
Attachment 2

2024 CFA Program Guidelines

Guidelines are also available to download from the CFA website
<https://www.members.cfa.vic.gov.au/programs/vesep>



Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP)

CFA GUIDELINES 2024/25

[Members Online - VESEP Link](#)

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Introduction

The Minister for Emergency Services the Hon. Mrs Jaclyn Symes recently announced the opening of the 2024/25 Victorian Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP). The program provides ongoing funding to assist eligible volunteer emergency services organisations with the acquisition of auxiliary equipment.

1. Aim

The aim of the CFA component of the VESEP program is to assist CFA Brigades and Groups through enhancing; operational safety, improving volunteer amenities, replacement or new auxiliary operational equipment, provision of training aides, Specialist vehicles, Field Command vehicles, BA Support vehicles and the acquisition of vehicles to enhance their operational response capacity whilst having access to equipment and vehicles that are built to a CFA standard ensuring the safety of volunteers.

2. Priority

The CFA VESEP Steering Committee has recommended the following categories for this funding round:

- Brigade / Community funded Primary Response Appliances – the *replacement* of firefighting appliances as specified in section 5.1.
- Field Command Vehicles 5.2
- Specialist Vehicles – refer to section 5.3.
- Operational Equipment (5.4)
- Brigade Minor Works (5.6)
- Volunteer Amenities (5.5)
- Statewide Initiatives & DPC Local Initiatives Applications

Priority will be given to operationally justified standard items of equipment / vehicles in Brigades where it has been identified that there is a lack of capacity to fund these projects through Brigade or Community resources. To ensure equity, CFA will provide appropriate levels of support to Brigades where the community capacity to provide funding is limited via the Special Access Grant (see item 10. Special Access Grants below)

Additions to the firefighting fleet:

Any application that increases the size of the brigade /community funded fire-fighting vehicle fleet, will again be afforded a **low priority**, and will require a full operational justification completed by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) and endorsed by the Regional Deputy Chief Officer (DCO). The VESEP program will provide an evaluation proforma to support the justification and decision making around the requirement for additions to fleet.

Replacement of vehicles that are not currently being serviced by DMO's (e.g. FCV's, BA, Support Vehicle etc.) with a primary response vehicle will be classed as an **addition** to Fleet. (i.e. changing from an FCV to a ULT, this is classed as changing to a primary response appliance and is deemed an **addition** to the firefighting fleet hence the application will be an "addition" to fleet application, not a "replacement").

3. Business Rules

The Business Rules are:

- Brigades, Groups and DPC can only apply for **one** project in each round.
- The Chief Officer will be responsible for the overall approval of the program.
- All funding applications must be endorsed and prioritised by the respective District Planning Committee's (DPC) and be consistent with District / Region typology and Infrastructure Planning.
- Applications for a change in typology must have formal written District & Regional approval.
- Any additions to the Brigade / Community funded fleet will be subject to the approval of the Chief Officer.
- **Only** standard build FCV's will be considered to ensure vehicle compliance requirements are followed.
- Any tanker modifications to support BA must be reviewed by Fleet Services prior to submission to ensure it aligns with CFA's strategic direction and brigades capability requirements.
- CFA will maintain approved tankers and specialist vehicles as per sections 5.1 & 5.3, to Level 1 maintenance.
- FCV's & BA Support maintenance & repairs are the responsibility of the brigade.
- All appliance and vehicle applications that have been approved as "replacements" are required to dispose of the outgoing tanker / FCV / BA vehicle **outside** of CFA as soon as the new vehicle is received.
- Projects commenced prior to Ministerial approval are not eligible for financial assistance under this program.
- It is the responsibility of Brigade/Group to replace assets acquired under the program.
- All Minor works projects **must be pre-registered** with the VESEP Minor Works LBS Project Manager prior to submission of the application, via VESEPProject@cfa.vic.gov.au by close of business, **31st May 2024**
- Minor Works to be undertaken on CFA **only** assets.
- Contractors for approved Minor Works grants are not to be engaged by the brigade, groups, or districts. This is to be managed by VESEP Minor Works LBS Project Manager
- If the Brigade breach any of the conditions in the acceptance of offer or commence any works prior to the VESEP Minor Works LBS Project Manager consent, the Brigade will be 100% responsible for the works and costs of the project.
- Generators, VESEP does not cover the generators ongoing maintenance and servicing. Please discuss with your APO regarding a maintenance and servicing plan.

