



VFBV | VOLUNTEER FIRE
BRIGADES VICTORIA

**ANNUAL REPORT
2019 - 2020**





BILL PRESSEY AFSM

Bill was a District 5 Executive Member of the former Victorian Urban Fire Brigades Association from 1994 until retiring in 2002, following which he was elected as President of VFBV District Council 5 until he retired from that role in 2015.

Bill was a member of numerous VFBV Committees including the Urban Competition & Rules Committee, and being a former competitor, was a strong supporter and active member of local competitions and State Championships for many years.

A recipient of the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) in 2008, Bill was also honoured with the VFBV Gold Star in 2008 and VFBV Life Membership in 2010.

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Bill joined Mortlake Brigade as a seventeen year old in 1954, and was later elected as the Brigade Secretary, serving in that role for 53 years.

Bill was a strong supporter and friend of VFBV, staff and association colleagues, and will be sadly missed by friends and fellow firefighters throughout the fire services.



MICK TAYLOR AFSM

One of the longest serving Association members having dedicated 31 years in senior leadership roles from 1980 until his retirement in 2011, Mick was an Executive Member of the former VUFBA for 23 years including one term as President and a member of the initial Joint Associations Steering Committee formed to develop VFBV, member of VFBV's inaugural Board serving on the Board for nine years and VFBV Vice President for four years.

Mick was a strong supporter and active member at local competitions and State Urban Championships having initially joined the Mornington Brigade as a competitor, then for many years as an official, and in later years assisted with the administration at the State Championships which he continued following his retirement until only a few years ago.

A true icon of the Victorian Fire Services, Mick spent his life tirelessly advocating on behalf of CFA volunteers. He made a significant contribution to the Association and was a huge supporter and friend to the Association and secretariat, which continued well after his retirement – and the wording on a Certificate presented to Mick by the then CEO Andrew Ford at a Mornington Brigade dinner in 2012, sums up his support and friendship to the VFBV team:

From VFBV staff with sincere thanks and appreciation of all your assistance, support and help willingly given over your many years as a Volunteer Association member including:

- *Moving and setting up of Association offices on at least three occasions (SETG, CFA HQ and 24 Lakeside Drive)*
- *Carpentry, Carpet laying, Painting and untold builder's skills*
- *Caring friend and mate at a time of family crisis*
- *House removalist, design consultant and garden maintenance advisor*
- *Travelling with staff around the State to meetings, functions and State Championships*
- *BBQ chef and harsh food critic*
- *Assisting administer State Championships*
- *Mentor, supporter and friend*

Thank You

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc.

Reg No. A0057948T ABN 110 830 80403

Strong Volunteerism, Embraced to Build Community Resilience for a Safer Victoria

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020

For the year ended 30 June 2020

9/24 Lakeside Drive
Burwood East Vic 3151

P.O. Box 453
Mt Waverley Vic 3149

Tel: 03 9886 1141
Fax: 03 9886 1618

Email: vfbv@vfbv.com.au
Website: www.vfbv.com.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cfavol

Twitter: twitter.com/vfbv

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/vfbvtv

Instagram: [@volunteer_fire_brigades_vic](https://www.instagram.com/volunteer_fire_brigades_vic)

Some photographs courtesy of: *Fire Wise, Brigades & CFA Digital Library*

OVERVIEW

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) is established under Victorian law, the Country Fire Authority Act, to represent CFA volunteers on all matters that affect their welfare and efficiency. VFBV is an independent association operating autonomously from CFA, but at the same time working closely with CFA and other key stakeholders, to engage volunteers in CFA and other deliberations and provide advice on all matters affecting CFA volunteers. More than 94 per cent of CFA Brigades elect to pay an annual financial affiliation fee that contributes to the running of VFBV and its services.

VFBV also represents Coast Guard Brigades in Victoria and has close working relationships with other emergency service volunteer associations across Victoria and Australia. VFBV and volunteer fire brigade associations in all states of Australia work together on issues of common interest and/or national relevance through the Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA).

VFBV is an organisation run by the CFA volunteers it represents. VFBV is an independent and united voice of volunteers and engages with the State Government, Emergency Management Victoria, the CFA Board and management, Members of Parliament, official inquiries, municipal councils and instrumentalities, business and the public to proactively shape the future of emergency management in the interests of efficient and effective fire services and positive community safety outcomes.

VFBV engages with the Government and emergency management agencies to ensure that volunteers and their communities remain actively involved in emergency management decision making at every level through day to day practical work in VFBV/CFA Joint Committees and the Ministerial-level Volunteer Consultative Forum, and by advocating for positive, practical results from reviews such as the Jones Inquiry, the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements and inquiries conducted by the Inspector General for Emergency Management in Victoria.

Given VFBV's direct volunteer-based foundations and in-depth knowledge of successful fire prevention, protection and response approaches in Victoria, it's well-established local and state-wide networks and the breadth and depth of hands-on experience in matters affecting volunteers and the provision of a volunteer based service model, VFBV is best placed to provide independent, unified and credible advice on matters affecting volunteers. VFBV facilitates regular state and local consultation forums and engagement activities to ensure that the views of volunteers are known and represented to stakeholders.

VFBV is independent from CFA but is an important part of CFA's foundation and future success. CFA is comprised of the community-based Brigades that form it. CFA management and staff provide the framework, governance, leadership, systems and expertise to direct, coordinate, support and empower this network of Brigades. Those CFA Brigades have built and delivered a remarkably successful and world-respected service to Victoria. VFBV is integral to enabling CFA to harness the leadership, knowledge and experience of volunteers and to engaging those volunteers in decision-making about matters that affect their welfare and efficiency. In a community and volunteer-based organisation such as CFA, genuine engagement with volunteers is vital. Robust, meaningful, respectful and honest communication and consultation is essential, and has been enshrined in the CFA Act through the Volunteer Charter as an obligation on CFA and the Government in any decisions that impact or have the potential to impact upon volunteers.

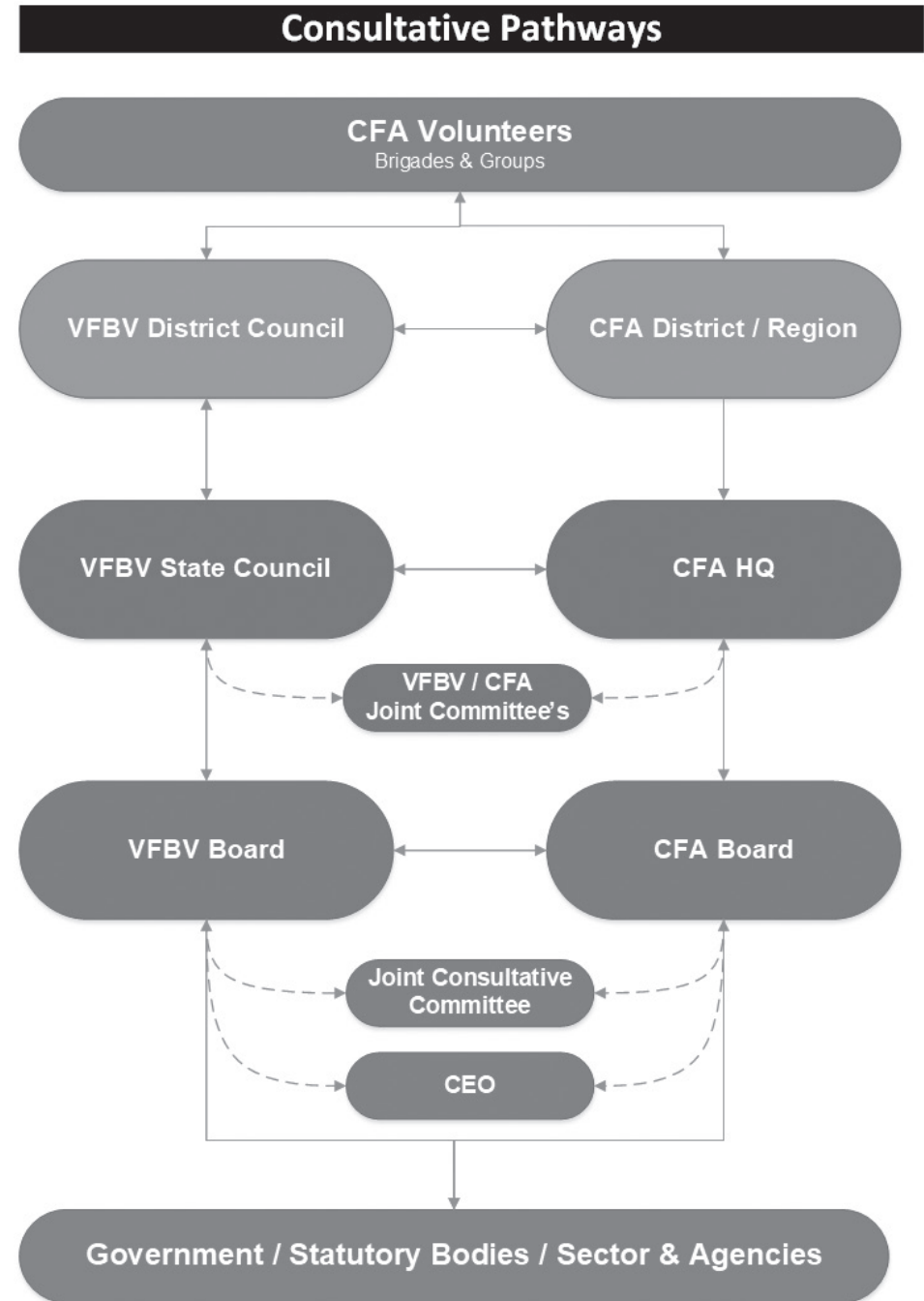
OUR VISION

Strong Volunteerism, Embraced to Build Community Resilience for a Safer Victoria

OUR MISSION

To achieve our vision we will:

- Be well informed of, and responsive to, grass roots volunteer needs, ideas and concerns;
- Represent volunteers and work with CFA and the Victorian Government to ensure ongoing commitment to the principles outlined by the Volunteer Charter;
- Be aware of strategic influences, opportunities and challenges confronting CFA volunteers, volunteerism generally and the decision makers who influence our future;
- Be proactive and prepared to lead and contribute, as volunteer advocates, to decision making and future planning processes at all levels;
- Build the profile and relationships required to position VFBV as an active and respected influence on decision making;
- Deliver communication, representation and decision processes that keep volunteers informed and provide opportunity for volunteers to be consulted on matters that impact on them;
- Resolve concerns and issues raised as quickly as possible;
- Work collaboratively with CFA management to achieve a CFA culture, structure, and operating context that treats volunteers fairly, justly and reasonably.





As predicted, the 2019/20 period has been extremely challenging, both on and off the fireground.

The 'Black Summer' fires of this fire season started much earlier than its January peak. In as early as September 2019, thousands of CFA volunteers were deployed interstate providing significant support assisting our interstate colleagues in NSW and QLD. All the while, tens of thousands of volunteers provided local protection to Victoria.

In late December and early January, the peak of the Black Summer fires was raging across the entire eastern seaboard. In Victoria, District 11 in the South East of the State, and District 24 in the North East were the hardest hit, with thousands of volunteers joining the campaign - assembling strike team after strike team. A commitment that would last until March 2020.

If anyone needed evidence of the critical nature of CFA's surge capacity, this fire season delivered in spades. It was this surge capacity that enabled tens of thousands of highly trained and professional CFA volunteers to be deployed right across the state, dealing with multiple major and concurrent incidents, lasting months at a time.

And while this fire season exacted a very heavy price on our communities, our land and our wildlife, it was the loss of nine firefighters from our partner agencies that cast a long shadow.

On behalf of all VFBV members, I express my deepest sorrow and pay tribute to our fellow firefighters who tragically lost their lives while protecting others. Victorian firefighters Bill Slade, Mat Kavanagh and David Moresi. New South Wales firefighters Geoffrey Keaton, Andrew O'Dwyer and Samuel McPaul. and North American firefighters Ian McBeth, Paul Hudson and Rick DeMorgan Jr who all travelled from the United States of America to help Australia in its time of need.

Each of these firefighters were bravely defending their communities at the time of their deaths and their sacrifice and service will be forever remembered. I extend our deepest sympathies to their families and loved ones.

With entire communities devastated by fires, the work of our charities came to the fore. From early January, VFBV delegates and officials were on the ground working alongside affected brigades and members, ensuring welfare support and recovery resources were made available as soon as possible.

At the close of this financial year, VFBV continues to work in the state's fire affected areas to identify volunteers who had lost stock, fencing, outbuildings, machinery or anything else that will impact on a member's livelihood. Our people are connecting members with grants and recovery services through VFBV's Welfare Fund and the VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust.

Challenging Environment

Although the past few years has seen many challenges for the association and CFA volunteers, frustratingly this past year has been no different – with the impending implementation of the Government's reform agenda, and the forming of Fire Rescue Victoria come 1st July.

And while early discussions were fragile but promising, I cannot hide my disappointment in our Minister Lisa Neville MP who has doggedly pursued the Government's reform agenda while abandoning many of the promises and commitments she gave VFBV about open, fair and equal engagement of volunteers on all matters that would come to affect them.

While I and the Board gave Minister Neville the benefit of the doubt and worked hard over the last 12 months to build trust and good faith, it has become increasingly clear that volunteer consultation and needs have not been genuinely met.

The continued bias evident in decisions that clearly only seek to placate or reward the UFU often against the advice of CFA and other senior leaders across the sector is jarring. Volunteers continue to express frustration about decisions that are one-sided and come at the detriment of CFA and our communities, with no evidence, logic or rationale provided. An example of the broken promises and return to the former divisive and polarising ways of old, was the Minister's promise to CFA that it would not be gutted of its administrative staff, and that all CFA officers who were required to be seconded from FRV under the reforms, would continue to wear CFA uniform 'just as they do now'.

Recent announcements make a mockery of those commitments. The Minister has announced that more than 170 administrative staff are to be cut from CFA and transferred across to FRV and a further 229 operational staff will be sent from CFA to FRV and then seconded back to work in these same positions within CFA but as employees of FRV, wearing FRV uniform.

Evidence of the betrayal was best portrayed by the sudden and immediate resignation of CFA's CEO and Chief Officer Steven Warrington AFMSM on the 25th June 2020 after his alleged refusal to follow a Ministerial direction to sign CFA's future away via a one-sided and heavily biased secondment agreement, that he, and the CFA Board felt was not in CFA's interest.

Steve was a CFA veteran of 42 years, starting with the CFA as a volunteer and working his way to the top to become CFA Chief Officer back in 2016. The government appointed him to the dual position of CFA CEO and Chief Officer following the sudden resignation of the CFA CEO last year, after a similar spat over the Government's reform agenda.

The train wreck of senior leadership casualties that has amassed over the last four years directly caused by the Government's agenda are on clear display to the world and should give even the most ardent supporter of the reforms pause that something is not right.

Sadly, it will fall to CFA's hardworking volunteers to make the best of a bad situation. Despite the setbacks, I am confident we will continue to seek out new opportunities to best position CFA and ensure Victorian's continue to be protected.

Vale

It is with great sadness that I acknowledge the passing of two VFBV Life Members in the past financial year.

Mick Taylor AFMSM (Morrington Brigade – District 8) who passed away on 5th May 2020, was one of the longest serving Association members having dedicated 31 years in senior leadership roles from 1980 until his retirement in 2011.

Mick was an Executive Member of the former VUFBA for 23 years, including one term as President. He was a member of the initial Joint Associations Steering Committee formed to develop VFBV and was a member of VFBV's inaugural Board, serving on the Board for nine years, including as VFBV State Vice President for four years. Mick made a significant contribution to the Association, and was one of the most active members serving on countless Committees and Working Parties over his 31 years' service with the Association.

On a personal note, I would like to acknowledge the incredible impact Mick had on me personally. It was Mick who first approached me about getting more involved in the senior levels of the Association. It was his encouragement and support that steered my initial involvement and ultimately led to my becoming State President of VFBV. He was a great mentor and will be sorely missed.

Bill Pressey AFMSM (Mortlake Brigade – District 5) who passed away 30th June 2020, was an Executive Member of the former VUFBA for 18 years, a member of numerous VFBV Committees and Joint Committees. He was a member of the Urban Competition & Rules Committee and was a strong supporter and active member of local competitions and State Championships for many years. Bill, a former President of VFBV District Council 5 until 2015, was a volunteer of the Mortlake Brigade since 1954, which included serving as Brigade Secretary for 53 years.

Both Mick and Bill were valued, respected members and huge supporters of the Association, and VFBV extends its sincere respects to their families and Brigades.

Thank-you

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank all our people who work so tirelessly throughout the year to serve our membership.

I particularly thank our CEO Adam Barnett for his absolute dedication and commitment on all matters in representing the interests of volunteers. Thanks also to our small staff team who continue to toil away in an ever-challenging environment. We are so incredibly fortunate to have such a great and loyal team of people working for us.

I also want to acknowledge the families, the partners, and our loved ones who regularly make sacrifices to support us not only in our VFBV roles, but our CFA ones also.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank my fellow Board members, State Council, District Council members and all Brigade/Group delegates for your support during yet another particularly tough and challenging year.

Nev Jones AFMSM
VFBV State President



To describe the past year as difficult, complex and challenging would be an understatement. As if Fire Services Reform and the impending implementation date of 1 July 2020 was not enough to deal with, we have also faced two catastrophic events in the form of one of the worst bushfire seasons in living memory this summer while simultaneously dealing with the global pandemic of COVID-19.

And while all three of these events have had a significant impact on our operations, the sector and CFA volunteers in general - I am pleased to report that the association has not only weathered each event admirably but has finished the year in an exceptionally strong and resilient position.

The 'Black Summer' fires of 2019/20 predominantly stretched between September 2019 to March 2020. Over these months, fires burned across an estimated 18 million hectares of land across Australia, destroying over 5,900 buildings including 2,779 homes and tragically killing thirty-three people, including nine firefighters from our partner agencies.

While New South Wales and Victoria were the hardest hit, no Australian State or Territory were spared. Victoria declared a State of Disaster for parts of the State on the 2nd January 2020, the first time since the devastating Black Saturday Fires of 2009.

VFBV, CFA and CFA volunteers met this challenge like it has all previous ones, with selfless grit and determination. CFA volunteers contributed the single largest interstate contingent across Australia, assisting our neighbouring States, deploying thousands of firefighters to New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia while also battling our own blazes at home. We were assisted by international firefighters from New Zealand, the United States of America, Canada and many others.

Early in the year a commonwealth Royal Commission into Natural Disaster Arrangements was floated by the Prime Minister and was officially formed by Letters Patent issued on the 20 February 2020. On the 14th January 2020, the Victorian Government also announced its own inquiry with the Victorian Inspector-General for Emergency Management to examine Victoria's preparedness, response, relief and recovery concerning the 2019-20 fire season.

VFBV welcomed both inquiries and pledged its full support and assistance to assisting with their investigations.

With both inquiries running in parallel, with markedly different terms of reference and with the fire season still underway, VFBV had to manage several competing priorities. The commencement of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions only added to the pressure. And while both inquiries provided short extensions for submissions, both closed submissions in April 2020. For context, the Fire Danger period was officially declared finished on the 20th April 2020, demonstrating the significant concurrency of events.

VFBV prepared and made extensive submission to each, covering each inquiries terms of reference and answering any follow-up questions or topics put to it. Volunteers expressed concern about enquiries running while the events were still unfolding and they were still busy on the fireground, and VFBV communicated this anxiety and concern to each. The VFBV Board and State Council worked diligently to contribute and finalise positions and policy while at the same time meeting our individual commitments to the fire fight. Over 300 pages of volunteer testimony and evidence outlining the broad and diverse views of CFA volunteers on a wide range of topics and issues was provided. And while this work represents one paragraph in my annual report, just one formal inquiry in normal times would usually have represented a significant portion of a years' worth of work and preparation. This was certainly not an ordinary year.

On the 25th January 2020, Australia recorded its first cases of the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 referred hereafter as COVID-19. The World Health Organisation officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic on the 11th March. On the 16th March the Victorian Government declared a State of Emergency and announced restrictions on large gatherings. Stage 2 restrictions were introduced on the 25th March, including the first of stay-at-home orders. Stage 3 restrictions were announced on the 30th March which included Australia's toughest lockdown of all non-essential movement and no gatherings of two or more people unless they were members of your immediate household.

And while some restrictions started to be eased from the 11th May, Victoria's State of Emergency was again renewed on the 21st June, and Victoria returned to harsh Stage 3 restrictions on the 30th June.

While CFA and CFA Brigades as an emergency service were exempt for emergency response activities only, this effectively closed or limited many associated activities. Brigades and Groups had to adapt, with training and brigade meetings required to be cancelled. VFBV had to suspend all face-to-face meetings and gatherings, with staff required to work from home and all non-essential activities scaled back or suspended. This had a significant impact on our meetings and working parties, but also significantly delayed our planned community recovery works for the fire affected areas who were only just commencing their recovery from the season's fires.

With Brigades and Groups unable to meet, we faced significant disruption to our normal processes. We worked with brigades and groups to provide greater flexibility and time for affiliation and payment of accounts, and we adapted all welfare fund services to ensure welfare fund operations continued uninterrupted.

Financially, the association has ended the year in a strong position. Due to the postponement of many events, committee meetings and working parties, there were significant budget underspends in both travel and meeting expenses, generating short-term operating surpluses. The VFBV Board has carefully managed cash flows to ensure any underspends are protected for when these activities resume and the inevitable catch-up period commences.

This year's financials therefore reflect a significant lag in expenses which are likely to be revisited over the coming financial years as things return to normal. Similarly, public donations to our charities reached new record highs this year contributing to our strong balance sheet. The generosity of not only Australian but international donors to this year's bushfire crisis has been nothing short of amazing and deeply humbling. The launch of VFBV's online donation options allowed donors unprecedented flexibility to select and promote the specific charities they wished to support and opened our charities to a much broader support base.

Our Black Saturday Trust swung back into action and was reshaped to become the VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust to support CFA volunteers directly impacted by this year's Black Summer Fires. This trust was originally formed in 2009 and was designed to provide short-term emergency grants for CFA volunteers directly impacted by large campaign-type bushfire events and other natural disasters. The Trust has been working with local brigades and groups in the fire affected areas to identify volunteers in need of assistance. It is expected a couple of hundred CFA volunteers will require financial assistance to recover from this year's fires.

