



VFBV

VOLUNTEER FIRE
BRIGADES VICTORIA



ANNUAL REPORT 2018 - 2019

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc.

Reg No. A0057948T ABN 110 830 80403

Strong Volunteerism, Embraced to Build Community Resilience for a Safer Victoria

ANNUAL REPORT 2018 - 2019

For the year ended 30 June 2019

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OVERVIEW

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) is established under Victorian law, the Country Fire Authority Act, to represent CFA volunteers on all matters that affect their welfare and efficiency. VFBV is an independent association operating autonomously from CFA, but at the same time working closely with CFA and other key stakeholders, to engage volunteers in CFA and other deliberations and provide advice on all matters affecting CFA volunteers. More than 95 per cent of CFA Brigades elect to pay an annual financial affiliation fee that contributes to the running of VFBV and its services.

VFBV also represents Coast Guard Brigades in Victoria and has close working relationships with other emergency service volunteer associations across Victoria and Australia. VFBV and volunteer fire brigade associations in all states of Australia work together on issues of common interest and/or national relevance through the Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA).

VFBV is an organisation run by the CFA volunteers it represents. VFBV is an independent and united voice of volunteers and engages with the State Government, Emergency Management Victoria, the CFA Board and management, Members of Parliament, official inquiries, municipal councils and instrumentalities, business and the public to proactively shape the future of emergency management in the interests of efficient and effective fire services and positive community safety outcomes.

VFBV engages with the Government and emergency management agencies to ensure that volunteers and their communities remain actively involved in emergency management decision making at every level through day to day practical work in VFBV/CFA Joint Committees and the Ministerial-level Volunteer Consultative Forum, and by advocating for positive, practical results from reviews such as the Jones Inquiry and the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) report on Managing Emergency Services Volunteers.

Given VFBV's direct volunteer-based foundations and in-depth knowledge of successful fire prevention, protection and response approaches in Victoria, it's well-established local and state-wide networks and the breadth and depth of hands-on experience in matters affecting volunteers and the provision of a volunteer based service model, VFBV is best placed to provide independent, unified and credible advice on matters affecting volunteers. VFBV facilitates regular state and local consultation forums and engagement activities to ensure that the views of volunteers are known and represented to stakeholders.

VFBV is independent from CFA but is an important part of CFA's foundation and future success. CFA is comprised of the community-based Brigades that form it. CFA management and staff provide the framework, governance, leadership, systems and expertise to direct, coordinate, support and empower this network of Brigades. Those CFA Brigades have built and delivered a remarkably successful and world-respected service to Victoria. VFBV is integral to enabling CFA to harness the leadership, knowledge and experience of volunteers and to engaging those volunteers in decision-making about matters that affect their welfare and efficiency. In a community and volunteer-based organisation such as CFA, genuine engagement with volunteers is vital. Robust, meaningful, respectful and honest communication and consultation is essential, and has been enshrined in the CFA Act through the Volunteer Charter as an obligation on CFA and the Government in any decisions that impact or have the potential to impact upon volunteers.

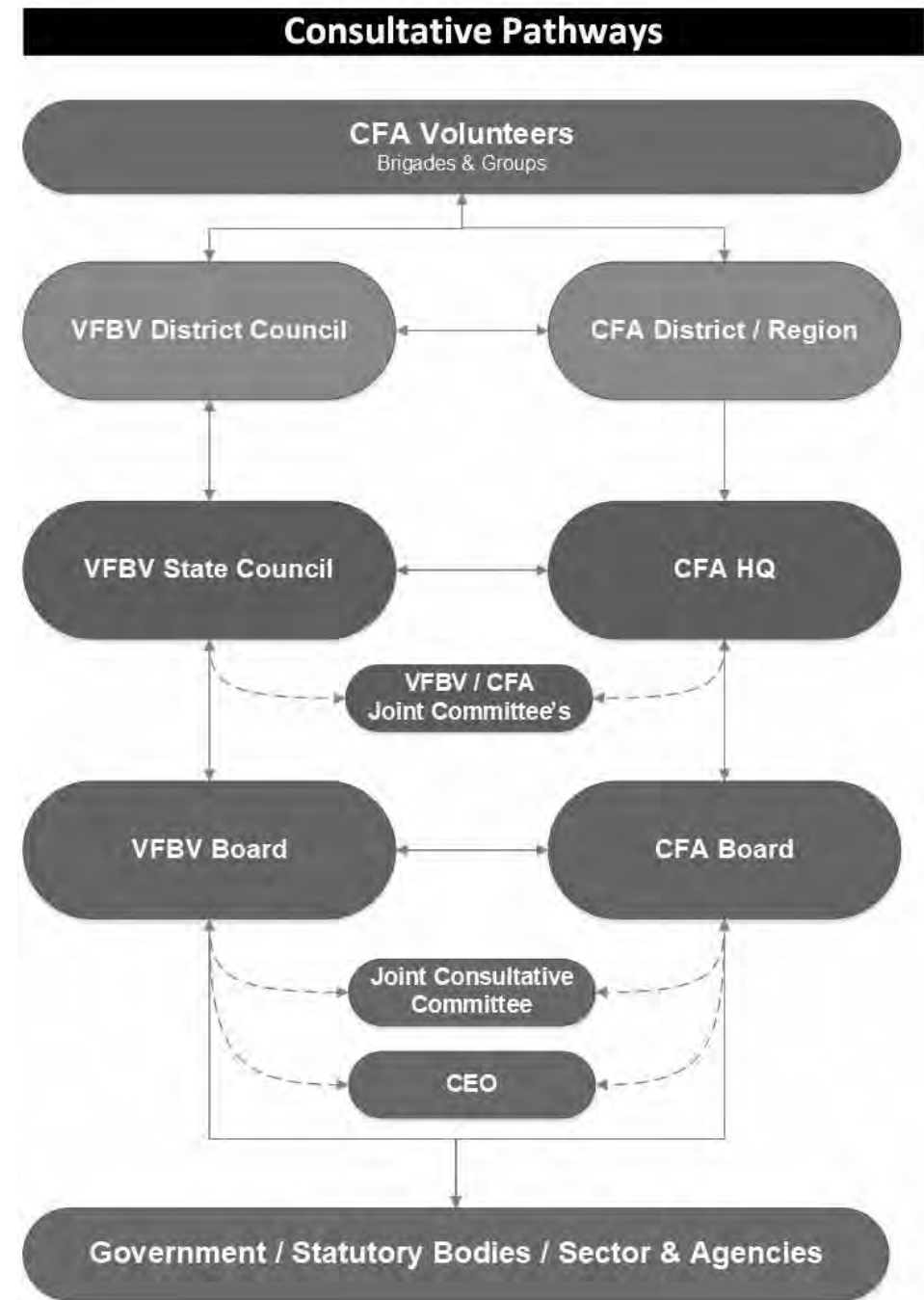
OUR VISION

Strong Volunteerism, Embraced to Build Community Resilience for a Safer Victoria

OUR MISSION

To achieve our vision we will:

- Be well informed of, and responsive to, grass roots volunteer needs, ideas and concerns;
- Represent volunteers and work with CFA and the Victorian Government to ensure ongoing commitment to the principles outlined by the Volunteer Charter;
- Be aware of strategic influences, opportunities and challenges confronting CFA volunteers, volunteerism generally and the decision makers who influence our future;
- Be proactive and prepared to lead and contribute, as volunteer advocates, to decision making and future planning processes at all levels;
- Build the profile and relationships required to position VFBV as an active and respected influence on decision making;
- Deliver communication, representation and decision processes that keep volunteers informed and provide opportunity for volunteers to be consulted on matters that impact on them;
- Resolve concerns and issues raised as quickly as possible;
- Work collaboratively with CFA management to achieve a CFA culture, structure, and operating context that treats volunteers fairly, justly and reasonably.





The year 2019 will go down in history as the end of one era and the start of another for CFA, especially for the volunteers who have built the CFA from the ground up into a world-respected emergency service.

VFBV has been clear and consistent in expressing its concerns on behalf of members about the Government's reform package, and there is no question that a lot of work is needed to rebuild the trust and confidence of volunteers in building the future direction of our CFA.

It is my intention that VFBV will continue to honestly and respectfully represent CFA volunteers, without fear or favour and as an independent voice of volunteers. While our message is not always well received, I take seriously our obligation to represent our members honestly and genuinely.

The appointment of a new Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Lisa Neville MP in late 2018, has given us some hope for a more professional relationship after the experience of the previous two years. VFBV has met regularly with Minister Neville since her appointment and is encouraged that respectful and constructive engagement is possible under her leadership, even when we have different viewpoints.

The fact of the matter is, Parliament has now made its decision and we must respect that. We put our argument up to Parliament and the lawmakers, and ultimately, they have decided to reject our view. While we may not be happy about the result, the strength of our democracy is that we all respect the final decision.

Sadly in my view the majority of those making the decision in Parliament have not truly appreciated the importance and role of CFA, the fundamental benefits of the current operational model, and how our community-based emergency service works.

That's understandable – CFA is a complex service and understanding over a hundred years of building a community-based emergency service and its predecessors is difficult for people who aren't familiar with us.

In what I find most personally disappointing as a third generation CFA firefighter and as State President of VFBV, is that VFBV and volunteers were not only excluded, they were subjected to misleading claims, criticisms and political attacks intended to damage our reputation and credibility.

What is perhaps most disappointing of all, is those who claimed to respect and value our vital CFA volunteers were notable by their silence in our defence.

Now that the legislation has passed, we will do as we have always done. I have confidence that CFA volunteers will work with good will as they always have done and we'll seek to work to get the best outcomes for our communities and the Victorian public.

I like many of you will not look back fondly on the last couple of years. Much of the work done by VFBV and many CFA volunteers over the past few years has not been obvious as we navigated a bitter, politicised environment to represent volunteer interests behind closed doors as well as in the public domain.

I want to thank every CFA member who raised concerns and spoke up; to VFBV, in public, to MPs and to other stakeholders. I particularly thank the tireless VFBV representatives who acted as a key support for brigades and members and were such a critical part of representing our views to Government, MPs and to CFA.

I thank the former fire services leaders who bravely raised their voices in concern about the damaging agenda of the past few years, and other experts such as Jack Rush QC and Justice Bernie Teague from the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, who defended and respected the current model.

I also wish to thank the various politicians and members of all parties who expressed their support for CFA volunteers. In particular, I thank those who have been consistent public voices in support of CFA volunteers and staunch defenders of the CFA's highly successful integrated operational model – a model that has been the envy of fire services around the world. Their support and their determination to shed light on the flaws in the legislation was of great comfort to volunteers and, at minimum, it means that the concerns of those who want the best and safest fire services in our State were captured for the public record and for reference in the future.

Vale

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of three VFBV life members in the past financial year.

Ex-Foreman George A Ellis (Bendigo Brigade - District 2) passed away on 1 March 2019. George was first elected in September 1982 and retired in July 1993. He was presented with a VFBV Life Membership 1992 and the VFBV Gold Star Award 1982. He served on numerous Joint VFBV/CFA Committees over that time.

Fred Grove (Lara Brigade – District 7) passed away on 10 March 2019. Fred was elected to the Association in August 2006 and retired in August 2018 after 12 years. He became an Association Life Member in 2016, was awarded the VFBV Gold Star in 2009 and was a member of the Joint VFBV/CFA Community Safety Committee and the FEM Advisory Committee.

Ian Thomson (Sunbury Brigade – District 14) passed away on 28 January 2019. He was elected in 1999 and retired in 2009. He received a VFBV Life Membership in 2009 and VFBV Gold Star in 2002.

Vale to these most valued and respected members, and VFBV extends its sincere respects to their families and Brigades.

CEO change

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the passing of the leadership baton at VFBV from Andrew Ford to Adam Barnett as CEO from May 2019.

Andrew has been an outstanding CEO since his appointment in February 2007 and in the 12 years he served as CEO he has helped lead us through one of the most traumatic, disruptive and destructive periods of fire services history in Victoria.

Under Andrew's leadership we have a highly professional organisation supporting our VFBV structure and he has brought a strong strategic insight into our thinking and operations. Affiliations have increased and remained steady under his tenure, demonstrating that Brigades value the performance of VFBV as their representative.

His successor Adam will take us even further, and his experience both as a volunteer and as VFBV's Executive Officer ensures we will have a credible, highly capable leader for the future.

Although the years ahead promise to be challenging, I believe Adam's leadership based on his incredible knowledge of the issues and the sector will position VFBV very well for the future.

In closing, we shouldn't lose sight of all the wonderful work we have been able to achieve together throughout the year, both on and off the fireground. I am often reminded when I attend each year's State Championships – the incredible work that goes into building tomorrow's firefighters. I am always impressed with how inclusive they have become, with competitors from all walks of life competing. Showcased for all to see is the broad age demographic, gender and ability. While I often hear people espousing what needs to happen, I am so proud to see volunteers just getting on with it and doing it.

I also want to acknowledge the families, the partners, and our loved ones who regularly make sacrifices to support us and the work we do 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We could not do what we do without their support, and on behalf of VFBV I want to express my deepest gratitude.

Finally I would like to sincerely thank my fellow Board members, State Council, District Council members and all Brigade/Group delegates for your support during a particularly tough and hard year. Well done and thank-you.

Nev Jones AFSM
VFBV State President



Working for VFBV for the past 12 years has been a privilege and a challenge, and none more so than this past year, where VFBV was practically the 'last person standing' in the debate on the Government's fire services restructure. So I was both excited and challenged when I accepted the role of CEO, given the landscape ahead of us.

Excited by the potential possibilities and the opportunities ahead, but challenged as I acknowledge the gravity of representing CFA volunteers at a time of significant upheaval that has caused many of you great distress. I know there are many challenges ahead as we work to ensure we have the strongest possible CFA in the future.

My overall reflection of the reporting year is that I am so very proud of the effort made by our VFBV network, our Board, our staff and the many CFA volunteers and friends who spoke up and participated in the debate around the legislation that was passed on 20 June 2019.

I am proud that as a volunteer representative organisation we stood up for what was right, and we consistently sought to bring debate about the fire services into a realm where evidence, research and analysis were the principles behind change proposals. This failed – not because of the weakness of our logic or argument, but because clearly logic, common sense, community safety and CFA's effectiveness were not the drivers of the change debate.

For better or worse, the highly successful CFA integrated model that has served Victoria so well during major disasters and decades of continuous urban growth, has been replaced by a new untested model. I stated on the night the Bill passed that although our warnings and advice have gone unheeded and many volunteers would be feeling betrayed and broken-hearted, all of them should sleep with a clear conscience.

We have articulated our concerns, both collectively through VFBV and separately. We have put forward thoughtful, logical and factual advice, backed up by trusted fire services leaders and experts, and made available the vast knowledge and experience of CFA volunteers in warning of the dangers and unintended consequences that accompany the arrangements proposed.

I have no doubt that CFA volunteers' profound sense of duty to their communities and to the people of Victoria will overcome their immediate reactions with time. We are used to backing each other and getting on with the job, and the job ahead is immense. We will need to seize the positive and the opportunities and try to minimise the negative and prevent the harm. Volunteers should remember that history is scattered with setbacks and losses, and often they serve as catalysts for positive change. We should not just set our eyes on the next couple of years – but think much more long-term about how CFA might look in 5, 10 or 20-years' time.

The history of our own association dates back to 1884 and spans over 135 years where volunteers have tirelessly and selflessly worked and toiled, sometimes with dogged determination to build the CFA we know today. Volunteers have been the principal drivers of CFA's world-successful and respected achievements. They have led, administered and coordinated CFA services to our communities for decades, whether it is in prevention, preparedness, or response and recovery.

We now have an obligation to use that knowledge and experience to build tomorrow's CFA. Our experience and achievements deserve to be respected, and we must continue to ensure the promises made to us through the Volunteer Charter and in Parliament are honoured and respected. For that is how the collective wisdom, knowledge and experience of volunteers can best be utilised, and harnessing that incredible knowledge is now the task ahead of all of us. We owe it to our forebears and those that will come after us - to build the best CFA we can.

Now is the time to heal the divisions that we never wanted but that have been created by the agenda of recent years. It is now critically important that we all unite behind our common cause in putting our communities first and protecting lives and property. For our part - VFBV is committed to working hard with the Government, agencies and all stakeholders to find common ground and heal the divisions of the recent past. We are committed to working constructively and in good faith as we move into the next part of this journey. No one should read this as a sign of giving up, in fact it is just the opposite. We have hard work ahead of us. And just as we do on the fire ground, we must remain agile and adaptable.

Much of the focus of the coming year will be determining how to mitigate the worse impacts of the changes and seize the positive. We will need to track the impacts that are intended and unintended, and to determine how communities and CFA volunteers will be supported. While the impacts might not be immediate, the long-term impact of seconding officers who have no experience working with or managing CFA volunteers and who have been trained in a paid-only environment, will be a particular challenge.

My hope is CFA will remain the world-respected, highly successful and admired emergency service that it is today, but this won't just happen – we will need to work hard together to make this a reality. It is also now incumbent on the Government, EMV and CFA to rebuild trust with volunteers, and I am committed to supporting this as best we can in the hopes of making the strongest possible CFA arise from the ashes of the old.

CFA volunteers will do as we always have – we will remain focussed on safety and we will seek to achieve the best and strongest CFA possible. As we do always, we will also seek to ensure that the effectiveness, efficiency and welfare of CFA volunteers is a top priority with decision-makers and that they are held to account for both their promises and commitments.

The value of our unified voice is clearly recognised by brigades, with VFBV affiliations remaining above 95 per cent in 2018-19. Our Welfare Fund provided support totalling more than \$96,000 to 30 CFA members experiencing financial hardship. Much of this support related to supporting firefighters who have cancer or other health related crisis.

In other areas, VFBV has diligently represented grass root common sense and volunteer views to CFA throughout the year during consultation on a range of proposals, and in many cases this has resulted in better outcomes for CFA as an organisation as well as members. Volunteers continue to prove their value not just on the fireground but as innovators – suggesting new initiatives or proposals to improve CFA. In the following pages there are many examples of the progress and achievements made by VFBV during the year, and I commend this report to our members.

And finally, I want to acknowledge the significant contribution of outgoing VFBV CEO Andrew Ford. I have worked with Andrew for over twelve years and consider him not only a respected work colleague, but as a friend. I have witnessed firsthand the professional and personal sacrifices he has made on our behalf, and while I know he does not regret any of them, I have nonetheless seen the toll they have taken and understand his reasons for wanting a change. We are rightfully very proud of the organisation that Andrew has helped lead and I commend him on the very solid and strong foundations he leaves behind. While Andrew will continue his strong involvement and contribution to the Association in a new important strategic advisory role, I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the VFBV Board, State Council and all Association members to formally thank him most sincerely for his outstanding service and acknowledge the significant contributions he has made over the years representing volunteers and building a safer Victoria.

As we cast our eyes to the future, we must look to create a CFA that is not only effective – but is also a great place to volunteer and be involved with. We will need to work hard to encourage tomorrow's leaders, as well as guide and mentor our new recruits. I encourage all members to continue to raise any issues with your brigade or District VFBV representative, engage with your local VFBV District Council and as always, feel free to contact myself directly. Your voice is important, now more than ever. VFBV is your organisation, so please stay active and engaged as we continue our work seeking the best possible outcomes for a strong and united CFA – working together to build safer and more resilient communities.