4. Selection Criteria

In addition to the selection criteria referred to in the brochure, the following CFA criteria will apply, and all applications will be assessed on these criteria:

- **Needs Assessment**
 - Is the vehicle / equipment operationally justified?
 - Is the vehicle / equipment suitable for the risks?
 - Is the primary appliance used on strike teams?
 - Are there similar capabilities within the response footprint?
- **Risk Assessment**
 - What is the risk environment?
 - Is the risk environment changing?
 - What is the likelihood of a significant event (Rare, Unlikely, Moderate, Likely, Almost certain)
 - What are the consequences of a significant event?

- **Ability to Crew and Operate**
 - Can the brigade adequately house the vehicle?
 - Can the brigade crew and operate the vehicle and/or equipment?
 - Does the Brigade have the appropriately trained personnel?

- **Benefit to the Community / Catchment**
 - Will the vehicle / equipment be used in the broader community?
 - Will the asset bring a benefit to the community?
 - Is the likelihood that the asset may be provided in the area by CFA / or other agencies i.e. Vic SES?
 - Will the improved amenities benefit the broader community?

- **Capacity to Fund**
 - Can the Brigade / Group fund the required vehicle / equipment contribution?
 - Can the Brigade / Group fund future maintenance and replacement of the vehicle / equipment?
 - Has the Brigade/Group considered using the special access grant where fund raising capacity is limited?

- **Core Responsibility Factors**
 - Does the proposed asset use fall within the Brigade / Group core responsibilities?

- **Enhance Operational Readiness**
 - Will the asset assist in the Brigade / Group operational readiness / service delivery?

Minimum Age at the time of anticipated replacement, variation on the timelines may occur once the build program has been established. *Estimated build times listed below, based on what we know now.*

Applications where a replacement is required sooner will need to be assessed by exception by Fleet Services. This may be due to factors such as mechanical failure or cab chassis rust.

Typology	Min Age	Timeframes	Approx. Build Timing as at order placement (After rounds announced)
Medium Tanker	20 Years	At time of replacement	18-21 Months
Light Tanker	20 Years	At time of replacement	21-24 Months
Ultra-Light Tanker	12 Years	At time of replacement	18+ Months
Rehabilitation Units	Useful Life	Based on Fleet assessment	9-12 Months
Multipurpose Units	Useful Life	Based on Fleet assessment	12-15 Months
Big Fill	12 Years	At time of replacement	24 Months
FCV Standard Build	8 Years	At time of replacement	6-9 Months
BA Support	8 Years	At time of replacement	6-9 Months

5. Endorsed Projects

Below is a list of the projects available through the VESEP program, all of these must be operationally justified. Separate handouts / brochures are also available with vehicle descriptions, indicative costs, and detailed specifications.

Refer to Members Online for above brochures [Members Online](#). Refer to section 14 of guidelines for project contacts.

5.1. Primary Response Appliance (Tankers)

VESEP 2024/25 will offer the following Appliances.

(Refer to 6.1 for funding formula)

- Light Tanker
- Ultra-Light Tanker
- Medium Tanker (Note, there is different funding arrangements for additions to the fleet)

5.2. Support Vehicles

- Field Command Vehicle -Standard Build (**NO** GVM Upgrades on FCV's will be provided)
- BA Support Vehicle

5.3. Specialist Vehicles

All Specialist vehicle applications must be demonstrated to fit with District Typology. This is particularly relevant where a Brigade or Group seeks to build a specialist vehicle not on the standard build list below. Specialist vehicles must have a clear demonstrated purpose that provides capability to meet an identified gap within Brigade, Group, District or Regional Plans.

The program will offer the following Standard Specialist Vehicles:

(Refer to 6.2 & 6.3 for funding formula)

- Multipurpose Vehicles
- Big Fill
- Rehabilitation Vehicles

Brigades / Groups wishing to apply for a specialist vehicle not listed in the program will be required to have the projects assessed and **approved** before submission. They will be overseen / managed by CFA Fleet Services and built by an approved body builder.

The VESEP program provides funding to support innovative ideas from brigades, however this needs to be coordinated and managed appropriately to ensure compliance and other regulatory requirements are factored into the build of any specialist vehicle.

The development of non-standard specialist vehicles will require additional planning and concept design which will in turn have an impact on the timeframes for delivery. These timeframes will be determined through the conceptual research and design phase.

5.4. Operational Equipment

Some equipment examples are listed below, all will be considered on their respective merits: -

(Refer to 6.4 for funding formula).