And while donations have significantly boosted our Balance Sheet for this financial year, judging from current enquiries, I expect the majority of this year's donations to our Recovery Trust to be almost fully expended within the next six to twelve months. As we did following the 2009 Black Saturday disaster, we will seek to allocate the majority of funds as quickly as possible, with a small amount kept in reserve to cater for members that may need additional help, as well as preparing for future disasters. COVID-19 impacts are also presenting significant challenges to what would normally be intensive on the ground face to face recovery work.

The VFBV Welfare Fund was also an attractive choice for donors. With 100% of money received by us to the Welfare Fund going towards volunteer grants, the integrity and long history of our welfare fund and the sustainable long-term nature of the capital investment model proved very popular with donors. As the Welfare Fund is a capital fund - all donations are injected into the capital investments, with the interest from those investments and member subscriptions generating perpetual annual operating grant income. This means the influx of donations this financial year to the capital base will benefit CFA volunteers for decades to come.

Highlighting the difficult year and challenging economic impacts of COVID-19 lockdowns and disruptions - the Welfare Fund set a new record, with \$273,237 in emergency grants distributed to CFA volunteers suffering serious financial hardship and in necessitous circumstances this financial year.

As I reflect on each of this year's challenges and how the organisation has risen to deal with each, I am left with an immense feeling of pride and satisfaction. VFBV has stepped up to the plate on each occasion and has not only met the challenge but excelled.

Thank-you to all VFBV delegates on the Board, State Council and our twenty-one District Councils, including our brigade and group delegates across the State. The work you have done to tirelessly advocate, represent and support CFA volunteers this year has been exceptional. I also wish to thank our dedicated staff and office holders who have proven to be amongst the most loyal, dedicated and resilient team of people one could ever ask for.

Adam Barnett
VFBV Chief Executive Officer

Despite an exceptionally challenging year, VFBV has continued to successfully advocate for CFA volunteers on various platforms and contribute to the continuous improvement of Victoria's fire services in many important ways. While the year was dominated by the State Government's Fire Services Reform with the expected implementation of FRV come 1st July, a fire season that significantly impacted members and communities across two Districts, closely followed by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent impact and restrictions on VFBV, Brigades and members, VFBV maintained all aspects of our portfolio and processes in advocating for volunteers. In addition to the issues covered in detail elsewhere in this report, the following is a brief snapshot of some of the key issues for the year:

- VFBV's Welfare Fund distributed \$273,237 to assist 59 volunteers and their families – the highest annual total of Welfare Fund grant payments in support of volunteers, to date.
- The 2019 VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey had almost 2,600 CFA volunteer participants, with results studied by VFBV, CFA and EMV to better understand volunteer opinions.
- VFBV Board, State Council, seven Joint VFBV/CFA Committees and 21 District Councils, continued their hard work and advocacy pursuing a huge range of issues impacting on volunteers' day to day work and our future success.
- VFBV provided assistance to many Brigades and Groups applying for a VESEP grant this year, with an Application Help Pack and previous years' Case Studies.
- VFBV has contributed to various official Committees and reviews over the year, including providing a detailed submission to the Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) '*Review of Emergency Management Reform (over the past ten years)*' in August; the review called under the IGEM's independent statutory role in providing assurance to Government and the community regarding the emergency management arrangements in Victoria and fostering their continuous improvement.
- VFBV introduced a new *VFBV Quarterly Supplement*, in partnership with *Fire Wise* which will be included with *Fire Wise* four times a year. The supplement replaces the VFBV Quarterly Mailout that in the past had been posted to all Brigade Secretaries, and this new arrangement has significantly broadened the reach and improved VFBV's communication flow to members.
- Presumptive Legislation came into operation the day after the Government's *Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Act 2019* received Royal Assent on 2nd July 2019 – providing all CFA firefighters access to presumptive legislation for any diagnosis after 1st July 2016.
- VFBV was able to move quickly to provide support to many volunteer members who lost their primary residence in this season's devastating bushfires in Victoria's north east and south east areas which severely impacted members and communities in Districts 11 and 24, with monetary grants provided from VFBV's Welfare Fund and Volunteer Support & Recovery Trust.
- VFBV issued comprehensive information to members outlining available Commonwealth and State bushfire relief and recovery resources, connecting members up with available grants and recovery services seen as a priority, with updated information made available via VFBV District Councils and the VFBV website.
- VFBV continues to work in the fire affected areas to identify volunteers who have lost stock, fencing, outbuildings, machinery or tools etc. that will impact on members' livelihood, with the intent to finalise financial support to members impacted, from corporate and public donations made to the VFBV Welfare Fund and VFBV's Volunteer Support & Recovery Trust.
- VFBV submitted comprehensive and detailed submissions to both the *Federal Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements* and the state's IGEM phase 1 *Inquiry into the 2019-20 Victorian Fire Season*, in response to two inquiries called following this year's devastating bushfires.
- VFBV strongly advocated in regard to the Commonwealth Payment to Volunteer Firefighters announced by the Federal Government during the 2019-2020 fire season, that decisions on whether the scheme should be accepted or not by Victoria's State Government should not occur until after the fire season, and after volunteers had an opportunity to be consulted.
- VFBV and volunteers voiced their criticism of broken promises, to the Government's commitment last year to work and consult with all stakeholders equally and assurances they would engage in genuine consultation with volunteers on any matters that have the potential to impact on them, in the lead up to the implementation of FRV on 1st July 2020 – which clearly did not occur.
- COVID-19 pandemic impacts included the cancellation of the 2020 State Championships which had only ever been cancelled on two occasions, for the duration of World War I and World War II; and Government's COVID-19 restrictions impacted on meetings of VFBV, District Councils, Groups and Brigades, and impacted severely on Brigade training.

VFBV AFFILIATED MEMBERS – CONTINUE TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT

Without doubt it is more important than ever that volunteers have a strong, united, independent and credible voice.

VFBV's Brigade affiliations for the 2019-2020 financial year were maintained at a high rate of 94%, demonstrating yet again the strong support for the Association's important work in representing and advocating for all CFA volunteers.

This high level of support reinforces the importance of VFBV's legislated role in the CFA Act and our driving motivation to encourage, maintain and strengthen volunteerism and the capacity of volunteers to deliver CFA services. Good service delivery is a fundamental requirement to enabling a community to share responsibility for their own safety, to community resilience and, ultimately, to achieving a safer Victoria.

Three VFBV Districts achieved a 100% Brigade affiliation rate this year, with the majority of Districts achieving above 90%. The continued strong support from Brigades can be attributed to the hard work and good local representation of VFBV District Councils, Brigade delegates and State Council delegates.

Again this year, as a gesture of appreciation for Brigade support, all Brigades and Groups who paid their 2019-2020 affiliations prior to 30th June were automatically entered into a prize draw to win their choice of one of four great prizes with a total value of almost \$3,500 kindly donated by GAAM Emergency Products and Powdersafe. The winning Brigades were Baddaginnie, Carboor, Douglas and Metcalfe, and VFBV gratefully acknowledges the generous donations from GAAM and Powdersafe

VFBV WELFARE FUND – SUPPORTING OUR MOST VULNERABLE MEMBERS

Brigade membership of the VFBV Welfare Fund has been maintained at a high level, with 1,065 Brigades subscribing to the Welfare Fund for the 2019-2020 financial year – a continued high rate of 89% of all CFA Brigades.

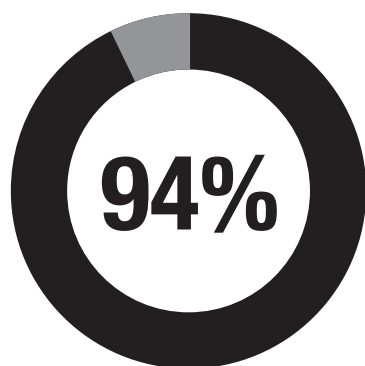
In the 2019-2020 financial year the Welfare Fund distributed \$273,237 to assist 59 volunteer members and their families who were experiencing personal financial hardship.

The Welfare Fund aids members who find themselves experiencing severe financial hardship and are unable to meet essential living expenses. Since its creation in 1913 the Welfare Fund has assisted 1,228 volunteers by distributing over \$2 Million. Over the past 7 years alone, the Fund has been able to provide grants totalling more than \$1 Million to volunteers and their families.

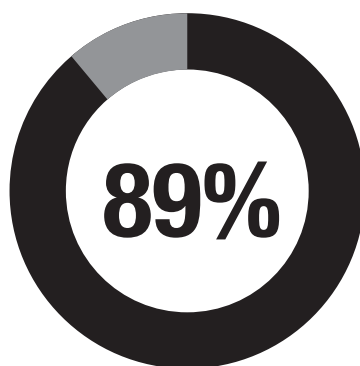
The Welfare Fund is run as a Government-approved charity under Australian Taxation Office rules with a Committee of Management comprising six long-serving CFA volunteers. The Fund is independently audited annually, with all operating and administrative costs covered by VFBV. This ensures that every dollar earned by the Fund's investments and subscriptions goes to assisting volunteers in need. Grants from the VFBV Welfare Fund are financed by Brigade subscriptions and interest is earned on the Fund's invested capital, which ensures the Fund's capital base is maintained to ensure support to CFA volunteers in need for future generations.

The Welfare Fund Committee moved quickly this year to provide expedited support to CFA volunteers who lost their primary residence in this year's bushfires. With a large number of members directly impacted, the Welfare Fund was able to support these members from donations received from the public and corporate organisations in Australia and overseas.

Brigade VFBV Affiliation & Welfare Fund Subscription

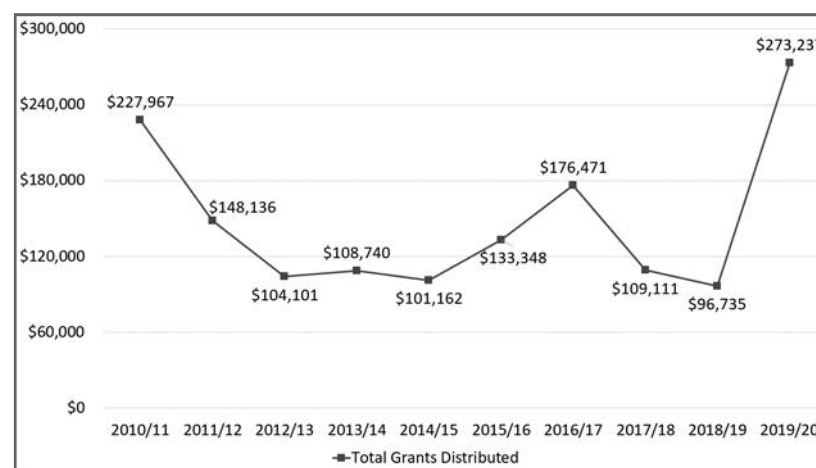


of CFA Brigades
affiliated with VFBV
in 2019/2020



of CFA Brigades subscribed
to the VFBV Welfare Fund
in 2019/2020

VFBV Welfare Fund Grant Distribution



Some key issues that were addressed by our consultative forums and working parties during 2019-2020 include:

FIRE DANGER RATING SIGNS

VFBV delegates on the Joint VFBV/CFA Community Safety Committee continued to raise safety concerns on behalf of members who are required to manually update fire danger rating signs, often located on busy roadways making updating them a high-risk activity. Delegates requested that CFA review its risk assessment and provide support for volunteers to safely undertake this work. The Committee also requested a request be made for EMV to review the location of all signs, with the intent of prioritising the replacement of manual FDR signs with new electronic ones that can be updated remotely.

In related news, CFA has completed the implementation of a new pager cap code that can be optionally added to members pagers to advise of changes to the FDR. This was a VFBV request to support members who have to manually update FDR signs, where previously members had to manually check details online and determine if signs needed changing. Under the new system, nominated members will receive a pager message twice daily during the FDP. VFBV delegates have thanked CFA for its support of this initiative.

STORZ COUPLING CHANGEOVER

For a number of years now, VFBV has been expressing serious concerns about the dangerous situation arising from the slow and unfunded state-wide changeover from three and five-thread hose couplings to Storz couplings. In reviewing the rollout, the Joint VFBV/CFA Equipment and Infrastructure Committee ascertained that changeover had only occurred in full in six Districts across the state. Of the remaining 15 Districts – two are above 50% and eight are at less than 25% changeover indicating the slow progress. VFBV delegates had received reports from Brigades reporting instances where their appliances have been unable to transfer water from tanker to tanker due to incompatible couplings and a lack of adapting pieces.

VFBV delegates strongly criticised the lack of CFA state funding and a rollout strategy that in some instances have left individual CFA Districts to try and manage with their limited non-discretionary budgets. Delegates again have voiced their concerns and expressed their view that volunteers having to fundraise for core firefighting equipment is untenable and immoral.

VFBV continues to call on CFA to allocate urgent funding to complete the Storz project across all Districts as soon as

possible and has refused to support requests that volunteer grant programs be used as an alternative to fund CFA base funding shortfalls.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

VFBV delegates on the Joint VFBV/CFA Operations Committee requested an update on the current progress of Leadership Training. Specifically, Team Member and Team Leader modules that were to be presented by the Australian Institute of Management following their successful appointment following public tender. CFA reported that all agencies within the sector have now reviewed the material and these courses were to progress to pilot. VFBV delegates requested involvement in the pilot courses to improve feedback, and CFA has agreed. Delegates continue to raise concerns with CFA at the lack of leadership training opportunities provided to volunteers, with it now being more than two years since the highly popular FireLine Leadership program was cancelled.

SUPPLEMENTARY ALERTING SYSTEM (SAS)

Two VFBV delegates from the VFBV/CFA Joint Communications and Technology Committee commenced work in 2019 with CFA and other emergency agencies on an EMV led working party to assist with the design and implementation of a new Supplementary Alerting System, and by mid-2020 they reported that limited tests on the latest version of the system have been underway. The VFBV delegates were informed that the mapping component of the SAS performed well, however the working party is looking now to the use and testing of the system with actual data.

ESTA has commenced work on the data transfer component and expect to have this completed in June or July, in line with the 2020 release timeline. Once the data transfer is completed there will be some further testing by the SAS working party to ensure there is a high level of confidence before the expected rollout prior to the next fire season.

CFA DISCIPLINE PROCESS

VFBV continued to advocate that CFA works with VFBV to review the discipline process and procedures and to conduct a review that is open, transparent and most importantly informed by feedback and input from volunteers. With the move to a centralised complaints management system VFBV has provided examples where the Integrity Unit has been responsible for the investigation of many minor and innocuous matters, which has subjected volunteers to lengthy periods of suspension and stressful investigations. CFA has agreed that a clear distinction

needs to be made between a minor or low-level complaint compared to a more serious offence. CFA has advised of the appointment of a new Complaints Manager who will be responsible for determining which matters are investigated by the Integrity Unit, and which are more appropriately handled at District level. It is proposed this system will ensure that every complaint will be logged and strict time frames adhered to.

VFBV will continue to voice concerns around the lack of transparency and natural justice afforded to members traversing CFA's discipline system until tangible and meaningful changes are made. VFBV will continue campaigning for external oversight and will continue to explore options such as the creation of a Volunteer Ombudsman type role to act as an independent mechanism for possible oversight or appeal processes where in VFBV's view CFA conflicts of interest cannot be adequately or appropriately managed.

4.4 IVECO TANKER TRANSMISSION UPGRADE

VFBV raised safety concerns discussed by members in many forums of how the Iveco 4.4 Heavy Tanker transmission deals with a drop in engine revs. In a semi-automatic transmission, software engages the clutch automatically during gear changes, but when the engine revs drop below approximately 700/800 RPM, these transmissions automatically engage the clutch to prevent the vehicle from stalling – leaving the driver effectively controlling a vehicle coasting in 'neutral' and therefore without exhaust brakes. VFBV was very pleased when CFA agreed to stop purchasing this transmission and agreed that all future builds would be fitted with an Allison automatic transmission. While this fix addresses the problem for future builds, there are still approximately 80 appliances in the fleet fitted with the older transmission.

VFBV delegates on the Joint VFBV/CFA Equipment and Infrastructure Committee continue to raise this as a significant safety concern and have requested CFA develop an urgent business case and funding bid to present to Government to cover a retro fit program.

In the interim, VFBV delegates continue to raise concerns that with different transmissions now spread across the Iveco fleet, CFA needs to urgently fit dashboard placards that aid in transmission identification for when these vehicles are used in campaign fires or part of strike teams, and any other occasions where drivers may not be aware of the differences. The Committee will continue advocating these measures to compliment training and education as part of CFA's risk management strategy.

PROTECTIVE FACE MASKS

VFBV delegates to the PPE and C Consultative Committee have requested CFA establish a working party to review all scientific and research literature on protective face masks for use during bushfire firefighting.

In recognition that there are still many unknowns and a lack of consistency across fire services across Australian jurisdictions in this space, VFBV has requested that a multi-state working party be established. The intent would be to invite other States and Territories to consider becoming involved and sharing resources to investigate and consider the available evidence. VFBV is aware of a number of services who have conducted limited field evaluations on alternate products.

VFBV State Council has recommended a collaborative and multi-faceted approach to ensure all health and safety factors are considered. CFA Health and Occupational specialists have long cautioned on the widespread replacement of the current P2 masks without first investigating the available evidence, warning that there are complex interactions that first need to be tested and understood first. For example, concern has been raised that higher rated masks may increase the risks to firefighter's cardiovascular system as the body needs to work harder and compensate for more laboured breathing as is frequently experienced with non-positive pressure masks. CFA has indicated support to this approach and will work with the Committee to progress.

PUMPER/TANKER PROTOTYPE

In a major setback, VFBV delegates to the Pumper/Tanker Working Party expressed their disappointment that CFA has awarded the tender for the prototype vehicle without addressing the concerns that the Working Party had previously raised. The Working Party received good feedback from volunteers when it invited submissions early in 2019, and there was significant alignment in submissions that have assisted the Working Party agree on the vehicles role statement, equipment and stowage requirements. VFBV delegates had significant concerns about some aspects of the build including its weight, length and pump capacity which it has sought CFA clarification on. Delegates are also disappointed that CFA had not embraced the opportunity to prototype some more innovative 'out of the box' thinking that would allow volunteers to evaluate some cutting edge technologies emerging in the industry. VFBV delegates to the Working Party will now escalate their concerns with CFA. VFBV will try to bring the project back on track and restore the proactive and collaborative approach the Working Party was initially seeking.

GENERAL FIREFIGHTER DELAYS

VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Training Committee were disappointed to learn that the much-anticipated release of the General Firefighter program has once again been delayed. General Firefighter is due to replace minimum skills wildfire. While some of these delays may be explained by COVID-19 restrictions, other delays have also been created by the departure and changing of key training personnel at HQ.

VFBV delegates have requested consultation on materials as they become available to help minimise the delays and have requested a revised schedule, and it is expected that completed foundation skills drills packages including training videos will be made available on the Learning Management System (LMS)

FIRE INVESTIGATION TRAINING PRE-REQUISITES

VFBV delegates on the Joint VFBV/CFA Operations Committee continued to receive and escalate volunteer complaints regarding the difficulty in accessing the prerequisite training 'Give Evidence in a Judicial or Quasi-Judicial setting' required to undertake Fire Investigation Courses. In consultation with the Committee, CFA has agreed to provide a distance learning option that would use an assignment approach using the current Reference Manual and skillsPAK to facilitate volunteers resuming this prerequisite training.

This new program will see a training and assignment option created and loaded onto the Learning Management System based on the new PUA2019 updates that would then be available for members to access and undertake, and was expected to be released in early 2020.

LOW VOLTAGE FUSE REMOVAL

VFBV continued to advocate for the rollout of critically important 'Low Voltage Fuse Removal Training' to as many Brigades as possible following the alarming drop in qualified members across the state. VFBV has campaigned strongly for the resumption of this training – pointing out to CFA the significant risk firefighters are exposed to when electricity cannot be safely isolated early on during structural firefighting operations. Hand in hand with this initiative is the continued advocacy for CFA to support a strong, sustainable, well trained and experienced Volunteer Trainer and Assessor pool. The need for CFA to provide training opportunities in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy for volunteers to participate continues to be one of the poorest performing areas identified in VFBV's annual Volunteer Welfare & Efficiency Survey. CFA has advised that due to changes in the framework, the requirement for Low Voltage Fuse Removal courses to be conducted in partnership with TAFE and using a

qualified electrician is no longer required. This will allow suitably qualified and experienced volunteers and staff instructors (those that hold a Cert IV in Training & Assessment) to undertake train the trainer type courses to develop a volunteer instructor pool to assist with the delivery of this critically important training. CFA reports it has completed six Low Voltage Fuse Removal courses, with a further 14 courses scheduled this year. To assist with course delivery, a further four LVFR Trailers are being constructed that will finally see one trailer per Region, in addition to LVFR props established at every CFA training ground. With over 450 volunteers trained so far, there is still a long way to go to reach the previous level of 5,000 trained members.

WELLBEING SUPPORT HOTLINE

In 2020 VFBV delegates escalated concerns of a serious shortcoming of how calls to the CFA Wellbeing Support hotline were being managed. The Joint VFBV/CFA HR, Welfare and OH&S Committee received a request from VFBV State Council to investigate a request for assistance from District Council 16 who had provided examples where calls transferred from the hotline to field-based support services are not logged and therefore created the potential for calls to go unanswered or not followed up. CFA confirmed the problem and advised that it is due to the current system relying on an internal telecommunications system that has been built in-house.

VFBV has requested that alternate systems be investigated as a matter of priority to ensure no calls to the wellbeing line can go unanswered or missed. VFBV acknowledges that the current system may have been appropriate in the past, however delegates have advocated the system has outgrown its original intent and requires investment to ensure wellbeing and welfare requests are suitably logged and managed to help ensure cases do not fall through the cracks. The Committee has also requested more awareness is provided to Brigade leaders on how to assist members when requesting wellbeing and support services.

