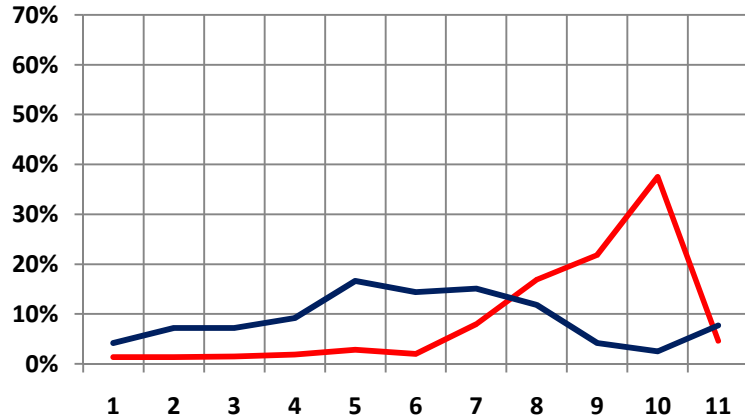
26. Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at CFA Corporate level.



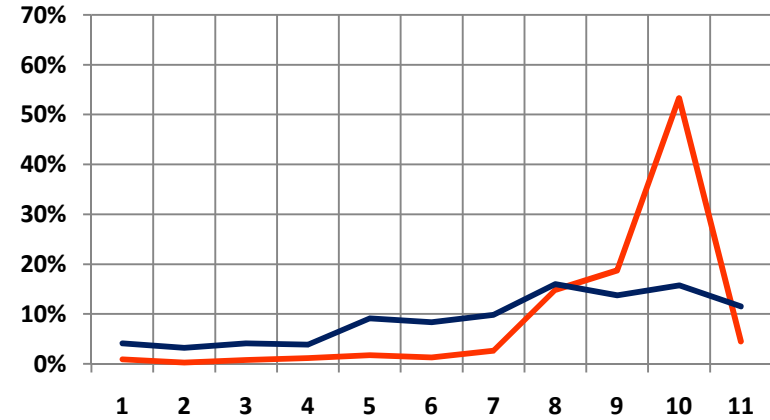
SUPPORT

— Importance — Performance

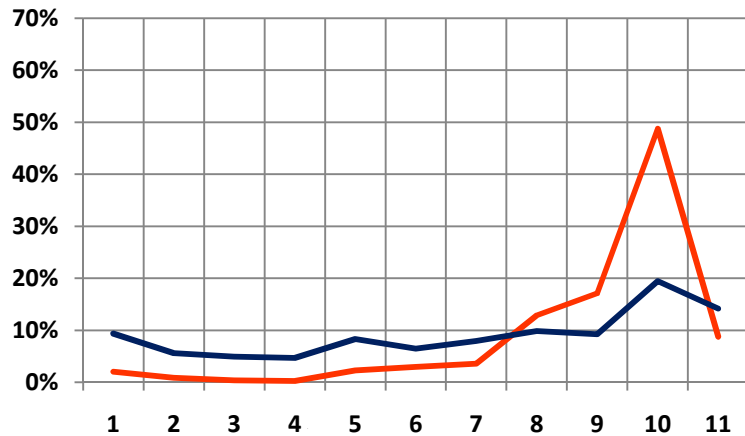
15. CFA corporate policies and leadership support an effective volunteer based and fully integrated organisation.



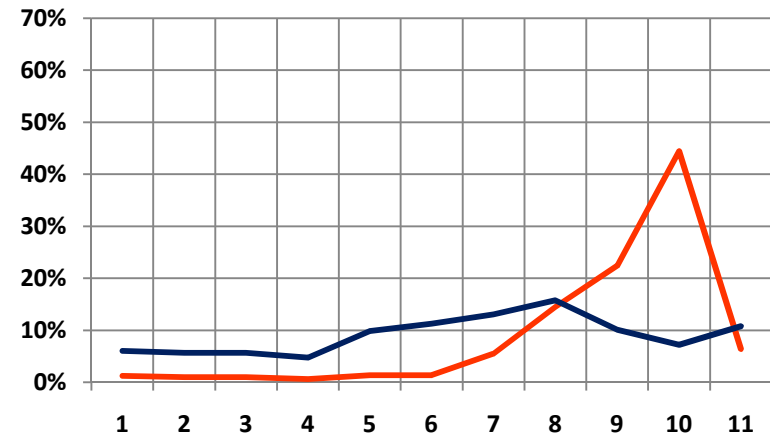
17. CFA works actively to discourage workplace bullying.