Adam Barnett
VFBV Chief Executive Officer

On 4 October 2008 the two Volunteer Associations amalgamated into Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) to provide a single unified voice for CFA volunteers. The event was marked by the Government and CFA re-affirming their commitment to the Volunteer Charter originally created in 2001. A symbolic re-signing of the Volunteer Charter was made by then-Premier John Brumby, Minister for Police and Emergency Services Bob Cameron, CFA Chairman Kerry Murphy PSM AFSM and VFBV President Gary Lyttle AFSM. This year marked the 10th anniversary of VFBV and its key achievements, which include:

- 2008: a \$2M one-off capital grant from the State Government established the **VFBV Welfare Fund**, expanding the VUFBA Welfare Fund and extending eligibility to all CFA volunteers.
- 2009: following corporate and individual donations for the support of volunteers, the **VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund** was established and distributed more than \$900K to nearly 300 volunteers and their families who were seriously impacted by the fires.
- 2009: established the **VFBV Volunteer Support and Development Fund** with significant donations from the Victorian Racing Club (VRC) and racehorse magnate HH Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al to enable programs, development and advocacy of volunteerism following the fires in February 2009.
- 2009: **VFBV Future Focus Workshops** provided the opportunity for District Councils to strengthen links with Brigades and ensure VFBV focuses on the issues of importance to volunteers.
- 2010: VFBV designed and initiated the **VFBV/Darley Leadership Scholarship Program**. In total 327 graduates achieved a Certificate IV in Frontline Management.
- 2010: **VFBV Volunteer Recognition Program** work commenced, substantially increasing the media coverage of VFBV and CFA volunteers on non-operational issues, carrying VFBV's messages about the professionalism and achievements of CFA volunteers.
- 2011: VFBV converted the VFBV Drought Support Fund, which had operated since 2007, to the **VFBV Natural Disaster Support Fund**, delivering practical help and allowing the public and other brigades to assist volunteers and communities affected by flooding as well as other natural disasters.
- 2011: newly elected Government fulfilled a commitment to VFBV by announcing **The Jones Inquiry**, an independent inquiry headed by His Hon. David Jones AM, retired County Court Judge, to examine the effect of arrangements made by CFA on volunteers, including recruitment, training, deployment, and utilisation and support of CFA volunteers.
- 2011: the **CFA Amendment (Volunteer Charter) Bill 2011** passed, enshrining the Volunteer Charter in legislation.
- 2011: VFBV developed an improved consultation process with CFA by establishing a Committee structure with seven redefined **Joint VFBV/CFA Committees** aligned with CFA's internal structure. This meant VFBV representatives on the committees are able to raise issues directly with CFA's relevant decision-makers.
- 2012: initiated the **'Think Like a Volunteer'** campaign with the backing of the Department of Justice, which presented bushfire safety messages in the words of volunteers urging Victorians to have their own fire plan, attracting state-wide TV, radio and press attention. It was later followed by VFBV's fire safety campaign with the slogan **'Fire Safety Starts With You'**.
- 2012: the first two **VFBV Support Officers** commenced, increasing VFBV's capacity to work with brigades and District Councils at the local level and with practical and on-the-ground support to ensure that volunteer engagement and input is effective. Today a team of five VFBV Support Officers cover the entire State.



- 2012: VFBV designed the **VFBV Volunteer Welfare & Efficiency Survey** to measure CFA volunteers' satisfaction against key issues affecting volunteer welfare and efficiency; it has since extended to other volunteer emergency services and nationally.
- 2013: the **VFBV Welfare Fund** celebrated 100 years of assisting volunteers in financial hardship, with more than \$1million distributed to more than 1,000 CFA volunteers.
- 2013: VFBV expanded both the size and the scope of the **VFBV/Darley Volunteer Leadership Program** to include volunteers across the emergency services sector.
- 2015: the **Digital Scanner Subsidisation Program**, which VFBV proposed and managed in partnership with CFA, saved Brigades and Groups more than \$3 million.
- 2016: the **VFBV Multi-Agency Youth Network** rolled out, bringing together young volunteers from across the emergency services sector and building their capabilities as the next generation of leaders, with active Youth Panels now established and working with VFBV support in most Districts.
- 2016: **VFBV's Surge Capacity Modelling** promoted the professionalism and essential nature of volunteers to Victoria's emergency services. VFBV launched a simple animated video showing how CFA's huge volunteer capacity deals with multiple and concurrent major incidents while still protecting Brigade's local community; VFBV also worked with the University of Melbourne to produce an evidence-based, computer-generated time lapse tool that visually demonstrates CFA's huge volunteer surge capacity in real time.
- 2016: VFBV successfully sought and was granted a **Supreme Court injunction** due to concerns regarding the CFA enterprise bargaining agreement and how it would interfere with CFA decision-making and the Chief Officer's powers.
- 2017: VFBV successfully campaigned for amendments to the **Fair Work Amendment (Respect for Emergency Services Volunteers) Bill 2016** to protect volunteers and seeks to ensure that no industrial agreement undermines the volunteer nature of CFA or limits CFA's ability to recognise, value, respect or promote the contribution of its volunteers to the wellbeing and safety of the community; the amendments also sought to protect the powers of the CFA Chief Officer from being undermined or overridden on matters affecting volunteers.
- 2017: VFBV developed and launched its **Delegate Development Program, Engaging Diversity**, providing practical skills and knowledge to VFBV delegates at the Brigade/Group level; this mapped to national competencies from the Australian Public Safety units.
- 2018: over the decade there was a significant increase in the **VFBV Affiliation rate from** 67% to a high of 95.5%, which has been maintained since 2014, clearly demonstrating that CFA Brigades and volunteers see value in VFBV.

VFBV AFFILIATED MEMBERS – CONTINUE TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT

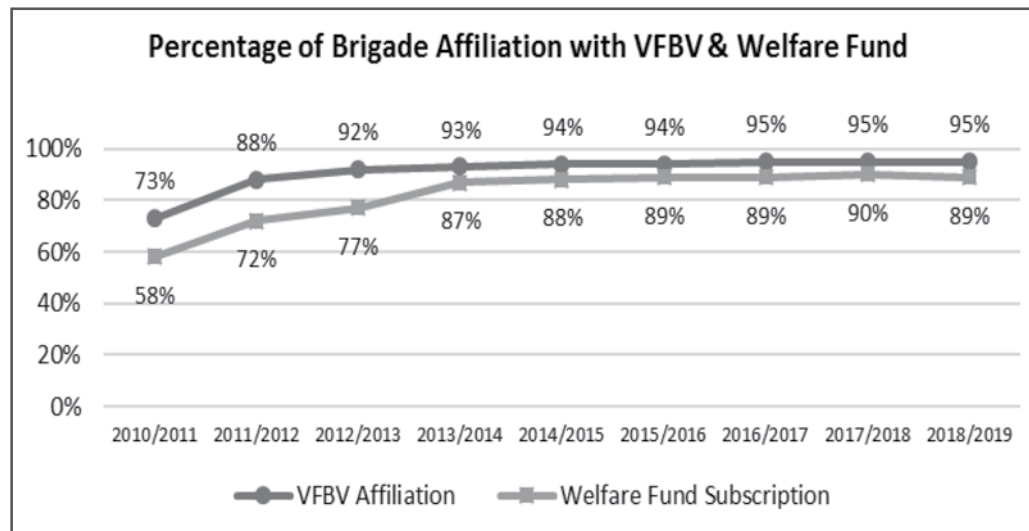
Without doubt it is more important than ever that volunteers have a strong, united, independent and credible voice.

VFBV's Brigade affiliations for the 2018-19 financial year were maintained at a high 95.3%, demonstrating yet again the strong support for the Association's important work in representing and advocating for all CFA volunteers.

This high level of support reinforces the importance of VFBV's legislated role in the CFA Act and our driving motivation to encourage, maintain and strengthen volunteerism and the capacity of volunteers to deliver CFA services. Good service delivery is a fundamental requirement to enabling a community to share responsibility for their own safety, to community resilience and, ultimately, to achieving a safer Victoria.

Two Districts achieved a 100% Brigade affiliation rate this year, with most Districts achieving above 96%. The continued strong support from Brigades can be attributed to the hard work and good local representation of VFBV District Councils, Brigade delegates and State Council delegates.

As a gesture of appreciation for Brigade support, VFBV this year gave all Brigades and Groups that paid their affiliations before 30 June a chance to win one of four prizes. The prizes were kindly donated by GAAM Emergency Products and Powdersafe Pty. Ltd. VFBV gratefully acknowledges the generous donations from GAAM and Powdersafe.



VFBV WELFARE FUND – SUPPORTING OUR MOST VULNERABLE MEMBERS

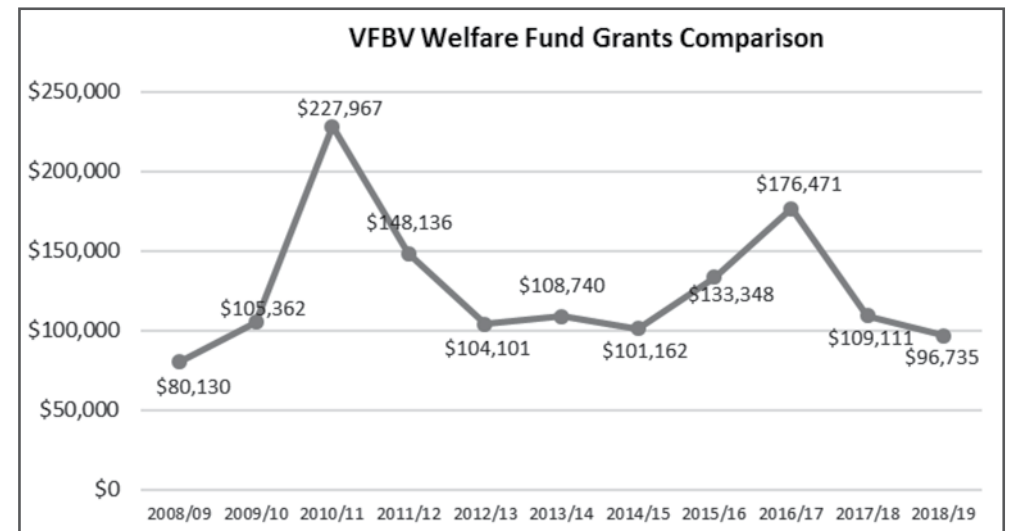
Brigade membership of the VFBV Welfare Fund has been maintained at a high level, with 1,066 Brigades subscribing to the Welfare Fund for the 2018-19 financial year – a continued high rate of 89.4% of all CFA Brigades.

In the 2018-19 financial year the Welfare Fund distributed \$96,735 to assist 30 volunteer members or their families who were experiencing personal financial hardship.

The Welfare Fund aids members who find themselves experiencing severe financial hardship and are unable to meet essential living expenses. It is designed to alleviate stresses that can impact on their family, their ability to continue as a CFA volunteer and therefore their ability to continue protecting their community. Since its creation in 1913 the Welfare Fund has assisted 1,169 volunteers by distributing more than \$1.8 million. Over the past 10 years alone, the Fund has been able to provide grants totalling more than \$1.3 million to volunteers and their families.

The Welfare Fund is run as a Government-approved charity under Australian Taxation Office rules with a Committee of Management comprising six long-serving CFA volunteers. The Fund is independently audited annually, with all operating and administrative costs covered by VFBV. This ensures that every dollar earned by the Fund's investments and subscriptions goes to assisting volunteers in need. Typical cases involve volunteers who are facing financial difficulty due to prolonged illness, bereavement, loss of earnings, or costs associated with supporting a family member undertaking medical treatment or hospitalisation.

Grants from the VFBV Welfare Fund are financed by Brigade subscriptions and interest is earned on the Fund's invested capital, which ensures the Fund's capital base is maintained to ensure support to CFA volunteers in need for future generations.



Overview

Some key issues that were addressed by our consultative forums and working parties during 2018-19 include:

VOLUNTEER WORKWEAR

More than 3,300 volunteers participated in the 2018 Volunteer Workwear Survey. Volunteer feedback to the Survey was comprehensive, and CFA subsequently agreed to radical changes to its initial proposal.

It was the second survey conducted on the matter, which has dragged on for many years without an outcome. An initial survey in 2015 by CFA Chief Officer Euan Ferguson included several options for dress uniform, work wear and field/station wear for volunteers. Those options were well accepted, with more than 70% of respondents favouring the options and designs presented.

However CFA was forced to withdraw these popular volunteer workwear specifications and the associated tender process in 2017, after industrial interference associated with the proposed 2016 Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) required that PPC, station wear and uniforms for staff be significantly visually distinguishable from volunteers, and that these versions must not be made available to anyone other than operational career staff. This contradicted claims and assurances that the proposed 2016 CFA/UFU EBA would have no impact on volunteers.

VFBV expressed frustration at the consistent delays and interference on this issue and CFA's failure to deliver on its 2010 commitments to review and update uniforms, workwear and field/station wear for volunteers.

VFBV State Council wrote to the CFA expressing its deep frustration at the lack of information and progress, given CFA received \$3 million from the State Government in August 2017 from a volunteer support package to provide workwear to CFA volunteers. CFA met with the VFBV Uniform Working Party in September 2018 and finally presented its proposed redesigned garments.

CFA and the VFBV Uniform Working Party agreed to seek further feedback from volunteers on a number of these changes that were not addressed by the initial survey, with a further brief short survey undertaken.

Volunteer workwear has been a contentious issue for several years and VFBV hopes CFA will now finalise the specifications, moving as quickly as possible through a tender and procurement process to final implementation.

STRUCTURAL HELMETS

Members have continued to raise concerns with VFBV over CFA's decision to issue new structural helmets only to career staff, with volunteer rollout delayed.

CFA advised that it was unable to procure helmets for volunteers before it runs an open tender process, as required by Victorian Government procurement guidelines. It remains unclear why the procurement of new helmets for career staff was not similarly affected.

CFA advised that it intends to seek expressions of interest from the market and then evaluate and run an open tender process to select a new structural helmet for volunteers. Given the delays in procuring new helmets for volunteers, it is possible there are better helmets now on the market.

VFBV has rejected false claims that VFBV is the cause of these delays, the same misleading tactic used about the selection process for volunteer and staff PPC in 2008, which has often been misrepresented as VFBV's fault.

Indeed VFBV advised CFA in 2015 that its preference was for a singular helmet to be selected, funded and rolled out, and it confirmed this again in 2016.

Even after it was suggested that VFBV be excluded from the user trials, VFBV reached a pragmatic position to support a single helmet to avoid the delays and a predicted disjointed process and divergent outcomes that occurred with structural PPC selection. A 2008 report by Judge Gordon Lewis on the excessive delays in selecting PPC was damning of all parties involved except VFBV.

After CFA decided to run an open tender and field evaluation VFBV advocated for a transparent and open process in which members could participate, resulting in three field trials held across the State in early 2019. As at writing, results from the tender processes were yet to be released.

GROUP OFFICER HELMETS

VFBV continued to seek clarification on rumours that CFA is introducing new helmet colours for career staff only. VFBV has asked why there has been no consultation with volunteers on the proposed changes. VFBV State Council expressed strong disappointment with CFA's advice that it had come to an agreement with UFU on helmet colours without consulting volunteers, and that volunteers will not be permitted to wear the same colour helmets as career staff.

This was a further example of a lack of volunteer consultation – or deliberate exclusion of volunteers from input into decisions that affect them – that breaches the Volunteer Charter and CFA Act.

VFBV cautioned CFA about its approach, advising that volunteers are increasingly reporting they are not feeling respected or appreciated by CFA, and the serious consequences these secret backroom deals are having on volunteer goodwill and morale.

VFBV is considering options to further escalate its concerns and will continue to seek a fair and transparent resolution.

ELEVATED WORK PLATFORM TRIALS

On behalf of members the VFBV representatives on the Joint VFBV/CFA Equipment & Infrastructure Committee highlighted to CFA a significant safety issue when working at incidents that require the rescuers to operate above ground level.

As a result, an Elevated Work Platform (EWP) is being trialled by brigades during rescues that require stable above-ground access at incidents, such as when rescuing a person trapped in a rolled over large truck cabin.

The trial is the direct result of active requests from rescue Brigades who had identified the requirement as a key safety and efficiency measure for rescue operations. Casterton Fire Brigade first trialled a portable lightweight Elevated Work Platform, with Werribee and Ballarat Brigades joining a wider trial in the latter part of the financial year.

BRIGADE MANAGEMENT MANUAL

The effectiveness of genuinely embracing consultation with volunteer representatives was demonstrated with the development and release of an updated Brigade Management Manual on CFA online.

VFBV representatives on the Joint VFBV/CFA Volunteerism Committee were heavily involved in the review of the manual and congratulated CFA on a good collaborative model that enabled enough time for VFBV to request feedback from members.

This ensured feedback from the field was incorporated. The online manual will include access and links to important information such as the CFA Act, Regulations, Standing Orders and Standard Operating Procedures, as well as policies, forms, etc.

Every brigade will receive a hard copy of the manual, which was expected to be distributed in August 2019.

IVECO 4.4 TANKER

VFBV successfully escalated safety concerns raised by members about the Automated Manual Gearbox (semi-automatic transmission) in the IVECO Eurocargo 4.4C Tankers. Following reports from volunteers, VFBV State Council sought an urgent review and operational risk assessment be conducted via the Joint VFBV/CFA Equipment & Infrastructure Committee. CFA's initial advice that it would address the issue through targeted driver training and vehicle familiarisation was considered inappropriate and inadequate by VFBV given the core fault was mechanical not one of driver error, and it represented this to CFA.

CFA subsequently agreed to discontinue the use of the semi-automatic gearbox in the current build of tankers and replace it with an Allison automatic transmission for all future builds. Unfortunately, this led to CFA having to reduce its planned build program of 20 Heavy Tankers scheduled in the financial year to 18 – again highlighting the inadequacy of the CFA base budget for appliances. Approximately 80 appliances fitted with the older semi-automatic transmission remain, and VFBV expressed concern at the potential to now have two identical looking vehicles, one with a semi-automatic transmission and the other with a fully automated one – and how this may manifest during campaign fires, for example where drivers are frequently rotated.

VFBV delegates requested a funding bid be developed for Government to cover a retro-fit program, and in the interim for CFA to develop measures to make the transmission type easily identifiable.

WIRE ROPE SAFETY BARRIER SUCCESS

For many years VFBV has advocated on behalf of volunteers about the importance of engaging CFA Brigades on any plans to install wire rope barriers along roadways. Early consultation allows Brigades to clearly understand what is proposed and work with VicRoads staff to mitigate any impacts on local firefighting operations, including access/egress to bushland and turnaround points large enough to accommodate emergency vehicles.

Late 2018, VFBV officials met with VicRoads senior management on behalf of the Joint VFBV/CFA Community Safety Committee about the importance of engaging local Brigades, and subsequently received reports from several Brigades that had been approached by VicRoads, which then worked closely with the Brigade to alleviate, and in some cases resolve, concerns with planned works.

LOSS OF GPS TRACKING

VFBV expressed its disappointment during the year that CFA and its radio supplier had failed to anticipate and plan for a known fault that occurs every 20 years and caused significant concern and disruption in the reporting period.

Millions of GPS devices worldwide, including the Tait radios on CFA appliances, experienced a Y2K-style glitch on 6 April 2019 when the GPS internal date counter reset itself. Neither CFA or Tait had put in place any planning or workaround for the known fault that impacted on CFA during the fire season.

Vehicles still had full use of the radio for communication purposes, however the glitch meant the radio GPS lost satellite lock and could not re-establish. As a result, appliance locations were not visible using the resource tracking system, eMap or EMCOP, and when the "L" button on the handset was pressed, the last stored coordinates were displayed. When the duress button is pressed, the correct coordinates are not sent. EMV removed all symbols from EMCOP and eMap to prevent confusion as to whether the signal is working or not, and TAIT worked to provide CFA a firmware patch that required a technician to reprogram every GPS antenna.