TREE HAZARD ASSESSOR ENDORSEMENT DELAYED

Early 2019, VFBV delegates of the Joint VFBV/CFA Operations Committee sought an update on the progress of the Training package for Hazardous Tree Assessors for volunteers. CFA had previously advised that it had introduced a RPL process for volunteers who had significant experience and knowledge in hazardous trees while a skills acquisition package was being developed. CFA advised the package was being piloted by DELWP and a final version for CFA would be released 'shortly.' VFBV delegates have continued to raise concerns as another fire season approached and with the increase in near misses

from falling trees. With no progress and no additional volunteer Hazardous Tree Assessors trained to assess and mark potentially hazardous trees the pool of trained and qualified members continues to stagnate. In a recent update, the Committee has learned that CFA has made the decision not to endorse the package for CFA use, and that CFA's position is now that Hazardous Tree Assessment will remain with DELWP and Parks Victoria. VFBV delegates will continue to seek clarification and will request CFA's reasoning be provided to inform further discussion and consideration.

CANCELLATION OF BA COURSES

VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Training Committee expressed disappointment and escalated complaints arising from some Districts that are reporting cancellation or non-running of Breathing Apparatus courses due to the rollout of the new MSA BA Sets. Some trainers have claimed that because training materials have not been rewritten to cover the new MSA sets that they are therefore unable to schedule courses using the current content.

VFBV delegates have strongly criticised this lack of planning and approach and have called on CFA to urgently resolve the issue. VFBV also continues to pursue delays experienced by volunteers attaining BA Search and Rescue components required for internal structural attack.

PLANNED BURNING TASKFORCE

VFBV is a strong advocate of planned burning and has been working with CFA to support and develop the CFA Planned Burn Taskforce project. This project has been funded under the Victorian Safer Together initiatives and draws on the feedback and advocacy put forward by VFBV through our 2013 study of Volunteer Attitudes Towards Planned Burning. The project is piloting the formation of a volunteer taskforce which would operate similar to a strike team to assist local brigades and districts when a major planned burn is requested, and local district resources are not available. In simple terms, members from across the state can nominate to volunteer to assist in a planned burn outside of their own district.

The pilot was initiated in Districts 8, 13, 14 and 15 and is now being extended to other Districts. Brigades have long recognised there are many training advantages of participating in planned burns such as allowing newer members to observe and learn fire behaviour and provide an opportunity for experienced fire fighters to pass on their knowledge and experience to others in a controlled relatively safe manner.

VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Operations Committee requested the project team improve circulation of information and expressions of interest wider than has occurred so far, and also requested the project team consider attending DPC and Group meetings to explain the project and pilot.

RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLERS

VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Community Safety Committee report of the exciting progress being made to promote residential sprinkler systems, and good progress appears to have been made in VFBV's pursuit for an Australia Wide National approach. Through collaboration with the Fire Protection Association Australia (FPAA) and the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC), Government regulators continue to implement changes to legislation. The National Construction Code (NCC) and building codes have been updated and became effective 1st May 2020. These changes mandate effective, safe, fit for purpose sprinkler systems for new medium rise residential buildings 4 stories and over. Independent analysis of the installation of residential sprinkler systems has determined that a sprinkler system can reduce the occupants risk level by at least 67%. To date adding a sprinkler system to residential housing was seen to be cost prohibitive. New systems designed to the new specifications draw water from the existing plumbing and building water supply for residential buildings and offers significant cost savings. VFBV delegates will continue to monitor and encourage progress.

ONGOING STATION MAINTENANCE CONCERNS

VFBV State Council received a request by District Council 12 to escalate concerns regarding the lack of ongoing maintenance of fire stations. The lack of District funding for the cleaning of meeting rooms in particular was raised by members. It was pointed out that fire stations are a workplace for volunteers and used for Brigade meetings, functions and training. Being central to the community they are often the only remaining infrastructure in small towns, and therefore often shared with other community groups and not-for-profit community organisations for meetings, training and get-togethers. Members have raised concerns that the lack of funding is resulting in meeting room amenities and carpets not being cleaned regularly resulting in significant wear and tear and shortening their lifespan.

Brigades are reporting their annual brigade allowance is not designed for this purpose and is insufficient to cover maintenance, replacement or cleaning carpets. As a result, they can be left uncleaned for long lengths of time unless volunteers fundraise for funds to cover the expense. State Council agreed to raise this

issue with CFA and advocate for a fairer model where stations are fully funded to ensure stations are well maintained. State Council's position is that both the cleaning and replacement of worn or damaged carpets should form part of CFA's annual maintenance program.

APPROVED LED LIGHT BARS

Brigades have been regularly reporting that standard headlights on many CFA appliances are not bright enough, especially when driving on country roads and dealing with an increased hazard of wildlife.

VFBV requested CFA update its approved list of lights so that Brigades can make an informed decision when looking to retrofit appliances for better safety at night and requested that 'light bars' be considered for inclusion as a standard item at no extra cost on new builds as this would be more cost effective rather than retrofitting items. CFA agreed to commence this work, and VFBV will continue to advocate for funding to retrofit all existing tankers based in high risk townships as phase 1.

TFB & ISSUANCE OF INFRINGEMENT NOTICES

VFBV delegates of the Joint VFBV/CFA Community Safety Committee lobbied hard for CFA to lead a review of Total Fire Ban (TFB) provisions and seek strengthened powers and arrangements for Victoria Police to investigate and prosecute TFB offences. Consistent Brigade feedback over the last several years indicates breaches of TFB conditions are continuing to occur, with the prevalence of these fires having a significant impact on volunteers having to respond to preventable illegal fires (including camp fires) not to mention the impact on public safety.

VFBV is advocating for Victoria Police to be provided increased powers to issue on the spot infringement notices for the lower order offences. This would have an immediate impact and send a strong message that illegal burns and fires will not be tolerated on high risk days. CFA agreed to support this approach and to formally raise the issue with EMV and pursue relevant legislative changes, and requesting EMV's assistance in exploring infringement notices for lower order offences and to seek input to EMV's review of TFB provisions.

'B' CLASS FOAM TRAINING MATERIALS

'B' Class Foam is an integral part of firefighting used during fires or spills of flammable liquids. In 2015 CFA conducted a review of 'B' Class foam concentrate that was currently being used, this resulted in CFA choosing a new foam concentrate in the Solberg RF ATC which is fluoride free and biodegradable. During the roll-

out of the new foam concentrates to Brigades CFA conducted a Train the Trainer program for Brigades that held 'B' Class foam. VFBV has been advocating for CFA to update its 'B' Class Foam training, to bring it up to standard and adequately outline the key changes in application rates, effectiveness and duration of the new foam, including application techniques and safety/environmental considerations to be taken into account. CFA has agreed and committed to review the training materials and design a new training package in consultation with the Joint VFBV/CFA Operations Committee, and volunteer feedback will be sought on the draft package once available.

SPECTRUM REPLACEMENT

Following advice from Telstra that its Spectrum Pre Conferencing service was being discontinued as from January 2020, the VFBV delegates on the Joint Communications & Technology Committee worked with CFA on possible replacements. Spectrum is the system used by Brigades when the triple zero or paging activation systems fail. Following a search of the market for potential replacement systems, the Committee endorsed the provider AdTec conference system which has now replaced the spectrum system across the state.

VFBV has encouraged members to provide feedback from individuals, groups and brigades who have used the new system. Initial feedback has highlighted problems such as when the initial caller hangs up, the line is disconnected automatically which in turns doesn't allow for Brigade members on the line to continue the discussion and plan their next step. Other issues reported are when the initial message is presented to indicate you have a conference call, it only plays the pre-recorded message once, causing members missing this message to not know when to enter their pin. VFBV will continue to monitor the new system of any reported difficulties or adverse changes experienced.

POWER OUTAGE COMMUNITY MESSAGING

VFBV delegates of the Joint VFBV/CFA Community Safety Committee lobbied hard for CFA to improve community messaging and advice on the importance of considering power outages in peoples fire plans. The issue of the increased occurrence of power shedding during peak load days and pre-emptive power outages on high fire risk days was originally raised by VFBV District Council 24, and supported by VFBV State Council who requested the delegates to the Community Safety Committee take this issue up and advocate to CFA for consistent and specific messaging/advice across the sector. Delegates have observed that many peoples fire plans assume they will still have access to power for pumps and radio's etc. While VFBV delegates

have agreed with CFA that a national approach would be ideal, delegates have requested CFA take the lead through its own messaging, while work is done to build national consensus.

DRIVING STRATEGY

VFBV delegates on the Joint VFBV/CFA Training Committee are happy to report that their ongoing advocacy for an endorsed Driver Training Strategy including licensing, driving under operational conditions and off-road is now progressing through CFA. VFBV delegates met with CFA early 2020 as part of the consultation process to discuss and workshop a strategy that will essentially result in a streamlined and consistent approach to new medium rigid licensing. The Strategy will also include safer driving on-road and off-road and include a revised and more flexible delivery of CFA Driving Legislation and Policy aimed at Class 1 and 2 Brigades. The expectation is that the Strategy will be available on the Learning Management System (LMS) for all members to access. The Strategy also includes the provision for further educators to support delivery. It is expected this will lead to Districts having a more consistent approach and members having greater access to driver education.

RPL PROGRESS

CFA have now finalised a new formal RPL (recognition of prior learning) process for CFA Electrical Safety Awareness and First Aid qualifications. This follows long advocacy by VFBV who has continuously raised the struggle that volunteers face when trying to have prior skills and qualifications recognised by CFA. This new standard approach should now provide all volunteers the same opportunity to apply and finally removes District variances and barriers.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY MEDALS

On Australia Day 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the National Emergency Medal (NEM) would be awarded to recognise emergency responders for service during the 2019–20 Australian bushfires. The Medal was established in 2011 following the Victorian Black Saturday fires and is awarded for sustained service during a nationally significant emergency.

VFBV delegates on the Joint VFBV/CFA Volunteerism Committee are working with CFA in reviewing the nomination criteria, which is due to be announced late 2020. As previously has been the case, the NEM is open to all emergency service volunteers, as well as fire, police, and paramedics. The Prime Minister has also announced that Australian Defence Force members may also be eligible.

VFBV delegates are awaiting further advice from the Honours and Awards Secretariat in Canberra, but in the meantime work is underway to develop a process to support members with nominations, and review the processes used following the 2009 Fires NEM presentations and events.

POST SEASON & AFTER ACTION REVIEWS

The Joint VFBV/CFA Operations Committee continues to advocate on the importance of timely and inclusive after-action reviews. VFBV delegates to the Committee continue to express concern at the drop in formal post-season after-action reviews and the lack of opportunity for a broader range of members to participate, with some Districts moving to a multi-agency invite only model.

A positive outcome from ongoing discussions of the VFBV delegates on the Committee has been the development of the Learning Management Centre (LMC). The LMC is an online portal for information and case studies about incidents. The aim of the stories is not to apportion blame, but to allow volunteers to share their experiences so we can all learn from them. The LMC aim to publish a new case study every month and have available AAR guidelines and templates to help members conduct a structured review or debrief process for analysing an incident to help improve performance. It considers what was planned, what happened, why it happened and what can be done to improve or learn from an incident. This valuable resource will help volunteers to facilitate improvements, support learning, identify trends and share lessons from across the state.

VOLUNTEERS HAVE THEIR SAY

Through VFBV's state-wide network of 21 District Councils and elected volunteer representatives, VFBV maintains direct links with volunteers. VFBV's process of engaging with the field and seeking feedback from volunteers is vital in enabling VFBV to credibly advocate to CFA on behalf of volunteers.

VFBV sought feedback through its representative networks and encouraged all members to participate in discussions at the District, Group and Brigade level on a number of important issues during the reporting period:

- **Helmet Torch and PPC Kit Bags:** VFBV conducted a survey last financial year to determine Brigade/Group views on whether helmet torches and kit bags should be a mandatory part of CFA's minimum Personal Protective Clothing as a core health and safety issue. Based on the outcome of VFBV's Helmet Torch and Kit Bag Survey with feedback from almost 1,000 members, State Council in September 2019 formed the position that a Helmet Torch and Kit Bag should form part of CFA's minimum PPC wildfire allocation for all members upon completion of their minimum skills.

The Survey results confirmed VFBV's view that safety was the primary consideration for helmet torches, with 99% of Brigade/Group and individual responses agreeing that helmet torches should be considered essential equipment for operational use and should form part of minimum standard, with an overwhelming preference for personal issue vs vehicle caches.

State Council considered the results that showed 92% of brigade responses and 84% of individual responses indicated helmet torches the more appropriate minimum standard over right angle or handheld torches. However in recognition that preference for helmet torches over right angle torches dropped to 78% from predominately structural districts, State Council has requested VFBV delegates to the Joint CFA/VFBV Equipment and Infrastructure Committee work with CFA to explore alternates for a future second phase strategy, which will address the availability of right angle torches for the structural environment.

VFBV briefed CFA on the results and corresponding State Council position and continues to campaign for CFA support for the new minimum standard. As CFA support is likely to be contingent on funding, VFBV is promoting the increased health and safety outcomes the new minimum standard would bring for firefighters.

- **16-17 Year Old Operational Firefighters:** VFBV State Council's December 2019 meeting discussed and supported District Council 9's request to investigate and obtain members' views on the continued use of 16 & 17 year olds as operational members. With the law classifying any member under the age of 18 as a child, VFBV has sought feedback from Brigades, Groups and members on whether the minimum age for operational activities should be changed, or if there are further steps that can be taken to protect and improve the safety of children participating in CFA activities.

With no formal CFA position, State Council agreed this is likely to come up in the future, and therefore it would be prudent for Brigades and members to be given sufficient opportunity to consult and provide feedback so that VFBV is well informed if and when it is raised. Brigades, Groups and members were encouraged to discuss at local District Council meetings, and all members including juniors, parents, fellow Brigade members and leaders encouraged to consider making submission so all perspectives could be considered.

Submissions were due 2nd March 2020, however this was later extended until 15th May due to the significant and busy fire activity early 2020 for many Brigades and members. Based on submissions and feedback from members, next financial year VFBV State Council will further discuss and consider a formal position.

- **Bushfire Thermal Imaging Camera Course:** VFBV was pleased to learn that CFA has finally introduced a bushfire-themed Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC) course after considerable advocacy by VFBV on behalf of brigades. CFA has seen an overwhelming increase in TICs thanks to grants like the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP), however, there have been serious shortages of courses including the inability to provide courses due to skills profiles and pre-requisites that have excluded some brigades from the training. The new bushfire-themed TIC awareness course is now available on the Learning Management System (LMS) as an eLearning package.

VFBV delegates on the Joint VFBV/CFA Training Committee are encouraging members who partake in the eLearning module to provide ongoing feedback to VFBV so any issues can be identified and followed up.

- **Integrated Fire Management Planning:** VFBV continues to advocate the importance of CFA volunteer representation and input into fire management planning. Legislation changes

removed mandatory volunteer brigade and group representation and replaced Municipal Fire Prevention Committees (MFPC's) with new Emergency Management Planning Committees. Pleasingly, some Municipalities have chosen to keep their fire prevention committees by making them a subcommittee of the new overarching body, but this needs to be negotiated with each individual local government area.

To assist brigades to have input into these meetings, VFBV delegates on the Joint VFBV/CFA Community Safety Committee requested CFA develop guidelines to provide consistency. Where CFA decides to only appoint a CFA employee to represent CFA in these forums, VFBV delegates requested CFA provide a mandatory consultation process to ensure these representatives are well informed by local brigades and groups and that information is also passed back from the committee to the volunteers at the local level.

CFA has sent draft guidelines to all Groups, Districts and Regions for feedback, including a proposed fire prevention escalation process, municipal fire management planning guideline for CFA members, and proposed guide to CFA participation in municipal fire management planning. VFBV has encouraged volunteers to provide feedback direct to VFBV.

- **CFA Training Strategic Plan 2019-2024:** VFBV encouraged all members to provide VFBV with feedback on the draft CFA Training Strategic Plan 2019-2024. Volunteer views make a difference; strong feedback from the VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey which places training as one of the top two frustrations and areas of dissatisfaction, is quoted by CFA as a key influencer of the approach to the plan. CFA says the plan "responds to the 2018 VFBV Welfare and Efficiency Survey feedback by ensuring we provide sufficient training opportunities in formats and at times which in turn make it easier for our people to complete their training". As a number of commitments and statements of how activity will be delivered are included in the Plan, with volunteers 'on the ground' knowing best whether the strategic intent will deliver practical benefits, volunteer views are vital.
- **Digital Learning:** CFA is working on uploading and improving the digital learning platform on the Learning Management System (LMS). This year updates and materials have included Safe Driving and Legislation Requirements, First Aid, Asbestos Awareness and Prepare Test and Maintain Equipment. VFBV delegates to the Joint VFBV/CFA Training Committee are working closely with CFA to guide and improve eLearning in CFA. VFBV delegates have been keen to stress that digital

learning does not replace face-to-face, but rather extends and compliments it. Physical materials are being developed to mirror each of the eLearning modules and will be made available so that those who can't or choose not to access LMS are not disadvantaged. VFBV has encouraged any members partaking in the new eLearning to provide feedback which is essential for continual improvement.

VFBV SUPPORT OFFICERS

VFBV's team of five VFBV Support Officers cover the entire state and work directly with Brigades and the executive teams of each of the 21 VFBV District Councils. VFBV Support Officers provide technical, administrative and leadership assistance and hands on practical support in CFA's five regions. They are an important link in VFBV's Brigade and Group engagement and consultation network to volunteers, Brigades, District Councils and other local CFA Committees and processes.

VFBV Support Officers are experienced CFA volunteers, many having occupied senior Brigade leadership positions. They work on state-wide projects in addition to providing localised support and engagement with volunteers.

VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES EQUIPMENT PROGRAM

The Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) is an ongoing program funded by the Victorian Government. This annual program was established 20 years ago after VFBV proposed an annual program to provide local emergency services volunteer groups access to grants. VESEP provides funding to assist emergency service volunteers in acquiring a wide range of ancillary equipment in recognition of their significant contribution in supporting Victorian communities in times of emergency.

The successful VESEP 2019/2020 applications were announced in December 2019, with CFA awarded \$10 Million under this year's program. Of the 180 successful CFA grant applications, 43 were to replace or upgrade firefighting and specialist vehicles, 33 volunteer amenities improvements, 63 equipment and 41 minor works projects. In addition to the Brigade projects, \$2.4 Million was successfully approved for state-wide initiatives

As in previous years, VFBV provided an Application Help Pack and Case Studies to assist Brigades and Groups wanting to access the scheme, providing practical suggestions to help with the application process.

2019 VOLUNTEER WELFARE & EFFICIENCY SURVEY

This year's VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey opened on Friday 23rd August to coincide with the 2019 AFAC Conference held at the Melbourne Exhibition & Convention Centre, and members attending were able to complete the Survey at VFBV's stand in the exhibition space.

The VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey is an annual snapshot of volunteer opinion and welfare. It has become a critical tool in monitoring short- and long-term trends, and the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at improving CFA volunteer engagement and wellbeing.

The survey is a reliable and important method used to capture the views of volunteers while also tracking trends in volunteer opinion over the years. It is one of the largest surveys of its kind in Australia. As with previous years, VFBV supports other Australian States and Territory volunteer associations in running the survey within the other fire services to gain a national perspective of volunteer views. VFBV also worked with the Victorian SES Volunteers Association (VicSESVA) in offering the survey to VICSES members in recognition of the shared respect between CFA and VICSES volunteers.

Members were encouraged to participate to enable VFBV to be informed about what volunteers think, how they think CFA is performing, and what volunteers need to support their CFA activities. It's not just about what is not working - it is often a good insight into the areas that are working well, which helps decision makers learn from the good. It also helps show areas that with a little bit of attention could be doing better. The results of the survey are used by VFBV to advocate on behalf of volunteers and also by senior leaders across the sector. The results go straight to decision and policy makers, within CFA, EMV and Government. It shapes and drives the important advocacy work that gets done in the background to help volunteers.

At the closing of the survey in November 2019, it was clear from the number of responses that Brigades and Groups had worked hard to promote the survey and encourage members to participate – with this year's figures surpassing the previous year's participants.

The results of the 2019 Survey are largely consistent with previous years – the areas that had the biggest gaps when the survey was first introduced in 2012 are still the areas causing the highest levels of dissatisfaction amongst volunteers. This suggests that CFA need to more adequately and genuinely address these core issues, which are consistently about failure to consult volunteers on decisions that affect them and the lack of access to and adequacy of training.

VFBV SUPPLEMENT

November 2019 saw the launch of the new VFBV Quarterly Supplement. In partnership with Fire Wise, the supplement will be included with Fire Wise four times a year, and members will now receive a copy of Fire Wise with the supplement at no additional charge. VFBV's supplement replaces the VFBV Quarterly Mailout that in the past had been posted separately to all Brigade Secretaries, and included separate pages with relevant news, updates and information on current issues being pursued by VFBV on behalf of members.

VFBV is hopeful that this new format will be easier to read as well as providing the information all together in one place. Under this arrangement, VFBV has arranged for each Brigade to receive a free copy every month of Fire Wise to both Captain and Secretary and each Group a free copy for the Group Officer and Group Secretary as a benefit of their paid VFBV affiliation fee. As well to broaden the reach of the VFBV Supplement, all existing subscribers to Fire Wise will also receive a copy - significantly improving the communication flow between VFBV and members.

The broader distribution of information from VFBV will only improve member's awareness of VFBV's important work and ensure they are better connected and involved, and is just one way that VFBV continues to improve the communication flow between members and sharing the vital work done by the hundreds of VFBV delegates across the state who tirelessly and passionately support, represent and advocate for CFA volunteers.

PRESUMPTIVE LEGISLATION

As reported in last year's Report, the Government's Firefighters' *Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2019* was passed by Parliament on 20th June 2019.

The presumptive rights part of the legislation formed Part 2 of the Bill, and unlike the remaining parts of the legislation, the presumptive rights portion came into operation the day after the Act received Royal Assent on 2nd July 2019 – and gives all CFA firefighters access to presumptive legislation for any diagnosis occurring as from that date – or diagnosed after the 1st July 2016 which the legislation was backdated to. Volunteers have the choice if they wish to lodge a claim through CFA's Volunteer Compensation Scheme, or through WorkSafe to access presumptive legislation for one of the 12 types of cancer listed in the Act.

