02 August 2012

Regional Directors
Regional Commanders
Operations Managers
Group Officers
DPC Chairs
VFBV

Dear Ladies and Gentleman

REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE GROUP IN STRENGTHENING LOCAL COMMAND AND CONTROL IN CFA

The ability of CFA commanders to exercise local command and control of fires and incidents has been an important part of CFA's, and more recently Victoria's Fire Agencies, emergency management capacity.

Since the Black Saturday Bushfires there has been a significant enhancement of incident management capability for Level 3 incidents. It is now timely to put a greater focus on local command and control which can best be described as that level of operational management that lies between a Level1 brigade response and the Level 3 arrangements as outlined in the State Command Arrangements for Command & Control of Bushfires in Victoria i.e. the role of the Group.

To that end I have tasked a Project Team to identify, develop and enhance the capability and capacity for local command and control being exercised by CFA members. For your consideration I have attached the Terms of Reference for the review which details the purpose, objectives, project structure and timelines.

Ideally this review will result in a structure of local command and control that provides the capability to;

- Support brigades at more complex incidents
- Provide competent and accredited IMT personnel to manage Level 2 incidents
- Perform the DivComm function in an expanded IMT either as an incident grows or as part of predetermined readiness levels for Level 3 ICC's.

It is recognised that the role of a Group is much broader than simply Readiness and Response which form the scope of this current review. These other matters will be considered and addressed as a Phase 2 in the review process.

There will be ample opportunity provided for feedback from both Brigades and Groups throughout the review process and in fact input is encouraged. A Project Reference Group will be established through nominees from every District made by VFBV in consultation with the relevant District Planning Committee. In addition members of the Project Working Party will be available to attend DPC meetings once the initial recommendations have been developed by the end of August.

This project is important for CFA, reinforcing the philosophy of mission command, it will be central to the development of our doctrine around command and control into the future.

Yours Sincerely,

Euan Ferguson AFSM
Chief Officer

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TERMS OF REFERENCE
REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE GROUP IN
"STRENGTHENING LOCAL COMMAND AND CONTROL IN CFA"

BACKGROUND:

The ability of local CFA commanders to exercise local command and control of incidents has been an important part of the history and evolution of CFA's and Victorian fire agency's current command and control systems of work.

During the mid 2000's CFA conducted a review of the role of the Group that led to significant changes. This included the removal of the group from the CFA chain of command and re-defining the role of the Group in incident preparedness and support.

Recent developments in command and control in Victorian fire agencies include:

- A significant focus and investment in Level 3 multi-agency Incident Management arrangements;
- The introduction of the mission command philosophy into CFA;
- Anecdotal evidence that the number, ability and confidence of emerging CFA commanders at intermediate and developing incidents is a level that is unsustainable;
- The need to have a comprehensive training, exercising and mentoring program of "local commanders" in order to produce the required skills and capability to service future Level 3 Incident Managers.

In short, whilst there has been an enhancement of incident management capability for Level 3 incidents, there has been very little focus on local incident management capability in CFA. Local command and control and incident management is critical for three reasons:

Firstly, if the initial command control and management of incidents is appropriate, the number of larger incidents will be fewer.

Secondly, Level 3 incident managers do not just attain that level from a zero base. There must be a continuum of incident management training and development so that, to be eligible for working at a Level 3 incident, an incident management team member should first have known proficiency at smaller, local, incidents.

- Finally, even at large incidents, the skills learned in local command are exercised. Crew leaders, Sector and Division commanders all exercise the principles of local command on the part of an incident allocated to their responsibility.

Therefore, the development of arrangements that encourage and facilitate local command and control are critical to the success of not only CFA, but to all fire agencies.

PURPOSE:

This Terms of Reference defines the objectives of a CFA project to identify, develop and enhance the capability and capacity for local command and control being exercised by CFA members. The main purpose of this project is to ensure that CFA is able to actively, competently and confidently exercise command and control at emergency incidents. A secondary purpose is that CFA is able to provide appropriately developed members who can be successfully submitted to the multi-

agency Level 3 Incident Management team roles and senior command and control career continuation opportunities.

Note:
The Steering Committee recognize that the role of "The Group" is broader than just readiness & response however the objectives of this review focus on the command & control role only. It is recommended that the other roles be considered as a Phase 2 of the review process. See attachment Figure 1 for concept.

SCOPE:

The recommendations of the project shall be in accordance with:

- The principles and roles of AIIMS;
- The State Command and Control Arrangements for Bushfire in Victoria issued by the Fire Services Commissioner;
- The principles of mission command.

and will be consistent with the Chief Officer's intent.

This project relates to developing and maintaining local command and control within CFA and at incidents where CFA members may need to assume control.

Recommendations of the project should be consistent with the philosophy of "one integrated fire and emergency force with the community".

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this project are to:

1. Develop a framework that enables local commanders to exercise command and control at intermediate and developing incidents.

2. Outline a pathway and process to promote the development of a local command and control capability and capacity in CFA. This includes the application of AIIMS at small, escalating and medium incidents.