- Remote Area Lighting
- Staging Area Equipment
- Hose Testing Trailer
- Thermal Imaging Camera – 3M Scott
- CTIS (*Brigade / Community funded vehicles only*)
- Hygiene Unit Trailer (Single or Double Toilet)
- Audio Visual Training Equipment
- Battery Operated Tools and Equipment
- Hose/ Branches
- Blitz fire Ground Monitors
- Standard UHF Radios
- Standard Single & Double Axle Trailers – Replacement only, disposal of old/non-compliant trailers compulsory on receipt of new one (Refer to flyer)

5.5. Volunteer Amenities (*Less than \$5k*)

A priority for this funding round is to assist brigades with grants for small works and equipment that enhance CFA member amenities. The total value of these projects is to be less than \$5k in total (\$3,333 VESEP & \$1,667 Brigade contribution) and should be of a non-structural nature, not requiring a building permit.

Examples may include:

- Air Conditioning (New installations)
- Hot water Services (Upgrades)
- Kitchen Appliances: Fridge, Dishwasher, Oven, Boiling Water Unit, Crockery, Cutlery
- Furniture / Table / Chairs (Indoor & Outdoor)
- Window Furnishings
- Technology items for training and administration works.

Any work undertaken may need to be inspected by the Asset Project Officer and should be carried out by a qualified trades person/s.

5.6 Brigade Minor Works

Funding will also be provided to assist Brigades to undertake minor works for CFA assets, which will also enhance CFA member amenities, safety, and wellbeing. The maximum project value is \$150k (\$100,000 VESEP & \$50,000 Brigade contribution).

All Minor Works projects will require pre-registration, assessment and project will be managed by the VESEP Minor Works Land & Building Services Project Manager. Projects **not pre-registered** and reviewed by CFA Land and Building Services will **not** be considered by the committee due to potential gaps in scope, cost considerations and regulatory requirements.

To pre-register, please providing the following information to VESEPProject@cfa.vic.gov.au by close of business **31st May 2024, late submissions will not be accepted.**

- Completed application, copy of the template attached (banking details not required for this stage)
- Contact details of the brigade members who will be coordinating the application on behalf of the Brigade/Group if different to that on the application form.
- Comprehensive scope of the works (Brigade/Groups are no longer required to provide quotes)
- Any schematic or hand drawn plans you may have to indicate areas of station for works.
- Photos
- Any utilities or other services near the minor works area that may impact the planning application (drawn on map)

It should be noted that a Town Planning permit will most likely be required (refer definition below). In this case the obtaining of all necessary planning and permit approvals will be coordinated through the VESEP Minor Works Project Manager as part of the project implementation.

Examples may include:

- Motorisation / Lift of motor room door/s
- Male / Female turn out areas
- Static Generators (CFA Specification only)
- Installation of Garage / Shed
- Extension to Station
- Kitchen Refurbishment
- Car Park Sealing
- PPC Storage
- BBQ Areas

Planning Permit

In general terms, works which propose changes to the shape, size, and external appearance of a building, or change site conditions which impact on the local amenity, council infrastructure and streetscape require a Planning Permit.

Example - Works involving building extensions (and alterations), modifications to hardstand areas which increase site water catchment and impact on council drainage systems, works involving tree removal and alterations to landscaping, works to crossovers outside property boundaries require Planning Permits.

Building Permit

A Building Permit is required under the Building Act (Victoria) for all building works unless the works being executed is deemed to be maintenance works – i.e., where the work involves the replacement of an existing item when completed, is substantially the same as the existing conditions. All work is required to be undertaken in accordance with National Code for Construction (NCCA) formerly Building Code of Australia (BCA).

*Example - Any kitchen or bathroom upgrades undertaken at CFA sites require a building permit. Any physical alteration to the building structure will require a building permit and drawings from appropriate design consultants. **The value of works has no bearing on whether or not a Building Permit is required for CFA Buildings.***

Items not available under the program are:

- Breathing Apparatus
- Radios
- Major Capital Works greater than \$150K
- PFIT Kits
- Turn Out Systems
- GVM Upgrades on FCV's & BA's
- Stortz
- Defibrillators
- Solar
- Rigid Truck Licenses

6. Funding Formula

There are two sources of funding for this program, Brigade/Group and VESEP.

6.1. Primary Response Appliance (Tankers)

Light Tanker, Ultra-Light Tanker

- \$2 VESEP to \$1 Brigade of the Cab Chassis cost
- **Body** - funded by grant contribution.