VFBV delegates requested an update program be developed to ensure minimal impact on Brigades and to give Brigades plenty of notice when technicians' visits were to occur to limit the inconvenience and ensure minimal appliance offline time.

LOW VOLTAGE FUSE REMOVAL

Feedback by volunteers was mixed following consultation on electrical safety training and the rollout during the year of the Electrical Safety Awareness Course.

VFBV initially asked CFA to consider a simple Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process for members who are qualified electricians and hold the relevant qualifications to be recognised for low voltage fuse removal. While it was possible to provide RPL for the electrical safety awareness portion of the course, there were aspects of the low voltage fuse removal that required assessment of an individual's knowledge of specific CFA procedures that are not covered by the industry-generic package.

CFA also advised of its intention to issue new electrical current detection equipment that would require training and familiarisation. CFA agreed to prioritise online and self-paced training options for the more generic electrical safety awareness package that would reduce the length of face-to-face learning.

The Electrical Safety Awareness Course is available online through the Training Hub and may be a pre-requisite in some Districts, depending on how its course delivery has been structured.

VFBV also continues to advocate for the provision of mobile electrical safety training props to give Brigades and Groups more flexible training options. VFBV has also requested that the maximum number of trainers and assessors be upskilled, including volunteers, to address the serious lack of training in low voltage fuse removal over the past five years.

THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA TRAINING

Following considerable advocacy by VFBV, CFA introduced a bushfire-themed Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC) course. VFBV delegates on the Joint VFBV/CFA Training Committee advocated for a streamlined training package to cater for TIC's in the non-structure environment. It had received reports of members who had difficulty getting operational approval to place TIC's on vehicles because they couldn't access training.

There has been an overwhelming increase in TIC's thanks to the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) grants.

VFBV requested that training development be prioritised due to the significant operational efficiencies TIC's have given firefighters, especially during blackout operations in the non-structure environment. The bushfire-themed TIC awareness course is now available on the Learning Management System (LMS) as an Elearning package.

Disappointingly, the Joint VFBV/CFA Training Committee was not formally consulted on the actual package before it was uploaded, reflecting a major and ongoing volunteer satisfaction issue that arose in the VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey, which showed CFA failure to consult volunteers was the most major area of dissatisfaction for volunteers.

TRAINING CERTIFICATES

VFBV acted on behalf of members when it became known that some Districts had unilaterally decided not to automatically issue CFA training certificates except by request.

Following a formal request from the VFBV State Council about the importance of recognising volunteer qualifications, CFA advised that Districts had been instructed to resume the practice of issuing certificates, and CFA HQ arranged for the entire backlog of certificates to be printed and dispatched to Brigades for presentation. VFBV thanked CFA for its quick response and delivering a good outcome for members.

ANNUAL BRIGADE REVIEW DELAYS

VFBV was disappointed to learn of further delays with the roll-out of the new Annual Brigade Review. CFA advised that roll out had been delayed due to UFU objections. CFA has been reporting positive feedback from Brigades piloting the new annual brigade review that will supplement the annual Section 29 and provides important planning and brigade support services to help brigades meet their performance standards and long-term viability.

VFBV expressed deep concern that once again industrial interference prevented the rollout of a fundamental volunteer support and brigade capacity-building initiative.

UNIDEN DIGITAL SCANNER SOFTWARE

VFBV requested that CFA provide an update for the Uniden Scanners (Listening Sets) that will update scanners with the new CFA/DELWP radio channel mapping, talk groups and fireground channels.

CFA and Uniden worked together to release a patch to update the firmware, which included all the new CFA/DELWP channel mapping, and the patch was made available from both CFA and VFBV websites, along with instructions on how to install it.

VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Communications and Technology Committee congratulated CFA on the simple method for the update and thanked both CFA representatives and Uniden for their combined efforts, which resulted in a positive outcome for members.

However, towards the end of 2018, CFA advised VFBV that its contract with the Australian supplier for the discounted Uniden Scanners had ended, and CFA will not be accepting any further orders.

Any additional sets will now need to be sourced by members locally. VFBV advised CFA that there is likely to be renewed interest in additional sets with the forthcoming digital rollout of CFA digital comms to the outer metropolitan areas (Districts 7, 8, 13 and 14), and VFBV would continue to monitor interest levels for additional subsidy programs in the future.

Since the joint Digital Scanner initiative was announced by CFA and VFBV back in 2015, more than 11,000 digital scanners have been distributed across 970 Brigades and 80 Groups, closing a hugely successful and collaborative approach between the two organisations.

DISTRICT OH&S MEETINGS

The Joint VFBV/CFA HR, Welfare and OH&S Committee expressed concern at reports that CFA District OH&S meetings are being cancelled or rescheduled – often at very short notice. CFA Management committed to ensuring that these important District meetings occur and recently followed up with all CFA Regions and Districts. VFBV has requested regular reporting of issues raised through the District Committee's so that State-wide issues and trends can be appropriately managed and followed up.

ACCESS TO CFA DOCTOR

VFBV raised the problems that volunteers are experiencing when being directed by CFA to attend the CFA Doctor. Some of the issues highlighted were the difficulty and imposition on members attending the St. Kilda Road office and the subsequent cost to volunteers in terms of lost earnings, transport, accommodation, parking and other incidental costs.

In our experience, many volunteers are not aware that they are entitled to reimbursement for these costs. VFBV requested that every time CFA directs a volunteer to attend the CFA doctor, they be made aware of these reimbursements. VFBV suggested an easy-to-read card outlining what expenses and other entitlements can be claimed be handed to volunteers when they are asked to attend the doctor.

The Joint VFBV/CFA HR, Welfare and OH&S Committee also requested CFA consider either the CFA doctor making scheduled Regional visits or an arrangement with multiple providers strategically located throughout the State to minimise volunteers having to travel to the city. CFA agreed to consider these requests and will report back on progress.

VOLUNTEERS HAVE THEIR SAY

Through VFBV's state-wide network of twenty-one District Councils and elected volunteer representatives, VFBV maintains direct links with volunteers. VFBV's process of engaging with the field and seeking feedback from volunteers is vital in enabling VFBV to credibly advocate to CFA on behalf of volunteers.

VFBV sought feedback through its representative networks on a number of important issues to volunteers during the year.

VFBV encouraged all members to participate in discussions at the District, Group and Brigade level on a number of important issues during the reporting period:

- **Torch and PPC Kit Bag Survey:** Torches and PPC Kit Bags were raised as a core health and safety issue for volunteers. Volunteers expressed a view that torches should be a mandatory part of CFA's minimum Personal Protective Clothing supplied by CFA. VFBV conducted a survey to determine the views of Brigades and Groups on these and other topics. The results of the survey will be available in the 2019-20 financial year.
- **Feedback on Bag Radios:** VFBV sought feedback from members on the use, design and practicality of the current CFA bag radio. The existing Tait radios are approaching the end of their life. Some of the questions included identifying the number of times the radio was used via 240-volt power, whether the restraint system employed is suitable and practical, and if there are other features that may make the radio smaller and more usable.
- **Pumper Tanker Prototype:** VFBV sought volunteer input into the next generation Pumper-Tanker Prototype being developed by CFA. It requested CFA apply the same process used to develop the new Medium Pumper several years ago, that showcased what is possible with a proactive and collaborative approach to consultation and equipment design.

A small VFBV sub-committee of volunteer subject matter experts met with CFA engineers and designers to workshop the criteria and specifications shortlisted for the next prototype Pumper Tanker. The desire is to build a prototype appliance that will combine the latest safety features available with today's trucking fleet with the best firefighting equipment available, while balancing the needs of the unique operating environment for which these appliances are designed. It is expected that once designed the Prototype Pumper Tanker will be showcased across the state for further feedback before final design development and rollout.

- **Medium Tanker Survey:** Results from VFBV's 2018 Medium Tanker Survey are now being considered by a small volunteer working party. The working party will report back to the Joint VFBV/CFA Equipment and Infrastructure Committee with recommendations based on field feedback. Preliminary results reveal widespread high satisfaction ratings with most aspects of the current Medium Tanker Build. The areas with lower levels of satisfaction are communication with the rear deck, deck area stowage and hydrant/standpipe access and layout. Detailed results from the survey, and associated recommendations will be made available as soon as the working party has completed its analysis.
- **SOP 6.06 Consultation:** VFBV sought feedback from members on CFA's proposed changes to SOP 6.06 Practical and Hot Fire Training. As the proposed SOP includes significant changes from its predecessor, VFBV requested all Brigades, Groups and members assess the changes and discuss the potential for any of the proposed changes to impede or create barriers to operational training. Feedback received was wide ranging, with unusually high levels of dissatisfaction raised with many aspects of the policy. Key themes included concerns for the increased workload and red tape being introduced; the wide scope that seems to pick up every training activity regardless of complexity or risk; and impractical approval process required for CFA signoff. One area of specific concern was the strong objection that training can only be conducted with 'potable water' (drinking water quality). Feedback and data provided by members will now be consolidated into a formal response to CFA and it is likely VFBV will recommend this SOP be completely re-thought and redrafted to address the considerable concern raised by volunteers.
- This year CFA commenced consultation on several SOPs under review. VFBV asked members to provide comments on improvements or clarifications, and any practical limitations or difficulties members may identify. Feedback was requested by 15 July 2019, which VFBV will next year develop into a formal response to CFA. These SOP's include:
 - 5.04 Service Hose Testing and Coupling Inspection
 - 9.14 Low Voltage Fuse Removal
 - 9.41 Safe Work at Heights
 - 10.24 Emergency Medical Response (EMR)
 - 10.27 Train Incidents.

CFA is also proposing CFA revoke two SOP's: 6.03 Derelict Structures – Burning Of; and 9.06 Fire Alarms – Monitoring and Logging of Tests

VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES EQUIPMENT PROGRAM

The Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) is an ongoing program funded by the Victorian Government. This annual program was established 19 years ago after VFBV proposed an annual program to provide local emergency services volunteer groups access to grants. This year's program offered four categories: volunteer amenities; minor works; operational equipment; tankers and specialist appliances.

VFBV provides targeted support for members who want to access the scheme, including providing an application help pack that includes case studies to help applicants.

VFBV advocated for an improved 'Special Access Grant' provision to assist Brigades and Groups that cannot cover the one-third contribution due to their inability to fundraise in smaller communities. Under this provision, eligible Brigades and Groups can apply for 100% grant funding.

2018 VOLUNTEER WELFARE & EFFICIENCY SURVEY

In a volunteer-based organisation, it is vital to have a culture, policies and organisational arrangements that are well-tuned to encourage, maintain and strengthen the effectiveness, morale and capacity of those volunteers. This is critical now, more than ever, for CFA.

The seventh annual VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey was conducted from September-October 2018, with more than 2,500 CFA volunteers participating. The survey remains the largest survey of its kind within CFA and probably across the emergency sector, eclipsing similar survey response rates by a significant margin.

For the third year in a row VFBV managed the survey for fire agencies across Australia, taking the total number of participants to approximately 6,000 volunteers nationwide, with survey results and trends now being used as a catalyst for dialogue at both state and national levels.

The survey is a critical tool to capture formal, evidence-based feedback directly from CFA volunteers about their expectations and satisfaction with matters they say are a priority for their welfare and efficiency. With the high number of participants it is an extremely reliable representation of CFA volunteer views.

VFBV encourages CFA, Government and key stakeholders to use the survey results to prioritise and understand what they can do to effectively support and sustain CFA volunteers. Failure to recognise and address the drivers of volunteer satisfaction leads to a reduction in volunteer commitment and volunteering at CFA generally.

VFBV is extremely proud of the survey's integrity and success and continues to devote considerable energy to the survey's analysis to make it a useful and insightful tool for CFA management and the sector.

The results of the 2018 Survey are largely consistent with previous years – the areas that had the biggest gaps when the survey was first introduced in 2012 are still the areas causing the highest levels of dissatisfaction amongst volunteers. This suggests that CFA and other fire services need to more adequately and genuinely address these core issues, which are consistently about failure to consult volunteers on decisions that affect them and the lack of access and adequacy of training.

A summary of the key outcomes of the 2018 Survey are on pages 18 & 19

PROVISIONAL PAYMENTS PILOT

VFBV worked with Government on its election commitment for a Provisional Payments pilot. The pilot is part of the Government's Mental Health initiatives and will allow eligible emergency workers (including volunteers) to access payments for medical treatment and services while their compensation claim is being assessed. The pilot will focus on determining claims as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of early intervention.

A Governmental Steering Committee has been established to oversee and guide the pilot to make provisional payments to eligible volunteer emergency workers. It will operate in conjunction with a steering committee focused on the in scope paid workforces.

The steering committee comprises representatives including Ambulance Victoria, CFA, State Emergency Service, Victoria Police and VFBV. Government agencies are represented on the committee, including the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Justice, Treasury and Health, the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DEWLP), Emergency Management Victoria, and Worksafe.

VFBV is represented by CEO Adam Barnett. VFBV commends the Government on this mental health initiative as an extremely important project to improve early intervention for emergency service volunteers and staff alike, and a positive step in helping to remove the stigma around seeking assistance for mental health and providing members with compassionate and accessible options for support.

COLD CLIMATE JACKETS

Following last year's successful Volunteer Emergency Service Equipment Program (VESEP) bid of more than \$2.5 million in grant funding, 7,100 cold climate jackets were distributed across 1,196 brigades. Given how popular the jackets were with brigades, VFBV worked with CFA to obtain funding for additional jackets.

The 2018-19 bid was successful and, although the final amount approved was less than hoped, it is envisaged that the allocated funding will cover up-to 1,900 additional jackets state-wide.

With last year's ordering process, Districts were asked to consult with Brigades when placing orders, but following reports of this not always occurring, VFBV offered to undertake the ordering process centrally to ensure Brigades and Groups had the opportunity to order specific sizes relevant to their membership profile.

VFBV thanked CFA for its support for the program.

VFBV SUPPORT OFFICERS

VFBV's team of five VFBV Support Officers cover the entire state and work directly with Brigades and the executive teams of each of the 21 VFBV District Councils. VFBV Support Officers provide technical, administrative and leadership assistance and hands on practical support in CFA's five regions. They are an important link in VFBV's brigade and Group engagement and consultation network to volunteers, Brigades, District Councils and other local CFA Committees and processes.

VFBV Support Officers are experienced CFA volunteers, many having occupied senior brigade leadership positions. They work on state-wide projects in addition to providing localised support and engagement with volunteers.

2020 STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

CFA and VFBV will conduct the 2020 State Rural Championships (juniors & seniors) and the State Urban Senior Championship at the same venue on the same two-day weekend. The Rural and Urban Championships will retain their own individual events and will be conducted as separate competitions but will be conducted concurrently on their own traditional competition tracks.

Combining the events was proposed by CFA after it conducted a review of the championships in early 2018. Following several meetings with CFA to work through the proposal, both VFBV's State Rural and Urban Competition Committees agreed to a combined event as a means of increasing participation, and see as a positive move to ensure the championships remain sustainable.

A District Committee including CFA management and members of both the Rural and Urban Committees is working in the planning, preparation and management of the 2020 combined event. It is liaising with the Greater Shepparton City Council, which is very supportive of the 2020 State Championships being held at Mooroopna.

EVOLUTION OF THE FIRE SERVICES RESTRUCTURE

With the passing of the Firefighter Presumptive Rights Compensation Legislation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 in June 2019, it is worth summarising the events that have led to this major change to the Victorian fire services sector.

The extraordinary and tumultuous period for the fire services had its genesis in an industrial dispute. It has resulted in nearly five years of mental and emotional trauma for many volunteers and staff and has led to an outcome that has raised serious concerns about the future effectiveness of Victoria's fire services and the safety outcomes for Victorian communities.

Industrial strife in the fire services

2015: In 2015 the United Firefighters Union (UFU) and the CFA and MFB were in the midst of extended and fractious negotiations for a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) for paid firefighters. The proposed EBA would replace the previous 2010 agreement that nominally expired in 2013. With a change in Government after the 2014 election, a new Minister was appointed: the Hon. Jane Garrett MP. The new Labor Government had different industrial policies to the previous Government, and this changed the nature of the negotiations.

CFA volunteers had no interest in these negotiations until it became obvious that elements of the EBA could seriously impede the powers of the CFA Chief Officer to direct and manage CFA resources, and would negatively affect CFA volunteers.

2016: In early 2016 the Government and fire services chiefs were aligned in their position that the EBA was “unreasonable and unworkable” as described by Minister Garrett. The CFA Board and CEO Lucinda Nolan, expressed concerns that the proposed EBA had unlawful and discriminatory concerns based on legal advice it had received, echoing the concerns of other fire services leaders.

In March 2016, the Premier made an about-face and announced his support for the proposed EBA, putting Minister Garrett under pressure given her opposition to the deal, in particular her concerns about ‘veto’ provisions that undermined the powers of the Chief Officer and gave an inappropriate increase in union power over the fire services.

During this time both the MFB Chief Officer Peter Rau and CFA Chief Officer Joe Buffone publicly stated they had serious concerns about the impact of the very similar MFB and CFA EBAs on community safety and on operational ability. In September 2016 Mr Rau resigned, citing bullying by the United Firefighters Union.

MFB acting Chief Officer Paul Stacchino re-stated the EBA concerns before a 2017 Parliamentary Inquiry into Fire Season Preparedness, saying the experience of the MFB under its current EBA had demonstrably proven that a ‘veto’ existed and the powers of the MFB Chief Officer had been compromised, and that the proposed MFB EBA was worse.

In April 2016 thousands of CFA volunteers and more than 420 trucks rallied outside Parliament and left flowers on the steps of Parliament House in a gesture of support and appreciation for Minister Garrett's position.

A second rally was held at Parliament House on 3 June 2016 as volunteer concerns grew.

On 10 June Minister Garrett resigned from her Cabinet position rather than direct the CFA Board to sign the agreement using her powers under the CFA Act. At the time volunteers praised Ms Garrett as “honourable, honest and values driven”.

A new Minister, the Hon. James Merlino MP, was immediately appointed and within an hour had sacked the CFA Board when it refused to comply with his direction to sign an agreement that CFA legal advice said had unlawful and discriminatory clauses.

On 17 June the popular and respected CFA CEO Lucinda Nolan, who had been appointed in 2015, resigned rather than sign an EBA she termed “destructive and divisive”. She later told a Parliamentary hearing she “could not stay and oversee the destruction of the CFA.”

On 29 June Chief Officer Joe Buffone, appointed by the Government in 2015, also resigned because of the dispute.

In June the VFBV launched legal action in the Supreme Court seeking the right to be represented in negotiations for an EBA that had a direct impact on volunteers. At the same time the Federal Parliament was considering amendments to the Fair Work Act that would protect volunteer-based organisations from industrial interference.

On 10 October 2016 the Commonwealth Government passed amendments to the Fair Work Act to prevent organisations signing EBAs that negatively affect volunteers, leading the UFU to withdraw its proposal because it could not pass the test. That CFA EBA has never been put to a vote. As a result the VFBV was able to cease the Supreme Court action.

2017: In February 2017 during the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Fire Season Preparedness the committee fielded a substantial number of submissions including from the former CFA heads and MFB confirming the operational impacts and organisational impacts of the proposed EBA and how it impacts the agencies control and ability to meet its statutory obligations.

In March the CFA appointed new Chief Officer Steve Warrington AFSM.

Fire services ‘reform’ proposed

On 18 May 2017 the Victorian Government announced a plan for a major ‘reform’ of the fire services – splitting paid staff and volunteers into separate organisations. This was recognised by most commentators as an attempt to bypass the Fair Work Act change that had stymied efforts to pass the controversial workplace agreement for CFA staff. The legislation was drawn up in secret and neither the MFB, CFA or EMV were consulted on the drafting, and were not notified of the legislation until the day before the announcement.