28. My employer is effectively recognised and supported to release me to undertake my volunteer commitments.



30. CFA paid personnel in my local brigade/district area are committed to supporting and empowering volunteers.

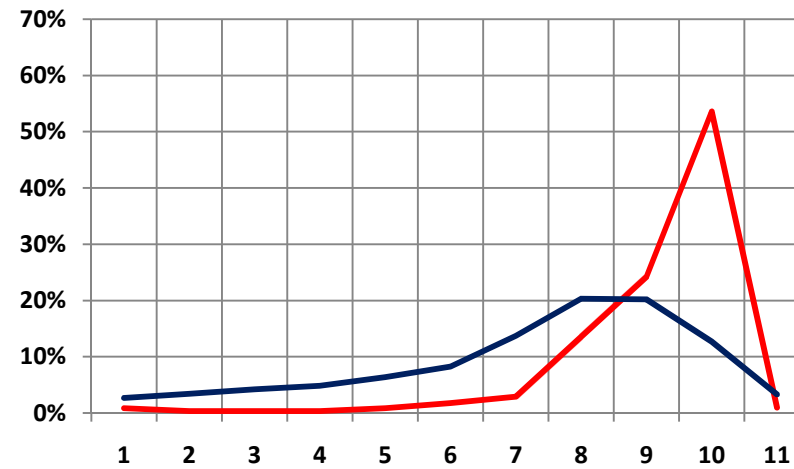


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SUPPORT

— Importance — Performance

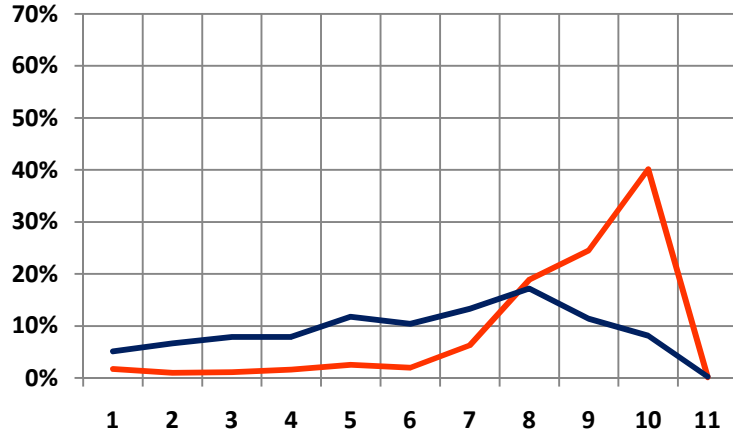
31. Volunteer leaders in my brigade are effectively supported and empowered to manage my brigade and undertake their roles.