Presumptive Legislation provides a rebuttable presumption for volunteer and career firefighters suffering from specified forms of cancer. It legislates that these cancers are presumed to be due to the nature of their service as a firefighter for the purposes of claiming compensation. It is intended to reverse the onus of proof so the sick firefighter does not have to needlessly face the almost impossible task of proving which specific fires, incidents or toxins caused the cancer.

One of the first priorities for VFBV was to influence the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation Regulations 2019 that were to be developed immediately following Royal Assent. While the Bill provides the framework for the law, the Regulations provide the detail and specifics that are required to give practical effect to how administrative processes would actually work. For volunteers in particular, the Regulations are even more critical, as they deal with the workings of the controversial 'Advisory Panel' required for all Victorian volunteer firefighter claims.

VFBV's concerns and objections to the additional barriers and processes that only volunteer firefighter claims must go through are well known and documented. While the Regulations are not able to completely cure those problems (as they have to operate within the framework of the principal legislation), VFBV saw an opportunity to work with Government and stakeholders to develop the Regulations in such a way that could minimise the harm while hopefully mitigating the potential bias that the legislation creates. The goal was to influence the Regulations to ensure volunteers received as fair and respectful treatment as possible under the circumstances.

VFBV's hard work and collaboration over many weeks with Government, EMV and WorkSafe on the drafting of the Regulations had some positive effects. One of VFBV's primary objectives was to gain increased transparency in the Advisory Panel process and its outcomes. In this vein, the new Regulations require the Advisory Panel to provide its expert opinion (and the reasons for it) within 10 days of receiving the request from WorkSafe. The Regulations also now provide an opportunity for the claimant firefighter to provide their own information to the Panel should they wish to – and the firefighter can request a copy of the expert opinion and the reasons for it, which must be provided within 7 days of the request being made. These were key criticisms of the original legislation and these changes are important safeguards for volunteers as they significantly increase the transparency and accountability of the Panel.

Other areas of importance was the ability for the nomination and activation of the three person Advisory Panel to be tailored to best suit the nature of the application. For example, the Panel that reviews whether a volunteer firefighter has 'attended fires to the extent reasonably necessary' could be made up of just fire service experts, which may be different to a Panel established to review an exceptional exposure event that may require scientific knowledge. This starts to lay the groundwork and shape the working of the Panel closer to the simple 'tick and flick' process that was promised. There is also provision for the Panel to help the applicant obtain relevant records or local knowledge – an important safeguard should agency records be incomplete or insufficient.

With the Regulations finalised and coming into effect on the 9th July 2019, VFBV's next priority was to review the actual claims forms and process to ensure a sick firefighter is not delayed or confused by complicated paperwork. Our preliminary analysis indicated the current forms are likely to be somewhat confusing for firefighters submitting a presumptive claim for cancer. This is mainly because the forms were primarily designed to report common workplace injuries where exact causes are known.

VFBV is currently working with CFA and WorkSafe on the claims process and has had productive discussions with WorkSafe on how to streamline and simplify how volunteer firefighters apply for compensation under the presumptive legislation scheme. In recognition that this is the first time many volunteers will be accessing a WorkSafe scheme, the work cover authority has agreed to progress in collaboration with VFBV new documentation and guides to assist volunteers with the application process and completion of the required forms.

VFBV is seeking information and clarity around the application process, the assessment process and how results will be reported. This has been slower than expected, but VFBV continues to progress the following:

- A clear application process that provides targeted support for the sick firefighter. VFBV continues to raise its concerns around the poor application process, confusing forms and lack of information pack and targeted support for sick firefighters presenting to the process.
- VFBV has raised its concerns with the level of assessment being conducted by the Advisory Panel for volunteer claims. The commitment provided by Government and Parliamentarians was for an easy "tick and flick" type process to simply determine if a volunteer was operational or not. Early indications are the Advisory Panel is requesting very detailed information about the activity levels of volunteer applications (which do not apply to career firefighters) to assess the "reasonably extent necessary" portion of the legislation. VFBV will continue to investigate and monitor
- VFBV are in discussions with Government and WorkSafe about how to report on the results of cases presented to the Advisory Panel. Early indications are the majority of cases have been supported. We are seeking a process for public reporting of results, while maintaining individual confidentiality.

VFBV is committed to assisting and supporting members who may need advice or help to understand the paperwork and the claim process while these hard-fought improvements are yet to be implemented, and has encouraged any volunteers who are considering making application under presumptive legislation to contact VFBV.

The first of the volunteer applications under Presumptive Legislation were decided late 2019, and VFBV kept a close eye to monitor how the new process was working and if the results from these first cases match the promises and commitments made, especially in relation to the panel that will decide on volunteer cases. While good progress has been made on the intent and design of administrative processes, VFBV will continue to monitor the progress closely of future claims that will test these processes. Despite the inherent weaknesses of the legislation, we will need to see whether these measures can, in fact, mitigate the different treatment of volunteers and career staff simply because one is paid. The ultimate measure of success will be that there is parity of results and all firefighters who go through the system receive fair, equitable and compassionate treatment.

Volunteers faced significant challenges this year in the lead up to the Government's Fire Services Reform with the implementation of FRV and changes to come into effect 1st July 2020, the state's worst fire season since Black Saturday in 2009 with areas and communities severely impacted in Districts 11 and 24, immediately followed by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic crisis and response.

GOVERNMENT'S FIRE SERVICES REFORM

Following the passing of the Government's Fire Services Reform legislation on 20th June 2019, VFBV made a commitment to work constructively and in good faith with Government, agencies, and all stakeholders to find common ground, and committed to working hard to salvage the best possible outcomes from the changes, and to hold decision-makers to account for the structures, promises and commitments made. VFBV took the State Government at their word when they promised they would work and consult with all stakeholders equally and VFBV accepted their assurances they would engage in genuine consultation with volunteers on any matters that have the potential to impact on them. Decision makers committed to the Volunteer Charter and committed to providing information allowing enough time for volunteers to understand the impacts and promised to provide opportunities for volunteers to have input so that alternatives or compromises could be reached before decisions were made.

VFBV had early meetings with EMV and Government officials including the Minister's office to establish constructive discussions and ensure volunteer involvement, feedback and views were represented at the highest levels of the Government's implementation structure and in the decision-making. The State Government established an IDC (Inter-Departmental Committee) and other related strategic governance groups. VFBV sought representation in the Governance Structure to ensure that any volunteer impacts were well known and understood and to ensure Volunteer Charter obligations for consultation were met, and the Minister formally confirmed VFBV's appointment to the Volunteer Reference Group which was established to formally engage with VFBV on implementation of the reforms, share progress and seek volunteer feedback. This was to be a small and highly strategic group that would meet with senior officials and receive implementation updates and discuss strategic opportunities and issues, to ensure decision makers were aware of any volunteer impacts or concerns. VFBV's representatives on the Reference Group were the State President, State Vice President and CEO.

By early 2020, VFBV raised concerns with the slower than expected progress and lack of detail that had been made available for consultation to the Volunteer Reference Group. The group sought better reporting of actions underway by the Agency Coordination &

Transition Group in order to better understand progress. Anxiety built that timelines were becoming very tight and very little time would be left to openly consult and engage before the deadlines for decisions. VFBV continued to express the feelings of members that very little information was actually available to discuss and engage on.

Volunteers were starting to voice their frustration and disappointment of the lack of formal communication or updates from the sector and engagement regarding reform, which was having a significant impact on volunteer morale. VFBV requested that engagement with integrated Brigades and neighbouring Brigades start as a matter of priority, and advocated that direct consultation on the development of the Allocation Statements needed to start as soon as possible so that volunteers would have direct involvement. CFA is required to provide the Minister an Allocation Statement for each integrated station to detail assets to be transferred to FRV. VFBV also requested an appeals process be established to outline concerns should volunteers disagree with elements of the Allocation Statement before being approved by the Minister.

CFA responded by advising they were scheduling targeted engagement sessions with all Integrated Brigades in February/ March 2020. VFBV supported these engagement activities and encouraged volunteers to be involved. VFBV Support Officers and State Councillors stayed in regular contact with Integrated Brigades 1st Lieutenants to offer any assistance or support. Several District Councils also arranged targeted engagement with their Integrated Brigades to help workshop and discuss ideas on future operating models. Government and CFA claim that over 1,330 volunteers attended 54 sessions and their documentation makes out that topics discussed included operations and response which were consulted on and addressed. However, reports from volunteers is that in reality, either VFBV or Groups were not notified or invited to the sessions, or no new information or answers to any issues raised, was provided.

Late January 2020, VFBV was provided with maps from EMV showing the planned FRV boundaries, requesting VFBV's comment. The maps were included in the original 2017 legislation but required updating to reflect current boundaries and several staff locations that did not exist at the time of the original 2017 legislation. The maps were required to define the new FRV District, due to the way the current legislation operates. At present, the Metropolitan Fire District is gazetted though maps provided to the Central Planning Office, and the CFA legislation then determines that any area outside this gazetted metropolitan fire district is defined as 'the country area of Victoria' for the purposes of defining CFA areas. The new legislation operates on the same basis. FRV areas must be gazetted by plans lodged, and then all areas outside those are defined as the country area of Victoria.

VFBV forwarded the maps to all impacted Brigades to provide an opportunity to raise any anomalies or concerns, but as the majority simply reflected current boundaries only brigades around the Latrobe West Fire Station raised concern. The proposed boundary for Latrobe West once it becomes staff only was a radical change, by using road network modelling for the first time as the boundary, which had been drawn as an 8 minute response time around the future FRV station – with the boundary completely enveloping four other volunteer Brigades. Two of those Brigades were comfortable and raised no concern. The other two Brigades, Trafalgar and Westbury wrote to VFBV raising their concerns requesting VFBV formally advocate on their behalf – which was unanimously agreed by the VFBV Board.

On 4th June 2020, the Government introduced an Amendment Bill into Parliament to amend their FRV boundaries. These amendments were being made through the Police and Emergency Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. Both Trafalgar and Westbury Brigades requested VFBV's assistance in opposing the proposed changes contained in this amendment that will have significant impacts on their Brigades. VFBV stood in full support and solidarity with both Brigades and wrote to all Members of Parliament requesting they oppose the amendments proposed to the FRV Latrobe West boundary in so far as it impacts on Trafalgar and Westbury Brigades. Despite Government promises and assurances that its Fire Services Reform would not impact on any other Brigades, both Trafalgar and Westbury were shocked to discover that instead of simply respecting the existing primary area of the Moe Brigade when staff were appointed, the last minute amendment proposed to significantly expand the primary FRV area, this is despite both Brigades recording 100% Service Delivery Standard and service to their respective communities. Despite perfect records, the Government rejected all compromises put forward by the Brigades, the local DPC, CFA management and VFBV. More disappointing is the broken promise and assurances that all future boundary changes would be subject to independent, robust risk analysis and consultation, through a "independent" Fire District Review Panel process.

In the final months leading up to the implementation of FRV on 1st July, VFBV continued to strongly advocate for volunteer engagement and consultation throughout the Government's Fire Services Reform implementation. Examples of priorities pursued by VFBV were to request Brigade and volunteer consultation on the development of Asset Allocation Statements; the inclusion of an appeal process prior to Ministerial signoff; a Tenancy Agreement for co-located Brigades to clarify and protect volunteer access to amenities and shared areas and dispute resolution; volunteer consultation on any changes proposed to the response or operating model; the CFA/FRV Secondment Model; the Fire District Review Panel; the Implementation Monitor and Plan; and a volunteer support and

respect package to strengthen and enhance the support provided to volunteers during the changes to protect Victoria's essential volunteer surge capacity. Progress and response to those requests was found wanting.

In June 2020, FRV announced its operational structure. Despite the significant impact that operational staff operating at the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Commander levels have on volunteer reporting lines and operational support, VFBV was again excluded from these discussions. FRV's communique stated "Over the last six months extensive work has been undertaken by the CFA, MFB and UFU in developing an FRV Secondment Model that meets the requirements of the Act, ensures essential services to the community continue to be delivered, and that support to both volunteer and career firefighters is maintained."

While VFBV suspected it for some time, proof of the Government's betrayal emerged as decisions had been made and communicated without any VFBV involvement or volunteer consultation. Governance and consultative structures appear to have represented the illusion of consultation at best, an elaborate and dishonest stalling tactic at worst. VFBV worked incredibly hard to honour our commitment to good faith discussions, and resisted provocation after provocation and for many months VFBV escalated our growing concerns and disappointment all of which have been met with a wall of silence or indifference. And while we have great empathy for the unenviable task of working with multiple agencies and stakeholders, we cannot forgive them for stacking the deck by giving one stakeholder an unassailable veto power that is as broad as it is absolute.

VFBV and volunteers were saddened and disappointed to learn on the 25th June that the Government's fire services reform had claimed yet another victim, with CFA CEO/Chief Officer Steven Warrington AFSM resigning rather than be forced to sign agreements and contracts that would destroy CFA and rob it of its future. Steve was a veteran CFA officer serving 42 years after joining CFA as a volunteer in 1978. A passionate leader, Steve firmly believed he could carve out a strong, independent and autonomous CFA from the reforms, but sadly like all those before him stretching back to 2016, was forced out for standing up for what he believed in.

VFBV's request for an extension in negotiating a Tenancy Agreement for CFA/FRV co-located stations was agreed by the FRV Commissioner on 30th June, with status quo arrangements to be in place until 15th August. VFBV raised the concerns of volunteers who were only shown a draft Tenancy Agreement just one week prior to 1st July. VFBV will continue to work with the new co-located Brigades, CFA and FRV on the formal Tenancy Agreement to support volunteers at co-located stations.

BUSHFIRE RELIEF & RECOVERY

The state's 2019/20 fire season was long and challenging commencing 21st November 2019 with containment late February 2020 – over three months of significant bushfire activity across the state, particularly impacting areas and communities in Districts 11 and 24. Victoria's major bushfires followed out of control bushfires in Queensland and New South Wales from September 2019 onwards, with thousands of CFA volunteers and staff deployed to assist interstate crews with firefighting, incident management and other specialist roles.

Over a million hectares was burnt in the three states, and the country's fires devastatingly resulted in the deaths of three Victorian firefighters, three New South Wales volunteer firefighters and three North American firefighters.

VFBV delegates and officials worked on the ground alongside affected brigades and members - ensuring welfare support and recovery resources were made available as soon as possible. VFBV's Welfare Fund Committee moved quickly to provide expedited support for volunteer members directly impacted by this season's bushfires in Districts 11 and 24. VFBV officers personally met with volunteers directly impacted, and through the Welfare Fund and VFBV's Volunteer Support & Recovery Trust (formerly known as the Black Saturday Trust) were able to provide quick assistance to those who had lost their primary residence, many with funds provided within days.

VFBV issued a comprehensive News Note to members outlining available bushfire relief and recovery resources, such as Commonwealth and state payments designed to provide financial help for people directly impacted by the bushfire emergency, including assistance available from VFBV for members severely impacted by the fire activity.

A joint recovery task force was formed by VFBV District Councils 8 and 13, an initiative led by VFBV State Councillor Bill Watson AFSM modelled on the recovery taskforces VFBV assembled following the Black Saturday fires of 2009. The taskforce was to be deployed over the following months to undertake community-based recovery projects in areas affected by this season's bushfires and to target any CFA volunteers whose own properties had been impacted and supporting local communities by ensuring any additional resourcing, tools or equipment required was drawn from local businesses, thereby boosting and supporting the local economy. This work had to be suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions in March, but will resume again once restrictions ease.

VFBV Support Officers and District Councils have worked in the fire affected areas to identify any members who lost their homes, stock, fencing, outbuildings, machinery or anything else that will impact on that member's livelihood. It is hoped this work will result in an accurate register of all impacted members so that VFBV's Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust and the Welfare Fund can assess demand and make arrangements for appropriate disbursement of funds. The Trust alone has distributed more than \$880,000 to CFA members and their families since Black Saturday and is just one way VFBV continues to support our members who have been directly impacted from large scale fire campaigns.

COMMONWEALTH PAYMENTS TO VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER

With communities across NSW and Queensland impacted by intense bush fire activity from September 2019 involving deployment of many hundreds of volunteer firefighters over several months, the Federal Government announced 29th December 2019 a scheme to compensate NSW volunteer firefighters with payments of \$300 for volunteer service exceeding 7 days up to a maximum of 20. Other States were told they could also join the scheme, which was to be funded through a Federal and State Government co-payment.

VFBV's current position to not support volunteers receiving income for their voluntary firefighting service, was established after broad consultation during the early Green/White Paper process of 2003 and was revisited during the 2009 Bushfires Royal Commission. Our position is also consistent with our National Body, and most of the States and Territories. Results from VFBV's annual Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey confirms that overwhelmingly CFA volunteers contribute their time for one of two main reasons: to help protect the community they live in; and a sense of fulfilment in supporting their community in a meaningful way.

VFBV met face to face with both Federal Minister David Littleproud MP, and State Minister Lisa Neville MP to discuss options. VFBV requested details on the Commonwealth Scheme and asked for confirmation on what was non-negotiable under the scheme (due to already being in place in other states), and what could be tailored for Victoria. No information has yet been received.

The State Government, CFA and VFBV unanimously agreed that due to the operational activity at that time with significant bushfires in the north east and south east areas of Victoria – that decisions on whether the scheme should be accepted or not, should not occur until after the fire season, and after volunteers had an opportunity to be consulted.

While VFBV and volunteers appreciate the support and good intent evident in the Federal Government's initiative, the overwhelming view is that it is misplaced and has the potential to undermine the volunteer ethos of which Australia's volunteer movement relies. VFBV is incredibly disappointed that such a significant policy shift could be made on the run and with no consultation directly with volunteer firefighter peak bodies involvement.

VFBV's position on payment for volunteers has been well documented and broadly consulted on over many years. Our membership is large and diverse and there will always be a broad range of views on any given topic. Historically however, when the issue of payment for volunteer service has been raised, CFA volunteers have overwhelmingly rejected this proposition.

While CFA volunteers are firm they do not want to be paid for their services, they are however just as firm that being a volunteer should not be a cost to the individual for out of pocket expenses such as transport costs, personal expenses, clothing and equipment reimbursement and communication costs legitimately incurred in undertaking their volunteering.

There is some interest for an analysis of other opportunities that may exist for the improved recognition of volunteers through economic support, for example tax incentives and insurance premiums or fire service levy offsets. There is also the belief that there is a need to consider the role played by employers in permitting volunteers to respond to incidents and attend specialist training courses during working hours. The real and hidden cost to many employers is significant and VFBV believes there is an opportunity to recognise this by way of incentives such as tax relief or a form of reimbursement for lost productivity similar to the army reserve model that was recommended in the 2011 Independent Inquiry into Effect of Arrangements made by the CFA on its Volunteers, led by retired County Court Judge, the Honourable David Jones AM.

One of the most fundamental responsibilities of Government and the agencies is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its emergency service volunteers, and while many do the best they can with the resources available to them, in many cases this is simply not enough. There remains a very large gap between standards for paid employees and the conditions that volunteers are often expected to just endure, simply because they are not paid. Improving safety nets and welfare support services is also a priority.

STATE & FEDERAL INQUIRIES

- The Victorian Government announced **14th January 2020 the Inquiry into the 2019-2020 Victorian Fire Season**, with the Inspector General for Emergency Management Tony Pearce to lead an inquiry into Victoria's preparedness for and response to the state's bushfires, and to review relief and recovery efforts. Preliminary recommendations into preparedness and response are due 31st July 2020. The IGEM's investigation into Victoria's relief and recovery arrangements is due 30th June 2021.
- The Federal Government established 20th February 2020 the **Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements** in response to the 2019-2020 extreme bushfire season which resulted in 33 deaths, 3,000 homes and 7,000 outbuildings destroyed and 10 million hectares of land burnt. The Royal Commission will deliver its final report by the end of August 2020.

In early April 2020, VFBV requested that both the Federal and State bushfire inquiries extend the period available for volunteers to make submission, due to the fire season's debriefing and after-action reviews being significantly impacted by COVID-19, allowing little opportunity for CFA members to genuinely respond to the terms of reference. A short extension was granted, however closing dates for submissions was still incredibly tight with the Federal inquiry's closing date extended to 28th April 2020, and the state's inquiry extended to 30th April 2020.

VFBV submitted a comprehensive and extensive submission to both the Federal and state bushfire inquiries, with each submission:

- strong on the need for planned burning and for fuel reduction, the importance of volunteers being involved, and that they want to be more involved but there are too many barriers.
- critical that there has been no follow up or action in regard to recommendations from previous inquiries and reviews.

VFBV's CEO is due to appear before the Federal Royal Commission early next financial year.

COVID-19 IMPACTS

Almost immediately following the state's extremely busy fire season, VFBV, CFA and communities then found themselves navigating the complex and challenging COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the coronavirus outbreak, the State Government declared an unprecedented 'State of Emergency' from 16th March 2020 for a minimum of four weeks, which was later extended until 19th July 2020 following an increase of the state's coronavirus cases.

COVID-19 measures and restrictions put in place did not impede CFA Brigades and volunteers' ability to respond, with emergency plans activated and protocols to maintain emergency response continuity to their communities. Restrictions on Brigade training created extra pressure and challenges. As one of the busiest and demanding roles within a Brigade, Training Officers found creative new ways to keep in touch with training during the restrictions, and the LMS online courses provided access to a range of digital learning topics, both operational and non-operational.

For VFBV, the restrictions meant that meetings of VFBV Board, State Council and State Council Executive had to be held by virtually by either video or teleconference. With VFBV Support Officers already working remotely there was continuity in VFBV's processes but with new demands. For VFBV's secretariat it was business as usual but with limited numbers of staff in the office at any one time and other staff working from home, maintaining VFBV's normal work practices and support to Brigades and our membership.

VFBV State Council Executive approved to accept items raised or motions from District Council Executives without these having to go to a full District Council meeting for endorsement, and VFBV provided teleconferencing facilities for any District Council wanting to conduct their executive meeting by phone. VFBV also advised that District Council elections due this year were to be postponed, with current incumbents requested to continue in their roles until such time as elections could be held.