Medium Tanker – Addition to Fleet

- \$2 VESEP to \$1 Brigade **total** cost of vehicle

Medium Tanker – Replacement Tanker

- \$2 VESEP to \$1 Brigade of the Cab Chassis cost
- Body of **Replacement vehicle** - funded by grant contribution

6.2 Big Fill's

- \$2 VESEP to \$1 Brigade of the Cab Chassis cost
Body - funded by grant contribution

6.3 Specialist Vehicles (*Rehab, MPV, FCV's & BA Support*)

- Specialist vehicles are funded by Brigades & VESEP as per the formula below.
- \$2 VESEP to \$1 Brigade

6.4 Operational Equipment

- \$2 VESEP to \$1 Brigade

6.5 Volunteer Amenities

- \$2 VESEP to \$1 Brigade – to a maximum VESEP contribution of \$3,333

6.6 Brigade Minor Works

\$2 VESEP to \$1 Brigade – to a maximum VESEP contribution of \$100,000 and Brigade/Group contribution of \$50,000. (Maximum project cost \$150,000)

7. Funding Contribution Rules

7.1. Brigade

- Brigades / Groups must provide evidence that they can fund their portion of the project costs which may include an Extended Credit application.
- If funds are coming from donations to assist funding of Brigade/Group Projects - letter of the pledge is sufficient.
- Special Access Grant Provisions – refer to Point 10 for guidelines.

7.2. Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program

- In most cases VESEP funds will not be released until completion of the project
- Brigades / Groups will only be invoiced once the project is complete / delivered.
- Projects commenced on or before Ministerial approval will not be eligible for VESEP funding.

8. Application Process

Step 1. Brigade's / Group's to complete application forms in conjunction with District staff and forward them to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer for operational justification, and to ensure that the application is in accordance with the District Infrastructure Plan.

In the case of Minor Works applications and some Amenities applications, the VESEP Land & Building Services Project Manager will be required to provide an assessment of the application to verify the scope of the proposed works, cost estimates and the deliverability of the project as a prerequisite to consideration of the application.

In the case of a Non-Standard vehicle build, the application must be reviewed and endorsed and approved by fleet services prior to submission. Approval is to be included with the application when submitted.

Step 2. Application forms to be reviewed by District Commanders and Assistant Chief Fire Officers, ensuring they are in line with district priorities and correct information is provided.

Assistant Chief Fire Officers are to add supporting comments to the district priority list.

Step 3. Application to be reviewed at District Planning Committee (DPC), or DPC Sub-Committee, and priorities allocated to all applications under each separate category.

- Step 4.** The Deputy Chief Officer reviews and provides comments on the DPC recommendations. All endorsed applications, along with supporting information, are to be uploaded to the SharePoint site by the due date, **14th June, 2024** via the link provided.
- Step 5.** VESEP CFA Statewide Steering Committee meets to determine state-wide priorities and seeks Chief Officer's endorsement. The VESEP Statewide Steering Committee consists of VFBV, Fleet Services, Infrastructure Services, Operational and Regional representatives.
- Step 6.** CFA recommendations forwarded to the VESEP Emergency Management Victoria Committee, who will consider submissions from all participating agencies prior to the VESEP Emergency Management Victoria Committee seeking Ministerial approval.
- Step 7.** Emergency Management Minister announces the approved projects.

9. Application Conditions

- **Brigades / Groups may apply for only one project in Round 2024/25**
If brigades are included in a multi-application and/or will be supplied directly with equipment etc. under a District or Groups initiative, this is considered as an application and the brigade would not be able to apply as an individual brigade for a different category.
- Approval for funding for a replacement tanker, specialist vehicle, FCV or BA Support is conditional on providing proof of disposal of an existing Brigade / community owned tanker.
- Tankers less than the stipulated age requirements in section 4, will not be considered for replacement unless in poor mechanical condition as determined by Fleet Services. Consideration for replacement of an appliance under the stipulate minimum age criteria for any other reasons will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- FCV's under (8) years of age by the time of changeover will not be considered for replacement under the program, **additions** to fleet will be assessed as a low priority.
- Replacement applications for single or double axel trailers will be based on a 1 for 1 basis with evidence of disposal to be provided.
- Applications for Minor Works projects must be pre-registered with the VESEP Minor Works Project Manager for assessment via VESEPPProject@cfa.vic.gov.au prior to **31st May 2024**, if to be considered by the Statewide Steering Committee, late submissions will not be accepted.
- Projects which commence prior to the Ministers approval, will not receive any financial assistance from VESEP.
- Incomplete applications will be returned to the district and not considered for VESEP 2024/25 funding.
- CFA will coordinate the VESEP applications from CFA Brigades /Groups on behalf of EMV.
- Brigades /Groups will be required to enter into an agreement to cover the proposed funding arrangements via way of signing the acceptance of offer.
- Offers of funding must be accepted within 6 weeks of receipt of offer or the offer may be withdrawn.