3. Propose systems of work for local commanders that will include the system and triggers for transfer of control. The systems of work will be inclusive of local command and control for a range of incidents including: bushfire, structure fire, Hazmat and support to other control agencies. The triggers for escalation shall be consistent with the State arrangements for transfer of control.

4. Propose changes to the CFA line of control that will better;
   (i) recognise and strengthen the role of local command and control,
   (ii) establish the role as the baseline within the command and control arrangements thereby ensuring ongoing local participation in any expanded response as an incident grows in size and complexity.
   (iii) Clarify the function, role and scope of "Div Comms".

5. Identify the functional and operational roles that are required to successfully plan, prepare and deliver effective command and control for incidents that are

not within the scope of the State arrangements for command and control (ie: not "Major Fires"). Develop role statements for each role identified.

6. Consider options for and make any recommendations for the name, terminology and rank markings associated with the "Group".

7. Make any other recommendations as are necessary to ensure that CFA is able to properly exercise its statutory responsibilities in respect to command and control.

PROJECT STRUCTURE:

The project owner is the Chief Officer.

The project steering committee will be the Joint Operations Committee.

The project working party will be:
Regional Commander Alan Ellis
Project Officer Trevor Roche
Deputy Chief Officer John Haynes
Group Officer Nev Jones
Operations Manager Trevor Owen
Operations Officer Peter Barr
Group Officer Ron Cole (JOC).
Command & Control Project Task Group (Local Command & Control)
Regional Commanders Peter O'Keefe, Mike Owen & Gregg Paterson

The project reference group will be through nominees from every District made by the VFBV in consultation with the relevant District Planning Committee.

TIMELINES:

Initial recommendations no later than 30 August 2012.

Consultation on initial recommendations from September 2012 to November 2012.

Final recommendations no later than 30 November 2012.

Euan Ferguson
Chief Officer

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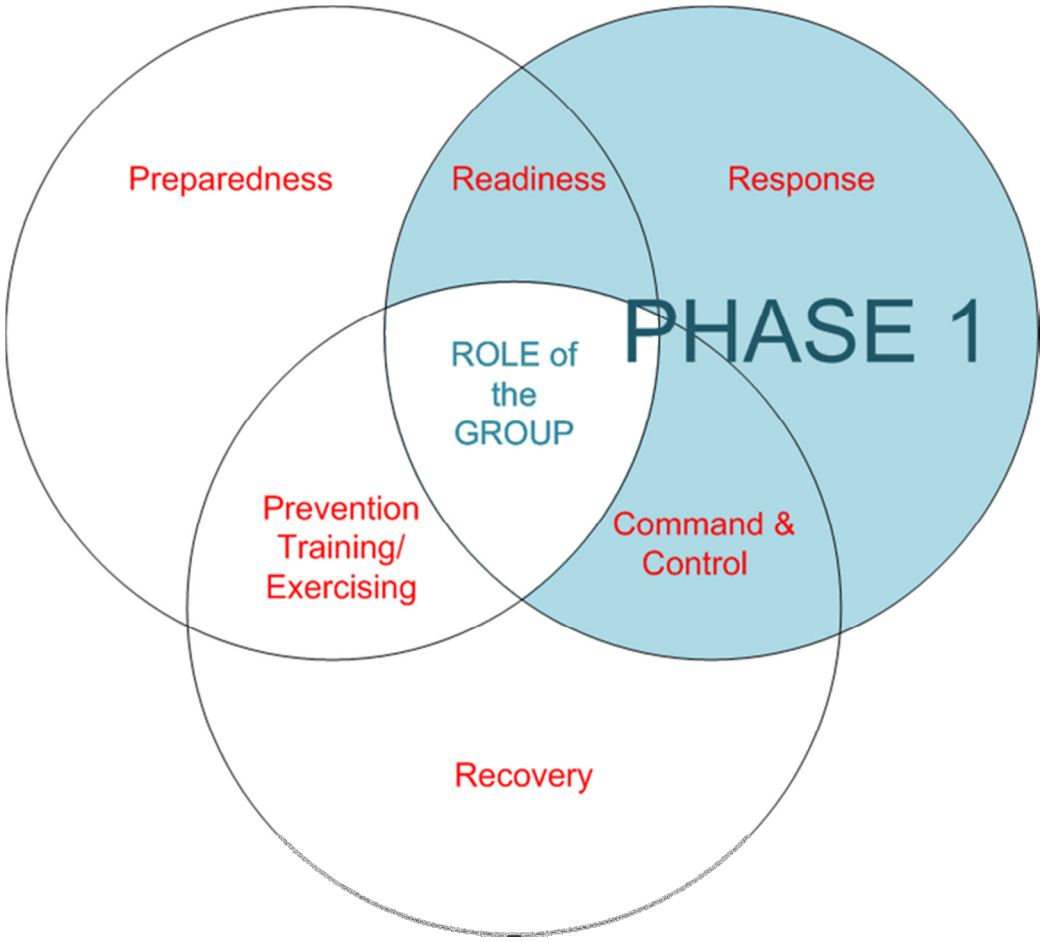
Attachment; Figure 1



Phase 1 Review of the role of The Group in strengthening Local Command & Control
Indicated by shaded area.