Volunteers were not consulted at all and were not informed by the Government until after the public announcement. The announcement was disingenuously cited as “much needed and overdue reform” despite no evidence being provided to back up the claim.

The only party that appears to have been consulted on the legislation prior to it being publicly released was the United Firefighters Union, which has little to no understanding of how the CFA and CFA volunteers function. The UFU claimed it had only been consulted on the Presumptive Legislation component – which, disturbingly, had a strong and obvious bias against CFA volunteers, requiring them to give additional evidence and go through additional processes that did not apply to paid firefighters.

The legislation received widespread condemnation for being ill-conceived, lacking consultation, driven by an industrial agenda that handed even more power to the union, diminishing and discouraging volunteer capacity, dismantling the CFA integrated model and eroding the CFA Chief Officer's power and control of CFA resources. The legislation provided no additional service capacity or capability to the existing arrangements.

Yet the legislation was introduced to Parliament (Legislative Assembly) in May amidst strong concerns raised by many of the former Victorian fire services leaders who had been removed, as well as other fire services experts such as the lead counsel of the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission (VBRC) Jack Rush QC, who said it was almost the exact opposite of the VBRC recommendations.

During 2017 and beyond the Victorian Opposition party (Liberal-National Coalition) and various minor party and independent MPs moved motions to separate the structural reform from presumptive cancer claim legislation in order to deliver the presumptive legislation component as quickly as possible but was unable to gain Government agreement. The linking of the two unrelated pieces of legislation was viewed as using leverage to influence the structural reform off the back of Presumptive Legislation.

Concerns were also raised about the fairness of the Presumptive Legislation, given it required volunteer firefighters to jump additional evidentiary and bureaucratic hurdles that did not apply to paid firefighters.

The proposed legislation was voted for in the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) and referred to the Fire Services Bill Select Committee. In August the committee completed its review and recommended the legislation be withdrawn.

In its final report it cited a 'lack of clarity around implementation, operations and funding', 'failure to undertake consultation with affected parties and the near total polarisation of volunteer and career firefighters' as reasons for its recommendation the bill be withdrawn, or if not withdrawn, rejected by the Legislative Council.

However the Government determined it would proceed with despite a lack of evidence and any bipartisan support in Parliament for what was a significant change to the operational delivery of an emergency service in Victoria.

In July the Chief Executive Officer of the MFB Jim Higgins quit amid increasing pressure to sign an EBA he and his Board had labelled unworkable.

MFB Acting Chief Officer Paul Stacchino resigned in August.

2018: In January the President of the MFB Andi Diamond, appointed in 2015, resigned immediately after a slim majority of the MFB Board voted to sign the EBA. Under her leadership the MFB Board had resisted Government pressure to sign the proposed EBA, having received legal advice that it contained unlawful and discriminatory clauses. The composition of the Board had changed after several resignations and completed tenures, and new appointments by the Government in the latter half of 2017. Her resignation marked the removal of an entire generation of fire services leadership in CFA and MFB since 2015.

In February a new Chief Executive Officer Dr Paul Smith started at CFA, replacing the interim CEO (health services bureaucrat Frances Diver).

On 27 March the Fire Services Reform legislation was introduced to the Legislative Council (Upper House) for debate. The Government received strong criticism about the last-minute tabling of 29 pages of non-material amendments, the lack of consultation or briefings prior to them being tabled, and the sudden haste to push the legislation through while parts of Victoria and many volunteers were involved in or recovering from major fires.

The absence of a sick Independent MP who had indicated she did not support the legislation gave the Government a slim one-vote majority in the Upper House after it declined to give her a 'pair' (an arrangement in which an opposing MP also leaves the House to ensure democratic balance of Parliament). The Government then used the one vote majority to extend the Upper House sitting late into the evening and force through a vote to pass the first reading of the Bill, with the support of the Greens and Reason Party MPs. The second reading of the legislation was supported by one vote.

Debate resumed on Thursday 29 March and, with the ill MP still absent, the Government was able to force an extended 17 hour sitting that went into Good Friday. Parliament had never continued sitting into Good Friday in the past, breaking a long-standing parliamentary convention.

Debate therefore continued into 30 March, Good Friday. Amid riotous scenes in Parliament, the Bill was defeated when two Liberal Party MPs who had been paired and left Parliament returned to the House to cast their vote, breaking another long-standing parliamentary convention. This resulted in a one vote majority for the 'no' vote, and the legislation was defeated.

On 18 April, after an international search, British fire chief Dan Stephens was appointed CEO/Chief Officer of MFB. Like those before him, Mr Stephens resigned just 12 months into his five-year contract, following tensions between he and the Government.

The culture of the fire services was one of the reasons originally cited for the 'reform' legislation. On 4 October the UFU was successful in long-running Supreme Court action to block the release of a report by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC), which had been commissioned by Minister Garrett in 2015. VFBV expressed deep disappointment and concern on behalf of the many fire services people – paid and volunteer – who had bravely shared their stories in the hopes of improving the fire services. The report was blocked based on a legal technicality – basically whether the request for VEOHRC to undertake the Review should have come from a Minister or a Government Department.

A Victorian state election was held on 24 November and won by the Andrews Government with a majority in the Lower House and a majority with cross-bench support in the Upper House, changing the dynamic of Parliament and putting the fire services once again at risk of a vote in Parliament that lacked any bi-partisan support despite the grave, enduring state-wide impacts it would have on the Victorian people.

In the lead up to the election there was no proactive announcement about re-introducing the Fire Services Bill, although there was passive inclusion on the ALP website. The Labor Party won the 2018 election, however it did not raise the prospect of the Bill again until just after the Federal Election in May 2019. Commentators had previously cited the Victorian fire services dispute as a key reason the federal ALP failed to win any seats in Victoria, and therefore the election, in 2016.

2019: After just over a year in the role, CFA CEO Dr Paul Smith resigned. He was the fifth CFA CEO in four years.

The Federal election was held on 18 May and resulted in an unanticipated win by the Liberal-National Coalition.

On 29 May the Victorian Government re-introduced the Fire Services Bill to Parliament in the Legislative Assembly, saying it now had the numbers to force the legislation through. The move drew criticism as it was tabled with no notice and without MPs seeing the legislation before it was tabled for debate.

In fact, the legislation was not seen by Parliamentary members or anyone else until the second reading on 4 June, which was also the date VFBV was offered (and attended) a briefing on the Bill.

Sadly, not a single material change had been made to the legislation since it had originally been released in 2017, demonstrating there was no appetite to listen to the credible and very widespread concerns raised by Victorian fire services experts.

Usually, after a Bill has been read a second time, debate is adjourned for two weeks to allow Members of Parliament to consider the Bill and consult with their constituents and stakeholders prior to the debate and third reading. However the Government used its numbers in the Lower House to bypass this usual practice.

On 5 June debate resumed. The Government used its absolute majority in the Lower House to pass the third reading, rushing the Bill from the Lower House to the Legislative Council (Upper House) on the same day, even though the Bill had only been tabled in the Lower House three days before.

The Upper House immediately pushed through the first reading in that Chamber on 6 June.

The Upper House was recalled on 7 June, despite it not previously being a sitting day, so that the Bill could be pushed through the second reading all in the same week it was first tabled. The final step was the third reading and the vote in the Upper House.

Parliament resumed on 18 June and the debate on the Fire Services Bill in the Upper House began. Very few amendments, and no material amendments relating to the concerns that had been expressed, were made during the debate.

On 20 June, using a slim majority from the vote of several minor and Independent MPs, debate concluded and the Fire Services Reform Bill passed its third reading – effectively making it law.

Voted to support the Bill:

Labor - 17 votes,
Samantha Ratnam - Victorian Greens - 1
Fiona Patten - Fiona Patten's Reason Party - 1
Andy Meddick - Animal Justice Party - 1
Catherine Cumming – Independent - 1

Total: 21

Voted against the Bill

Liberal: 10
National: 1
Jeff Bourman - Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party - 1
Stuart Grimley, Tania Maxwell - Derryn Hinch's Justice Party - 2
Tim Quilty, David Limbrick - Liberal Democrats - 2
Clifford Hayes - Sustainable Australia - 1
Rodney Barton - Transport Matters Party - 1

Total: 18

VICTORIAN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (VEOHRC)

In December 2015, then Emergency Services Minister Jane Garrett asked VEOHRC to undertake an Independent Review into Equity and Diversity in CFA and MFB, but the following year the UFU took legal action to stop VEOHRC from publishing its findings.

On 4 October 2018 the Victorian Court of Appeal handed down judgment on the appeal brought by the United Firefighters Union of Australia Victoria Branch (UFUV) against the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (the Commission). The appeal was part of the UFU's long-running challenge to the Commission's Independent Equity and Diversity Review into Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB).

At the time, VEOHRC Commissioner Hilton said: "We are surprised and extremely disappointed by the decision. We conducted the Review at the request of Government and were actively supported by the leadership of the MFB and CFA in doing so. Thousands of people participated in the process and it is a real blow that these stories will not be heard."

The order prevented the Commission from making any comments about or publishing the report. The decision confirmed that the methodology used to conduct the Review was entirely reasonable. The appeal was successful based on a technicality about who was able to commission such a review and on what letterhead.

The outcome let down the hundreds of courageous CFA people, paid and volunteer, who had shared their stories in the hopes of improving the fire services culture.

The decision was particularly disappointing considering a decision in 2017 by then-CFA CEO Frances Diver not to release a report into bullying, harassment and sexual assault at CFA that had been commissioned by her predecessor Lucinda Nolan. The author of that report, Carolyn Taylor, expressed serious concerns about the culture of CFA at the time, and claimed she had been bullied out of CFA because of her work.

PLUMBING REGULATIONS REVIEW

The Victorian Government completed its sunset review of the Plumbing Regulations during 2018, but failed to consult with VFBV or volunteers, announcing new Regulations would come into effect 18 November 2018.

The new regulations impacted on any Brigade providing FEM (Fire Equipment Maintenance) services, as 'routine servicing' was inserted, with the effect of regulating a twice-yearly routine servicing of fire hose reels and required this to be done by a licensed plumber.

There are around 300 Brigades and more than 1,500 CFA members trained and servicing fire equipment to 30,000 premises across Victoria. The Regulations sunset review was conducted by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), however DELWP and CFA failed to engage with VFBV on the significant impacts of the new Regulations. Concern is the lack of licensed plumbers willing to conduct this rudimentary work, especially in remote rural areas leading to large scale non-compliance and putting upward pressure on costs that will inevitably be passed on to the public.

VFBV has joined other stakeholders in working with the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) to properly scope the impacts of these changes and discuss appropriate arrangements to minimise the impact on CFA Brigades.

VFBV will continue to advocate for a common-sense approach that will ensure CFA volunteers can continue to provide this valued and essential service to communities.

VFBV continues to build volunteer involvement across the emergency management sector. These connections complement VFBV's network of Board, State Council, District Councils, Group and Brigade engagement, which provides VFBV with unparalleled reach to the grass roots of CFA, ensuring VFBV representatives are well informed by rank and file members and local consultative forums. The VFBV framework makes for an extremely credible, knowledgeable and cohesive input into decisions.

VFBV/CFA JOINT COMMITTEES

VFBV/CFA Joint Committees are a critical part of the consultative framework, offering a direct line of communication between volunteers and state-level decision makers.

Collectively the Joint Committees meet, on average, 28 times a year and involve almost 80 volunteer delegates drawn from each of the 21 District Councils.

VFBV sincerely thanks all Joint Committee volunteer delegates for their time and contribution, which is instrumental for our consultative process. Their efforts make an immense difference to all volunteers and to the effectiveness of volunteer input into CFA decision-making.

This year, some key issues worked on by the Joint Committees included:

Communications & Technology

- Scanner/Listening Set Firmware Update
- Fire Incident Reporting Systems
- Loss of GPS Tracking
- CFA Bag Radios

Community Safety

- Emergency Management Act Amendment Bill 2018
- Cladding notification process
- Wire Rope Safety Barriers

Operations

- Introduction of Vehicle Location Data
- Improving Ops Committee Consultation
- Emergency Management Professionalisation
- Fire Investigators
- Long Term OO/OM Vacancies

Training

- CFA Training Certificates
- Additional Mobile Training Props
- General Firefighter project
- Low Voltage Fuse Removal
- Thermal Imaging Training

Volunteerism

- Volunteer Travel and Out of Pocket Reimbursement
- Volunteer Grants
- Brigade Management Manual Review
- Annual Brigade Review delays

Equipment and Infrastructure

- Small Equipment Register
- Foam – Search and Destroy
- Volunteer Exclusion from Truck Design
- Brigade Owned Trailers Safety Check
- Medium Tanker Survey
- Pumper/Tanker Prototype
- Elevated Work Platform Trials
- Iveco 4.4 Tanker

HR, Welfare and OH&S

- Access to and availability of CFA Doctor
- Volunteer Access to CFA-SAFE
- Matter of Respect Virtual Reality Workshops
- District OH&S Meetings



VFBV delegates of the Joint Equipment Infrastructure Committee, inspecting the new Ultra Light Tanker

VFBV/CFA JOINT COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVES

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

Dave Arnott	Andrew Bath	Geof Bassett	Shane Cramer	Neil Dusting
David Farmer	John Northey	Douglas Parke	Adrian Stone	Gary Taylor
Darren Wallace	Justin Wills			

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Alex Caughey	Bruce Conboy	Mary Anne Egan	Libby Hay	Elissa Jans
Bruce Jewell	Phil Lind	Frank Tobin	Maree Varley	Bruce Vine

EQUIPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Noel Austin	Tom Brodie	Mark Jones	Owen O'Keefe	Gary Parlbay
Bruce Pickett	John Seymour	Phil Slender	Toddy Small	Rob Waterson
Peter White	Trevor Wyatt			

HR, WELFARE & OH&S

Rob Auchterlonie	Kelvin Bateman	Ian Hannaford	Vickie Linaker	Michael O'Mara
Lesley Read	Eric Smith	Howard Smith	Hans van Hamond	Bill Watson

OPERATIONS

Ron Cole	Jan Cleary	Andy Cusack	Tim Desmond	Gary Fitzgerald
Phil Hawkey	Adrian Marshman	Trevor Roche	Peter Shaw	Peter Solley
Leigh Tomlinson	Greg Walcott			

TRAINING

Noel Arandt	Janet Auchterlonie	Eric Collier	John Davies	Paul Denham
Colin James	Graeme Jilbert	Harold Jochs	Stephen McDonald	Greg McIntyre
Phillip O'Keefe	Rod Taylor			

VOLUNTEERISM

Malcolm Bishop	Graham Cocks	Maurice Dumesny	Mark King	Craig Lawless
Gerry Neyenhuis	Julie Owens	Sam Rothman	Darryl Wagstaff	Bryan Walpole

The 2018 VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey was the seventh consecutive annual survey conducted by VFBV, with more than 2,500 CFA volunteers taking part. The survey remains one of the largest surveys of its kind within CFA and most likely across the emergency sector.

It was the third year in a row that VFBV managed the survey nationally for fire service agencies across Australia, with almost 6,000 participants in total. The VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey was initially developed by VFBV in 2012 to capture formal, evidence-based feedback directly from volunteers about their expectations and satisfaction with matters they feel are a priority for their general welfare and efficiency.

The survey was designed with support from expert, independent organisational and people performance consultants, and informed by focus groups and broad consultation with CFA volunteers on issues most important to their satisfaction. A series of statements were developed based on that consultation that were identified as critical to volunteer welfare and efficiency. These statements form the core of the survey.

The survey results are made available to Government and CFA to help prioritise areas that need attention if the vital foundation of Victoria's volunteer-based emergency service is to be better recognised, maintained and supported.

Survey participation

The number of CFA participants continues to be statistically robust, and participation is independently audited and verified as a valid representation of the wider CFA volunteer population. The overall demographics of participants largely reflects the CFA volunteer population, with all CFA districts represented in the responses.

OVERALL RESULTS

The results are largely consistent with previous years – the areas that had the biggest gaps when the survey was introduced in 2012 are still the areas causing the highest levels of dissatisfaction amongst volunteers. The areas where volunteer expectations are closest to being met remain at that level.

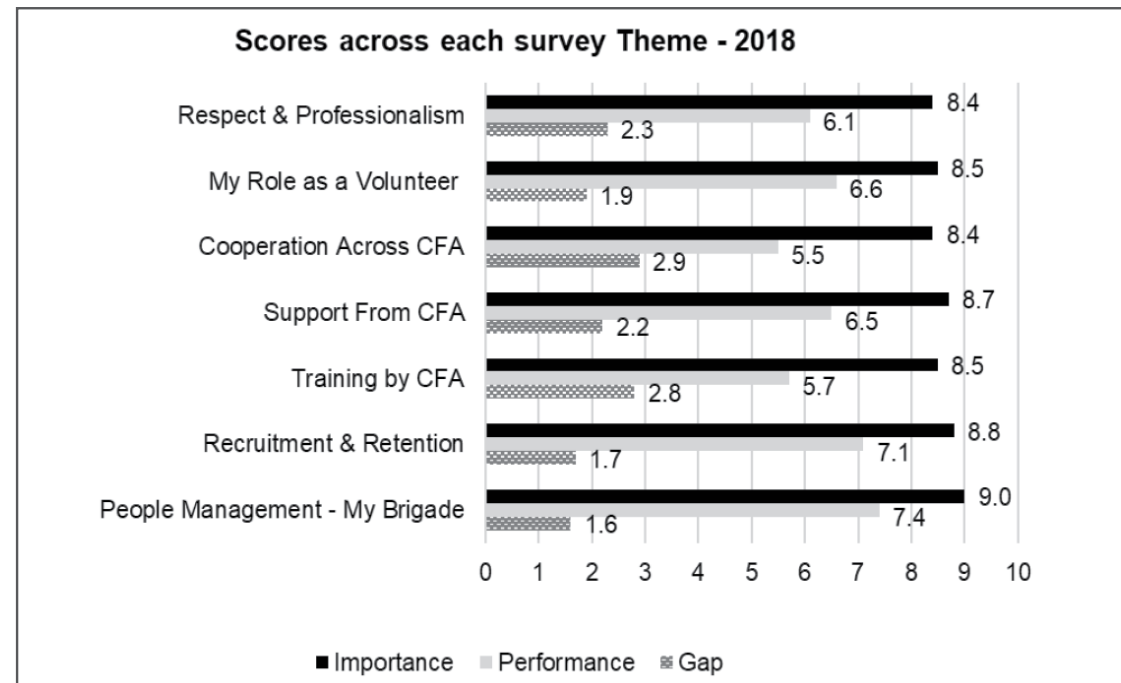
Volunteers are most satisfied with their role and activities that occur at brigade level. Many feel that the time they devote to CFA is productive and worthwhile.

In contrast, volunteers are least satisfied with activities that are the responsibility of corporate / management levels of CFA, including how CFA consults and involves volunteers in decisions that may affect them, the policies that support CFA volunteers and support for volunteer leadership and people management. Many of the 'free text' comments provided by participants put 'Government' into the same category as 'corporate decision-makers', and there was a significant portion of comments relating to the lack of consultation with volunteers about the fire services legislation.

Volunteer satisfaction with the performance of Training by CFA decreased in 2018, reversing the gains made in 2017, highlighting a big gap between volunteer expectations and CFA performance in this regard. The gap between expectation and performance on Training is one of the biggest in the survey.

Recruitment and Retention continues to be one of the more positive areas, but results highlight the recruitment and retention of younger volunteers as an ongoing concern to participants.