10. Special Access Grant

Provisions are available for all VESEP projects that are operationally justified. The Brigade / Group should indicate a voluntary contribution amount, if any, with their application. All special access grant applications require an accompanying endorsement from the Deputy Chief Officer justifying the application.

The Special Access paperwork can be found on members online under *General Information*. This document is to be endorsed/signed and accompany the grant application form. Brigades wishing to access this funding stream are to contact their Assistant Chief Fire Officer to discuss progression of an application through the DPC prioritisation process.

11. Maintenance

- Successful applications listed under the Tankers in 5.1 and Specialist vehicles listed under 5.3 will attract level 1 full DMO maintenance support.
- All other vehicles are the responsibility of the brigade/group to service and maintain, they will receive a Brigade owned maintenance allowance as approved by their District.
- Generators, the ongoing maintenance, and servicing of generators is the responsibility of the brigade or group. The only exception is for Incident Control and Regional Control centres.

12. Future Replacement

As part of the conditions relating to the offer of funding, Brigades / Groups are required to accept responsibility for the future replacement of the vehicle or item of equipment and should not rely solely on the VESEP program to support future replacements. Whilst CFA does not undertake to replace the vehicle or equipment when it reaches the end of its life, consideration for replacement may be given on a merit basis through future VESEP applications.

Each Brigade / Group is to prepare a financial plan for funding the replacement of the vehicle or equipment when it reaches the end of its operational life – as deemed by CFA Policy.

13. Technical Requirements – General

Any Cab chassis, which can be new or used, must comply with current CFA specifications. Funding will not be approved to assist Brigades / Groups acquire a cab chassis that does not meet CFA current specifications.

Secondhand cab chassis under 5 years old will only be accepted, after a DMO inspection to the satisfaction of the Ho F&PE and approval from GMIS. The inspection will include roadworthiness and robustness relevant to the proposed use and lifespan as a firefighting vehicle.

14. Project Contacts

Further information and assistance can be obtained through the following channels: -

Ask your **Assistant Chief Fire Officer** or **Commander**

Or

CFA's Members Online contains all documentation including Minister's announcement, vehicle descriptions, indicative costs and specifications, application forms and Special Access Grant application form. This information can be found by going to: Members Online > Home > Brigades/Operational > Brigades > VESEP (Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program)

[CFA Members Online/Home/Brigades-Operational/Brigades/VESEP](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/members-online/home/brigades-operational/brigades/vesep)

VFBV Website:

Application assistance can be obtained via

VFBV District Councilors,

VFBV Support Officer,

by calling the VFBV Office.

www.vfbv.com.au/vesep.php

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Timelines - *Anticipated dates and maybe subject to change*

Dates	Process
19 th April, 2024	Application's Open
31 st May, 2024	Registrations close for Minor Work applications to be submitted to Land & Building Services for review; 7th May 2024. Late submission will not be accepted. Email to: VESEPProject@cfa.vic.gov.au Applications not pre-registered for reviewed will not be considered by the Steering Committee.
14 th June, 2024	Applications Close - <i>Completed application forms along with relevant documentation should be forwarded to your District Assistant Chief Fire Officer for processing</i>
14 th June – 24 th June, 2024	District Planning Committee (DPC) or designated subcommittee prioritises applications. Assistant Chief Officer to review and provide comment on the recommendations
1 st July, 2024	All applications forwarded to CFA VESEP Project Coordinator via electronic link.
12 th August, 2024	CFA VESEP Steering Committee meets to determine state-wide priorities. Steering Committee Representatives: - Chair: General Manager , Infrastructure Services VFBV Executive Officer VFBV District Representatives, x 3 Deputy Chief Officer West Deputy Chief Officer North East Manager Infrastructure Planning VESEP Project Coordinator Advisors: - Head of Fleet & Protective Equipment Assistant Chief Fire Officer Structural Planning Head of Land & Building Services VESEP Minor Works Project Manager, Land & Building Services Manager Asset Management
21 st August, 2024	Chief Officer meeting to review recommendations and statewide initiatives
27 th August, 2024	EMV meets with all agencies to review priorities and seek Ministerial approval of projects
October 2024	Anticipated Ministers announcement and advice forwarded to successful Brigades
October 2024	CFA advises all applicants of funding outcomes

- The Minister will formally advise the successful applicants, most likely via email, then
- CFA will advise all successful applicants via mail with their letter of acceptance
- CFA will advise the unsuccessful applicants via mail with a letter from the Chief Officer