



# VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES VICTORIA

## STATEMENT

**27 June 2022**

### **VFBV BOARD ANNOUNCES NEW STATE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT**

The Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms Samantha Collins as the new State President and Board Chair, and Captain Andy Cusack AFSM as State Vice-President. This follows the retirement of Captain Nev Jones AFSM who has served as State President since 2015.

Ms Samantha Collins (Rothman) was appointed to the VFBV Board on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015, and has served as State Vice President since 2017.

Sam first joined Bacchus Marsh Fire Brigade as a junior and is now with Maryborough Fire Brigade where she has served as a firefighter and lieutenant. She is a secondary school teacher, mother of three, and is also a volunteer lifesaver with Life Saving Victoria, having also worked as a Project Firefighter with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Sam has a strong interest in the development of youth and volunteerism and developed a special program on the emergency services for year 9 students, which won the 2016 Fire Awareness Awards prestigious *Education* award.

“It is both an honour and a privilege to be the incoming State President” Sam said.

“Nev has been such a wonderful mentor and role model for me to learn from, and while I have big shoes to fill, I feel prepared, and I am really looking forward to the challenge.”

“VFBV is such an amazing organisation, and I feel so proud of what we as volunteers achieve together.”

In stepping down from the role of State President, the VFBV Board reflected on Captain Nev Jones’ significant contribution to not only VFBV but to CFA also.

Nev first joined CFA at the age of eleven and growing up in a family where CFA involvement was firmly entrenched, he has served with distinction for over 40 years. Nev joined the VFBV Board in December 2009 and has served as State President since 2015.

Nev advised the board early last year that he was looking to retire from the Chair role and would not be seeking re-nomination at the following board’s AGM.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted these plans and last year Nev, in consultation with the board - agreed to serve a further term as State President to see through the work that the board had commenced with the new CFA leadership, but on the understanding that he would be retiring mid-term.

“I wanted to step down early so that I could provide the new State President the benefit of my support and experience while they were new to the role and while I could still contribute to the board” Nev said.

“Usually, the new Chair takes over when the previous one leaves, and I felt, given the challenging times we have been through, I owed it to the next person to hand the baton while I was still there to cheer them on and support them settle in.”

“Sam has served as my Vice-President since 2017 and I could not be more pleased that the board has thrown its unanimous support behind her, electing her as State President.”

“I am so proud of her journey and contribution to our organisations leadership over the years and am confident she will do a fantastic job advocating for our volunteers.”

Nev will continue to serve his full term as a regular board member until 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 with Sam assuming the role of State President effective immediately. Nev has indicated he will not be seeking reappointment to the board when his term expires in October.

With Sam vacating her Vice-President role, Captain Andy Cusack AFSM was elected as the new Vice President. Andy has been on the board since 2010 and has been Treasurer since 2012. He too has been involved with CFA most his life, and has served as Brigade Captain, Lieutenant, Secretary and Group Officer over his career.

On behalf of the VFBV Board, officers, volunteers and staff we congratulate Sam and Andy on their appointments. We say thank-you to Nev for the outstanding contribution he has made, with the knowledge that the Association’s long record of strong leadership and stewardship of the vital role that CFA volunteers play in Victoria’s emergency management arrangements are in safe and experienced hands.



**About VFBV:** VFBV is established under the Country Fire Authority Act and is the peak body for CFA Volunteers in Victoria. VFBV works tirelessly to represent, advocate and support CFA volunteers to the CFA Board and management, governments, ministers, members of parliament, councils, instrumentalities, business and the public. Our vision is for **Strong Volunteerism, Embraced to Build Community Resilience for a Safer Victoria.**