



Media release

The Hon Peter Ryan MP

Acting Premier
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Bushfire Response
Minister for Regional and Rural Development

Friday 24 February 2012

Better recruitment, training and support for CFA volunteers

Victorian firefighters are to benefit from better initiatives for recruitment, retention, recognition and leadership, as well as increased support and training under the Victorian Coalition Government plans to improve arrangements for volunteers.

Speaking at the official opening of the new Gippsland Regional Control Centre in Traralgon, Acting Premier and Minister for Emergency Services Peter Ryan outlined the Victorian Coalition Government's vision for CFA volunteers, through its co-ordinated response to the David Jones Inquiry.

"The independent inquiry led by former County Court judge David Jones highlighted issues CFA volunteers have been raising for years and I have urged the CFA to view this as an opportunity to create a renewed organisation culture," Mr Ryan said.

"The Coalition Government has given this report due consideration, and in a new spirit of cooperation, convened two independently facilitated workshops with the CFA, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV), the United Firefighters Union and the Fire Services Commissioner, invited to discuss the recommendations."

Mr Ryan said the David Jones inquiry and its 41 recommendations would be fundamental to the success of a volunteer based and integrated CFA.

"The CFA is now driving the implementation of this report, together with regular consultation from the with VFBV, around the framework of six key themes that emerged from the report," Mr Ryan said.

Key themes

- **Culture and leadership to empower and support volunteerism**
Ensure organisational design, systems and processes are directly aligned to growing, maximising, and empowering the vital community-based volunteer resource
- **Recruitment, retention, recognition and utilisation of volunteers**
Introduce, expand and improve initiatives for the recruitment, retention and recognition of volunteers and increase opportunities available to them within the CFA to maximise the optimal utilisation of volunteer capacity

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- **Strengthening the volunteer-based and integrated service delivery model**
Develop the service delivery model to more effectively utilise the individual and collective expertise and capacity of employees and volunteers as an integrated team, commensurate with risk
- **Improved support for brigades and communities**
Strengthen the support provided to CFA volunteers, CFA brigades and their communities so they are better able to prepare for and respond to emergencies
- **Training development**
Engage volunteers in and improve the development of training for volunteers so that it best meets their individual and collective needs
- **Training delivery and assessment**
Engage volunteers in and improve the availability and delivery of training to volunteers so that it best meets their individual and collective needs

“The Coalition Government will be seeking regular reports from the CFA on the progress of implementation and I look forward to measureable outcomes,” Mr Ryan said.

The CFA has already begun a number of initiatives that address key recommendations in the report including:

- the development of a statement of vision, mission and values to give the CFA clear purpose and focus as it develops its goals, leadership and structure to align with the concept of ‘one CFA’ (Recommendation 6);
- the development of a new Human Capital Management System, accompanied by a new web-based Volunteer Support Portal, which will provide improved functionality for CFA volunteers, including the management of brigade transfers for CFA members (Recommendation 8);
- the deployment of 64 Volunteer Support Officers over the next four years to work directly with CFA volunteer firefighters (Recommendation 39);
- the development of a Statewide Operations Training Strategy, with a discussion paper to be released in March 2012 for consultation with volunteers. The strategy will address several of the inquiry’s recommendations (Recommendation 16,18, 19, 29);
- reviewing the process for the recognition of current competency and recognition of prior learning with a view to making that process more transparent, fair and efficient (Recommendation 31); and
- progressing the joint CFA/ Department of Sustainability and Environment Incident Management Team Training with respect to the management of incident control centres and the training of incident management teams (Recommendation 36).

Media contact: Sonia Heath 0413 485 526