Cooperation across CFA received the lowest scores for performance. While People Management – My Brigade received the highest scores for both importance and performance.



AREAS IDENTIFIED AS PERFORMING WELL

- There are no barriers to the roles women can occupy within a brigade.
- Diversity is accepted and welcomed at brigades.
- Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at brigade level.
- Volunteers feel the time they devote to CFA is productive and worthwhile.
- There is a friendly environment within brigades, which welcomes new members and has good morale.
- New volunteers are actively supported to allow them to turn out to incidents within a reasonable time of joining.
- New volunteers in non-response roles are actively supported to allow them to contribute in brigades within a reasonable time of joining.

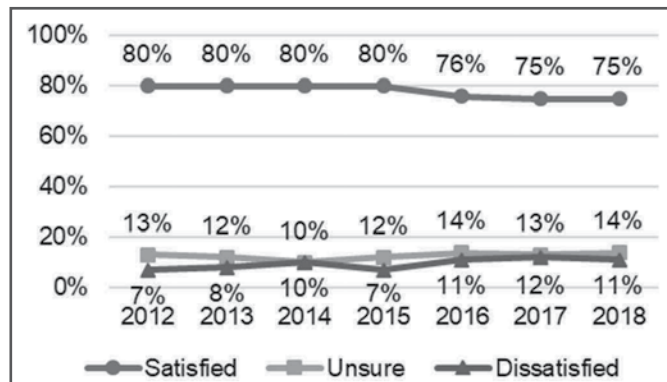
AREAS IDENTIFIED AS IN NEED OF SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT

- Volunteers do not feel that they are effectively consulted in decision making at CFA corporate level or regional level.
- CFA corporate policies and leadership do not support an effective volunteer based and fully integrated organisation.
- Paid personnel in local brigades / Districts are committed to supporting and empowering volunteers.
- CFA does not provide enough training opportunities in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy to participate nor is it provided within a reasonable distance of the brigade.
- Volunteers do not feel that CFA provides enough leadership training for volunteers in people management, conflict resolution and mentoring.
- CFA does not support its workforce arrangement which allow paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as an integrated team.
- Recruitment and retention, particularly retention, of younger volunteers continues to be a challenge for brigades.

SATISFACTION WITH VOLUNTEERING

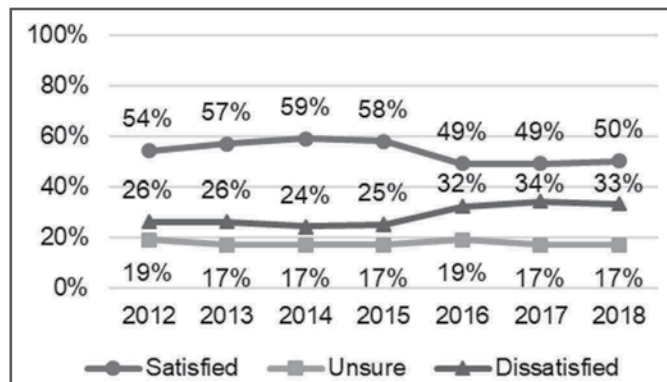
The percentage of volunteers satisfied with their role as a CFA volunteer has not improved on the low levels reported in both the 2016 and 2017 surveys. The 75% of volunteers satisfied with their volunteer role is well below the 80% achieved in the first four years of the survey.

Results for 'overall how satisfied are you with your role as a CFA volunteer?'



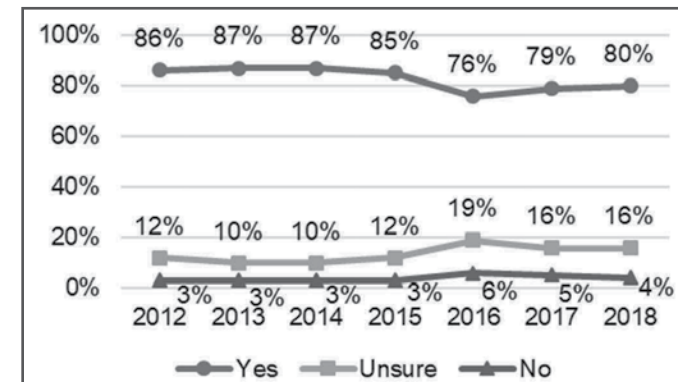
Satisfaction with the way volunteers are treated by CFA remains at concerning low levels, consistent with the decline first reported in 2016. This should be of significant concern to CFA, coupled with the decline in volunteer numbers reported by CFA in 2018, it is possible that many dissatisfied volunteers have already resigned or withdrawn from CFA, which means that this declining trend is likely understated in the reported results.

Results for 'overall how satisfied are you with the way volunteers are treated by CFA?'



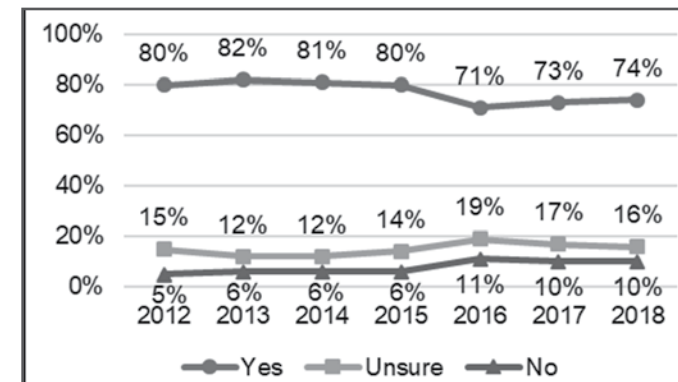
There has been a slight improvement overall with a number of volunteers indicating they intend to continue their membership with CFA since the drop reported in 2016. This figure remains well below the 87% positive intention rate reported in 2014, but is showing signs of improvement which is positive.

Results for 'I intend to continue my membership with CFA.'



The overall result for recommending being a CFA volunteer to other people has increased marginally from 73% in 2017 to 74%. This measure is showing a slow but gradual improvement, which is a good outcome following the significant drop reported in 2016.

Results for 'I would recommend being a CFA volunteer to people I know.'



VFBV State Championships are one of Victoria's longest traditions and one of the proudest for CFA members, running for nearly 150 years. The first State Championship (then called Demonstrations) was held in Melbourne in 1873 and they have been conducted annually since then. The event has never been cancelled due to fire, flood, weather or natural disaster – the only cancellations were due to WWI and WWII.

The establishment of volunteer fire brigades in country Victoria began in 1854, with formal Brigades established first at Geelong and Sandhurst (now Bendigo). The introduction of hose reels into the fire service to assist in moving equipment to the fire scene quickly was a major catalyst for fire brigade demonstrations.

The Championships are viewed as a demonstration of firefighting skills, agility, teamwork and discipline. They arose from an awareness that fire brigade operational response and training could be enhanced if it was performed in a competitive environment. Brigades soon discovered their effectiveness improved by engaging in training and competitions with neighbouring Brigades, with the State Championships evolving as the pinnacle of the season's competitions conducted by Districts and the volunteer Associations.

State Championships allow volunteer firefighters to test their skills and prowess against opposing Brigades in a congenial atmosphere, unlike a bushfire or structural fire situation in which firefighters are pitted against mother nature, and where lives and property are at risk. It's one of the few times Brigades and firefighters gather on a large scale and across Regional boundaries together outside of a major incident.

Competitions and State Championships remain an integral part of CFA activities, attracting volunteer and career firefighters from across the state and interstate, competing against each other in a range of events designed to hone their firefighting skills and put them to the test in a demonstration of their unique life and property saving skills. Speed and accuracy are vital as the firefighters compete in events using a range of traditional and modern-day firefighting equipment.

The Urban Championships includes traditional events, such as the use of the hose reel that was used in the early 1900's. The hose reel events are not only exciting to watch, they are a robust test of strength, endurance, agility and teamwork. Events at the Rural Championships, which evolved in the 1950's, are based more around current fireground practices and involve either tankers or replica tanker stands for most events.

The benefits and objectives of our competitions and State Championships are to:

- increase operational firefighting efficiency and discipline
- develop, maintain and enhance the operational skills of firefighters by providing a competitive environment to promote and hone training and skills maintenance in core and fundamental firefighting skills and practices
- develop teamwork and leadership skills of individuals and Brigades
- increased health and fitness development and promotion of healthy lifestyle and its correlation to increased firefighting efficiency and effectiveness
- promote comradeship amongst firefighters, sense of belonging and networking.
- encourage family participation and strengthen community engagement and involvement in local Fire Brigades
- encourage our future CFA volunteer firefighters and provide early exposure to young people to instil a sense of community service and the importance of local Fire Brigades.
- promote a professional image of CFA to the community
- instil and promote the Australian tradition of having a go and doing your best.
- promote and recognise our future CFA, Brigade and VFBV leaders and celebrate excellence.

VFBV is very active in organising and running these events, with dedicated committees that seek ways to improve the competition and Championship events each year and oversee the rules, judges and officials.

All four State Championships, held in Kerang and Bendigo this year, were outstandingly successful. Each event was a credit to the countless people who contributed in the pre-planning, management, and setting up, who officiated, competed or who attended to make these VFBV events so memorable.

In total up to 1,500 volunteers competed at the 2019 State Championships, with many more playing various roles including coaching, local support, judging and officiating. Many more participated at the District competitions conducted across the state in the lead-up to the State Championships. The two Junior State Championships were a great display of thriving young volunteer participation, with nearly 700 junior volunteer competitors – tomorrow's CFA firefighters demonstrating their skills.

VFBV sincerely thanks the many people for their work and support in making these events so successful, and our sincere appreciation and thanks are extended to:

- CFA management and staff, particularly the DMO's and tower overseers for their work and efforts prior to, during and following each Championship
- the three local committees: the Kerang Local Committee, the Bendigo & Districts Fire Brigades Championship Committee and the District 2 Championships Committee, for their huge contribution and effort in hosting these events
- the Gannawarra Shire Council (Kerang) for their interest and support of the State Urban Junior Championship, and particularly to the City of Greater Bendigo for their support to the District 2 Championships Committee in hosting the State Rural Championship, and to the Bendigo & Districts Championships Committee in hosting three successive State Urban Championships
- the many volunteer officials and judges, without whom these events could not be conducted
- our major sponsor Hino and the many other sponsors and trophy donors for their continued generous support and
- the Brigades, competitors, coaches, and the families and friends who support the competitors, ensuring the continuation of our Championships and competitions.

Next year CFA and VFBV will conduct an inaugural combined Championships event, with the Rural Senior and Junior Championships and the Urban Seniors all hosted at Mooroopna. The Rural and Urban Championship events will be conducted on separate competition tracks, but alongside each other at the same location on the same weekend.

Traditionally the State Championships have been held separately – the State Urban Senior Championship over the Labour Day weekend in early March, and the Rural Senior and Junior Championships in early April.

VFBV hopes that all current competing Brigades will fully support the concept and enter to compete at the combined 2020 Championships. VFBV also hopes to build participation numbers and strongly encourages new and former competing Brigades to attend, to make this a showcase of our competition events, and of CFA to the community.

URBAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Dandenong won its fifth Grand Aggregate title at the 2019 State Urban Championship in Bendigo. The Championship was closely contested right up until the very last event, the Champion Fours. Dandenong took out third placing in this event, but the team finished the Championship in the lead with 85 points in the Grand Aggregate, with Maryvale close behind with 80 points, and Kangaroo Flat on 76 points.

A longstanding record for the Champion Fours set by Carrum (now Patterson River) of 16.05 seconds set in 1978, was broken by Kangaroo Flat with a time of 15.90 seconds, creating an exciting finish. Jackson Dargaville, Kangaroo Flat Brigade won the Ladder Race in a time of 6.26 seconds, his eighth win in this event over the last nine years.

The Championship was well attended, with more than 2,000 people on location and 51 teams from across the state totalling nearly 500 competitors. Interstate teams from Harvey, Western Australia and Wyong, New South Wales also attended. The number of female competitors continues to increase, with many mixed teams now competing in events such as the Ladder Race, Hydrant Race and the reel events.

2019 AGGREGATE RESULTS**A SECTION**

1st	Dandenong	85 Points
2nd	Maryvale	80 Points
3rd	Kangaroo Flat A	76 Points

B SECTION

1st	Osborne Park	53 Points
2nd	Werribee	52 Points
3rd	Moe	47 Points

Dry Aggregate

1st	Dandenong	35 Points
2nd	Kangaroo Flat A	17 Points
3rd	Tatura	15 Points

Wet Aggregate

1st	Maryvale	66 Points
2nd	Kangaroo Flat A	58 Points
3rd	Dandenong	48 Points

DISCIPLINE CONTEST**A SECTION**

1st	Melton A	89.55%
2nd	Eaglehawk	87.73%
3rd	Harvey	86.82%

B SECTION

1st	Knox Group	90.91%
2nd	Hoppers Crossing	86.36%
3rd	Mornington	84.09%

Torchlight Procession

1st	Hoppers Crossing	93%
2nd	Knox Group	92%
=3rd	Mildura & Melton	91%

2019 CHAMPION BRIGADE: Dandenong

2019 CHAMPION COMPETITOR: Jon Murphy (Dandenong)

WA/VIC Challenge Event Winner: Western Australia

**RURAL CHAMPIONSHIP**

The State Rural Championships held in Bendigo were highly successful with an estimated 2,000 people attending and well above 500 members and juniors competing over the two days of competition. The Championships were conducted at the Tom Flood Sports Centre, where the famous Bendigo International Madison cycling race is held annually and provided an ideal location for competitors and spectators alike.

Greta repeated its win of last year, being named the Champion Brigade at the Senior Championship after winning the Division 1 Aggregate, with Dunrobin/Nangeela coming first place in Division 2 and Mandurang first place in Division 3. Greta A won four of the six events in Division 1 and broke the record for the Tanker Hose Reel and Ladder event with a new record time of 36.43 seconds. Another new record time was set in the Hydrant and Tanker event by Hurstbridge A, with a time of 17.41 seconds.

A huge highlight for the Wallington Brigade, the Neyenhuis family and CFA in general was to see Wallington Brigade member Caleb Neyenhuis, 17, compete for the first time in the Tanker – Priming, Pumping & Ladder event. Caleb, who is blind, was applauded by all attending, but none more so than his fellow Brigade members who included his grandfather Gerry, father Greg, uncle Michael and siblings Bianca and Eliza.



Caleb Neyenhuis competing in the Tanker – Priming, Pumping & Ladder event – fulfilling his life-long ambition to compete with his Brigade at the State Championships with the Wallington Brigade.

2019 AGGREGATE RESULTS**DIVISION 1 AGGREGATE**

1st	Greta A	54 Points
2nd	Hurstbridge A	46 Points
3rd	Leopold A	26 Points

DIVISION 2 AGGREGATE

1st	Dunrobin/Nangeela D	78 Points
2nd	Swan Hill (on a countback)	36 Points
3rd	Connewarre B	36 Points

DIVISION 3 AGGREGATE

1st	Mandurang B	40 Points
2nd	Chiltern A	34 Points
3rd	Dunrobin/Nangeela C	30 Points

DISCIPLINE AWARD: Sedgwick Brigade

WINNERS OF THE SPRINTS:

Female Sprint: Abbey Hromenko, Huntly

Male Sprint: Nathan Hooper, Greta

URBAN JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

An impressive performance saw Melton win its first State Junior Championship by a significant lead - coming first place with 90 points over second placed Harvey WA on 39 points and Tatura third on 27 points.

The Championship was held in Kerang and attracted almost 500 junior competitors, with 63 teams from across the state including Harvey and Kellerberrin from Western Australia. Hundreds more CFA volunteers and staff, including members of the general public, enjoyed seeing the future firefighters of CFA do their thing.

Melton A was the clear winners of the Under 14 Years age group, winning six of the nine events. The team also won three events in the Under 17 Years age group, taking a clear sweep of all the aggregates after winning the Dry, Wet, Under 14 Years, Under 17 Years and the Grand Aggregates.

Other strong performances came from Harvey W.A., Tatura and Kangaroo Flat.

2019 AGGREGATE RESULTS**GRAND AGGREGATE**

1st	Melton A	90 Points
2nd	Harvey W.A.	39 Points
3rd	Tatura A	27 Points

UNDER 14 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	58 Points
2nd	Kangaroo Flat A	25 Points
3rd	Harvey W.A.	16 Points

UNDER 17 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	32 Points
2nd	Tatura A	27 Points
3rd	Harvey W.A.	23 Points

DRY AGGREGATE:

1st	Melton A	40 Points
2nd	Kangaroo Flat A	21 Points
3rd	Harvey W.A.	18 Points

WET AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	50 Points
2nd	Harvey W.A.	21 Points
3rd	Tatura A	14 Points

**RURAL JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP**

Springhurst won its second State Junior Championship title at this year's 41st Junior State Rural Championship in Bendigo.

Springhurst A won the 11-15 Years Aggregate and was second placed in the 11-13 Years Aggregate, giving them the lead in the Grand Aggregate with 68 points. Mandurang A won the 11-13 Years Aggregate and was second placed in the Grand Aggregate on 52 points, with both Springhurst and Mandurang well ahead of equal third placed teams – Barnawartha A, Greta A and Hurstbridge A, all on 30 points.

There were two new record times; one by Springhurst in the 11-13 Years Hydrant and Tanker, and the other by Mandurang in the 11-13 Years Low Down Pump and Ladder.

The State Junior Championship conducted by District 2 was well attended by volunteers, supporters and families, supporting 53 teams comprising junior volunteer members, of which over a third were young women competing with their fellow teammates.

2019 AGGREGATE RESULTS**11-13 YEARS AGGREGATE**

1st	Mandurang A	52 Points
2nd	Springhurst A	36 Points
=3rd	Axe Creek A	16 Points
	Strathmerton A	16 Points
	Stuart Mill A	16 Points

11-15 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Springhurst A	32 Points
2nd	Barnawartha A (on a countback)	30 Points
3rd	Greta A	30 Points

CHAMPION TEAM:

1st	Springhurst A	68 Points
2nd	Mandurang A	52 Points
=3rd	Barnawartha A	30 Points
	Greta A	30 Points
	Hurstbridge A	30 Points

VFBV STATE PRESIDENT ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD:
Eldorado B

STAN ROSS CONDUCT TROPHY: Greta Brigade

JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER SPRINTS:

11-13 Years – Female:	Erin Hayes, Chiltern
11-13 Years – Male:	Jack Burn, Mandurang
11-15 Years – Female:	Bethany Evans, Greta
11-15 Years – Male:	Harrison Muscat, Springhurst



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

Gwynne Brennan AFSM – for distinguished and dedicated service to CFA as a volunteer and staff member; outstanding leadership within the Community Safety area with a strong focus on community resilience, engagement and safety; and leadership in implementing programs to support the recommendations from the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission while testing new approaches to engage communities in the creation of bushfire action plans.

John Callahan AFSM, Barwon Downs – for distinguished and dedicated service to CFA as a volunteer and officer of the Barwon Downs Fire Brigade; outstanding leadership and contribution at the Brigade and Group level; for his contribution as an outstanding operational leader; as a mentor in the development of young CFA volunteers and for his significant contribution in the development of the role of Air Observers.

Nicole Harvey AFSM – for distinguished and dedicated service to CFA as a volunteer and staff member; outstanding leadership and achievements in advancing the role and importance of fire investigation to generating improvements in Community Safety; for her role in the development of the CFA – Fire Investigation Management System; and leadership and prodigious contribution to the development of the Advanced Diploma of Public Safety (Fire Investigation).

Colin Newell AFSM, Warracknabeal - acknowledges a long, distinguished and dedicated service to CFA as a volunteer and officer of the Warracknabeal Brigade; outstanding leadership and contribution to the Warracknabeal Brigade and Group; and also acknowledges his leadership and instrumental role in the development and successful introduction of new initiatives, particularly the Group Hubbing Project and the Voluntary Grain Harvest Guidelines.