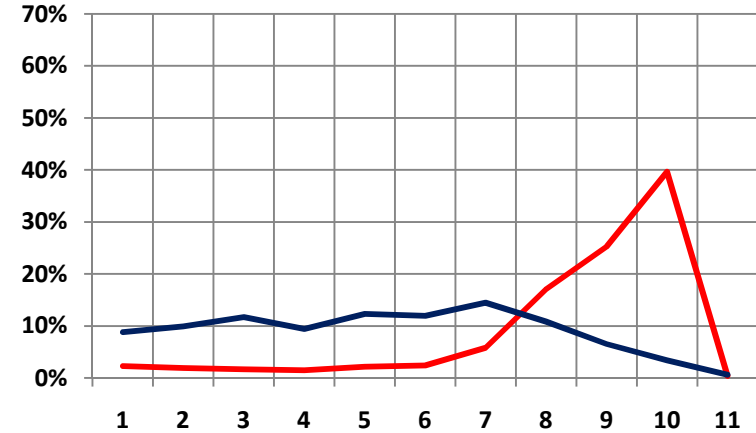
TRAINING

— Importance — Performance

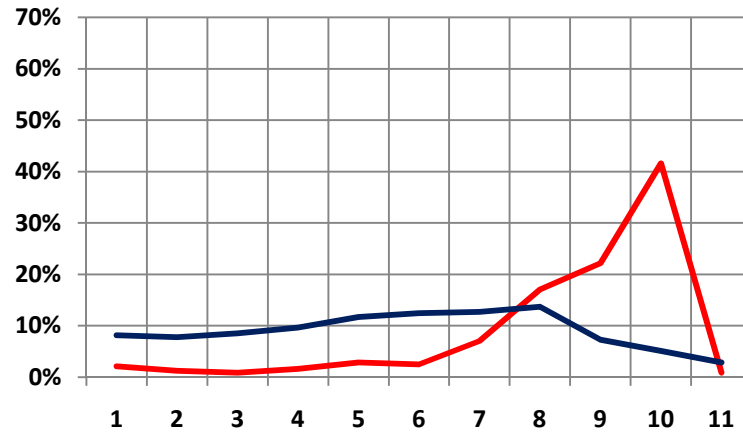
12. Most training is available and provided within a reasonable distance from my brigade.



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



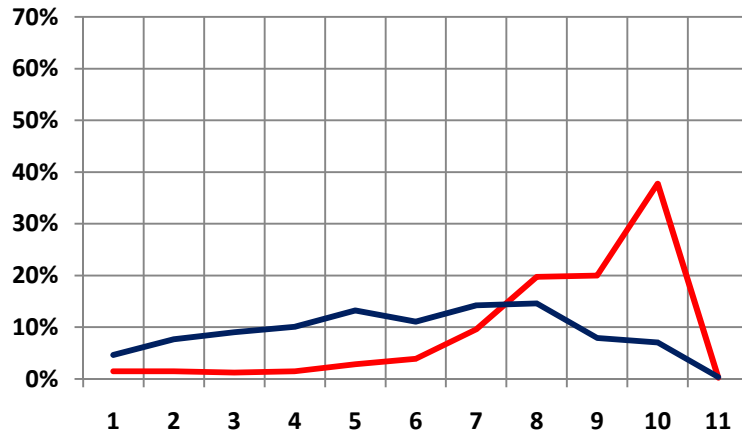
10. CFA provides good leadership training for volunteers in people management, brigade management, conflict resolution and mentoring.



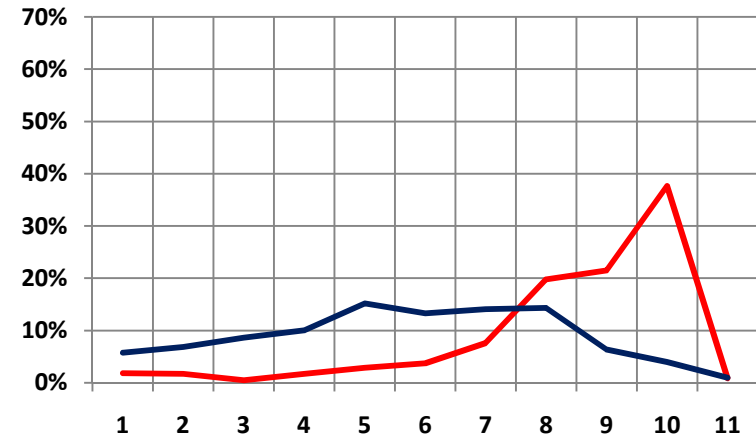
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

