Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP)

CFA GUIDELINES – 2017/18

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Introduction

The Minister for Emergency Services Mr James Merlino, MLA recently announced the opening of the 2017/18 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 appliances, field command vehicles and the acquisition of vehicles to enhance their operational response capacity whilst having access to equipment and vehicles that are built to a standard ensuring the safety of volunteers.

2. Priority

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

- Improvements to Volunteer amenities (eg: air conditioning, hot water service, carpet, furniture)
- Items that enhance operational safety
- The provision of Brigade training aides (eg computers, white boards, projectors)
- New or replacement auxiliary operational equipment (eg: quick fill pumps, chainsaws, generators)
- Field Command Vehicles to assist fire ground management
- New or replacement specialist appliances
- The replacement of aged fire fighting appliances

Priority will be given to operationally justified 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 (see 10. Hardship below).

Additions to the firefighting fleet:

Any application to increase the size of the fire fighting fleet will again be afforded a low priority and will also now require a full operational justification from the District Operations Manager and endorsement of the Assistant Chief Officer.

3. Business Rules

The Business Rules are:

- Brigades / Groups can apply for only **one** project in 2017/18
- The Chief Officer will be responsible for the overall management 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 Infrastructure Plans
- Any additions to the Brigade owned fleet will require the approval of the Chief Officer
- CFA will maintain approved tankers and specialist appliances to level 1 maintenance
- Projects commenced prior to Ministerial approval are not eligible for financial assistance.
- It is the responsibility of Brigade/Group to replace assets acquired under the program

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?

- **Risk Assessment**
  - What is the risk environment?
  - Is the risk environment changing?

- What is the likelihood of the 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 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 ie Vic SES?
  - Will the improved amenities benefit the broader community?

Capacity to Fund
- Can the Brigade / Group fund the appropriate vehicle / equipment?
- Can the Brigade / Group fund future maintenance and replacement of the vehicle / equipment?

- **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?

5. Endorsed Projects

Below is a list of the projects available through the VESEP program, all of these must be operationally justified.

Separate handouts are also available with vehicle descriptions, indicative costs and detailed specifications. (Refer to Section 14. *Project Contacts* for details on where to obtain further information).

5.1. Tankers & Big Fill's

VESEP 2017/18 will offer the following Appliances.

(Refer to 6.1 for funding formula)

- Light Tanker – Crew Cab
- Ultra-Light Tanker – Toyota Land Cruiser
- Big Fill
- Medium Tanker (note funding arrangements for additions to the fleet)

5.2. Specialist Appliances

Brigades / Groups wishing to apply for, and build specialist appliances not listed in the program will be required to have the projects overseen by CFA Fleet Services and built by an approved body builder.

The program will offer the following Specialist Appliances (refer to 6.2 for funding formula):-

- Multipurpose Vehicles

5.3. Operational Equipment

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

(Refer to 6.2 for funding formula).

- Field Command Vehicles
  Applications must be supported by a weight vehicle calculation pro forma if not the CFA standard build. GVM upgrades will not be considered for any FCV's.

  The Weight vehicle calculation pro forma is available on *Brigades on Line – Brigade / Property & Equipment / Brigade Owned Vehicles / Equipment Information.*

- Remote Area Lighting
- Staging Area Equipment
- Thermal Imaging Camera
- Hose Testing Trailer
- Positive Pressure Fan
- Training Equipment
- Hose Branches

Items not available under the program are:

- Helmet Torches
- Breathing Apparatus
- Radios
- Major Capital Works >$80K
- PFIT Kits
- Turn Out Systems
- GVM upgrades on FCV's

5.4. Volunteer Amenities Improvements

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 shall 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
- Kitchen Refurbishment
- Hot Water Services
- Carpet
- Insulation
- Furniture

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

5.5. Brigade Minor Works

Funding will also be provided to assist Brigades to undertake minor works which will also enhance CFA member amenities and safety. The total project value is to be less than $80k ($53,333 VESEP & $26,667 Brigade contribution)

A position of *VESEP Minor Works Project Manager* has been established in Land & Building Services to advise brigades considering minor works projects.

These projects will require registration, assessment and management by the Land and Building VESEP Minor Works Project Manager and the Asset Project Officer. 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 Land and Building VESEP Minor Works Project Manager as part of the project implementation.

Examples may include:-

- Motorization of motor room door/s
- Installation of garage / shed
- Station refurbishment
- Static Generators
- Extension to station
- Car park sealing
- PPC Storage

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.***

6. Funding Formula

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

6.1. Tankers & Big Fill's

Crew Cab Light Tanker, Ultra Light Tanker & Big Fill

- $2 VESEP to $1 Brigade 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 Cab Chassis cost

Body – Replacement vehicle

- Funded by grant contribution

6.2. Specialist Appliances & Operational Equipment (inc FCV's)

- Specialist Appliances & Equipment are wholly funded by Brigades & VESEP as per the formula below.
- $2 VESEP to $1 Brigade – to a maximum VESEP contribution of $100,000
- For the replacement FCV's previously funded through the program the $2 : $1 funding formulae will now only be applied to the net change over value (*ie* cost less trade in value)

6.3 Volunteer Amenities Improvements

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

6.4 Brigade Minor Works

- $2 VESEP to $1 Brigade – to a maximum VESEP contribution of $53,333

7. Funding Contribution Rules

7.1. Brigade

- Brigades / Groups must demonstrate the capacity to fund their portion of the project costs which may include
- Extended Credit applied for in accordance with CFA Finance Corporate Policy FI.05
- Hardship 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
- 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 to the Operations Managers for operational justification, and to ensure that the application is in accordance with the District Infrastructure Plan.