VFBV Gold Star Awards

Since first being introduced in 1969, there have been 1,464 Gold Stars awarded in recognition of 30 or more years' service to the Association.

This year, 25 long serving volunteers from 20 Brigades were awarded the VFBV Gold Star, and congratulations are extended to:

Barnawartha

H C Y Smith

Kerang

C Kenyon

Newmerella

D Ryan

Tooradin

M Allan
D Bulman
E Claye
G Luxford
K Luxford

Belmont

D Nash

Kotupna

W Geisler

Seymour

A D Doherty

Caroline Springs

M A Wright

Kyabram/Undera

M L Close

St James & District

N Lonie

Upper Ferntree Gully

G W Luke

District 14

R Baird

Melton

R C Brooks

Strathmerton

P Ross-Soden

Werribee

M Wells

Hastings

P De La Haye

Naring

A Hendy

Sunbury

D R Hudson

Kangaroo Flat

D Hocking
A Melis

Narre Warren North

R J Appel

Four members were nominated for the VFBV Gold Star by the District 22 Championship Committee, with the awards presented at the District 22 annual competition at Strathmerton in March 2019. The awards ceremony formed part of the Official Opening of the competition, with the prestigious VFBV Gold Stars presented by VFBV Board Member Graeme Jilbert.

Pictured following the presentation with VFBV Board Member Graeme Jilbert (centre) are: Wayne Geisler (Kotupna), Neil Lonie (St James & District), Al Hendy (Naring) and Phillip Ross-Soden (Strathmerton). These four volunteers as well as serving their Brigades and communities, have all made a significant contribution to the District 22 Championship Committee and local competitions - with between them, over 150 years of volunteer service.



BOARD

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Board Member 2018-2020
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Libby Hay
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Graeme Jilbert
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At the VFBV Annual General Meeting held on 9 September 2018, the Chair of the VFBV Board Interview Panel, State Vice President Samantha Rothman, announced the appointment to the VFBV Board for two years from 1 October 2018 of:

- Nev Jones AFSM
- Andy Cusack AFSM
- Bill Maltby

The State Council meeting on 9 September 2018 elected Graeme Jilbert and Rob Auchterlonie as the two State Council ex officio VFBV Board members for 2018-19.

VFBV BOARD ELECTIONS

At the first meeting of the VFBV Board in October members elected Nev Jones AFSM as State President and Samantha Rothman as State Vice President for 2018-19.

NEWLY APPOINTED VFBV BOARD MEMBER

Greg Walcott was appointed on 14 December 2018 until 1 October 2020 to fill a casual vacancy on the VFBV Board that arose due to the retirement of Bruce Pickett AFSM.

Greg has a wealth of CFA experience and has been an active firefighter for 47 years. He has served as Captain and First Lieutenant of the Telangatuk Fire Brigade in District 17 as well as Group roles with the Jilpanger Group. Greg moved to District 5 in 2018 where he is currently serving on the District 5 District Planning Committee as a member of the District 5 HQ Brigade. Greg has a long history with the Association, having previously served as District Council President and State Councillor of what was then Region 17 for the former Victorian Rural Fire Brigades Association (VRFBA), and was re-elected in September 2018 as a District 5 delegate to VFBV State Council.

RETIRED VFBV BOARD MEMBER

Ex Captain Bruce Pickett AFSM did not re-apply for the VFBV Board this year, retiring from the Board as from 1 October 2018.

At the August 2018 Board meeting State President Nev Jones AFSM thanked Bruce for his service and contribution over the past eight years.

CEO Andrew Ford also thanked Bruce for his contribution to the Board. Bruce was valued not just for his time and input but for his diligence in raising queries about matters, which was seen as an asset. He raised the need for Board members to undertake development in governance and finance, which was the catalyst for VFBV Board Governance Workshops undertaken in 2015.

At the 2018 AGM, State Vice President Samantha Rothman acknowledged the service of Bruce Pickett and thanked him for his commitment over the last eight years, presenting Bruce with a VFBV plaque in recognition of his service and contribution to the VFBV Board. Bruce will continue his service to VFBV and State Council, where he has been a District 7 delegate for 23 years.



VFBV CEO ANDREW FORD STEPS DOWN



In February 2019, Chief Executive Officer Andrew Ford advised the VFBV Board of his desire to step down as CEO as from the end of April 2019.

Andrew was appointed as VFBV CEO in February 2007 and prior to that held various senior management positions as a CFA employee during a 15-year career commencing in 1992 involving appointments as CFA Manager Corporate Planning and General Manager CFA Westernport Area.

Andrew agreed to continue his outstanding commitment to CFA volunteers and stay on with VFBV in a part-time strategic advisory role, while pursuing other career interests and taking the opportunity to establish a better family/work balance following what has been a very demanding role as VFBV CEO over the past 12 years.

The VFBV Board thanks Andrew for his outstanding service to VFBV, CFA volunteers and the community, commends him on the very solid and strong foundations of the organisation he leaves behind, and thanks him sincerely for the significant contribution he has made over the years building a safer Victoria.



NEW LIFE MEMBER

VFBV District Council 7 nominated Gerry Neyenhuis for VFBV Life Membership, having recently retired after representing District 7 as a State Councillor for over 10 years. Gerry's nomination for VFBV Life Membership was endorsed by State Council on 2 December 2018. A VFBV Life Member plaque was presented to Gerry at the official opening of the 2019 State Championships, where Gerry was thanked for his contribution and service to VFBV, District 13 and CFA volunteers across the state (pictured above).

STATE COUNCILLORS		DISTRICT COUNCILS	
District 2	Ex Captain Geoff Browning Ex Captain Ron Cole Ex Captain Bill Maltby Ex Captain Frank Tobin Captain Darryl Wagstaff AFSM	President Laraine Leask Secretary Peter Dillon	
District 4	Captain Kelvin Bateman Captain Andy Cusack AFSM	President Gary Taylor Secretary Julie Bateman	
District 5	Ex Captain Malcolm Bishop Ex Captain Greg Walcott	President John Mahoney Secretary Carolyn Bishop	
District 6	Ex Captain Mike Evans Secretary Andrew Bath	President Brian Ritchie Secretary Margaret Evans	
District 7	Ex Capt Bruce Pickett AFSM DGO Robert Clark Lieutenant Rod Taylor	President Gerry Neyenhuis Secretary Eddy Rees	
District 8	Captain Timothy Desmond Firefighter Stephen McDonald Ex Captain Bill Watson AFSM	President Eric Collier Secretary Max Johnson	
District 9	Lieutenant Robert Auchterlonie Ex Captain Darren Wallace	President Brian Brewer Secretary Dawn King	
District 10	Ex Captain Mark Jones DGO Bryan Walpole	President Mark Jones Secretary Terry King	
District 11	Ex Captain Geof Bassett Firefighter Philip Lind	President Graeme East Secretary Ian Ashcroft	
District 12	Lieutenant Paul Denham Lieutenant Eric Smith	President Chris Lloyd Secretary Kathy Quinlan	
District 13	Firefighter Vickie Linaker Ex Captain Rod Stebbing	President Frank Whelan OAM Secretary Gwen Corbett	
District 14	DGO Sean Brittan Lieutenant Leigh Tomlinson	President Mark Gravell Secretary Michael Vermeulen	
District 15	Group Officer Shane Cramer Ex Captain Graeme Goodrem	President Ron Head Secretary Kimberly-Rose Betts	
District 16	Firefighter Greg Fithall Firefighter Peter Hannan	President Peter Hannan Secretary Vivien Maddison	
District 17	Group Officer John Davies Firefighter Maurice Dumesny	President Garry Smith Secretary Bronwyn McIntyre	
District 18	Firefighter Graeme Jilbert Lieutenant Shaun Thompson	President Harold Jochs <i>Position vacant at 30th June 2019</i>	
District 20	Ex Captain Greg Murphy Ex Capt Rob Waterson AFSM	President Greg Murphy Secretary Bryan Pickthall	
District 22	Firefighter Phil Hawkey AFSM Ex Captain Phil Slender	President Leonard Balfour Secretary Bill Stockdale	
District 23	Firefighter Mary Anne Egan Firefighter John Seymour	President Mick Jones Secretary Jim Buchan	
District 24	<i>Position vacant at 30th June 2019</i> Ex Captain Howard Smith	President Max Wood Secretary David Langshaw	
District 27	Captain Mark King DGO David Farmer	President Lance King AFSM <i>Position vacant at 30th June 2019</i>	

RETIRED MEMBERS**Ex Captain Fred Grove (District 7)**

Retired 8 August 2018 – a volunteer member of the Lara Brigade, served as a State Councillor for 12 years, delegate on the Joint Community Safety Committee and the FEM Advisory Committee, and was honoured with VFBV Life Membership by State Council on 11 September 2016.

(VALE: VFBV was saddened by the passing of former member and VFBV Life Member Fred Grove in March 2019; the huge attendance at Fred's funeral included VFBV and CFA members and Victoria Police officers. Fred spent his working career with Victoria Police.)

Ex Captain David Jarratt (District 8)

Retired 23 August 2018 – a volunteer member of the Crib Point Fire Brigade, served as a State Councillor for two years, which included serving as a State Council delegate on the Joint Training Committee.

Ex Captain Gerry Neyenhuis (District 7)

Retired 8 August 2018 – a volunteer with the Wallington Brigade, served as a State Councillor for ten years, member of the VFBV Board for three years, member of the State Council Executive Committee for seven years, honoured with VFBV Life Membership in December 2018, and continues as a delegate on the Joint Volunteerism Committee, and as chair of the State Rural Competition Committee.

Firefighter Owen O'Keefe (District 5)

Retired 6 September 2018 – a volunteer with Winslow-Yarpturk, served as a State Councillor for 24 years, and as a delegate on numerous committees and working parties over that time, including the Joint Equipment & Infrastructure Committee. Honoured with VFBV Life Membership by State Council on 13 September 2009.

Ex Captain Peter White AFSM (District 4)

Retired 24 June 2018 – a volunteer with the Casterton Brigade, served as a State Councillor for 28 years, member of the VFBV Board for two years, member of the State Council Executive Committee for five years, member on numerous Committees and Working Parties over that time, and continues as a delegate on the Joint Equipment & Infrastructure Committee and a member of the Urban Competition & Rules Committee.

Firefighter Trevor Wyatt AFSM (District 18)

Retired 9 September 2018 – a volunteer of the Murrayville Brigade, served as a State Councillor for 14 years, member of the State Council Executive Committee for nine years, honoured with VFBV Life Membership by State Council on 14 September 2014 and continues as a delegate to the Joint Equipment & Infrastructure Committee.

NEW STATE COUNCILLORS**Captain Kelvin Bateman, District 4 –**

elected 24 June 2018, member of Dunrobin & Nangeela Brigade for 41 years, currently Captain and Brigade Community Safety Officer and Casterton Group DGO, Group Communications Officer and Group Health & Safety Officer.

**Ex Captain Greg Walcott, District 5 –**

elected 6 September 2018, CFA volunteer for 50 years with Telangatuk Brigade in District 17, where he was Brigade Captain for six years, currently member of District 5 Headquarters Brigade.

**Deputy Group Officer Robert Clark,**

District 7 – elected 8 August 2018, joined Geelong West Brigade in 1983, transferring to Grovedale brigade in 2002 where he was Captain for 12 years, DGO of the Geelong Group since 2014.

**Ex Captain Rod Taylor, District 7 –**

elected 8 August 2018, member of Winchelsea Brigade for 33 years, former Captain for 14 years, currently Brigade Lieutenant, Brigade Health & Safety Officer and Group Delegate.

**Firefighter Stephen McDonald, District 8 –**

elected 23 August 2018, joined Eltham Brigade in 1995, transferred to Mornington Brigade in 2001 where he was a Lieutenant, currently a member of Frankston Brigade.

**Ex Captain Rod Stebbing, District 13 –**

elected 25 November 2018, CFA volunteer for 45 years, originally with Belgrave Brigade before transferring to Monbulk Brigade where he served as Captain for 10 years, and a former Group Officer of the Dandenong Ranges Group for six years.

**Lieutenant Shaun Thompson, District 18**

– elected 9 September 2018, joined Raywood Brigade in District 2 as a Junior in 1994 before transferring to Beulah in 2015 where he is currently Lieutenant and Brigade Training Officer. Also currently DGO of the Southern Mallee Group.

STATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The State Council Executive Committee makes recommendations to State Council on strategic/process matters and issues raised by District Councils. State Council members representing Brigades with a predominantly structure risk profile nominate nine members and State Council members representing Brigades with a predominantly bushfire risk profile nominate nine members.

Members of the State Council Executive Committee for the year 2018-19 were: Geof Bassett, Malcolm Bishop, Sean Brittan, Timothy Desmond, Maurice Dumesny, Mary Anne Egan, Phil Hawkey, Mark Jones, Vickie Linaker, Phil Lind, Bill Maltby, Greg Murphy, Bruce Pickett, Phil Slender, Eric Smith, Howard Smith, Shaun Thompson and Rob Waterson. The two State Council delegates to the VFBV Board, Rob Auchterlonie and Graeme Jilbert, also attend as ex officio members to this Committee.

DISTRICT COUNCIL RETIREMENTS

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

District 4	President Kelvin Bateman (July 2018) Secretary Karyn Bothe (July 2018)
District 5	President Don Robertson AFSM (September 2018) Secretary Heather McIntyre (September 2018)
District 7	President Robert Clark (August 2018)
District 9	Secretary Michael Varranti (October 2018)
District 12	President Mick Sanderson AFSM (Aug 2018) Secretary Alex Caughey (August 2018)
District 15	President Lisa Palmer (July 2018) Secretary Samantha Speedy (October 2018)
District 16	Secretary Tameeka Cann (October 2018)
District 18	Secretary Chris Smith (August 2018) Secretary Monique Bruton (January 2019)
District 27	Secretary Di Billingsley (2017)

1946	M.W. Carver	1981	E.C. Caddy QFSM (Drouin) L.W. Peters	2001	H.A. van Hamond AFSM (Wendouree)
1951	J.K. Stokes			2003	P.E. Davis AFSM (Carrum) L.C. Doye (Golden Square) J.L. Laing
1952	C. Ford (Miners Rest)	1983	R. Jones D.H. Lade QFSM (Highlands/Caveat)	2004	R.W. Waterson AFSM (Cohuna)
1953	D.M. Cameron			2005	B.A. Pickett AFSM (Geelong West)
1955	J.L. Allen	1984	D.E. Gow (Leitchville) K.W. Talbot OAM (Dandenong)	2006	R. Hill (Paynesville) J.S. Kennedy (Loch)
1956	W.B. Richardson BEM (Wangaratta)			2007	G.N. Lyttle AFSM (Cardigan) S.M. O Callaghan (Warracknabeal)
1959	J.R.C. Plante (Lilydale) M. Steward OBE (Warragul) J. Reilly (Tarndale) H.M. O'Rorke MBE (Lake Bolac)	1985	R. Collier OAM (Portarlington) G.T. Evans OAM QFSM (Echuca) M.E. Johnson QFSM (Traralgon) J. McLeod AFSM (Boronia) P.G. Mullins QFSM (Maryborough) R.K. Patterson AFSM (Portland) H.W. Stewart (Broadford)	2009	T.J. Brodie AFSM (Longwood) P. Downes (Mandurang) O.T. O'Keefe (Winslow) W.R. Rodda AFSM (Korumburra) J.I. Thomson (Sunbury)
1961	H.W. Wade (Natimuk)	1986	E.J. Baynes AFSM OAM (Indigo Valley) M.W. Dawson OAM (Avoca)	2010	B. Conboy (Mt Martha) R. MacDonald (Carlsruhe) W.T. Pressey AFSM (Mortlake)
1962	Hon. I.A. Swinburne GMC MLC	1987	L.J. Baillie (Warrnambool) B.C. Condick AFSM (Tarnagulla)	2011	B.L. Vine AFSM (Tawonga)
1966	W.H. Barnes OAM (Chelsea) H. Brown (Golden Square) S.G.W. Burston OBE (Casterton) T.F. Hayes (Violet Town) W.J. Jones BEM AFSM (Moorooduc) L.J. Slattey (Kyabram) A.E.J. Turton (Wodonga)	1988	D.A. Austin QFSM ED L.V. Winsall AFSM (Warracknabeal)	2012	B. Pyke (Whanregarwen) P.R. Denham (Boronia) M.R. Jones (Stratford) R.B. Snell (Hamilton)
1967	E.E. Allen (Kaniva) S.M. Begley (Colac) Hon. T.H. Grigg CBE MLC (Maldon) Dr P.S. Lang	1990	G.H. Baxter AFSM (Freshwater Creek) K.H. Larsen AFSM (Belmont) J.N. McEachern (Wodonga)	2013	A.J. Cusack AFSM (Mumbanner) T.G. Desmond (Dromana) M.J. Evans (Barongarook) R.P. Lind (Mount Taylor) W.I. Maltby (Castlemaine) C. Pomroy (Longford)
1968	F.C.B. Minchin J.S. Tabuteau (Moe)	1991	W.E. Davies AFSM (Walmer) W.H. Royal AFSM (Bairnsdale) M.J. Taylor AFSM (Mornington) L.L. Thomason AFSM (Woodend)	2014	C.W. Dennis (Frankston) M. Nunweek (Stawell) D.J. Wagstaff AFSM (Maryborough) T.J. Wyatt AFSM (Murrayville)
1970	D. Campbell (Springvale) S.C. Diffey MBE MC OAM (Springhurst) H. Lester-Smith MBE (Kerang) L.J. Maguire (Boronia) W.M. Reid (Mooroopna)	1992	G.A. Ellis (Bendigo)	2015	G.W. Bassett (Lakes Entrance) P.J. Slender (Tatura)
1971	H.L. King (The Fireman)	1993	M.J. Sanderson AFSM (Seymour) Q.T. Turner AFSM (Creswick)	2016	F.J. Grove (Lara)
1972	E.J. Barrett (Geelong City) R.A. Dore BEM (Carrum) W.H. Rowe (Maldon)	1994	P.R. Bishop AFSM (Mildura) G.C. Dare (Colac) R.D. Walker (Kerang)	2017	J.M. Austin (Drouin) K. Clough (Lake Charm) R.C. Cole (Romsey) M.A. Egan (Maidample) A.J. Ford
1973	H.G. Kyle AFSM (Bengworden)	1995	R.G. Jacobs AFSM OAM (Chelsea) B.M. Maher AFSM (Lubeck) J.C. McMillan (Moe) H.B. Morris (Avoca)	2018	G. Neyenhuis (Wallington)
1975	N.H. Jenkins (Kyneton)				
1976	C.J.H. Drife BEM (Clunes) W.G. Wilson OAM (Shepparton)	1997	R.D. Gartside (Castlemaine)		
1979	A.I. Laidlaw BEM AFSM (Willaura) C.T.N. Stone (Diamond Creek)	1998	A.J. Hooper AFSM (Winnindoo) R.A. Horner AFSM (Sassafras/Ferny Creek)		
1980	R.J. Jilbert BEM (Swan Hill) A.E. King AFSM (The Fireman) D.J. McEachern OAM (Wodonga)	1999	R.A.C. McDonald (Bowser)		
		2000	D.W. Adams (Carrum) R.E. Schultz AFSM (Benalla) P.J. White AFSM (Casterton)		