— Importance — Performance

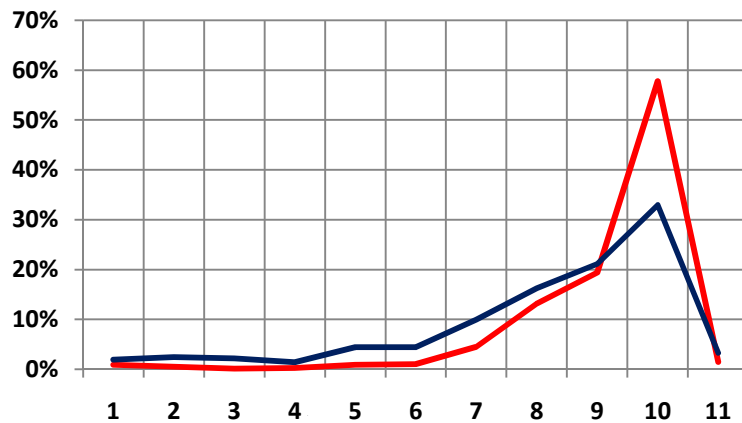
7. My brigade is successful in 'recruiting' younger people as volunteers.



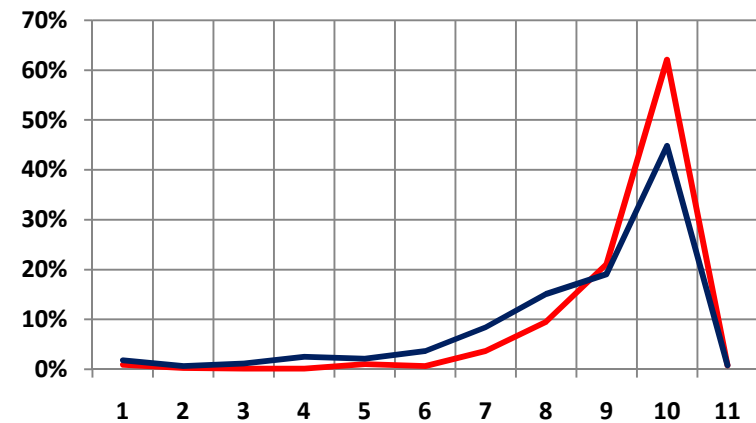
8. My brigade is successful in 'retaining' younger people as volunteers.



18. People from all cultural backgrounds, different religious, political and personal beliefs are all made welcome at my brigade.



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

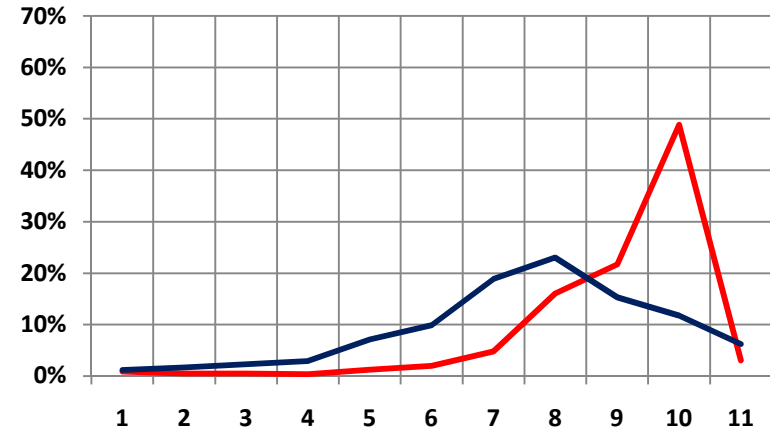
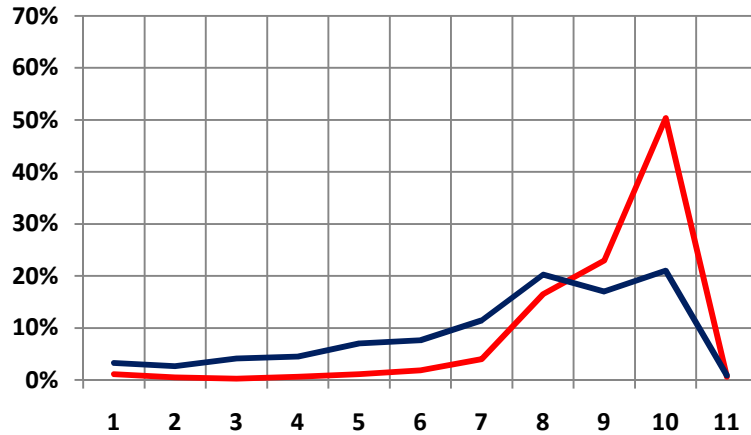


RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

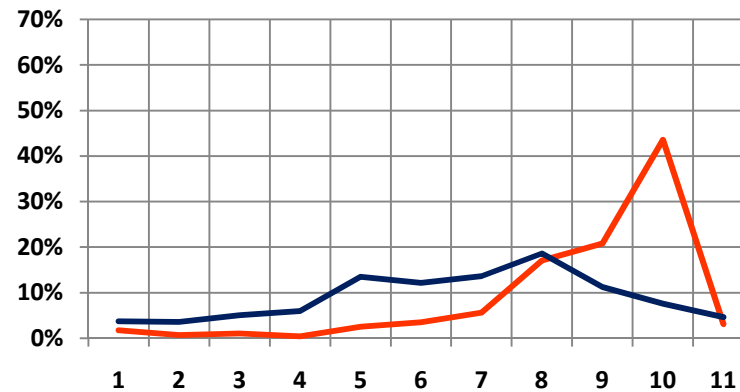
— Importance — Performance

20. New volunteers are actively supported to allow them to turn out to incidents within a reasonable time of joining the brigade.

24. The environment across the wider CFA is volunteer-friendly and welcoming to new members.



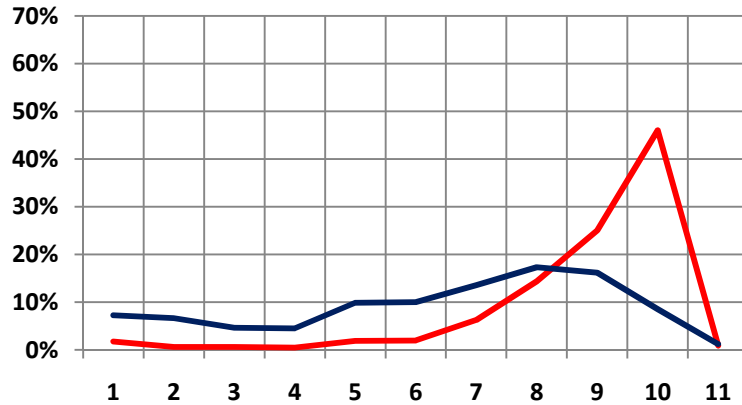
33. New volunteers in non response roles are actively supported to allow them to contribute in my brigade within a reasonable time of joining.