VFBV/CFA Joint Committee meetings for 2020 were to commence in March, and VFBV worked with CFA on proceeding with these meetings virtually. Where CFA Committee chairs requested meetings be postponed, VFBV requested information be forwarded to VFBV delegates for issues to be progressed out of session.

VFBV created two landing pages on the VFBV website for members to access information in regard to COVID-19 restrictions, and financial support and assistance resources available to members, and VFBV will continue to monitor the situation and provide updated advice and communication to our membership.

VFBV's annual Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey was conducted for the eighth time in 2019, with almost 2,600 CFA volunteers taking part.

In addition to the survey for CFA volunteers, VFBV also managed the survey nationally for fire service agencies across Australia through the Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA) and Victorian SES volunteers through their association, VicSESVA, for the fourth time. Across all surveys there was over 5,500 participants nationally.

The VFBV Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey was initially developed by VFBV in 2012 in conjunction with expert, independent organisational and people performance consultants and informed by focus groups and broad consultation with CFA volunteers on the issues most important to their satisfaction.

The survey measures volunteer opinions on what is important to their welfare and efficiency and how well CFA is performing according to what they are experiencing, the gap between the measurement of importance and performance is referred to as the Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Level (VoWEL) Outcome.

The survey results each year are made available to Government and CFA to assist in prioritising areas that need attention if the vital foundation of Victoria's volunteer-based emergency service is to be better recognised, maintained and supported.

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

The number of CFA participants continues to be statistically robust and considered to be a valid representation of the wider CFA volunteer population. The overall demographics of participants largely reflects the CFA volunteer population, with all CFA districts represented in the responses.

The demographic distribution of the respondents to the survey indicate that the likelihood of bias due to a particular cohort with particular views, is unlikely.

OVERALL RESULTS

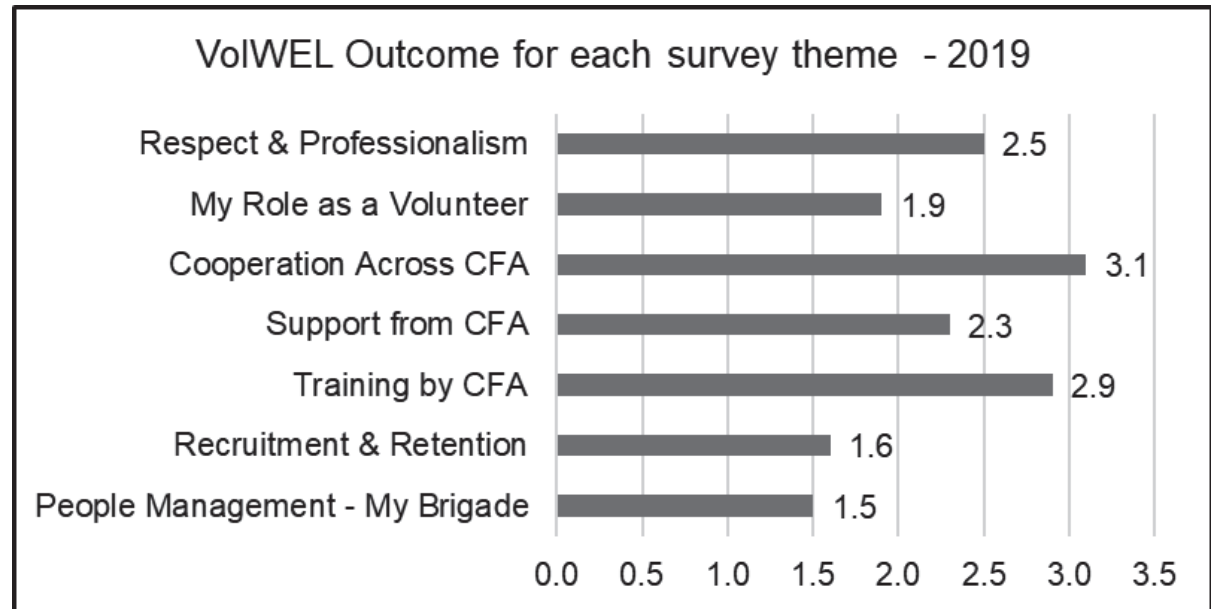
The 2019 results show that volunteer satisfaction particularly in relation to training and cooperation have declined again. CFA volunteers indicated that they were the most satisfied with their role and activities that occur at brigade level, and many respondents find the time that they devote to CFA is productive and worthwhile.

In contrast, volunteers feel that the level of engagement at a broader level is an issue. The survey results show that there is an enormous level of concern regarding effective consultation with volunteers, corporate policies that support a volunteer based and fully integrated organisation and the provision of training opportunities that are aligned with volunteer requirements. Additional commentary provided by survey participants included 'Government' in the same category of 'corporate decision-makers' within CFA, and related this to the lack of consultation with volunteers regarding the passing of legislation to establish Fire Rescue Victoria.

The VoWEL outcome has worsened for the Respect and Professionalism, Cooperation across CFA, Support from CFA and Training by CFA themes when compared with the 2018 survey results

People Management – My Brigade and Recruitment and Retention themes have the best VoWEL outcomes in the survey indicating that volunteers are reasonably satisfied with these areas.

In contrast the Cooperation Across CFA theme has the worst VoWEL outcome indicating that there is a critical need for priority attention to be directed towards this area, closely followed by the Training by CFA theme.



AREAS IDENTIFIED AS PERFORMING WELL

- There are no barriers to the roles women can occupy within my brigade.
- People from all cultural backgrounds, different religious, political and personal beliefs are all made welcome at my brigade.
- The environment at my brigade is volunteer-friendly, welcoming to new members and creates good morale.
- Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my Brigade level.
- I feel the time I devote to CFA is productive and worthwhile.

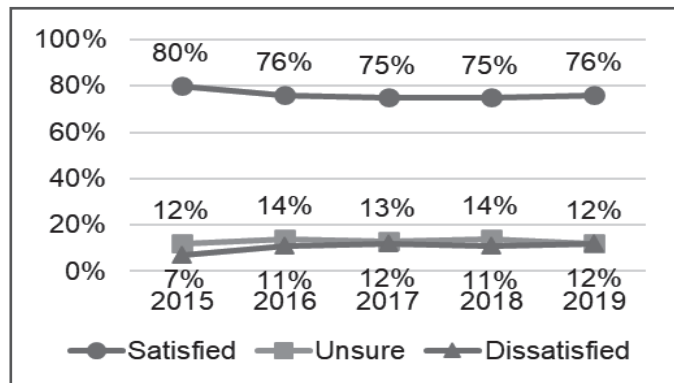
AREAS IDENTIFIED AS IN NEED OF SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT

- Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at CFA Corporate level.
- CFA provides enough training opportunities in formats, at times and at locations that make it easy for me to participate.
- CFA corporate policies and leadership supports an effective volunteer-based and fully integrated organisation.
- CFA's workforce arrangements allow the paid staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as an integrated team.
- Volunteers are effectively consulted and involved in decision making at my local District/Regional level.
- Most training is available and provided within a reasonable distance from my brigade.
- CFA provides good leadership training for volunteers in people management, brigade management, conflict resolution and mentoring.
- CFA paid personnel in my local brigade/district area are committed to supporting and empowering volunteers.
- Volunteers and CFA staff work cooperatively at all levels to achieve shared goals and serve the community.
- In general, CFA staff accept and recognise the professionalism of volunteers.
- The respect and value of the contribution of volunteers is evident in CFA's actions and culture.
- My brigade is successful in 'retaining' younger people as volunteers.
- I respect and appreciate the effort made by CFA to support me as a volunteer.

SATISFACTION WITH VOLUNTEERING

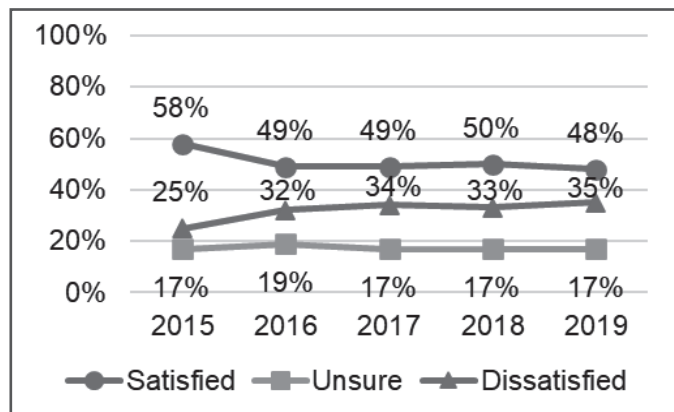
76% of survey respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their role as a CFA volunteer. This measure is still well below the 80% of volunteers who were satisfied with their role in the first four years of the survey (2012 to 2015).

Results for 'Overall how satisfied are you with your role as a CFA volunteer?'



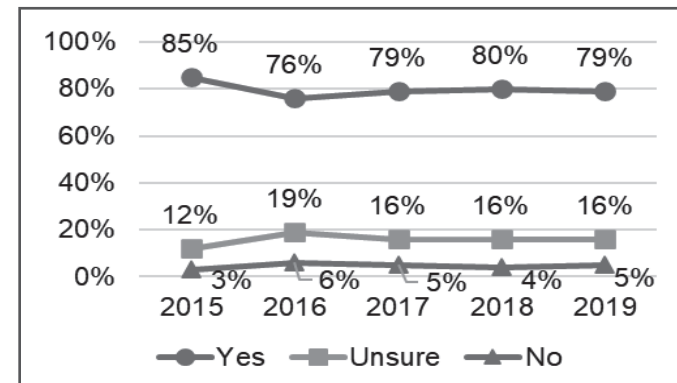
Concerningly, volunteer satisfaction with the way volunteers are treated by CFA has dropped to the lowest level in the eight years of the survey, continuing the decline first reported in the 2016 survey. The number of volunteers who are dissatisfied with their role as a CFA volunteer has also been increasing across the last five years of the survey.

Results for 'Overall how satisfied are you with the way volunteers are treated by CFA?'



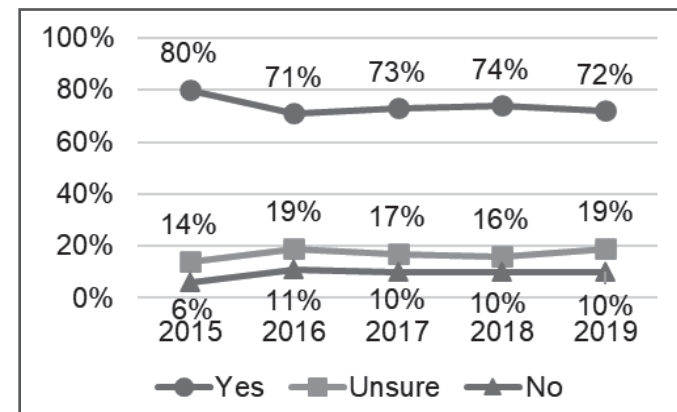
The number of volunteers who intend to continue their membership with CFA has remained consistent with the results from the 2017 and 2018 surveys. This is still well below the 87% who are intending to continue their membership in the 2013 and 2014 surveys.

Results for 'I intend to continue my membership with CFA.'



There has been a slight decrease in the number of respondents, 72%, who would recommend being a CFA volunteer to people they know when compared to the 2018 results. This measure is still well below the high recommendation rate of 80% or more in the first four years of the survey.

Results for 'I would recommend being a CFA volunteer to people I know.'



VFBV continues to build volunteer involvement across the emergency management sector.

These connections complement VFBV's network of Board, State Council, District Councils, Group and Brigade engagement, which provides VFBV with unparalleled reach to the grass roots of CFA, ensuring VFBV representatives are well informed by rank and file members and local consultative forums. The VFBV framework makes for an extremely credible, knowledgeable and cohesive input into decisions.

VFBV/CFA JOINT COMMITTEES

VFBV/CFA Joint Committees are a critical part of the consultative framework, offering a direct line of communication between volunteers and state-level decision makers. Each Committee endeavours to work collaboratively and cooperatively on issues, but may also be required to escalate issues where resolution or common ground cannot be found – requiring executive attention.

Collectively the Joint Committees meet, on average, 28 times a year and involve over 80 volunteer delegates drawn from each of the 21 District Councils.

VFBV sincerely thanks all Joint Committee volunteer delegates for their time and contribution, which is instrumental for our consultative process. Their efforts make an immense difference to all volunteers across the state and to the effectiveness of volunteer input into CFA decision-making.

This year, some key issues worked on by the Joint Committees included:

Communications & Technology

- Spectrum replacement
- Digital Radio upgrade
- Supplementary Alerting System
- Telecommunications Redundancy
- Portable Radio life
- Trunking Radio (SMR)
- Connected Brigades
- Spatial Vision Mapbook

Community Safety

- IFMP Consultation
- Fire Danger Rating Signs
- Residential Sprinklers
- Power outage community messaging
- AFAC National Fire Danger Rating Review
- TFB & issuance of Infringement Notices

Equipment and Infrastructure

- Funding for Storz Coupling Changeover
- 4.4 Iveco Tanker Transmission Upgrade
- Crew Cab Light Tankers
- Pumper/Tanker Prototype
- Online Small Equipment Register
- Ongoing Station maintenance
- Approved LED Light Bars

HR, Welfare and OH&S

- Wellbeing Hotline improvements
- The Working Mind First Responders Training
- CFA Discipline Process
- Provisional payment for mental health claims

Operations

- New Structural Helmet rollout
- Tree Hazard Assessor Endorsement
- Greater Alarm Response System Analysis
- Incident Controller Survey
- Lessons Management Centre Launch
- Season Focus
- Long term vacancies

Training

- Digital Learning
- Cancellation of BA courses
- Driving Strategy
- Thermal Image Camera Training
- Low Voltage Fuse Removal
- Urban Firefighter Program
- Driver Education
- Leadership Training
- B Class Foam Training materials
- Fire Investigation training pre-requisites

Volunteerism

- National Emergency Medal
- Brigade Management Manual
- Youth Cadets
- Jones Inquiry Review
- Volunteer Events EOI
- Young Members Survey
- Decrease Volunteer numbers

VFBV/CFA JOINT COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVES

COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

Dave Arnott	Andrew Bath	Shane Cramer	Neil Dusting	Nathan Jolly
Mick Jones	John Northey	Douglas Parke	David Sidebottom	Adrian Stone
Gary Taylor				

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Samantha Ackland	Alex Caughey	Mary Anne Egan	Libby Hay	Elissa Jans
Bruce Jewell	Phil Lind	Frank Tobin	Maree Varley	Bruce Vine

EQUIPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Noel Austin	Geof Bassett	Mark Jones	Stephen O'Keefe	Gary Parlbay
Bruce Pickett	Phil Slender	Toddy Small	Rob Waterson	Peter White
Jason Willis	Trevor Wyatt			

HR, WELFARE & OH&S

Robert Auchterlonie	Kelvin Bateman	Mark Gravell	Ian Hannaford	Vickie Linaker
Michael O'Mara	Lesley Read	Eric Smith	Howard Smith	Hans van Hamond
Bill Watson				

OPERATIONS

Ron Cole	Jan Cleary	Andy Cusack	Tim Desmond	Gary Fitzgerald
Mark King	Phil Hawkey	Adrian Marshman	Trevor Roche	Peter Shaw
Peter Solley	Leigh Tomlinson	Greg Walcott		

TRAINING

Craig Aiton	Noel Arandt	Janet Auchterlonie	John Davies	Paul Denham
Colin James	Graeme Jilbert	Harold Jochs	Raymond McGeehan	
Greg McIntyre	Rod Taylor	Justin Wills		

VOLUNTEERISM

Malcolm Bishop	Robert Clark	Graham Cocks	Maurice Dumesny	Craig Lawless
Kirsty McCallum	Julie Owens	Sam Rothman	Roger Smith	Darryl Wagstaff
Bryan Walpole				

STATE URBAN SENIOR AND STATE RURAL CHAMPIONSHIPS CANCELLATION

The 2020 State Championships, a combined event of the State Urban Senior Championship events and the State Rural Championship Senior and Junior events, was to have been a much anticipated showcase of competitions and of CFA to the community, to be held at Mooroopna late March 2020.

Unfortunately, on 13th March following a Government ban of mass public gatherings of more than 500 people in response to COVID-19 restrictions, members were advised that the 2020 State Championships was regrettably cancelled.

Commencing in 1873, the State Championships have enjoyed a very long and proud history which pre-dates our Federation and even predates Australia's first Test Cricket match by four years. Highlighting the historic nature of this year's cancellation – the State Championships have only ever previously been cancelled during the war years of World War I and the World War II.

VFBV recognised the impact this decision made not only on our own members, but on the host city of Mooroopna in particular. In recognition of these impacts, VFBV requested that CFA approve that the 2021 and 2022 State Championships be conducted in Mooroopna, which was readily endorsed by CFA.

Appreciation and gratitude were extended to all members of VFBV's state Competition Committees and the 2020 Mooroopna Host Committee who together had toiled extremely hard in the 18 month lead up to the Championships, in preparation for what was to have been an historic celebration of our Urban and Rural competition events. However, with the next two successive State Championships to be held in Mooroopna, much of that work will not be lost.

VFBV thanks all competing brigades, competitors, coaches, organisers, sponsors and supporters for their understanding and co-operation as arrangements of the cancellation were progressed - and with their continued support, we can all plan for our State Championships to be bigger and better in 2021.

The State Championships signify one of the earliest times in Victorian history that volunteer fire brigades unite as one, and we look forward to continuing that tradition in the years ahead.



2020 STATE URBAN JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

With the spread of COVID-19 in Australia still in its infancy in February, the 2020 State Urban Junior Championship went ahead as planned at Horsham, on 22nd & 23rd February.

Harvey from W.A. won the Grand Aggregate title at the State Urban Junior Championship, in the closest finish at a Junior State Championship for many years.

At the start of the final event, Melton's A team were in the lead by one point on 56 points to Harvey second on 55 points - but Harvey took out third placing in this event, giving them the lead on 58 points in the Grand Aggregate. Close behind was Melton A with 56 points, followed by Melton B third on 46 points.

VFBV congratulates the Horsham Brigade and its Championship Committee on hosting a very successful Junior Championship, and thanks the Brigade members for their work and efforts and for their commitment to host the Junior State Championship again next year at Horsham.

VFBV thanks the Horsham Rural City Council for their support to the Horsham Brigade in hosting the Junior Championships, and also extends its thanks and appreciation to CFA for their continued support, in particular the Tower Overseers & District Mechanical Officers.

The Championship was well attended, with an estimated 2,000 people attending and 61 entered teams from across the state including two teams of 12 junior competitors from Harvey W.A., with well over 400 junior members competing in total.

2020 STATE URBAN JUNIOR AGGREGATE RESULTS

GRAND AGGREGATE

1st	Harvey A	58 Points
2nd	Melton A	56 Points
3rd	Melton B	46 Points

UNDER 14 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	39 Points
2nd	Harvey A	35 Points
3rd	Geelong West	30 Points

UNDER 17 YEARS AGGREGATE

1st	Melton B	31 Points
=2nd	Harvey A & Kangaroo Flat A	23 Points

DRY AGGREGATE:

1st	Harvey A	32 Points
2nd	Melton A	27 Points
3rd	Kangaroo Flat A	23 Points

WET AGGREGATE

1st	Melton A	29 Points
=2nd	Harvey A & Melton B	26 Points



2020 State Urban Junior Champions, Harvey



2nd & 3rd placed Melton competitors & Brigade supporters

AUSTRALIAN FIRE SERVICE MEDAL (AFSM)

This year five CFA members received the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM), the highest award for members of the Australian fire services, for their long and distinguished service.

Peter Shaw AFSM, The Basin – acknowledges a long, distinguished and dedicated service to CFA as a volunteer and an officer of The Basin Brigade; recognises his outstanding leadership and contribution to the Knox Group; and also acknowledges his outstanding operational management ability and his dedication and commitment as a volunteer nominee on the CFA Board.

Russell Pardew AFSM, Bemm – for long and distinguished dedication and service to CFA as a volunteer and officer of the Bemm Brigade, the Orbost Group and for developing working relationships with other key government agencies such as DELWP, Parks Victoria and the East Gippsland Shire in the interests of community safety; and also acknowledges his outstanding contribution to influence important fuel reduction burns and other collaborative public safety projects, and in using his expert local and operational knowledge in the protection and safety of his community.

George O'Dwyer AFSM, Barongarook West – acknowledges a long, distinguished and dedicated service to CFA as a volunteer and officer of the Barongarook West Brigade; distinguished contribution and service with the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP); and also acknowledges his outstanding leadership and contribution to incident management and in community fire relief and recovery.

Ian Symons AFSM, Clyde – for long and distinguished dedication and service to CFA as a volunteer, former staff member and Deputy Chief Officer (Operations); outstanding contribution to public safety, Critical Incident Stress Management Program and writing training materials and fire ground practices for new generation equipment and major appliances; and also acknowledges his contribution to the adoption of the Incident Control System (ICS), mentoring the performance of Level 3 Incident Management Teams and with CFA's preparations for the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

Robin Parsons AFSM, Belmont – for long and distinguished dedication and service to CFA as a volunteer and former staff member, Station Officer and Senior Instructor and Operations Officer; and also acknowledges his outstanding contribution and dedication to improve CFA's service delivery, specifically as a mentor and as an eminent source of information relating to the practices of the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) and the implementation of the Incident Control System (ICS).

VFBV GOLD STAR AWARDS

Since first being introduced in 1969, there have been 1,483 Gold Stars awarded in recognition of 30 or more years' service to the Association.

This year, 19 long serving volunteers from ten Brigades were awarded the VFBV Gold Star, and congratulations are extended to:

Baranduda
A G Treffers

Buxton
P Denham

Melton
J Field

Stanley
R G Leary

Belmont
M Wilde

Hallam
A McMullen
M Tiberi

Pearcedale
T Ahchow
D Balcke
G Carter
C Judd
D Kleeman
N Lewis
K Sullivan

Winchelsea
R M Taylor

Bethanga
R J Evans

Hoppers Crossing
F Fitzgerald
G Green
L Lawrence



Three VFBV Gold Stars presented this year were in recognition of a combined 145 years of service to the CFA and years of dedication to Rural Competitions & State Championships. All three were nominated by the District 24 Championship Committee, with the three awards presented at the District 24 annual competition at Gapsted in March 2020. The awards ceremony formed part of the Official Opening of the competition, with the prestigious VFBV Gold Stars presented by VFBV State Councillor Mary Anne Egan.

