



VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES VICTORIA

News Note

NOTE TO MEMBERS – 26th February 2019

A MESSAGE FROM THE VFBV STATE PRESIDENT VFBV CEO ANDREW FORD STEPPING DOWN AS CEO

VFBV CEO Andrew Ford has advised the VFBV Board of his desire to step down as VFBV CEO as of end April 2019. While this is sad news for VFBV, I am sure you will share with me in recognising that Andrew has made an outstanding contribution to VFBV, CFA volunteers and the community over many years, and truly deserves our support as he chooses to pursue other career and family objectives.

Andrew was appointed to 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, and involving appointments as CFA Manager Corporate Planning and General Manager CFA Westernport Area.

Through Andrews leadership VFBV operates as a highly professional organisation and fortunately, in recognition that this time would eventually arrive, we have a well-established succession strategy in place. I am pleased to also announce that the VFBV Board has appointed experienced CFA volunteer and VFBV Executive Officer Adam Barnett as the new VFBV CEO from 1 May 2019.

Andrew has agreed to continue his outstanding commitment to CFA volunteers and stay on with VFBV in a part-time strategic advisory role. This will allow Andrew to focus his energy and expertise on driving VFBV's focus on navigating the complex and challenging period ahead that will almost certainly see the Victorian State Government push ahead with its plans to create Fire Rescue Victoria. As members know, this involves plans to separate operational paid staff out of CFA and discontinue Victoria's world-renowned model of integrating volunteers and paid staff working as one unified team and VFBV has been very clear that it poses significant risks to the sustainability and effectiveness of CFA.

The VFBV Board is extremely grateful to Andrew for remaining with us in this part-time capacity to support a smooth transition for our new CEO and enable an even stronger focus on navigating the very vulnerable times that the Governments fire service reform agenda will create. Freeing Andrew up from the day to day leadership of VFBV will allow him to dedicate his significant expertise to help us influence an outcome that can achieve the strongest possible CFA despite the significant downsides of a very flawed fire service reform proposition.

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In addition to continuing part time with VFBV, Andrew will be pursuing some 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. We wish Andrew well with these endeavours and will watch with interest as the next steps in his career evolve.

Andrew, I take this opportunity to thank you personally for your wisdom, leadership, integrity and courage. Your knowledge and expertise on matters relating to CFA particularly and Victoria's emergency management sector generally is second to none. Your understanding and expertise on matters relating to CFA and other emergency management sector volunteers is an invaluable asset that we must somehow remain connected to. You will be sorely missed as VFBV CEO and greatly appreciated in the role you will continue to play with VFBV and CFA into the future.

I take this opportunity to welcome Adam Barnett into the VFBV CEO role. Adam is well known throughout both VFBV and CFA and is a highly experienced and well-regarded operator. Adam has acted as VFBV CEO on numerous occasions and performed excellently during these periods. Adam brings 13 years CFA experience to the role, joining VFBV in July 2007, and is well known to members through his role as VFBV Executive Officer since 2010. Adam has worked on behalf of CFA volunteers for many years and his preparation to operate in the CEO role has been underway as part of VFBV's ongoing strategic planning for some time.

Adam will hit the ground running with regard to the continued day-to-day leadership of VFBV, the strategic challenges presenting to us and the important ground work we must always do to support, engage with and advocate for CFA volunteers and the work volunteers do to protect Victorian communities.

Having Adam take on ongoing management and leadership of VFBV and at the same time being able to retain the expertise of Andrew during what will be a very challenging and vulnerable time for CFA in the year ahead is the best possible way to transition to Andrew's departure from the CEO role. As VFBV President I am very proud that VFBV has established such a mature transition arrangement that provides continuity and stable leadership despite a period of significant vulnerability and upheaval in the emergency sector and CFA.

Further announcements will be made about an opportunity to recognise Andrews outstanding contribution to VFBV and to give him an appropriate farewell from his role as VFBV CEO.

Work will commence immediately to recruit a new VFBV Executive Officer to replace Adam. Rest assured that VFBV is well positioned to make this milestone transition.

VFBV's strength comes not just from our leadership positions but from you our members, and I take this opportunity to express my ongoing gratitude to all of you for the contribution you make to ensuring the voice of volunteers is respected and heard. We remain steadfast in our commitment to represent volunteers on all matters that affect them so that on behalf of all Victorians we sustain strong volunteerism and the strongest possible CFA for the benefit of our communities.

NEV JONES AFSM
VFBV STATE PRESIDENT