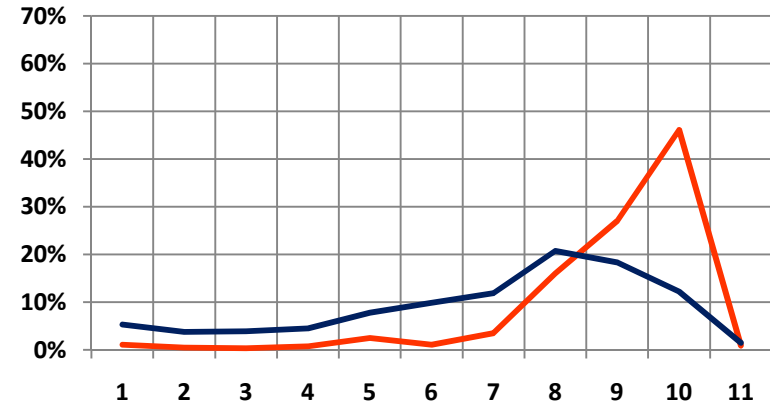
PEOPLE MANAGEMENT – MY BRIGADE

— Importance — Performance

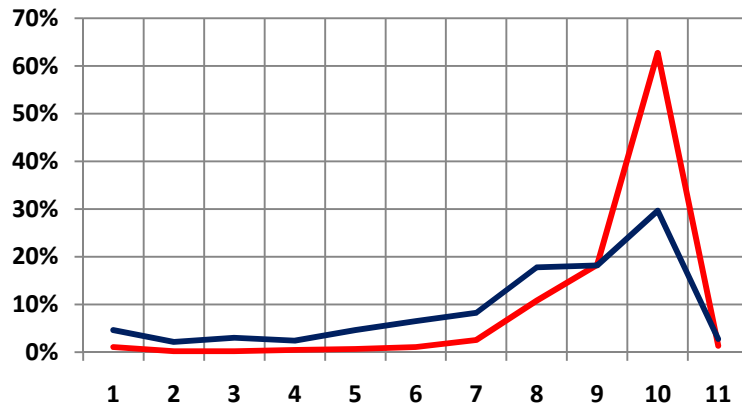
14. My brigade leaders are able to deal effectively with human resource, conflict resolution and morale issues at brigade level.



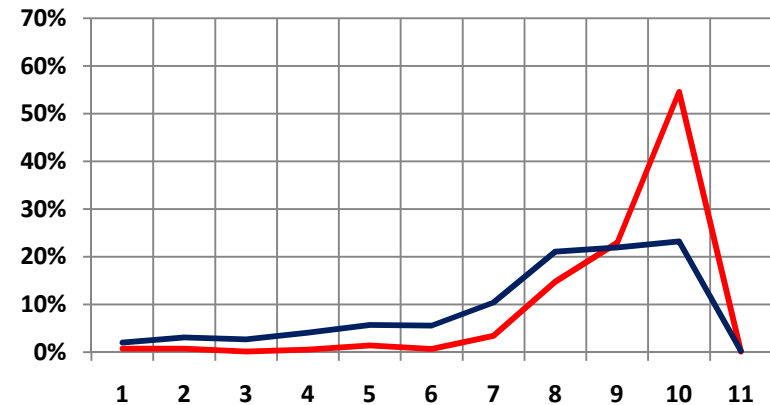
21. People management issues, conflict resolution and volunteer morale are generally well managed within my brigade.



16. Workplace bullying is not tolerated in brigades that I have been a member of.



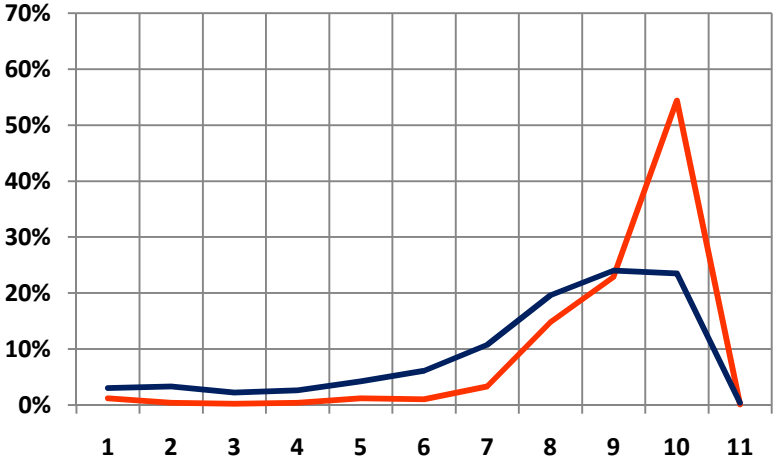
23. The environment at my brigade is volunteer-friendly, welcoming to new members and creates good morale.



PEOPLE MANAGEMENT – MY BRIGADE

— Importance — Performance

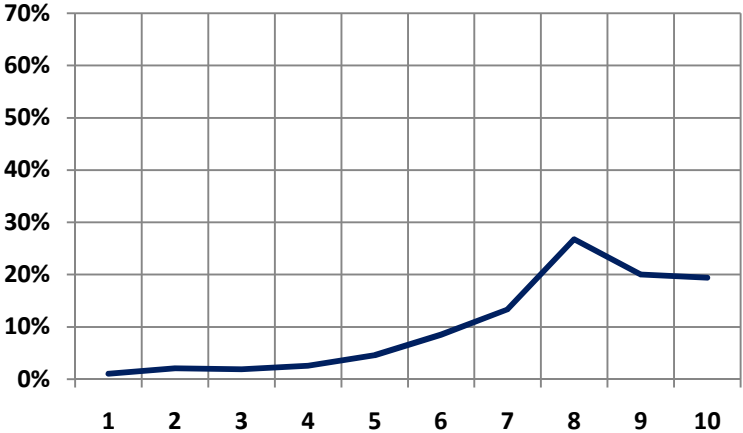
27. Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my brigade level.