Pictured following the presentation with VFBV State Councillor Mary Anne Egan are: (from left) Tony Treffers (Baranduda Brigade 38 years), Ron Evans (Bethanga & District Brigade 65 years) and Ron Leary (Stanley Brigade 42 years). These three volunteers as well as serving their Brigades and communities, have all made a significant contribution to the District 24 Championship Committee and local competitions.

BOARD



Nev Jones AFSM
State President
Board Member 2018-2020
n.jones@vfbv.com.au



Samantha Rothman
State Vice President
Board Member 2019-2021
s.rothman@vfbv.com.au



Robert Auchterlonie
Board Member 2019-2020
r.auchterlonie@vfbv.com.au



Jan Cleary
Board Member 2019-2021
j.cleary@vfbv.com.au



Andy Cusack AFSM
Board Member 2018-2020
a.cusack@vfbv.com.au



Libby Hay
Board Member 2019-2021
l.hay@vfbv.com.au



Graeme Jilbert
Board Member 2019-2020
g.jilbert@vfbv.com.au



Bill Maltby
Board Member 2018-2020
b.maltby@vfbv.com.au



David Sidebottom
Board Member 2019-2021
d.sidebottom@vfbv.com.au



Greg Walcott
Board Member 2018-2020
g.walcott@vfbv.com.au

SECRETARIAT



Adam Barnett
Chief Executive Officer
a.barnett@vfbv.com.au



Mark Dryden
Executive Officer
m.dryden@vfbv.com.au



Chris Fryer
Policy Support Officer
c.fryer@vfbv.com.au



Jenni Laing
Administration Officer
j.laing@vfbv.com.au



Cathie Smith
Administration Officer
c.smith@vfbv.com.au



Kara Bishop
Administration Officer
k.bishop@vfbv.com.au

FIELD BASED STAFF



Chris Dent
VFBV Support Officer
c.dent@vfbv.com.au



Glenn Mercer
VFBV Support Officer
g.mercer@vfbv.com.au



Michelle Ryan
VFBV Support Officer
m.ryan@vfbv.com.au



Peter Sharman
VFBV Support Officer
p.sharman@vfbv.com.au



Colin Booth
VFBV Support Officer
c.booth@vfbv.com.au

At the VFBV Annual General Meeting held 22nd September 2019, the Chair of the VFBV Board Interview Panel, State President Nev Jones AFSM announced the appointment to the VFBV Board for two years from 1st October 2019 of:

- Samantha Rothman
- Libby Hay
- Jan Cleary
- David Sidebottom

State Council meeting on 22nd September 2019 elected Graeme Jilbert and Rob Auchterlonie as the two State Council ex officio VFBV Board members for 2019/2020.

VFBV BOARD ELECTIONS

At the first meeting of the VFBV Board in October members elected Nev Jones AFSM as State President and Samantha Rothman as State Vice President for 2019/2020.

RETIRED VFBV BOARD MEMBER

Kate Boschetti did not re-apply for the VFBV Board when her term expired 1st October 2019, attending her final Board meeting on the 30th August 2019. Kate, a volunteer member of the Wodonga West Brigade and a member of the Brigade's BMT, has worked actively to increase female participation by addressing barriers to their participation.

Kate was an asset with her extensive experience in the commercial sector, and State President Nev Jones AFSM acknowledged her contribution and passed on VFBV's thanks and appreciation for her service at the 2019 AGM.



Kate Boschetti

NEWLY APPOINTED VFBV BOARD MEMBER

David Sidebottom was appointed for a two year term as from 1st October 2019. David a volunteer with the Mooroolbark Brigade in District 13 with 50 years service has carried out numerous roles, including Brigade President/Chair for four terms, developed Brigade training systems, set up and ran the Junior Brigade for 10 years and involved on many Brigade committees.

David is an experienced Company Director with his own company in the water & irrigation industry, prior to which he was Project Operations Manager with Yarra Valley Water. With David's many years of experience in CFA, in Operational and Management roles, he sees the opportunity of serving on the Board as an opportunity to use his experience, skills and dedication to bring new ideas and support to the great work VFBV does.



David Sidebottom

CFA BOARD ASSOCIATION NOMINEES

The CFA Act requires a skills based appointment process for CFA Board members, who must meet the following criteria: 'knowledge or, or experience in, commercial, technical, operational, legal or financial matters; or expertise in fire or emergency management, land management or any other field relevant to the performance of the functions of the Authority'. Four of the nine Board Members are appointed by the Minister from a panel nominated by VFBV.

From the panel nominated by VFBV and forwarded to the Minister, three members were appointed to the CFA Board in July 2019. Due to a late withdrawal of a selected nominee, VFBV readvertised the position and forwarded the Minister a further panel from which Beth Davidson was appointed in November 2019. All four volunteer nominees were appointed for a term of three years.

Beth Davidson OAM, a member of the Anglesea Brigade since 1983, has been heavily involved with fire prevention committees and community education, and has over 30 years experience in senior leadership and governance roles in CFA, local Government and the non-government sector, and has served previously on the CFA Board as a municipal representative from 2004-2007.

Ken Griffin, volunteer with the Langley-Barfold Brigade in District 2 and Brigade Secretary and Treasurer, previously a partner with Ernst & Young is currently Chief Financial Officer for TAL a leading life insurance company, and an experienced director having held various director positions on companies across Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Thailand and India.

Dawn Hartog, volunteer and currently Captain of Toolangi Brigade in District 12 and Chair of the District 12 DPC, has extensive experience across the education, training and the emergency management sector in addition to her volunteer experience, having had roles with CFA, Royal Life Saving Society of Australia, EMV and currently performs a senior role with DELWP.

Peter Shaw AFSM, renominated to the CFA Board having served on the Board for the previous three years, a volunteer since 1974 with The Basin Brigade and currently Group Officer for the Knox Group in District 13, Peter brings extensive emergency management experience to the role, having served with Victoria Police concurrently with his CFA service for over thirty-five years.

	STATE COUNCILLORS	DISTRICT COUNCILS		STATE COUNCILLORS	DISTRICT COUNCILS
District 2	Ex Captain Geoff Browning Ex Captain Ron Cole Ex Captain Bill Maltby Ex Captain Frank Tobin Captain Darryl Wagstaff AFSM	President Laraine Leask Secretary Peter Dillon	District 13	Firefighter Vickie Linaker Ex Captain Rod Stebbing	President Frank Whelan OAM Secretary Gwen Corbett
District 4	Captain Kelvin Bateman Captain Andy Cusack AFSM	President Gary Taylor Secretary Julie Bateman	District 14	DGO Sean Brittian Lieutenant Leigh Tomlinson	President Mark Gravell Secretary Leonard Mammoliti
District 5	Ex Captain Malcolm Bishop Ex Captain Greg Walcott	President John Mahoney Secretary Carolyn Bishop	District 15	Group Officer Shane Cramer Ex Capt Maurice Preston (<i>Acting</i>)	President Ron Head Secretary Kimberly-Rose Betts
District 6	Ex Captain Mike Evans Secretary Andrew Bath	President Bevan Deppler Secretary Terry O'Brian	District 16	Firefighter Jason Willis Firefighter Peter Hannan	President Peter Hannan <i>Position vacant at 30th June 2020</i>
District 7	Ex Capt Bruce Pickett AFSM Captain Robert Clark Lieutenant Rod Taylor	President Gerry Neyenhuis Secretary Eddy Rees	District 17	Group Officer John Davies Firefighter Maurice Dumesny	President Garry Smith Secretary Bronwyn McIntrye
District 8	Captain Timothy Desmond Firefighter Stephen McDonald Ex Captain Bill Watson AFSM	President Eric Collier Secretary Max Johnson	District 18	Firefighter Graeme Jilbert Lieutenant Shaun Thompson	President Harold Jochs Secretary Kaylene Cossar
District 9	Lieutenant Robert Auchterlonie Ex Captain Darren Wallace	President Garry Morgan Secretary Dawn King	District 20	Ex Captain Greg Murphy Lieutenant Jim Parsons	President Greg Murphy Secretary Bryan Pickthall
District 10	Ex Captain Mark Jones DGO Bryan Walpole	President Mark Jones Secretary Terry King	District 22	Firefighter Phil Hawkey AFSM Firefighter Mick Jones	President Leonard Balfour Secretary Bill Stockdale
District 11	Ex Captain Geof Bassett Firefighter Philip Lind	President Graeme East Secretary Ian Ashcroft	District 23	Firefighter Mary Anne Egan Firefighter John Seymour	President Jack Harrison Secretary Jim Buchan
District 12	Lieutenant Paul Denham Lieutenant Eric Smith	President Chris Lloyd Secretary Kathy Quinlan	District 24	<i>Position vacant at 30th June 2020</i> Ex Captain Howard Smith	President Max Wood Secretary Graham Cocks
			District 27	Captain Mark King DGO David Farmer	President Lance King AFSM Secretary Craig Griffiths

* Due to retirements, positions remain vacant as at 30th June 2020, pending District Council elections

RETIRED MEMBERS

**Firefighter Greg Fithall (District 16)**

Retired August 2019 – a volunteer member of the St Arnaud Brigade, served as a State Councillor for 10 years, which included as a delegate on the Joint Volunteerism Committee and was honoured with VFBV Life Membership by State Council on 5th April 2020.

**Ex Captain Graeme Goodrem (District 15)**

Retired February 2020 – a volunteer member of the Bacchus Marsh Brigade, served as a State Councillor for three years which included serving as a State Council delegate on the Joint Community Safety Committee.

**Firefighter John Seymour (District 23)**

Retired July 2019 – a volunteer member of the Wangaratta Brigade, served as a State Councillor for four years, and was a State Council delegate on the Joint Equipment & Infrastructure Committee.

**Ex Captain Rob Waterson****AFSM (District 20)**

Retired September 2019 – a volunteer with the Cohuna Brigade, served as a State Councillor for 25 years which included member of the VFBV Board for two years and a member of the State Council Executive Committee, served as a delegate on the Joint Operations and Joint

Equipment & Infrastructure Committees and numerous working parties, State Urban Championship Co-ordinator for the past 20 years and continues as a member and the chair of the Urban Competition & Rules Committee.

NEW STATE COUNCILLORS



Firefighter Mick Jones, District 23 – elected 1st July 2019, member of the Mansfield Brigade for 20 years, has served in Lieutenant roles for 11 years including 6 years as 1st Lieutenant, was Brigade Captain for 4 years, and is currently FEM Officer, DGO and Group Health & Safety Officer.

**Lieutenant Jim Parsons, District 20**

– elected November 2019, joined the Gunbower Brigade in 2004, transferring to Leitchville Brigade in 2016 where he is currently 2nd Lieutenant, Brigade Training Officer and the Brigade's Group Delegate.

**Firefighter Jason Willis, District 16**

– elected August 2019, has been a CFA volunteer of the Stawell Brigade for 12 years, served as the Brigade's VFBV Delegate for two years and is currently the Brigade's Junior Leader.

VFBV's NEWEST LIFE MEMBERS



DGO Sean Brittan: VFBV District Council 14 nominated Sean for Life Membership having representing District 14 as a State Councillor for over 10 years.



Firefighter Greg Fithall: VFBV District Council 16 nominated Greg for Life Membership having represented District 16 as a State Councillor for 10 years.

State Council endorsed the nominations of Sean and Greg for Life Membership at its meeting 5th April 2020, when State President Nev Jones AFSM congratulated Sean for this honour and recognition and thanked him for his contribution and service to VFBV, District 14 and CFA volunteers across the state. Greg Fithall having retired in 2019, will be suitably congratulated at a future District Council meeting.

STATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The State Council Executive Committee makes recommendations to State Council on strategic/process matters and issues raised by District Councils.

Members of the State Council Executive Committee for the year 2019/2020 were: Geof Bassett, Malcolm Bishop, Sean Brittan, Timothy Desmond, Maurice Dumesny, Mary Anne Egan, Phil Hawkey, Mark Jones, Vickie Linaker, Phil Lind, Bill Maltby, Greg Murphy, Bruce Pickett, Phil Slender, Eric Smith, Howard Smith, Shaun Thompson & Leigh Tomlinson. The two State Council delegates to the VFBV Board, Rob Auchterlonie and Graeme Jilbert, also attend as ex officio members to this Committee.

DISTRICT COUNCIL RETIREMENTS

VFBV thanks the following retired members for their contribution to District Councils:

- District 6 President Brian Ritchie (July 2019)
- District 6 Secretary Margaret Evans (July 2019)
- District 9 President Brian Brewer (August 2019)
- District 14 Secretary Michael Vermeulen (August 2019)
- District 16 Secretary Vivien Maddison (October 2019)
- District 24 Secretary David Langshaw (August 2019)

1946	M.W. Carver	1981	E.C. Caddy QFSM (Drouin) L.W. Peters	2001	H.A. van Hamond AFSM (Wendouree)
1951	J.K. Stokes	1983	R. Jones	2003	P.E. Davis AFSM (Carrum) L.C. Doye (Golden Square) J.L. Laing
1952	C. Ford (Miners Rest)	1984	D.H. Lade QFSM (Highlands/Caveat)	2004	R.W. Waterson AFSM (Cohuna)
1953	D.M. Cameron	1984	D.E. Gow (Leitchville)	2005	B.A. Pickett AFSM (Geelong West)
1955	J.L. Allen	1985	K.W. Talbot OAM (Dandenong)	2006	R. Hill (Paynesville) J.S. Kennedy (Loch)
1956	W.B. Richardson BEM (Wangaratta)	1985	R. Collier OAM (Portarlington)	2007	G.N. Lyttle AFSM (Cardigan) S.M. O Callaghan (Warracknabeal)
1959	J.R.C. Plante (Lilydale) M. Steward OBE (Warragul) J. Reilly (Tarnedale) H.M. O'Rorke MBE (Lake Bolac)	1985	G.T. Evans OAM QFSM (Echuca) M.E. Johnson QFSM (Traralgon) J. McLeod AFSM (Boronia)	2009	T.J. Brodie AFSM (Longwood) P. Downes (Mandurang) O.T. O'Keefe (Winslow) W.R. Rodda AFSM (Korumburra) J.I. Thomson (Sunbury)
1961	H.W. Wade (Natimuk)	1986	P.G. Mullins QFSM (Maryborough)	2010	B. Conboy (Mt Martha) R. MacDonald (Carlsruhe) W.T. Pressey AFSM (Mortlake)
1962	Hon. I.A. Swinburne GMC MLC	1987	R.K. Patterson AFSM (Portland)	2011	B.L. Vine AFSM (Tawonga)
1966	W.H. Barnes OAM (Chelsea) H. Brown (Golden Square) S.G.W. Burston OBE (Casterton) T.F. Hayes (Violet Town) W.J. Jones BEM AFSM (Moorooduc) L.J. Slattery (Kyabram) A.E.J. Turton (Wodonga)	1987	H.W. Stewart (Broadford)	2012	B. Pyke (Whanregarwen) P.R. Denham (Boronia) M.R. Jones (Stratford) R.B. Snell (Hamilton)
1967	E.E. Allen (Kaniva) S.M. Begley (Colac) Hon. T.H. Grigg CBE MLC (Maldon) Dr P.S. Lang	1986	E.J. Baynes AFSM OAM (Indigo Valley) M.W. Dawson OAM (Avoca)	2013	A.J. Cusack AFSM (Mumbanner) T.G. Desmond (Dromana) M.J. Evans (Barongarook) R.P. Lind (Mount Taylor) W.I. Maltby (Castlemaine) C. Pomroy (Longford)
1968	F.C.B. Minchin J.S. Tabuteau (Moe)	1987	L.J. Baillie (Warrnambool)	2014	C.W. Dennis (Frankston) M. Nunweek (Stawell) D.J. Wagstaff AFSM (Maryborough) T.J. Wyatt AFSM (Murrayville)
1970	D. Campbell (Springvale) S.C. Diffey MBE MC OAM (Springhurst) H. Lester-Smith MBE (Kerang) L.J. Maguire (Boronia) W.M. Reid (Mooroopna)	1988	B.C. Condick AFSM (Tarnagulla)	2015	G.W. Bassett (Lakes Entrance) P.J. Slender (Tatura)
1971	H.L. King (The Fireman)	1988	D.A. Austin QFSM ED	2016	F.J. Grove (Lara)
1972	E.J. Barrett (Geelong City) R.A. Dore BEM (Carrum) W.H. Rowe (Maldon)	1988	L.V. Winsall AFSM (Warracknabeal)	2017	J.M. Austin (Drouin) K. Clough (Lake Charm) R.C. Cole (Romsey) M.A. Egan (Maindample) A.J. Ford
1973	H.G. Kyle AFSM (Bengworden)	1989	G.H. Baxter AFSM (Freshwater Creek)	2018	G. Neyenhuis (Wallington)
1975	N.H. Jenkins (Kyneton)	1989	K.H. Larsen AFSM (Belmont) J.N. McEachern (Wodonga)	2020	S.R. Brittan (Werribee) G.L. Fithall (St Arnaud)
1976	C.J.H. Drife BEM (Clunes) W.G. Wilson OAM (Shepparton)	1991	W.E. Davies AFSM (Walmer) W.H. Royal AFSM (Bairnsdale) M.J. Taylor AFSM (Mornington) L.L. Thomason AFSM (Woodend)		
1979	A.I. Laidlaw BEM AFSM (Willaura) C.T.N. Stone (Diamond Creek)	1991	M.J. Sanderson AFSM (Seymour) Q.T. Turner AFSM (Creswick)		
1980	R.J. Jilbert BEM (Swan Hill) A.E. King AFSM (The Fireman) D.J. McEachern OAM (Wodonga)	1994	P.R. Bishop AFSM (Mildura) G.C. Dare (Colac) R.D. Walker (Kerang)		
		1995	R.G. Jacobs AFSM OAM (Chelsea) B.M. Maher AFSM (Lubeck) J.C. McMillan (Moe) H.B. Morris (Avoca)		
		1997	R.D. Gartside (Castlemaine)		
		1998	A.J. Hooper AFSM (Winnindoo) R.A. Horner AFSM (Sassafras/Ferny Creek)		
		1999	R.A.C. McDonald (Bowser)		
		2000	D.W. Adams (Carrum) R.E. Schultz AFSM (Benalla) P.J. White AFSM (Casterton)		

District 2

Axe Creek
 Axedale
 Baringhup West
 Bealiba
 Bendigo
 Benloch
 Bolinda & Monegeetta
 Bowenvale
 Bullengarook
 Campbells Creek
 Carisbrook
 Carlsruhe
 Castlemaine
 Chewton
 Clarkefield & District
 Coliban Group
 Darraweit Guim
 District 2 Headquarters
 Dunolly
 Eaglehawk
 Elmore
 Elphinstone
 Eppalock Group
 Fortuna Group
 Fryerstown
 Gisborne
 Golden Square
 Goldfields Group
 Goornong
 Guildford
 Harcourt
 Heathcote
 Heskett-Kerrie
 Hunter-Diggora
 Huntly
 Junortoun
 Kamarooka
 Kangaroo Flat
 Knowsley
 Kyneton
 Lake Eppalock Coast
 Guard
 Lancefield
 Langley-Barfold
 Lockwood
 Macedon

Maiden Gully
 Maldon
 Malmesbury
 Mandurang
 Marong
 Maryborough
 Metcalfe
 Mia Mia
 Mosquito Creek
 Mount Macedon
 Mount Macedon Group
 Mt Camel
 Mt Cameron
 Natte Yallock
 Newham
 Newstead & District
 Oscar 1 Emergency
 Pastoria
 Raywood
 Redesdale
 Riddell's Creek
 Romsey
 Romsey Group
 Sedgwick
 Spring Hill
 Springfield
 Strathfieldsaye
 Sutton Grange & Myrtle Ck
 Talbot
 Taradale
 Tylden
 Walmer
 Wareek & Bung Bong
 Whipstick Group
 Woodend
 Woodvale

District 4

Bahgallah
 Carapook
 Cashmore
 Casterton
 Casterton Group
 Condah
 Corndale
 Dartmoor
 Digby
 District 4 HQ
 Drik Drik
 Drumborg
 Dunrobin & Nangeela
 Glenorchy Estate
 Gorae West
 Grassdale
 Heathmere
 Henty
 Heywood
 Heywood Group
 Lake Mundi
 Lindsay
 Lyons
 Merino
 Merino Group
 Milltown
 Morven
 Mumbannar
 Myamyn
 Narrawong
 Nelson
 Paschendale
 Portland
 Portland Coast Guard
 Sandford
 Strathdownie
 Strathdownie Group
 Tahara
 Wallacedale
 Wando Bridge
 Wando Vale

District 5

Abbey Hills
 Allansford
 Ardachy
 Ardonachie
 Bainbridge
 Balmoral
 Belfast Group
 Bessiebelle
 Bochara
 Branxholme
 Broadwater
 Buckley Swamp
 Bulart
 Burn Brae
 Byaduk
 Caramut
 Cavendish
 Codrington
 Coleraine
 Croxton East
 Cudgee
 Culla
 District 5 HQ
 Dundas Group
 Dunkeld
 Eilerslie
 Framlingham
 Garvoc
 Gazette
 Glenthompson
 Grange
 Gringe
 Gritjurk
 Hamilton
 Hawkesdale
 Hexham
 Hilgay Settlers
 Hopkins-Curdies Group
 Karabeal
 Kirkstall
 Knebsworth
 Kolora
 Konongwootong
 Koroit
 Laang
 Linlithgow