District 2

Axe Creek
 Axedale
 Baringhup West
 Bealiba
 Bendigo
 Benloch
 Bolinda & Monegeetta
 Bowenvale
 Bullengarook
 Campbells Creek
 Carisbrook
 Carlsruhe
 Castlemaine
 Chewton
 Clarkefield & District
 Coliban Group
 Darraweit Guim
 District 2 Headquarters
 Dunolly
 Eaglehawk
 Elmore
 Elphinstone
 Eppalock Group
 Fortuna Group
 Fryerstown
 Gisborne
 Golden Square
 Goldfields Group
 Goornong
 Guildford
 Harcourt
 Heathcote
 Hesket-Kerrie
 Hunter-Diggora
 Huntly
 Junortoun
 Kamarooka
 Kangaroo Flat
 Knowsley
 Kyneton
 Lake Eppalock Coast
 Guard
 Lancefield
 Langley-Barfold
 Lockwood
 Macedon

Maiden Gully
 Maldon

Malmsbury
 Mandurang
 Marong
 Maryborough
 Metcalfe
 Mia Mia
 Moolort & Joyces Creek
 Mosquito Creek
 Mount Macedon
 Mount Macedon Group
 Mt Alexander Group
 Mt Camel
 Mt Cameron
 Natte Yallock
 Newham
 Newstead & District
 Oscar 1 Emergency
 Response
 Pastoria
 Raywood
 Redesdale
 Riddell's Creek
 Romsey
 Romsey Group
 Sedgwick
 Spring Hill
 Springfield
 Strathfieldsaye
 Sutton Grange & Myrtle Ck
 Talbot
 Taradale
 Tylden
 Walmer
 Wareek & Bung Bong
 Whipstick Group
 Woodend
 Woodvale

District 4

Bahgallah
 Carapook
 Cashmore
 Casterton
 Casterton Group
 Condah

Corndale
 Dartmoor
 Digby
 District 4 Headquarters
 Drik Drik
 Drumborg
 Dunrobin & Nangeela
 Glenorchy Estate
 Gorae West
 Grassdale
 Heathmere
 Henty
 Heywood
 Heywood Group
 Homerton

Killara
 Lake Mundi
 Lindsay
 Lyons
 Merino
 Merino Group
 Milltown
 Morven
 Mumbannar
 Myamyn
 Narrawong
 Nelson
 Paschendale
 Portland
 Portland Coast Guard
 Sandford
 Strathdownie
 Strathdownie Group
 Tahara
 Wallacedale
 Wando Bridge
 Wando Vale

District 5

Abbey Hills
 Allansford
 Ardachy
 Ardonachie
 Bainbridge
 Balmoral
 Balmoral Group
 Belfast Group

Bessiebelle
 Bochara
 Branhholme
 Broadwater
 Buckley Swamp
 Bulart
 Burn Brae
 Byaduk
 Caramut
 Cavendish
 Codrington
 Coleraine
 Croxton East
 Cudgee
 Culla
 District 5 Headquarters
 Dundas Group
 Dunkeld
 Eilerslie
 Framlingham
 Garvoc
 Gazette
 Glenthompson
 Grange
 Grassmere
 Gringe
 Gritjurk
 Hamilton
 Hawkesdale
 Hexham
 Hilgay Settlers
 Hopkins - Curdies Group
 Karabeal
 Kirkstall
 Knebsworth
 Kolora
 Konongwootong
 Koroit
 Laang
 Linlithgow
 Macarthur
 Macarthur Group
 Melville Forest
 Mepunga
 Merri Group
 Minhamite
 Mooralla

Mortlake
 Mortlake Group
 Mount Rouse Group
 Muntham
 Nareen
 Nareen Group
 Naringal
 Nirranda South
 North Balmoral
 North Byaduk
 North Hamilton
 Nullawarre
 Orford
 Panmure
 Penshurst
 Peterborough
 Pigeon Ponds
 Port Fairy
 Purnim
 Ripponhurst
 Spring Creek
 St Helens
 Strathkellar
 Strathmore
 Tarrayoukyan
 Tarrenlea
 Tarrington
 The Sisters
 Toolong
 Vasey
 Victoria Valley
 Wando Heights
 Wangoom
 Warrayure-Moutajup
 Warrnambool
 Warrnambool Coast Guard
 Warrong
 Willatook & District
 Winslow & Yarpurk
 Woodford
 Woodhouse
 Woolsthorpe
 Wooriwrite
 Wootong Vale
 Yambuk
 Yulecart

District 6

Apollo Bay
 Barongarook West
 Barwon Downs
 Beeac
 Beeac Group
 Berrybank
 Birregurra
 Bookaar
 Boorcan
 Bostocks Creek
 Brucknell-Ayrford
 Bungador
 Camperdown
 Camperdown Group
 Carlisle River
 Carpendeit-Sth
 Purumbete
 Cobden
 Cobden Group
 Cobrico
 Colac
 Cororooke
 Cressy
 Darlington
 Derrinallum
 District 6 Headquarters
 Dixie
 Duverney
 Ecklin & District
 Forrest
 Gellibrand
 Gerangamete
 Irrewarra
 Irrewillipe
 Jancourt
 Kawarren
 Kennedy's Creek
 Larpent
 Leslie Manor
 Lismore
 Lismore Group
 Lower Heytesbury
 Mingay & District
 Nalangil
 Noorat & District
 Otway

Pomborneit & Dist
 Port Campbell
 Princetown
 Scotts Ck-Cowleys Ck.
 Simpson
 Stonyford
 Swan Marsh
 Terang
 Tesbury
 Timboon
 Timboon Group
 Vite Vite North
 Warrior
 Weering-Eurack
 Weerite
 Wye River
 Yeo & District
 Yeodene

District 7

Aireys Inlet
 Anakie
 Anglesea
 Bannockburn
 Barrabool
 Barunah Plains North
 Barwon Heads
 Bellarine Group
 Belmont
 Connewarre
 Corio
 Deans Marsh
 Deree
 District 7 Headquarters
 Drysdale
 Freshwater Creek
 Geelong City
 Geelong Coast Guard
 Geelong West
 Gnarwarre
 Grovedale
 Highton
 Inverleigh
 Lara
 Leigh Group
 Leopold
 Lethbridge

Little River
Lorne
Lovely Banks
Mannerim
Maude
Meredith
Modewarre
Mount Mercer
Ocean Grove
Portarlington
Queenscliff
Queenscliff Coast Guard
Rokewood
Shelford
St Leonards-Indented
Head
Stonehaven
Teesdale
Torquay
Wallington
Werneth
Winchelsea
Wingee
Wurdale

District 8

Balnarring
Bass
Bass Coast Group
Baxter
Bayles
Beaconsfield
Beaconsfield Upper
Berwick
Bittern
Boneo
Bunyip
Cardinia Group
Carrum Coast Guard
Carrum Downs
Casey Group
Clyde
Cockatoo
Corinella
Cranbourne
Crib Point
Dalyston

Dandenong
Devon Meadows
District 8 Headquarters
Dromana
Edithvale
Flinders
Frankston
Frankston Coast Guard
French Island
Gembrook
Glen Alvie
Hallam
Hampton Park
Hastings
Hastings Coast Guard
Heath Hill - Yannathan
Kernot - Grantville
Keysborough
Kilcunda
Koo Wee Rup
Lang Lang
Langwarrin
Main Ridge
Maryknoll & District
Moorooduc
Mornington
Mt Eliza
Mt Martha
Nar Nar Goon
Narre Warren
Narre Warren North
Noble Park
Officer
Pakenham
Pakenham Upper
Patterson River
Pearcedale
Peninsula Group
Phillip Island
Red Hill
Rye
Safety Beach Coast Guard
San Remo
Sandringham Coast Guard
Shoreham
Skye
Somers

Somerville
Sorrento
South East Group
Toomuc
Tooradin
Tyabb
Tynong
Warneet - Blind Bight
Westernport Group
Wonthaggi

District 9

Allambee
Baw Baw Group
Berry's Creek
Darnum & Ellinbank
Drouin
Drouin West
Dumbalk
Erica & District
Fish Creek & District
Foster
Hallora & District
Hallston-Mt Eccles
Hedley
Inverloch
Kongwak & District
Koonwarra
Korumburra
Leongatha
Loch
Longwarry & District
Meenyan & Stony Creek
Milford
Mirboo North
Neerim South
Nilma North
Noojee
Poowong
Port Welshpool Coast
Guard
Pound Creek
Ruby
South Gippsland Group
Strzelecki Group
Tarwin Lower District
Thorpdale

Toora
Trafalgar
Trida
Warragul
Welshpool
Westbury
Willowgrove
Yanakie
Yarragon

District 10

Alberton West
Avon Group
Boisdale
Briargolong
Carrajuing
Clydebank
Coongulla
Cowwarr
Dargo
Devon North
Giffard West
Glenmaggie
Golden Beach
Heyfield
Jack River
Licola
Loch Sport
Longford
Maffra
Meerlieu
Munro
Newry
Perry Bridge
Port Albert
Port Albert Coast Guard
Riverslea Group
Rosedale
Sale
Seaspray
Seaton
Stradbroke
Stradbroke Group
Stratford
Tarra Group
Tinamba
Valencia Creek

Willung
Willung South
Winnindoo
Won Wron
Woodside
Woranga
Yarram

District 11

Bairnsdale
Bemm
Bendoc
Bengworden
Bruthen
Cann Valley
District 11 Headquarters
Ensay
Fernbank
Flaggy Creek
Gelantipy
Glenaladale
Goongerah
Hillside
Johnsonville
Kalimna West
Lakes Entrance
Lakes Entrance Coast
Guard
Lindenow South
Mallacoota
Marlo
Marlo Coast Guard
Metung
Mitchell Group
Mossi - Tambo
Mount Delegate Group
Mount Taylor
Newmerella
Ormeo
Orbost
Paynesville
Paynesville Coast Guard
Sarsfield
Swift's Creek
Tambo Group
Toorloo
Wairewa

District 12

Acheron
Alexandra
Alexandra Group
Broadford
Buxton
Clonbinane
District 12 Headquarters
Eildon
Flowerdale
Glenaroua
Glenburn
Highlands-Caveat
Hilldene
Homewood
Kilmore
Kinglelake District
Kinglelake West
Koriella
Limestone
Marysville
Mitchell Shire Group
Molesworth
Murrindindi & Woodbourne
Narbethong
Nulla Vale
Seymour
Strath Creek-Reedy Creek
Taggerty
Tallarook
Terip Terip
Thornton
Tooborac
Toolangi
Trawool
Wallan
Wandong
Whanregarwen
Whiteheads Creek-
Tarcombe
Yarck
Yea
Yea Group

District 13

Badger Creek
Bayswater
Belgrave
Belgrave Heights & South
Boronia
Chrinside Park
Clematis
Coldstream
Dandenong Ranges Group
District 13 Headquarters
Dixons Creek
Emerald
Ferntree Gully
Gruyere
Healesville
Hillcrest
Hoddle's Creek
Kallista-The Patch
Kalorama & Mt
Dandenong
Knox Group
Lilydale
Little Yarra
Macclesfield
Maroondah Group
Menzies Creek
Monbulk
Montrose
Mooroolbark
Mt Evelyn
Narre Warren East
Olinda
Reefton
Rowville
Sassafras & Ferny Creek
Scoresby
Selby
Seville
Silvan
South Warrandyte
The Basin
Upper Ferntree Gully
Upwey
Wandin
Warburton
Warrandyte

Wesburn-Millgrove
Wonga Park
Yarra Glen
Yarra Junction
Yarra Valley Group
Yellingbo

District 14

Arthurs Creek
Bulla
Caroline Springs
Christmas Hills
Craigieburn
Diamond Creek
Diggers Rest
District 14 HQ East
Doreen
Eltham
Epping
Eyensbury
Greenvale
Hoppers Crossing
Hume Group
Hurstbridge
Kal Kallo
Kangaroo Ground
Melton
Mernda
Mount Cottrell Group
Nillumbik Group
North Warrandyte
Panton Hill
Plenty
Point Cook
Research
Rockbank
South Morang
St Andrews
Sunbury
Toolern Vale
Truganina
Wattle Glen
Werribee
Werribee Coast Guard
Whittlesea
Whittlesea/D.Valley Group
Wildwood

Wollert & District
Wyndham Vale
Yarrambat

District 15

Ascot & District
Bacchus Marsh
Bacchus Marsh Group
Ballan
Ballan Group
Ballarat
Ballarat City
Ballarat Group
Balliang & District
Blackwood
Bungaree
Buninyong Group
Buninyong-Mt Helen
Burrumbeet
Campbelltown
Cape Clear
Cardigan & Windermere
Clunes
Coimadai
Creswick
Daylesford
Elaine
Franklinford
Glen Park
Glendaruel & Mt
Beckworth
Glenlyon
Glenlyon Group
Gordon
Greendale
Grenville Group
Haddon
Hardies Hill
Hepburn
Invermay
Kingston
Learmonth-Addington
Leonards Hill & District
Linton
Mannibadar
Millbrook
Miners Rest

Mollonghip
Morrisons & District
Mt Buninyong
Mt Egerton
Mt Wallace
Mt Warrenheip
Musk
Myrniong
Napoleons-Enfield
Newlyn Dean
Parwan
Porcupine Ridge
Rokewood Junction & Dist
Rowsley
Sebastopol
Smythesdale
Trentham
Ullina
Wallace
Wallinduc & District
Waubra
Wendouree

District 16

Amphitheatre
Ararat
Ararat Group
Avoca
Barkly & Frenchman's
Beaufort
Beaufort Group
Beazley's Bridge
Bornes Hill
Brewster
Buangor & Middle Creek
Burnbank
Callawadda
Carapooee
Carranballac
Chatsworth
Coonooer Bridge
Cross Roads
Crowlands
Dadswells Bridge
District 16 Headquarters
Dundonnell
Elmhurst

Glenorchy & Riachella
Gre Gre Village
Great Western
Halls Gap
Joel Joel
Kooreh
Lake Bolac
Lake Goldsmith-Stockyard
Landsborough
Langi Kal Kal
Lexton
Marnoo
Maroona
Mininera
Moyston
Narrapumelap South
Nerrin Nerrin
Pomonal
Pura Pura
Pyrenees Group
Raglan
Redbank
Skipton
Slaty Creek
Snake Valley & District
St Arnaud
St Arnaud Group
Stawell
Stawell Group
Streatham
Stuart Mill
Tatyoan
Traynor's Lagoon
Wallaloo East
Warrak
Warrenmang & District
Westmere
Westmere Group
Wickliffe
Willaura
Woorndoo
Yalla Y Poora

District 17

Antwerp
Apsley
Apsley Group
Areegra
Bangerang
Benayeo
Boolite
Brim
Brimpaen
Bringalbert South
Broughton
Cannum
Charam
Chetwynd
Clear Lake
Connewirricoo
Coromby
Crymelon
Dergholm
Diapur
Dimboola
Dinyarrak
District 17 Headquarters
Dooen
Douglas
Dunmunkle Group
Edenhope
Gerang
Goroke
Goroke Group
Grass Flat
Green Lake
Gymbowen
Harrow
Horsham
Jeparit
Jilpanger Group
Jung
Kadnook
Kaniva
Kaniva Group
Karnak
Kellalac
Kenmare
Lah
Laharum

Lawloit
Leeor
Lorquon
Lowan Group
Lubeck
Miga Lake
Minimay
Minyip
Mitre
Murtoa
Natimuk
Netherby
Neuarpuur
Nhill
Noradjuha
North Wimmera
Ozenkadnook
Patyah
Peronne
Pigick
Pimpinio
Poolajelo
Propodollah
Rainbow
Rainbow Group
Rupanyup
Sandsmere
Sheep Hills
South Lillimur
Tarranyurk
Telangatuk
Telopea Downs
Ullswater
Vectis
Warracknabeal
Werrap
Wilkur South
Willenabrina
Winiam & District
Wonwondah
Woorak
Yanac
Yearinga - Yarrock

District 18

Annuello
Berriwillcock
Beulah
Beverford & District
Birchip
Boundary Bend
Buckrabanyule
Charlton
Charlton Group
Chinkapook
Cope Cope
Corack
Corack East
Curyo
Donald
Dumosa
Glenloth East
Goschen
Hopetoun West
Irymple
Jeffcott
Kooloonong
Laen East
Lake Boga
Lascelles
Manangatang
Merbein
Mildura
Mittyack
Murrayville
Naraport
Natya
Nulawil
Nyah Nyah West
Ouyen
Ouyen & District Group
Piangil
Red Cliffs
Reedy Dam
Robinvale
Robinvale & District Group
Rosebery
Sea Lake
Speed
Swan Hill
Teddywaddy

Tempy
Ultima
Underbool
Waitchie
Walpeup
Warmur
Watchem
Watchupga
Wemen
Woomelang
Woorinen South
Wooroonook
Wycheproof
Yaapeet
Yeungroon

District 20

Appin South
Bamawm Extension
Beauchamp
Boort
Bridgewater
Campbells Forest
Cohuna
Colbinabbin
Corop
Corop West
Deakin Group
Dingee-Tandarra
Echuca
Echuca Village
Fentons Creek
Gannawarra Group
Girgarre
Gunbower
Inglewood
Jarklin
Kerang
Koondrook
Korong Vale
Kotta
Kyabram
Lake Charm
Leitchville
Lockington
Loddon Vale
Macorna

Meering West
Mitiamo
Murphy's Creek
Murrabit
Mysia
Pine Grove
Powlett-Salisbury
Pyramid Hill
Quambatook
Rheola
Rochester
Rushworth
Sandhill Lake & District
Stanhope
Tarnagulla
Tennyson
Terrick Group
Timmering
Tongala
Toolleen
Waranga Group
Wedderburn
Wedderburn Group
Woodstock West
Woosang
Wychitella
Wyuna
Yambuna
Yarrawalla

District 22

Almonds
Arcadia
Avenel
Bailestion
Balmattum
Barmah
Boho
Branjee
Bundalong
Burramine
Caniambo
Cobram
Cobram East & Boosey
Cooma
Cosgrove & Pine Lodge
Creightons Creek

Currawa
District 22 HQ
Dookie
Drumanure
Earlston
Euroa
Euroa Group
Gooram
Kaarimba
Karramomus
Katamatite
Katandra
Kelvin View
Kialla & District
Koonda
Kotupna
Locksley
Longwood
Marraweeny
Merrigum
Miepoll
Molka
Moorlim
Mooroopna
Muckatah
Murchison
Nagambie
Naring
Nathalia
Numurkah
Numurkah Group
NW Mooropna
Peechelba
Picola
Rigg's Creek
Ruffy
Shean's Creek
Shepparton
Shepparton East
St James & District
Strathbogie
Strathmerton
Tallygaroopna
Tatura
Toolamba
Tungamah
Tungamah Group

Undera
Upton Hill
Violet Town
Violet Town Group
Waaia
Wahring
Wilby
Wirrate
Wunghnu
Yabba North
Yalca & Yielima
Yarrawonga
Yarrawonga Group
Yarroweyah

District 23

Baddaginnie
Barjarg
Benalla
Benalla Group
Bobinawarrah
Bonnie Doon
Boorhaman
Booroolite & District
Boweya
Bowman-Murmungee
Bowser
Carboor
Cheshunt
Chesney Vale
Devenish
Edi
Eldorado
Everton
Glenrowan
Glenroy & Merrijig
Goomalibee &
Upotipotpon
Goorambat Stewarton
Goughs Bay - Howes
Creek
Greta
Jamieson
Killawarra
Laceby West
Lima South
Lurg

Maindample
Mansfield
Mansfield Group
Merton
Milawa
Molyullah
Moyhu
Moyhu Group
Mt Buller
Myrrhee
Oxley
Oxley Flats
Samaria
South Wangaratta
Springhurst
Swanpool
Taminick & North Winton
Tarrowingee & District
Thoon
Tolmie & District
Wangaratta
Wangaratta Group
Wangaratta North
Warrenbayne
Whitegate
Whitfield & District
Whorouly
Winton
Woods Point

District 24

Allans Flat
Baranduda
Barnawartha
Beechworth Rural
Beechworth Urban
Berrigama
Bethanga
Biggara
Bogong Group
Bonegilla
Bright
Browns Plains
Buffalo River
Bullioh
Burrowye
Carlyle

Chiltern
Cornishtown
Corryong
Corryong Group
Cudgewa
Dartmouth
Dederang
District 24 Headquarters
Eskdale
Falls Creek
Gapsted
Gundowring
Harrietville
Indigo Valley
Kergunyah
Kiewa
Lake Hume Coast Guard
Leneva
Mitta Mitta
Mt Beauty
Mt Hotham - Dinner Plain
Mudgegonga
Myrtleford
Nariel Valley
Noorongong
Old Tallangatta
Ovens Valley Group
Ovens-Eurobin
Porepunkah
Rosewhite
Rutherglen
Sandy Creek & Charleroi
Stanley
Talgarno
Tallangatta
Tallangatta Group
Tallangatta Valley
Tawonga
Tintaldra
Wahgunyah
Walwa
Wodonga
Wodonga Group
Wodonga West
Wooragee
Yackandandah

District 27

Boolarra
Callignee
Churchill
Driffield
Flynn
Glengarry
Hazelwood North
Hyland Group
Maryvale
Merton Group
Moe
Moe South
Morwell
Newborough
Tanjil
Toongabbie
Traralgon
Traralgon East
Traralgon South
Traralgon West
Tyers
Yallourn North
Yinnar
Yinnar South

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Directors' Report

30 June 2019

The consolidated financial statements include the consolidated results and activities for Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Welfare Fund (the Group). The board members submit the financial report of the Group for the financial year ended 30 June 2019.