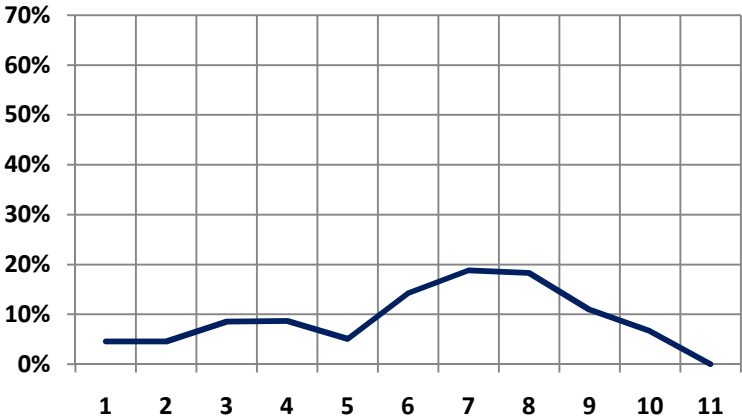
SATISFACTION LEVELS

Respondents were asked to rate each statement from 1 – 10, with 1 being the most positive, and 5 being unsure. Where applicable, 11 equalled 'don't know'.

34. Overall how satisfied are you with your role as a CFA volunteer?

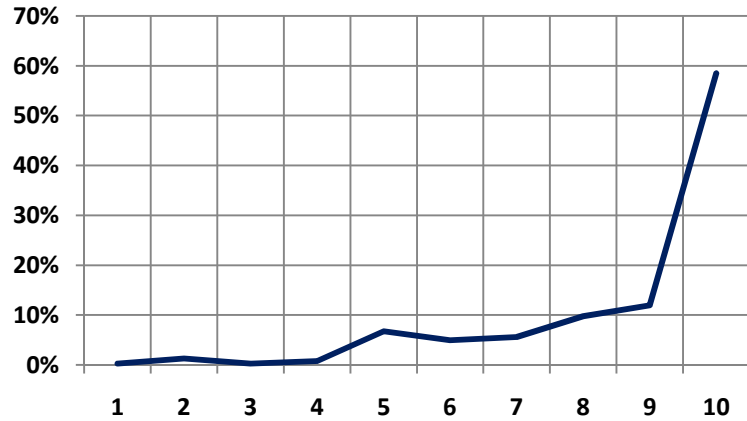


35. Overall how satisfied are you with the way volunteers are treated by CFA?

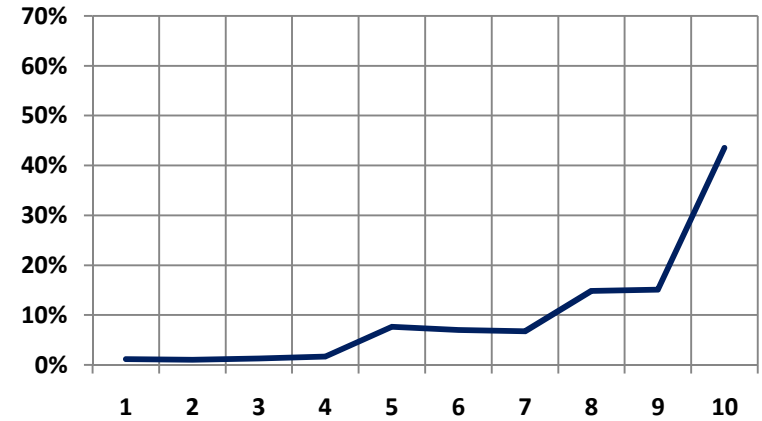


SATISFACTION LEVELS

36. I intend to continue my membership with CFA.



37. I would recommend being a CFA volunteer to people I know.



40. I am aware of the role VFBV plays in support of brigades and volunteers

