



September, 2018

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **CFA VOLUNTEERS CALLED ON TO INFORM AND INFLUENCE**

Victoria's 54,000 CFA volunteers are being encouraged to share their views and influence policy by participating in the annual online Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey.

The survey is managed by the peak body for CFA members, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) and gives volunteers the opportunity to have their say about key matters impacting on their welfare, efficiency and satisfaction. The survey results are analysed and reported by VFBV as anonymous summary data to the Country Fire Authority, Emergency Management Victoria, all Victorian State MPs and other key decision makers.

VFBV CEO Andrew Ford said the recently published results of the 2017 survey had been invaluable in providing information VFBV and shaping policy.

"Data from last year told us that the majority of volunteers noticed slight improvements in CFA training however they still felt there were significant gaps in the resourcing for training and in the access to and flexibility of training programs offered to volunteers. Volunteers also told us that consultation with volunteers from the corporate and regional level continues to be a key area of concern," Mr Ford said.

"Volunteers say some of these critical gaps in satisfaction are heavily influenced by their dissatisfaction with the Government's lack of consultation about the unnecessary and inappropriate proposals to restructure the fires services and the industrial and political interference into CFA. Volunteers expressed deep concern about the sacking of the previous CFA Board and forced resignation of respected CFA officials who spoke out about the problems with external interference in CFA decision making and concerns with the Government's direction regarding CFA.

CFA volunteers said they were most satisfied with their role at brigade level and least satisfied with activities that are the responsibility of CFA corporate/management level.

Mr Ford said the survey was powerful because it was designed by, and for, CFA volunteers and run by their independent peak body, free from government influence.

"It is one of the largest surveys of fire and emergency management volunteers in Australia and provides us with uniquely honest data directly from the CFA volunteers the VFBV is here to represent and advocate for.

"The survey ensures that when the VFBV speaks, we do so with authority and accuracy. We are the voice of CFA volunteers and this a critical tool to help deliver change when needed."

VFBV President Nev Jones said the survey gives the VFBV unparalleled confidence as the voice for CFA volunteers.

“If the VFBV did not have the ability to hear directly from so many CFA volunteers, I have no doubt that the flawed Fire Services Reform Bill would have passed Parliament and we would now be dealing with a starkly different Authority,” he said.

The 2018 VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey is open until the end of October and CFA volunteers can register at [www.vfbv.com.au](http://www.vfbv.com.au) or email VFBV at [vfbv@vfbv.com.au](mailto:vfbv@vfbv.com.au). The 2017 survey results can also be found at [www.vfbv.com.au](http://www.vfbv.com.au)