(a) General information

Board members

The names of each person who has been a director during the year and to the date of this report are:

Name	Position	Appointed/Resigned
Nev Jones AFSM	State President	
Samantha Rothman	State Vice President	
Andy Cusack AFSM	Treasurer	
Robert Auchterlonie		
Kate Boschetti		
Jan Cleary		
Greame Jilbert		
Bill Maltby		
Libby Hay		
Greg Walcott		Appointed 14/12/18
Bruce Pickett AFSM		Resigned 30/09/18

Principal activities

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

- To function as a non-profit association whose Members comprise Volunteer Fire Brigades registered by the Country Fire Authority under the Country Fire Authority Act (1958) and its Regulations.
- To liaise and consult on the operation of the "Volunteer Charter" in the interests of CFA volunteers about all matters which might reasonably be expected to affect them. The Volunteer Charter is an agreed tripartite commitment between the State of Victoria, the CFA and CFA Volunteers, committing the State of Victoria and the CFA to consultation with volunteers about all matters which might reasonably be expected to affect volunteers. VFBV represents its Members and CFA Volunteers in that consultation process.
- To assist in maintaining high morale, ongoing health and welfare of CFA volunteer members and their families.
- Support CFA volunteers experiencing personal financial hardship/crisis by providing small welfare grants that may assist in alleviating stresses impacting on the individual's ability to maintain their involvement as a volunteer.
- Preserve and strengthen CFA's community and volunteer based foundations by enabling members of CFA brigades to consider and bring to the notice of CFA all matters affecting their welfare and efficiency (other than questions of discipline and promotion).
- To promote to CFA volunteers the comprehensive support services available to them including but not limited to: legal assistance, OH&S, equity and diversity, counselling and welfare, training, employment support and compensation for accidents, injuries and illness.
- To develop awareness, respect and support for CFA volunteers and their fundamental and pivotal role in the CFA as a community based, volunteer based fire and emergency service of the people of Victoria.
- To take any other action as determined by the Association Board consistent with these purposes.

Directors' Report

30 June 2019

General information

Principal activities

- To maintain and pursue a balanced focus on issues affecting CFA volunteers across all brigades from all risk profiles.

Significant changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

Operating results and review of operations for the year

Operating result

The surplus of the Group for the financial year after providing for income tax amounted to \$ 272,487 (2018: \$225,153)

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

Board member:

Nev Jones AFSM - State President

Board member:

Andrew Cusack AFSM - Treasurer

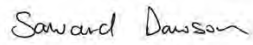
Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Auditor's Independence Declaration

In accordance with the requirements of section 60.40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, as the auditor for the audit of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities for the year ended 30 June 2019, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit, and;
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



Saward Dawson



Jeffrey Tulk
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 22 August 2019

Statement of Income and Expenditure and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
Income			
Affiliation Fees		196,033	195,131
Grants and Other Reimbursements		1,667,904	1,514,476
Championships		26,610	26,157
Interest Received		139,931	131,207
Special Projects Funding		93,979	205,849
Merchandise Sales		16,164	25,452
Donations Income		10,242	960
Other Income		566	13,367
		<u>2,151,429</u>	<u>2,112,599</u>
Expenditure			
Employment Costs		971,221	922,081
Project Salaries and Other Project fees		130,544	180,518
Welfare Grants		96,735	109,111
Travel, Accommodation and meals		369,062	305,609
Office & Administration Expenditure		40,687	71,542
Advertising		23,250	17,297
Rent & Outgoings		72,403	71,407
Depreciation		28,215	38,574
Printing, Postage and Stationery		70,203	83,511
Communications		30,537	32,701
Accounting and Audit Fees		10,371	8,640
Championships & Championships Equipment		13,315	10,205
Merchandise		13,731	19,252
Other Expenses		8,669	16,998
		<u>1,878,942</u>	<u>1,887,446</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		<u>272,487</u>	<u>225,153</u>
Other comprehensive income			
Other Comprehensive Income for the year		-	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year		<u>272,487</u>	<u>225,153</u>

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	2	1,117,184	1,408,189
Trade and other receivables	3	146,433	155,739
Financial assets	4	5,033,448	4,500,396
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		6,297,065	6,064,324
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Plant and equipment	5	200,286	184,409
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		200,286	184,409
TOTAL ASSETS		6,497,351	6,248,733
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	6	184,538	170,692
Employee benefits	7	269,426	245,006
Deferred income	8	853,337	895,663
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,307,301	1,311,361
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Employee benefits	7	-	19,809
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		-	19,809
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,307,301	1,331,170
NET ASSETS		5,190,050	4,917,563
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Accumulated surplus		5,190,050	4,917,563
TOTAL MEMBERS' EQUITY		5,190,050	4,917,563

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

2019

	VFBV Inc. \$	Welfare Fund \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2018	1,972,729	2,944,834	4,917,563
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year	181,815	90,672	272,487
Balance at 30 June 2019	2,154,544	3,035,506	5,190,050

2018

	VFBV Inc. \$	Welfare Fund \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2017	1,820,802	2,871,608	4,692,410
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year	151,927	73,226	225,153
Balance at 30 June 2018	1,972,729	2,944,834	4,917,563

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:			
Receipts from customers and government grants		2,163,823	2,631,872
Payments to suppliers and employees		(2,008,663)	(2,125,000)
Interest received		139,931	131,207
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	11	295,091	638,079
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:			
Purchase of plant and equipment		(76,807)	(61,144)
Redemption/ (Placement) of term deposit		(533,052)	(799,954)
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		23,763	35,091
Net cash used by investing activities		(586,096)	(826,007)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:			
		-	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		(291,005)	(187,928)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,408,189	1,596,117
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	2	1,117,184	1,408,189

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial report is aggregated to include the numbers of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc. and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Welfare Fund (the Group).

Other entities that are associated with the Group have not been included in this financial report and are reported independently are Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria - Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses Awareness and Protection Fund.

This financial report is a special purpose financial statement prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. The board has determined that the not-for-profit Group is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated specifically, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

(a) Income tax

The Group is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Welfare Fund are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

(b) Plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all property, plant and equipment is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the Group commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

(c) Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting year, the Group reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the statement of income and expenditure and other comprehensive income.

(d) Employee benefits

Provision is made for the Group's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting year. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled. The Long Service Leave provision is recorded after 5 years of service being rendered.

(e) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(f) Revenue and other income

The Group recognises revenue when the amount of revenue can be reliably measured, it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity and specific criteria have been met for each of the Group's activities as discussed below.

When grant revenue is received and the grant agreement contains a period of time and/or conditions specifying a specific use or purpose, the Group recognises the grant revenue in the statement of financial position as an income in advance liability. Revenue is recognised only when expenses is incurred to meet the conditions of the grant or over the period to which the grant relates.

When grant revenue is received that does not contain conditions specifying a specific use or purpose, the Group recognises the grant revenue when it obtains controls of the grant income, which is typically on receipt of funds.

Interest income is mainly on interest-bearing cash and cash equivalent balances. Interest income is recognised on an accruals basis.

Donations and bequests are recognised as revenue when received.

Merchandise revenue is recognised when significant risks and rewards of ownership of the goods are transferred out by the Group.

Affiliation fees are recognised as income over the period to which the fees relate.

Championship revenue is recognised when the event has occurred.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

(g) Leases

Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all of the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease term.

(h) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are presented as operating cash flows included in receipts from customers or payments to suppliers.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(i) Financial assets

Held-to-maturity investments

Held to maturity investments are non-derivative financial assets that have fixed maturities and fixed or determinable payments, and it is the Group's intention to hold these investments to maturity.

(j) Comparative Figures

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

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

2 Cash and cash equivalents

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
General Cheque Account	631,634	456,027
Travel reimbursement account	985	30,500
Debit card	2,286	9,283
Cash at call	96	94
Welfare Fund	114,553	87,892
Valuing Volunteers Cheque Account	2,792	2,753
Term Deposits - Valuing Volunteers	364,838	821,640
4a	<u>1,117,184</u>	<u>1,408,189</u>

3 Trade and other receivables

CURRENT

Affiliation Fees receivable - Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria	102,813	109,391
Affiliation Fees Receivable - Welfare Fund	43,620	46,348
	<u>146,433</u>	<u>155,739</u>

4 Financial assets

CURRENT

Term Deposits - VFBV	(b) 2,077,568	1,620,058
Term Deposits - Welfare Fund	(c) 2,955,880	2,880,338
	<u>5,033,448</u>	<u>4,500,396</u>

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

b) In the current year, as the term deposit had a maturity period of 6 months, the term deposit has been classified in the statement of financial position as financial assets.

c) Welfare Fund operates on a capital balance from donated funds used to support volunteers in times of personal hardship/crisis.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

5 Plant and equipment

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Motor vehicles		
At cost	228,960	224,745
Accumulated depreciation	(42,952)	(50,552)
Total motor vehicles	186,008	174,193
Office equipment		
At cost	36,223	149,254
Accumulated depreciation	(21,945)	(139,038)
Total office equipment	14,278	10,216
	<u>200,286</u>	<u>184,409</u>

6 Trade and other payables

CURRENT		
Trade creditors	26,348	15,702
Other payables	158,190	154,990
	<u>184,538</u>	<u>170,692</u>

7 Employee Benefits

CURRENT		
Long service leave	174,731	130,493
Annual leave	94,695	114,513
	<u>269,426</u>	<u>245,006</u>
NON-CURRENT		
Long service leave	-	19,809

8 Income in Advance

CFA Grants	637,408	681,460
Deferred Affiliation Fees - VFBV	100,011	98,285
Deferred Affiliation Fees - Welfare Fund	115,918	115,918
	<u>853,337</u>	<u>895,663</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

9 Capital and Leasing Commitments

Operating lease commitments

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
Non-cancellable operating leases contracted but not capitalised in the financial statements.		
- not later than one year	63,682	61,500
- between one year and five years	108,163	50,375
- later than five years	-	906
	<u>171,845</u>	<u>112,781</u>

Operating leases have been taken out for the rental of premises and the rental of a photocopier. Lease payments for the premises are increased on an annual basis to reflect market rentals.

The 3-year lease of the office premise will expire on 31/12/2019 and will be renewed for a further 2 years.

10 Related Parties Transactions

During the year, the Group entered into contracts with the following brigades of which Board members were also involved:

VFBV Board Member	Brigade	Membership Paid
Andy Cusack	Mumbannar	Yes
Bill Maltby	Castlemaine	Yes
Bruce Pickett	Geelong West	Yes
Nev Jones	Moorooduc	Yes
Graeme Jilbert	Swan Hill	Yes
Samantha Rothman	Maryborough	Yes
Robert Auchterlonie	Dumbalk	Yes
Kate Boschetti	Wondonga West	Yes
Jan Cleary	Lakes Entrance	Yes
Libby Hay	Barwon Heads	Yes
Greg Walcott	Dist 5 HQ	Yes

All contracts for membership fees were provided at arm's length commercial amounts.

Board members are reimbursed for their travel cost incurred.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

11 Cash Flow Information

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

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year	272,487	225,153
Cash flows excluded from (deficit)/surplus attributable to operating activities		
Non-cash flows in (deficit)/surplus:		
Depreciation	28,215	38,574
Profit on disposal of non-current assets	8,952	7,414
Changes in assets/liabilities		
- (increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	9,306	397,323
- increase/(decrease) in income in advance	(42,326)	6,036
- increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	13,846	(64,712)
- increase/(decrease) in provisions	4,611	28,291
Cashflow from operations	295,091	638,079

12 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc. Welfare Fund

(a) Statement of Income and Expenditure and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2019

INCOME

Affiliation fees	103,402	104,080
Interest Received	73,769	77,513
Other income	10,236	743
	187,407	182,336

EXPENSES

Grants	(96,735)	(109,110)
Surplus from operations	90,672	73,226

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

12 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc. Welfare Fund

(b) Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	114,553	87,891
Trade and other receivables	81,075	92,523
Financial assets	2,955,880	2,880,338
TOTAL ASSETS	3,151,508	3,060,752
LIABILITIES		
Deferred Income	(116,002)	(115,918)
TOTAL LIABILITIES	(116,002)	(115,918)
NET ASSETS	3,035,506	2,944,834
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Accumulated surplus	3,035,506	2,944,834
Total Equity	3,035,506	2,944,834

13 Association Details

The registered office of the association is:
 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities
 9/24 Lakeside Drive
 Burwood East VIC 3151



True and Fair Certification by Members of the Board

The board has determined that the Group is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the board the financial report as set out on pages 4 to 15:

1. Give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30 June 2019.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.
3. Satisfies the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commissions Regulation 2013.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the board and is signed for and on behalf of the board by:

Board member  Board member 

Dated: 22 August 2019

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Independent Audit Report to the board of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report being a special purpose financial report, of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2019, the statement of income and expenditure and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the board's assertion statements for the Group.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC), including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities financial position as at 30 June 2019 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended on that date; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 to the financial statements, Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013 and the Association Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Group in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the board's financial reporting responsibilities under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Independent Audit Report to the board of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

Responsibilities of Board Members for the Financial Report

The board members of the Group are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The board members' responsibility also includes establishing and monitoring such internal control as the board members determine necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the board members are responsible for assessing the Group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the board members either intend to liquidate the Group or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

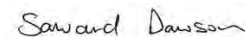
Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Group's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Group.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Group's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Group's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Group to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

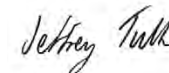
We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Seward Dawson

Blackburn, VIC

Date: 22 August 2019



Jeffrey Tulk
Partner

VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Revenue		
Interest income	409	403
Expenses	-	-
Surplus/(loss) for the year	409	403
Retained surplus at the beginning of the financial year	33,865	33,462
Retained surplus at the end of the financial year	34,274	33,865

Balance Sheet

As At 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank balances	34,274	33,865
Cash on hand	100	100
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	34,374	33,965
TOTAL ASSETS	34,374	33,965
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	-	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	-	-
NET ASSETS	34,374	33,965
EQUITY		
Settled Sum	100	100
Retained Surplus	34,274	33,865
TOTAL EQUITY	34,374	33,965

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**(a) Basis of Preparation**

The Trustees believe the Trust is a non-reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial reports. These financial statements are therefore a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in order to meet the requirements of the trust deed and the information needs of stakeholders.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the significant accounting policies disclosed below which the Trustees have determined are appropriate to meet the purposes of preparation. Such accounting policies are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. The accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of this report are as follows:

(b) Income Tax

The Trust is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The entity is a registered charity with the Australian Charity and Not-for-profits Commission.

(c) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

(d) Revenue and other income

The trust recognises revenue when the amount of revenue can be reliably measured, it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity and specific criteria have been met for each of VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund's activities as discussed below.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

Trustees' Declaration

The Trustees declare that the Trust is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

The directors of the trustee company declare that the financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 1 to 3:

1. present fairly the Trust's financial position as at 30 June 2019 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and;
2. in the Trustees' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Trust will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Trustees.

Trustee

Trustee

Dated

22 August 2019

VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Independent Audit Report to the members of VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund (the Trust), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2019, the for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the trustees' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Trust gives a true and fair view of the financial position of VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund as at 30 June 2019, and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with their accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial report.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund in accordance with the auditor independence requirements and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund to comply with the trust deed's financial reporting provisions. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance

The trustees of the Trust are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the trustees are responsible for assessing the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

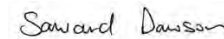
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

Independent Audit Report to the members of VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund

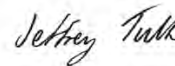
As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fund's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Fund's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Fund to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Seward Dawson



Jeffrey Tulk
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 22 August 2019

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Revenue		
Interest received	307	303
Expenses	-	-
Surplus for the year	<u>307</u>	<u>303</u>
Retained surplus at the beginning of the financial year	25,451	25,148
Retained surplus at the end of the financial year	<u>25,758</u>	<u>25,451</u>

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank balances	25,758	25,451
Cash on hand	100	100
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>25,858</u>	<u>25,551</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>25,858</u>	<u>25,551</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>25,858</u>	<u>25,551</u>
EQUITY		
Settled sum	100	100
Retained Surplus	25,758	25,451
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>25,858</u>	<u>25,551</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of Preparation

The trustees believe the Trust is a non-reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial reports. These financial statements are therefore a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in order to meet the requirements of the trust deed and the information needs of stakeholders.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the significant accounting policies disclosed below which the Trustees have determined are appropriate to meet the purposes of preparation. Such accounting policies are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. The accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of this report are as follows:

(b) Income Tax

The Trust is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The entity is a registered charity with the Australian Charity and Not-for-profits Commission.

(c) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

(d) Revenue and other income

The trust recognises revenue when the amount of revenue can be reliably measured, it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity and specific criteria have been met for each of the fund's activities as discussed below.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

Trustees' Declaration

The Trustees declare that the Trust is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

The directors of the trustee company declare that the financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 1 to 3:

1. present fairly the Trust's financial position as at 30 June 2019 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements;
2. in the Trustees' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Trust will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Trustees.

Trustee

Trustee

Dated

22 August 2019

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Independent Audit Report to the members of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund (the Trust), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2019, the statement of income or expenditure for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the trustees' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Trust gives a true and fair view of the financial position of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund as at 30 June 2018, and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with their accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial report.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Trust in accordance with the auditor independence requirements and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund to comply with the trust deed's financial reporting provisions. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Independent Audit Report to the members of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

Responsibilities of Trustees for the Financial Report

The trustees of the Trust are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the trustees are responsible for assessing the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

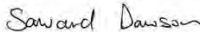
Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

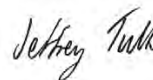
As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fund's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Fund's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Fund to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Saward Dawson



Jeffrey Tulk
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 22 August 2019

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VFBV

VOLUNTEER FIRE
BRIGADES VICTORIA

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Burwood East Vic 3151
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