Macarthur
 Macarthur Group
 Melville Forest
 Mepunga
 Merri Group
 Mirranatwa
 Mooralla
 Mortlake
 Mortlake Group
 Mount Rouse Group
 Muntham
 Nareen
 Nareen Group
 Naringal
 Nirranda South
 North Balmoral
 North Byaduk
 North Hamilton
 Nullawarre
 Panmure
 Penshurst
 Peterborough
 Pigeon Ponds
 Port Fairy
 Purnim
 Ripponhurst
 Spring Creek
 St Helens
 Strathkellar
 Strathmore
 Tarrayoukyan
 Tarrenlea
 Tarrington
 The Sisters
 Vasey
 Victoria Valley
 Wando Heights
 Wangoom
 Warrnambool
 Warrnambool Coast Guard
 Warrong
 Willatook & District
 Winslow & Yarpurk
 Woodford
 Woodhouse
 Woolsthorpe
 Wooriwyrite

Wootong Vale
 Yambuk
 Yulecart

District 6

Apollo Bay
 Barongarook West
 Barwon Downs
 Beeac
 Beeac Group
 Berrybank
 Birregurra
 Bookaar
 Boorcan
 Bostocks Creek
 Brucknell-Ayrford
 Bungador
 Camperdown
 Camperdown Group
 Carlisle River
 Carpendeit-Sth
 Purrumbete
 Choclyn
 Cobden
 Cobden Group
 Cobrico
 Colac
 Cororooke
 Cressy
 Darlington
 Derrinallum
 District 6 HQ
 Dixie
 Duverney
 Ecklin & District
 Forrest
 Gellibrand
 Gerangamete
 Irrewarra
 Irrewillipe
 Jancourt
 Kawarren
 Kennedy's Creek
 Larpent
 Leslie Manor
 Lismore
 Lismore Group

Lower Heytesbury
 Mingay & District
 Nalangil
 Noorat & District
 Otway
 Pomborneit & District
 Port Campbell
 Princetown
 Scotts Ck-Cowleys Ck.
 Simpson
 Stonyford
 Swan Marsh
 Terang
 Tesbury
 Timboon
 Timboon Group
 Vite Vite North
 Warrion
 Weering-Eurack
 Weerite
 Wye River
 Yeo & District
 Yeodene

District 7	Teesdale	Langwarrin	Fish Creek & District	Dargo	Goongerah	Marysville
Aireys Inlet	Torquay	Main Ridge	Foster	Devon North	Hillside	Mitchell Shire Group
Anakie	Warrington	Maryknoll & District	Hallora & District	Giffard West	Johnsonville	Molesworth
Anakie Group	Werneth	Moorooduc	Hallston-Mt Eccles	Glenmaggie	Kalimna West	Murrindindi & Woodbourne
Anglesea	Winchelsea	Mornington	Hedley	Golden Beach	Lakes Entrance	Narbethong
Bannockburn	Wingee	Mt Eliza	Inverloch	Jack River	Lakes Entrance Coast	Nulla Vale
Barrabool	Wurdale	Mt Martha	Kongwak & District	Loch Sport	Guard	Seymour
Barunah Plains North		Nar Nar Goon	Koonwarra	Longford	Lindenow South	Strath Creek-Reedy Creek
Barwon Heads	District 8	Narre Warren	Korumburra	Maffra	Mallacoota	Taggerty
Bellarine Group	Balnarring	Narre Warren North	Leongatha	Meerlieu	Marlo	Tallarook
Belmont	Bass	Noble Park	Leongatha South	Munro	Marlo Coast Guard	Terip Terip
Connewarre	Baxter	Officer	Loch	Newry	Metung	Thornton
Corio	Bayles	Pakenham	Longwarry & District	Perry Bridge	Mitchell Group	Tooborac
Deans Marsh	Beaconsfield	Pakenham Upper	Meeniyan & Stony Creek	Port Albert	Mossi - Tambo	Toolangi
Dereel	Beaconsfield Upper	Patterson River	Milford	Port Albert Coast Guard	Mount Delegate Group	Trawool
District 7 HQ	Berwick	Pearcedale	Mirboo North	Riverslea Group	Mount Taylor	Wallan
Drysdale	Bittern	Peninsula Group	Neerim South	Sale	Newmerella	Wandong
Freshwater Creek	Boneo	Phillip Island	Nilma North	Seaspray	Omeo	Whanregarwen
Geelong City	Bunyip	Red Hill	Noojee	Seaton	Orbost	Whiteheads Creek-
Geelong Coast Guard	Carrum Downs	Rye	Poowong	Stradbroke	Paynesville	Tarcombe
Geelong Group	Clyde	Safety Beach Coast Guard	Port Welshpool Coast	Stradbroke Group	Paynesville Coast Guard	Yarck
Geelong West	Cockatoo	San Remo	Guard	Stratford	Sarsfield	Yea
Gnarwarre	Corinella	Sandringham Coast Guard	Pound Creek	Tarra Group	Swift's Creek	Yea Group
Grovedale	Cranbourne	Shoreham	Ruby	Tinamba	Tambo Group	
Highton	Crib Point	Skye	South Gippsland Group	Willung	Toorloo	District 13
Inverleigh	Dalyston	Somers	Strzelecki Group	Willung South	Wairewa	Badger Creek
Lara	Dandenong	Somerville	Tarwin Lower District	Winnindoo		Bayswater
Leigh Group	Devon Meadows	Sorrento	Thorpdale	Won Wron	District 12	Belgrave
Leopold	District 8 HQ	South East Group	Toora	Woodside	Acheron	Belgrave Heights & South
Lethbridge	Dromana	St Kilda Coast Guard	Trafalgar	Woranga	Alexandra	Boronina
Little River	Edithvale	Toomuc	Trida	Yarram	Alexandra Group	Chirside Park
Lorne	Flinders	Tooradin	Warragul		Broadford	Clematis
Lovely Banks	Frankston	Tyabb	Welshpool		Buxton	Coldstream
Mannerim	Frankston Coast Guard	Tynong	Westbury	District 11	Clonbinane	Dandenong Ranges Group
Maude	French Island	Warneet-Blind Bight	Willowgrove	Bairnsdale	District 12 HQ	District 13 HQ
Meredith	Gembrook	Westernport Group	Yanakie	Bemm	Eildon	Dixons Creek
Modewarre	Glen Alvie	Wonthaggi	Yarragon	Benambra	Flowerdale	Emerald
Mount Mercer	Hallam	District 9		Bendoc	Glenaroua	Ferntree Gully
Ocean Grove	Hampton Park	Allambee	District 10	Bengworden	Glenburn	Gruyere
Portarlington	Hastings	Baw Baw Group	Alberton West	Bruthen	Highlands-Caveat	Healesville
Queenscliff	Hastings Coast Guard	Berry's Creek	Avon Group	Cann Valley	Hilldene	Hillcrest
Queenscliff Coast Guard	Heath Hill-Yannathan	Darnum & Ellinbank	Boisdale	District 11 HQ	Homewood	Hoddle's Creek
Rokewood	Kernot - Grantville	Drouin	Briagolong	Ensay	Kilmore	Kallista-The Patch
Shelford	Keysborough	Drouin West	Carrajung	Fernbank	Kinglake District	Kalorama & Mt
St Leonards-Indented	Kilcunda	Dumbalk	Clydebank	Flaggy Creek	Kinglake West	Dandenong
Head	Koo Wee Rup	Erica & District	Coongulla	Gelantipy	Koriella	Lilydale
Stonehaven	Lang Lang		Cowwarr	Glenaladale	Limestone	Little Yarra

Macclesfield
 Maroondah Group
 Menzies Creek
 Monbulk
 Montrose
 Mooroolbark
 Mt Evelyn
 Narre Warren East
 Olinda
 Reefton
 Rowville
 Sassafras & Ferny Creek
 Scoresby
 Selby
 Seville
 Silvan
 South Warrandyte
 The Basin
 Upper Ferntree Gully
 Upwey
 Wandin
 Warburton
 Warrandyte
 Wesburn-Millgrove
 Wonga Park
 Yarra Glen
 Yarra Junction
 Yarra Valley Group
 Yellingbo

District 14

Arthurs Creek
 Bulla
 Caroline Springs
 Christmas Hills
 Craigieburn
 Diamond Creek
 Diggers Rest
 District 14 HQ East
 Doreen
 Eltham
 Epping
 Eyensbury
 Greenvale
 Hoppers Crossing
 Hume Group
 Hurstbridge

Kal Kallo
 Kangaroo Ground
 Melton
 Mernda
 Mount Cottrell Group
 Nillumbik Group
 North Warrandyte
 Pantom Hill
 Plenty
 Point Cook
 Research
 Rockbank
 South Morang
 St Andrews
 Sunbury
 Toolern Vale
 Truganina
 Wattle Glen
 Werribee
 Werribee Coast Guard
 Whittlesea
 Whittlesea/D. Valley Group
 Wildwood
 Wollert & District
 Wyndham Vale
 Yarrambat

District 15

Ascot & District
 Bacchus Marsh
 Bacchus Marsh Group
 Ballan
 Ballan Group
 Ballarat
 Ballarat City
 Ballarat Group
 Balliang & District
 Blackwood
 Bungaree
 Buninyong-Mt Helen
 Buninyong Group
 Burrumbeet
 Campbelltown
 Cape Clear
 Cardigan & Windermere
 Clunes
 Coimadai

Creswick
 Daylesford
 Elaine
 Franklinford
 Glen Park
 Glendaruel & Mt
 Beckworth
 Glenlyon
 Glenlyon Group
 Gordon
 Greendale
 Haddon
 Hardies Hill
 Hepburn
 Invermay
 Kingston
 Learmonth-Addington
 Leonards Hill & District
 Linton
 Mannibadar
 Millbrook
 Miners Rest
 Mollongghip
 Morrisons & District
 Mt Buninyong
 Mt Egerton
 Mt Wallace
 Mt Warrenheip
 Musk
 Myrmiong
 Napoleons-Enfield
 Newlyn Dean
 Parwan
 Porcupine Ridge
 Rokewood Junction & Dist
 Rowsley
 Sebastopol
 Smythesdale
 Trentham
 Ullina
 Wallace
 Wallinduc & District
 Waubra
 Wendouree

District 16

Amphitheatre
 Ararat
 Ararat Group
 Avoca
 Barkly & Frenchman's
 Beaufort
 Beaufort Group
 Beazley's Bridge
 Bornes Hill
 Brewster
 Buangor & Middle Creek
 Burnbank
 Callawadda
 Carapooeee
 Carranballac
 Chatsworth
 Coonooer Bridge
 Dadswells Bridge
 District 16 HQ
 Dundonnell
 Elmhurst
 Glenorchy & Riachella
 Gooroc
 Gre Gre Village
 Great Western
 Halls Gap
 Joel Joel
 Kooreh
 Lake Bolac
 Lake Goldsmith-Stockyard
 Landsborough
 Langi Kal Kal
 Lexton
 Marnoo
 Maroona
 Mininera
 Moyston
 Narrapumelap South
 Nerrin Nerrin
 Pomonal
 Pura Pura
 Pyrenees Group
 Raglan
 Redbank
 Skipton
 Slaty Creek

Snake Valley & District
 St Arnaud
 St Arnaud Group
 Stawell
 Stawell Group
 Streatham
 Stuart Mill
 Tatyoon
 Traynor's Lagoon
 Wallaloo East
 Warrak
 Warrenmang & District
 Westmere
 Westmere Group
 Wickliffe
 Willaura
 Woomdoo
 Yalla Y Poora

District 17

Antwerp
 Apsley
 Areegra
 Bangerang
 Benayeo
 Boolite
 Brim
 Brimpaen
 Bringalbert South
 Broughton
 Cannum
 Charam
 Chetwynd
 Connewirricoo
 Coromby
 Crymelon
 Dergholm
 Diapur
 Dimboola
 Dinyarrak
 District 17 HQ
 Dooen
 Douglas
 Dunmunkle Group
 Edenhope
 Gerang
 Goroke

Goroke Group
 Grass Flat
 Green Lake
 Gymbowen
 Harrow
 Horsham
 Jeparit
 Jung
 Kadnook
 Kaniva
 Kaniva Group
 Karnak
 Kellalac
 Kenmare
 Lah
 Laharum
 Langkoop
 Lawloit
 Leeor
 Lorquon
 Lowan Group
 Lubeck
 Miga Lake
 Minimay
 Minyip
 Mitre
 Murtoa
 Natimuk
 Netherby
 Neuarpuur
 Nhill
 Noradjuha
 North Wimmera
 Ozenkadnook
 Patyah
 Peronne
 Pigick
 Pimpinio
 Poolaijelo
 Propodollah
 Rainbow
 Rainbow Group
 Rupanyup
 Sandsmere
 Sheep Hills
 South Lillimur
 Tarranyurk

Telangatuk
 Telopea Downs
 Ullswater
 Vectis
 Warracknabeal
 Werrap
 Wilkur South
 Willenabrina
 Winiam & District
 Wonwondah
 Woorak
 Yanac
 Yearinga - Yarrock

District 18

Annuello
 Berriwillock
 Beulah
 Beverford & District
 Boundary Bend
 Buckrabanyule
 Buloke West Group
 Charlton
 Charltn Group
 Chinkapook
 Cope Cope
 Corack East
 Curyo
 Donald
 Dumosa
 Glenloth East
 Goschen
 Hopetoun
 Hopetoun West
 Irymple
 Jeffcott
 Kooloonong
 Lake Boga
 Manangatang
 Merbein
 Mid Murray Group
 Mildura
 Mittyack
 Murrayville
 Narraport
 Natya
 Nullawil

Nyah Nyah West	Inglewood	Balmattum	Rigg's Creek	Goomalibee &	Bethanga	Tallangatta Group
Ouyen & District Group	Jarklin	Barmah	Ruffy	Upotipotpon	Biggara	Tallangatta Valley
Ouyen	Kerang	Boho	Shean's Creek	Goorambat Stewarton	Bogong Group	Tawonga
Piangil	Koondrook	Branjee	Shepparton	Goughs Bay-Howes Creek	Bonegilla	Tintaldr
Red Cliffs	Korong Vale	Bundalong	Shepparton East	Greta	Bright	Wahgunyah
Reedy Dam	Kotta	Burramine	St James & District	Jamieson	Browns Plains	Walwa
Robinvale & District Group	Kyabram	Caniambo	Strathbogie	Killawarra	Buffalo River	Wodonga
Robinvale	Lake Charm	Cobram	Strathmerton	Lacey West	Bullioh	Wodonga Group
Rosebery	Leitchville	Cobram East & Boosey	Tallygaroopna	Lima South	Burrowye	Wodonga West
Sea Lake	Lockington	Cooma	Tatura	Lurg	Carlyle	Wooragee
Speed	Loddon Vale	Cosgrove & Pine Lodge	Toolamba	Maindample	Chiltern	Yackandandah
Swan Hill	Macorna	Creightons Creek	Tungamah	Mansfield	Cornishtown	
Teddywaddy	Meering West	Currawa	Undera	Mansfield Group	Corryong	District 27
Tempy	Mitiamo	District 22 HQ	Upton Hill	Merton	Corryong Group	Boolarra
Ultima	Murphy's Creek	Dookie	Violet Town	Milawa	Cudgewa	Callignee
Underbool	Murrabit	Drumanure	Violet Town Group	Molyullah	Dartmouth	Churchill
Waitchie	Mysia	Earlston	Waaia	Moyhu	Dederang	Driffield
Walpeup	Newbridge	Euroa	Wahring	Moyhu Group	District 24 HQ	Flynn
Warmur	Pine Grove	Euroa Group	Wilby	Mt Buller	Eskdale	Glengarry
Watchem	Powlett-Salisbury	Gooram	Wirrate	Myrree	Falls Creek	Hazelwood North
Watchupga	Pyramid Hill	Kaarimba	Wunghnu	Oxley Flats	Gapsted	Hyland Group
Wemen	Quambatook	Karramomus	Yabba North	Samaria	Granya	Maryvale
Woomelang	Rheola	Katamatite	Yalca & Yielima	South Wangaratta	Gundowring	Merton Group
Woorinen South	Rochester	Katandra	Yarrowonga Group	Springhurst	Harrietville	Moe
Wooroonook	Rushworth	Kelvin View	Yarroweyah	Swanpool	Indigo Valley	Moe South
Wycheproof	Sandhill Lake & District	Kialla & District		Taminick & North Winton	Kergunyah	Morwell
Yaapeet	Stanhope	Koonda	District 23	Tarrowingee & District	Kiewa	Newborough
	Tarnagulla	Kotupna	Baddaginnie	Tatong	Lake Hume Coast Guard	Tanjil
District 20	Terrick Group	Locksley	Barjarg	Thoona	Leneva	Toongabbie
Appin South	Timmering	Longwood	Benalla	Tolmie & District	Mitta Mitta	Traralgon
Bamawm Extension	Tongala	Marraweeny	Benalla Group	Wangaratta	Mt Beauty	Traralgon East
Beauchamp	Toolleen	Merrigum	Bobinawarrah	Wangaratta Group	Mt Hotham-Dinner Plain	Traralgon South
Boort	Waranga Group	Miepoll	Bonnie Doon	Wangaratta North	Mudgegonga	Traralgon West
Bridgewater	Wedderburn	Molka	Boorhaman	Warrenbayne	Myrtleford	Tyers
Campbells Forest	Wedderburn Group	Moorlim	Booroolite & District	Whitegate	Nariel Valley	Yallourn North
Cohuna	Woodstock West	Mooroopna	Boweya	Whitfield & District	Noorongong	Yinnar
Colbinabbin	Woosang	Muckatah	Bowman-Murmungee	Whorouly	Norong	Yinnar South
Corop	Wychitella	Murchison	Bowser	Winton	Old Tallangatta	
Corop West	Wyuna	Nagambie	Carboor	Woods Point	Ovens Valley Group	
Deakin Group	Yambuna	Naring	Cheshunt		Ovens-Eurobin	
Dingee-Tandarra	Yarrowalla	Nathalia & Disitric Group	Chesney Vale	District 24	Porepunkah	
Echuca		Nathalia	Devenish	Allans Flat	Rosewhite	
Echuca Village	District 22	Numurkah	Edi	Baranduda	Rutherglen	
Fentons Creek	Almonds	Numurkah Group	Eldorado	Barnawartha	Sandy Creek & Charleroi	
Gannawarra Group	Arcadia	NW Mooroopna	Everton	Beechworth Rural	Stanley	
Girgarre	Avenel	Peechelba	Glenrowan	Beechworth Urban	Talgarno	
Gunbower	Bailestion	Picola	Glenroy & Merrijig	Berringama	Tallangatta	

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Directors' Report

30 June 2020

The consolidated financial statements include the consolidated results and activities for Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Welfare Fund (the Group). The board members submit the financial report of the Company for the financial year ended 30 June 2020.

Board members

The names of each person who has been a director during the year and to the date of this report are:

Name	Position	Appointed/Resigned
Nevyn Jones AFSM	State President	
Samantha Rothman	State Vice President	
Andrew Cusack AFSM	Treasurer	
Robert Auchterlonie		
Kate Boschetti		Resigned 30/09/2019
Janette Cleary		
Graeme Jilbert		
William Maltby		
David Sidebottom		Appointed 01/10/2019
Gregory Walcott		
Libby Hay		

Principal activities

The principal activities of the Company during the financial year were:

- To function as a non-profit association whose Members comprise Volunteer Fire Brigades registered by the Country Fire Authority under the Country Fire Authority Act (1958) and its Regulations.
- To liaise and consult on the operation of the "Volunteer Charter" in the interests of CFA volunteers about all matters which might reasonably be expected to affect them. The Volunteer Charter is an agreed tripartite commitment between the State of Victoria, the CFA and CFA Volunteers, committing the State of Victoria and the CFA to consultation with volunteers about all matters which might reasonably be expected to affect volunteers. VFBV represents its Members and CFA Volunteers in that consultation process.
- To assist in maintaining high morale, ongoing health and welfare of CFA volunteer members and their families.
- Support CFA volunteers experiencing personal financial hardship/crisis by providing small welfare grants that may assist in alleviating stresses impacting on the individual's ability to maintain their involvement as a volunteer.
- Preserve and strengthen CFA's community and volunteer based foundations by enabling members of CFA brigades to consider and bring to the notice of CFA all matters affecting their welfare and efficiency (other than questions of discipline and promotion).
- To promote to CFA volunteers the comprehensive support services available to them including but not limited to: legal assistance, OH&S, equity and diversity, counselling and welfare, training, employment support and compensation for accidents, injuries and illness.
- To develop awareness, respect and support for CFA volunteers and their fundamental and pivotal role in the CFA as a community based, volunteer based fire and emergency service of the people of Victoria.
- To take any other action as determined by the Association Board consistent with these purposes.
- To maintain and pursue a balanced focus on issues affecting CFA volunteers across all brigades from all risk profiles.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Directors' Report

30 June 2020

Significant changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

Operating results and review of operations for the year

The surplus of the Company for the financial year after providing for income tax amounted to \$ 1,472,977 including \$1,164,578 in donations (2019: \$272,487).