In the case of Amenities and Minor Works applications, the Asset Project Officer and the VESEP Minor Works 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.

Step 2. Application forms to be reviewed at District Planning Committee (DPC), or DPC Sub-Committee, and priorities allocated to all applications.

Step 3. The Assistant Chief Officer reviews and provides comment on the DPC recommendations. All endorsed applications, along with supporting information, are forwarded to the VESEP Project Coordinator

Step 4. VESEP CFA Steering Committee meets to determine State wide priorities and seeks Chief Officer's endorsement. The VESEP Steering Committee consists of VFBV, Operational and Regional representatives.

Step 5. CFA recommendations forwarded to the VESEP Emergency Management Victoria Committee, who will consider submissions from all participating agencies prior to seeking Ministerial approval.

Step 6. Minister announces approved projects

9. Application Conditions

- **Brigades / Groups may apply for only one project in 2017/18**
- Approval for funding for a replacement tanker or specialist appliance is conditional on providing proof of disposal of an existing Brigade owned, or community owned tanker
- **Tankers less than 20 years of age will not be considered for replacement under the program**
- FCV Vehicles under five (5) years of age will not be considered for replacement under the program
- Projects which commence prior to the Ministers approval, will not receive any financial assistance from VESEP
- Offers of funding must be accepted within 60 days of receipt of offer or the offer may be withdrawn
- Incomplete applications will be returned to the District and not considered for VESEP 2017/18 funding
- CFA will coordinate the VESEP applications from CFA Brigades
- Brigades / Groups will be required to enter into an agreement to cover the proposed funding arrangements

10. Hardship

Hardship provisions are available for all VESEP projects that are operationally justified. The Brigade / Group should indicate a voluntary contribution amount, if any, with the application. All hardship applications require an accompanying endorsement from the Assistant Chief Officer outlining the reasons for the application. Brigades wishing to access this facility are to contact their Operations Manager to discuss progression of an application.

11. Maintenance

- Successful applications for the tankers listed under the Tankers in 5.1 will attract maintenance support by CFA to level 1
- CFA will maintain other specialist appliances, approved by the Chief Officer, on level 1 maintenance
- All other appliances will receive a Brigade owned maintenance allowance as approved by the District

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. 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.

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.

Any new cab chassis purchased by Brigades / Groups must be modified to meet CFA standards at Brigade expense.

Second hand cab chassis under 5 years old will only be accepted after a DMO inspection to the satisfaction of the Operations Manager. 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 **Operations Manager** or **Operations Officer**

Or

CFA's Brigades Online contains all documentation including vehicle descriptions, indicative costs and specifications. This information can be found by going to: Brigades Online home > Brigade > Property & Equipment > Brigade Owned Vehicles > Current VESEP Details

CFA's Intranet: This information can be found by going to Intranet home > Operations > Firefighting vehicles > Brigade Owned Vehicles > Current VESEP Details

Or

VFBV Website: Application assistance can be obtained via VFBV Field Officers
www.vfbv.com.au/vesep.php

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15. Timelines

Dates	Process
9th May 2017	Application's Open
16th June 2017	**Applications Close** - *Completed application forms along with relevant documentation should be forwarded to your Operations Manager for processing*
19th – 23rd June	District Planning Committee (DPC) or designated sub committee prioritises applications. Assistant Chief Officer to review and provide comment on the recommendations
27th June 2017	All applications forwarded to CFA VESEP Project Coordinator
23rd August 2017	CFA VESEP Steering Committee meets to determine State wide priorities. ***Steering Committee Representatives:-*** Adam Barnett – VFBV Hans Van Hammond – VFBV Bruce Conboy – VFBV Darren Wallace – VFBV Alen Slijepcevic – Deputy Chief Officer Bushfire Peter O'Keefe – Assistant Chief Officer West Les Mengoni – Manager Infrastructure Planning Ross Sullivan– Assistant Chief Officer North East Di Frost – VESEP Project Coordinator Advisors: Danny Jones – Executive Manager Technical Asset Strategy and Services Bruce Rowley – VESEP Minor Works Manager Craig Brownlie – Operations Manager Structural Fire Planning Manager
24th August 2017	Chief Officer meeting to review recommendations and statewide initiatives
30th August 2017	EMV meets with all agencies to review priorities and seek Ministerial approval of projects
Mid-September	EMV forwards all agency recommendations for Ministerial approval
Mid-September	Anticipated Ministers announcement and advice forwarded to successful Brigades
Mid-September	CFA advises all applicants of funding outcomes

- *The Minister will formally advise the successful applicants*