Signed in accordance with resolution of the Members of the Board:



Board member:

Nevyn Jones AFSM - State President



Board member:

Andrew Cusack AFSM - Treasurer



Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Auditor's Independence Declaration

In accordance with the requirements of section 60.40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, as the auditor for the audit of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities for the year ended 30 June 2020, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit, and;
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Saward Dawson

Saward Dawson

Jeffrey Tulk

Jeffrey Tulk
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 28 August 2020

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Statement of Income and Expenditure and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
Note	\$	\$
Income		
Affiliation Fees	196,210	196,033
Grants and Other Reimbursements	1,701,262	1,667,904
Championships	3,416	26,610
Interest Received	114,236	139,931
Special Projects Funding	60,396	93,979
Merchandise Sales	19,774	16,164
Donations Income	1,164,578	10,242
Other Income	39,243	566
Cashflow Boost Income	50,000	-
	3,349,115	2,151,429
Expenditure		
Employment Costs	924,177	971,221
Project Salaries and Other Project Fees	55,664	130,544
Welfare Grants	273,237	96,735
Travel, Accommodation and Meals	260,893	369,062
Office & Administration Expenditure	55,658	40,687
Advertising	20,375	23,250
Rent & Outgoings	77,881	72,403
Depreciation	49,530	28,215
Printing, Postage and Stationery	90,733	70,203
Communications	23,488	30,537
Accounting and Audit Fees	13,180	10,371
Championships & Championships Equipment	7,199	13,315
Merchandise	15,328	13,731
Other Expenses	8,795	8,669
	1,876,138	1,878,942
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	1,472,977	272,487
Other comprehensive income		
Other Comprehensive Income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	1,472,977	272,487

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	2,154,993	1,117,184
Trade and other receivables	4	145,994	146,433
Financial assets	5	5,434,941	5,033,448
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		7,735,928	6,297,065
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Plant and equipment	6	217,148	200,286
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		217,148	200,286
TOTAL ASSETS		7,953,076	6,497,351
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	7	143,874	184,538
Employee benefits	8	280,528	269,426
Deferred income	9	746,768	853,337
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,171,170	1,307,301
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,171,170	1,307,301
NET ASSETS		6,781,906	5,190,050
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Accumulated surplus		6,781,906	5,190,050
TOTAL MEMBERS' EQUITY		6,781,906	5,190,050

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

2020

Note	VFBV Inc. \$	Welfare Fund \$	Total \$
	2,154,544	3,035,506	5,190,050
Balance at 1 July 2019	118,879	-	118,879
Retrospective adjustment upon first time adoption of AASB 15 1 (c)	446,519	1,026,458	1,472,977
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year			
Balance at 30 June 2020	2,719,942	4,061,964	6,781,906

2019

	VFBV Inc. \$	Welfare Fund \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2018	1,972,729	2,944,834	4,917,563
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year	181,815	90,672	272,487
Balance at 30 June 2019	2,154,544	3,035,506	5,190,050

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:			
Receipts from customers and government grants		3,447,100	2,163,823
Payments to suppliers and employees		(2,046,848)	(2,008,663)
Interest received		114,236	139,931
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	12	1,514,488	295,091
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:			
Purchase of plant and equipment		(95,186)	(76,807)
Redemption/ (Placement) of term deposit		(401,493)	(533,052)
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		20,000	23,763
Net cash used by investing activities		(476,679)	(586,096)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:			
		-	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		1,037,809	(291,005)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,117,184	1,408,189
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	3	2,154,993	1,117,184

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial report is aggregated to include the numbers of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc. and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Welfare Fund (the Group).

Other entities that are associated with the Group have not been included in this financial report and are reported independently are the VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria - Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses Awareness and Protection Fund.

This financial report is a special purpose financial statement prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC), the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the basis of accounting and disclosure requirements specified by all Accounting Standards and Interpretations, except the disclosure requirements of the pronouncements listed below:

- The Group has not adopted AASB 16 Leases, AASB 119 Employee Benefits and AASB 10 Consolidation.

The board has determined that the not-for-profit Group is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated specifically, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

(a) Income tax

The Group is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Welfare Fund are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

(b) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are presented as operating cash flows included in receipts from customers or payments to suppliers.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(c) Revenue and other income

The Group has adopted AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* and AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* for the first time in the current year with a date of initial application of 1 July 2019.

The Group has applied AASB 15 and AASB 1058 using the cumulative effect method which means the comparative information has not been restated and continues to be reported under AASB 111, AASB 118, AASB 1004 and related interpretations. All adjustments on adoption of AASB 15 and AASB 1058 have been taken to retained earnings at 1 July 2019.

The key changes to the Group's accounting policies and the impact on these financial statements from applying AASB 15 and AASB 1058 are described below.

The core principle of AASB 15 is that revenue is recognised on a basis that reflects the transfer of promised goods or services to customers at an amount that reflects the consideration the Group expects to receive in exchange for those goods or services. Revenue is recognised by applying a five-step model as follows:

1. Identify the contract with the customer
2. Identify the performance obligations
3. Determine the transaction price
4. Allocate the transaction price to the performance obligations
5. Recognise revenue as and when control of the performance obligations is transferred

Generally the timing of the payment for sale of goods and rendering of services corresponds closely to the timing of satisfaction of the performance obligations, however where there is a difference, it will result in the recognition of a receivable, contract asset or contract liability.

None of the revenue streams of the Group have any significant financing terms as there is less than 12 months between receipt of funds and satisfaction of performance obligations.

Operating grants and donations

When the Group receives operating grant revenue and donations, it assesses whether the contract is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance to AASB 15.

When both these conditions are satisfied, the Group:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to the grant;
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement; and
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(c) Revenue and other income

Where the contract is not enforceable or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligation, the Group:

- recognise the asset received in accordance with the recognition requirements of other applicable Accounting Standards (for example AASB 9, AASB 16, AASB 116 and AASB 138);
- recognises related amounts (being contributions by owners, lease liability, financial instruments, provisions, revenue or contract liability arising from a contract with a customer); and
- recognises income immediately in profit or loss as the difference between the initial carrying amount of the asset and the related amount.

If a contract liability is recognised as a related amount above, the Group recognises income in profit or loss when or as it satisfies its obligations under the contract.

Interest income

Interest income is mainly on interest-bearing cash and cash equivalent balances. It is recognised using the effective interest method.

Merchandise revenue

Merchandise revenue is recognised on transfer of goods to the customer as this is deemed to be the point in time when control of the performance obligations are transferred.

Affiliation fees

Affiliation fees are recognised as income over the life of the membership it relates to.

Championship revenue

Championship revenue is recognised when the event has occurred. When the event has not yet occurred, this will result in unearned income.

Application

The Group has chosen to use the modified retrospective application when applying this new accounting standard. Therefore, the comparative numbers are prepared under AASB 118 Revenue and AASB 1004 Contributions.

This application has resulted in an adjustment of \$118,879 in opening retained earnings.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(d) Plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all property, plant and equipment is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the Group commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

(e) Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting year, the Group reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the statement of income and expenditure and other comprehensive income.

(f) Employee benefits

Provision is made for the Company's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting year. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled. The Long Service Leave provision is recorded fully after 2 years of service being rendered (2019: 5 years).

(g) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

(h) Leases

Operating leases - expense on straight-line basis over lease life

The Group has not adopted AASB 16 Leases for the financial year ended 30 June 2020.

Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all of the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease term.

(i) Financial assets

Held-to-maturity investments

Held to maturity investments are non-derivative financial assets that have fixed maturities and fixed or determinable payments, and it is the Group's intention to hold these investments to maturity.

(j) Comparative Figures

Where required by Accounting Standards, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform with changes in presentation for the current financial year.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

2 Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgments

The directors make estimates and judgements during the preparation of these financial statements regarding assumptions about current and future events affecting transactions and balances.

These estimates and judgements are based on the best information available at the time of preparing the financial statements, however as additional information is known then the actual results may differ from the estimates.

The significant estimates and judgements made have been described below.

Key judgements - Performance obligations under AASB 15

To identify a performance obligation under AASB 15, the promise must be sufficiently specific to be able to determine when the obligation is satisfied. Management exercises judgement to determine whether the promise is sufficiently specific by taking into account any conditions specified in the arrangement, explicit or implicit, regarding the promised goods or services. In making this assessment, management includes the nature, cost, quantity and the period of transfer related to the goods or services promised.

Key estimates - receivables

The receivables at reporting date have been reviewed to determine whether there is any objective evidence that any of the receivables are impaired. An impairment provision is included for any receivable where the entire balance is not considered collectible. The impairment provision is based on the best information at the reporting date.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

3 Cash and cash equivalents

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
General Cheque Account	533,570	631,634
Travel reimbursement account	31,564	985
Debit card	3,318	2,286
Cash at call	96	96
Welfare Fund	273,974	114,553
Valuing Volunteers Cheque Account	34,360	2,792
Term Deposits	1,278,111	364,838
5a	<u>2,154,993</u>	<u>1,117,184</u>

4 Trade and other receivables

CURRENT

VFBV

Trade Debtors	43,746	42,613
Accrued Interest	25,861	17,728
Other Receivables	5,337	5,017
	<u>74,944</u>	<u>65,358</u>

Welfare Fund

Trade Debtors	43,116	37,455
Accrued Interest	27,934	43,620
	<u>71,050</u>	<u>81,075</u>
	<u>145,994</u>	<u>146,433</u>

5 Financial assets

CURRENT

Term Deposits - VFBV	(b)	2,110,524	2,077,568
Term Deposits - Welfare Fund	(c)	3,324,417	2,955,880
		<u>5,434,941</u>	<u>5,033,448</u>

a) In the current year, as the term deposit had a maturity period of 3 months or less, the term deposit has been classified in the statement of financial position as cash and cash equivalents.

b) In the current year, as the term deposit had a maturity period of 6 months, the term deposit has been classified in the statement of financial position as financial assets.

c) Welfare Fund operates on a capital balance from donated funds used to support volunteers in times of personal hardship/crisis.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

6 Plant and equipment

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Motor vehicles		
At cost	235,669	228,960
Accumulated depreciation	(55,312)	(42,952)
Total motor vehicles	<u>180,357</u>	<u>186,008</u>
Office equipment		
At cost	63,350	36,223
Accumulated depreciation	(26,559)	(21,945)
Total office equipment	<u>36,791</u>	<u>14,278</u>
	<u>217,148</u>	<u>200,286</u>

7 Trade and other payables

CURRENT

Trade creditors	13,375	26,348
Other payables	130,499	158,190
	<u>143,874</u>	<u>184,538</u>

8 Employee Benefits

CURRENT

Long service leave	222,220	174,731
Annual leave	58,308	94,695
	<u>280,528</u>	<u>269,426</u>

9 Income in Advance

CFA Grants	528,975	637,408
Deferred Affiliation Fees - VFBV	100,011	100,011
Income Received in Advance - VFBV	10,305	-
Deferred Affiliation Fees - Welfare Fund	107,477	115,918
	<u>746,768</u>	<u>853,337</u>

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

10 Capital and Leasing Commitments

Operating lease commitments

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Non-cancellable operating leases contracted but not capitalised in the financial statements.		
- not later than one year	65,720	63,682
- between one year and five years	42,443	108,163
	<u>108,163</u>	<u>171,845</u>

Operating leases have been taken out for the rental of premises and the rental of a photocopier. Lease payments for the premises are increased on an annual basis to reflect market rentals.

The 3-year premises lease was renewed for a further 2 years on 31 December 2019.

11 Related Parties Transactions

During the year, the Group entered into contracts with the following brigades of which Board members were also involved:

VFBV Board Member	Brigade	Membership Paid
Andrew Cusack	Mumbannar	Yes
William Maltby	Castlemaine	Yes
Nevyn Jones	Moorooduc	Yes
Graeme Jilbert	Swan Hill	Yes
Samantha Rothman	Maryborough	Yes
Robert Auchterlonie	Dumbalk	Yes
Janette Cleary	Lakes Entrance	Yes
Libby Hay	Barwon Heads	Yes
Gregory Walcott	Dist 5 HQ	Yes
David Sidebottom	Mooroolbark	Yes

All contracts for membership fees were provided at arm's length commercial amounts.

Board members are reimbursed for their travel cost incurred.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

12 Cash Flow Information

Reconciliation of net income to net cash provided by operating activities:

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	1,472,977	272,487
Cash flows excluded from surplus/(deficit) attributable to operating activities		
Non-cash flows in surplus/(deficit):		
Depreciation	49,529	28,215
Profit on disposal of non-current assets	8,795	8,952
Changes in assets/liabilities		
- (increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	439	9,306
- increase/(decrease) in income in advance	12,310	(42,326)
- increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(40,664)	13,846
- increase/(decrease) in provisions	11,102	4,611
Cashflow from operations	1,514,488	295,091

13 Events Occurring After the Reporting Date

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Group was required to make some changes to the arrangements for staff. Although the Group is unable to determine the full extent of the financial impact of this crisis on the organisation at the time of signing, the Board believe that the funding from the Country Fire Authority will remain in place and do not expect a significant decline in income during the year ending 30 June 2021. On this basis, the Board are currently satisfied that the short term implications will not adversely affect the Group's ability to continue to operate as a going concern.

Except for the above, no other matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or could significantly affect the operations of the Group, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Group in future financial years.

14 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc. Welfare Fund

(a) Statement of Income and Expenditure and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2020

INCOME		
Affiliation fees	103,356	103,402
Interest Received	63,292	73,769
Donations	1,133,049	10,236
	<u>1,299,697</u>	<u>187,407</u>
EXPENSES		
Grants	273,237	96,735
Bank Fees	2	-
	<u>273,239</u>	<u>96,735</u>
Surplus from operations	<u>1,026,458</u>	<u>90,672</u>

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

14 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc. Welfare Fund

(b) Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2019

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	773,974	114,553
Trade and other receivables	71,050	81,075
Financial assets	3,324,417	2,955,880
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>4,169,441</u>	<u>3,151,508</u>
LIABILITIES		
Deferred Income	107,477	116,002
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>107,477</u>	<u>116,002</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>4,061,964</u>	<u>3,035,506</u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS		
Accumulated surplus	4,061,964	3,035,506
Total Equity	<u>4,061,964</u>	<u>3,035,506</u>

15 Association Details

The registered office of the association is:
 Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities
 9/24 Lakeside Drive
 Burwood East VIC 3151

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

True and Fair Certification by Members of the Board

The Board has determined that the Group is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Board the financial report as set out on pages 4 to 17:

1. Give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30 June 2020.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.
3. Satisfies the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Regulations 2013.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board and is signed for and on behalf of the Board by:

Board Member


Board Member




Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Independent Audit Report to the board of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report being a special purpose financial report, of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, the statement of income and expenditure and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the board's assertion statements for the Group.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC), including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended on that date; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 to the financial statements, Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013 and the Association Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the Group in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the board's financial reporting responsibilities under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

20 Albert St, PO Box 256, Blackburn VIC 3130
 T +61 3 9894 2500 F +61 3 9894 1622
 contact@sawarddawson.com.au
 sawarddawson.com.au



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Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Independent Audit Report to the board of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

Responsibilities of Board Members for the Financial Report

The board members of the Group are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The board members' responsibility also includes establishing and monitoring such internal control as the board members determine necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the board members are responsible for assessing the Group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the board members either intend to liquidate the Group or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Group's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Group.

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Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

ABN 11 083 080 403

Independent Audit Report to the board of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Inc and Consolidated Entities

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Group's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Group's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Group to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Saward Dawson

Jeffrey Tulk
Partner

Blackburn, VIC

Date: 28 August 2020

20 Albert St, PO Box 256, Blackburn VIC 3130
T +61 3 9894 2500 F +61 3 9894 1622
contact@sawarddawson.com.au
sawarddawson.com.au



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VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Revenue		
Donations	309,155	-
Interest income	248	409
	<u>309,403</u>	<u>409</u>
Expenses		
Grant distributions	(17,500)	-
	<u>(17,500)</u>	<u>-</u>
Surplus/(loss) for the year	<u>291,903</u>	<u>409</u>

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank balances	326,177	34,274
Cash on hand	100	100
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>326,277</u>	<u>34,374</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>326,277</u>	<u>34,374</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>326,277</u>	<u>34,374</u>
EQUITY		
Settled Sum	100	100
Retained Surplus	326,177	34,274
	<u>326,277</u>	<u>34,374</u>
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>326,277</u>	<u>34,374</u>

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

2020

	Retained Surplus	Settled Sum	Total
	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2019	34,274	100	34,374
Surplus for the year	291,903	-	291,903
Balance at 30 June 2020	<u>326,177</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>326,277</u>

2019

	Retained Surplus	Settled Sum	Total
	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2018	33,865	100	33,965
Surplus for the year	409	-	409
Balance at 30 June 2019	<u>34,274</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>34,374</u>

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Donations distributed	(17,500)	-
Donations received	309,155	-
Interest received	248	409
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	<u>291,903</u>	<u>409</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held	291,903	409
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	34,374	33,965
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	<u>326,277</u>	<u>34,374</u>

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**(a) Basis of Preparation**

The Trustees believe the Trust is a non-reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial reports. These financial statements are therefore a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in order to meet the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, the trust deed and the information needs of stakeholders. The trust is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the mandatory Australian Accounting Standards applicable to entities reporting under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the significant accounting policies disclosed below which the Trustees have determined are appropriate to meet the purposes of preparation. Such accounting policies are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated.

During the financial year ended 30 June 2020, the Trust's name was change from VFBV Black Saturday Volunteer Recovery Fund to VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund.

These special purpose financial statements comply with all the recognition and measurement requirements in Australian Accounting Standards.

The financial statements, except for cash flow information have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. The accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of this report are as follows:

(b) Income Tax

The Trust is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The entity is a registered charity with the Australian Charity and Not-for-profits Commission. The Trust is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

(c) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

(d) Revenue and other income**In comparative period**

The trust recognises revenue when the amount of revenue can be reliably measured, it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity and specific criteria have been met for each of the Fund's activities as discussed below.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**For the current year**

The core principle of AASB 15 is that revenue is recognised on a basis that reflects the transfer of promised goods or services to customers at an amount that reflects the consideration the Trust expects to receive in exchange for those goods or services. Revenue is recognised by applying a five-step model as follows:

1. Identify the contract with the customer
2. Identify the performance obligations
3. Determine the transaction price
4. Allocate the transaction price to the performance obligations
5. Recognise revenue as and when control of the performance obligations is transferred

Generally the timing of the payment for sale of goods and rendering of services corresponds closely to the timing of satisfaction of the performance obligations, however where there is a difference, it will result in the recognition of a receivable, contract asset or contract liability.

None of the revenue streams of the Trust have any significant financing terms as there is less than 12 months between receipt of funds and satisfaction of performance obligations.

Donations which do not have an enforceable contract are recognised as revenue when received.

VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Trustees' Declaration

The Trustees declare that the Trust is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

The directors of the trustee company declare that the financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 1 to 6:

1. are in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards, as described in Note 1 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.
2. in the Trustees' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Trust will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2013.

Trustee



Trustee

Dated 28 August 2020



VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Auditor's Independence Declaration

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2020, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Saward Dawson

Jeffrey Tulk
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 28 August 2020



VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Independent Audit Report to the members of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund (the Trust), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2020, the for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the trustees' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Trust is in accordance with the Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including:

- (i) giving a true and fair view of the financial position of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund as at 30 June 2020, and its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (ii) complying with Australian Accounting Standards, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund in accordance with the auditor independence requirements and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund to comply with the trust deed's financial reporting responsibilities under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance

The trustees of the Trust are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act) and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.



VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Independent Audit Report to the members of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

In preparing the financial report, the trustees are responsible for assessing the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fund's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Fund's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Fund to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.



VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

ABN: 70 078 765 457

Independent Audit Report to the members of VFBV Volunteer Support and Recovery Trust Fund

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Saward Dawson

Saward Dawson

Jeffrey Tulk

Jeffrey Tulk
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 28 August 2020

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Revenue		
Interest received	179	307
Expenses	-	-
Surplus for the year	<u>179</u>	<u>307</u>
Retained surplus at the beginning of the financial year	25,758	25,451
Retained surplus at the end of the financial year	<u><u>25,937</u></u>	<u><u>25,758</u></u>

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank balances	25,937	25,758
Cash on hand	100	100
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>26,037</u>	<u>25,858</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>26,037</u>	<u>25,858</u>
NET ASSETS	<u><u>26,037</u></u>	<u><u>25,858</u></u>
EQUITY		
Settled sum	100	100
Retained Surplus	25,937	25,758
TOTAL EQUITY	<u><u>26,037</u></u>	<u><u>25,858</u></u>

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of Preparation

The trustees believe the Trust is a non-reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial reports. These financial statements are therefore a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in order to meet the requirements of the trust deed and the information needs of stakeholders.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the significant accounting policies disclosed below which the Trustees have determined are appropriate to meet the purposes of preparation. Such accounting policies are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. The accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of this report are as follows:

(b) Income Tax

The Trust is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The entity is a registered charity with the Australian Charity and Not-for-profits Commission.

(c) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

(d) Revenue and other income

In the comparative period

The trust recognises revenue when the amount of revenue can be reliably measured, it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity and specific criteria have been met for each of the fund's activities as discussed below.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

1 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

For the current period

Revenue from contracts with customers

The core principle of AASB 15 is that revenue is recognised on a basis that reflects the transfer of promised goods or services to customers at an amount that reflects the consideration the Trust expects to receive in exchange for those goods or services. Revenue is recognised by applying a five-step model as follows:

1. Identify the contract with the customer
2. Identify the performance obligations
3. Determine the transaction price
4. Allocate the transaction price to the performance obligations
5. Recognise revenue as and when control of the performance obligations is transferred

Generally the timing of the payment for sale of goods and rendering of services corresponds closely to the timing of satisfaction of the performance obligations, however where there is a difference, it will result in the recognition of a receivable, contract asset or contract liability.

None of the revenue streams of the Trust have any significant financing terms as there is less than 12 months between receipt of funds and satisfaction of performance obligations.

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Trustees' Declaration

The Trustees declare that the Trust is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

The directors of the trustee company declare that the financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 1 to 4:

1. present fairly the Trust's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements;
2. in the Trustees' opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Trust will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Trustees.

Trustee



Trustee



Dated 28 August 2020



The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Independent Audit Report to the members of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund (the Trust), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2020, the statement of income or expenditure for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the trustees' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Trust gives a true and fair view of the financial position of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund as at 30 June 2020, and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with their accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial report.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Trust in accordance with the auditor independence requirements and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund to comply with the trust deed's financial reporting provisions. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

20 Albert St, PO Box 256, Blackburn VIC 3130
 T +61 3 9894 2500 F +61 3 9894 1622
 contact@sawarddawson.com.au
 sawarddawson.com.au



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The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Independent Audit Report to the members of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

Responsibilities of Trustees for the Financial Report

The trustees of the Trust are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the trustees are responsible for assessing the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Fund's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by responsible entities.

The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

ABN: 30 120 187 964

Independent Audit Report to the members of The Trustee for the Volunteer Fire Fighters Occupational Illnesses (VFFOI) Awareness and Protection Fund

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Fund's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Fund's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Fund to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Saward Dawson

Saward Dawson

Jeffrey Tulk

Jeffrey Tulk
Partner

Blackburn VIC

Dated: 28 August 2020

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9/24 Lakeside Drive,
Burwood East Vic 3151
Tel: (03) 9886 1141
Fax: (03) 9886 1618

PO Box 453,
Mt Waverley Vic 3149
Email: vfbv@vfbv.com.au
Website: www.vfbv.com.au



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