

Fire Services Implementation Monitor

Year Four Annual Report

2023/24



Publication Information

The Fire Services Implementation Monitor acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we work and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

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Foreword

Message from the Fire Services Implementation Monitor, the Hon. Niall Blair

I am pleased to present to you my fourth annual report on the progress made by the Country Fire Authority, Fire Rescue Victoria, the Firefighters Registration Board and the Department of Justice and Community Safety in implementing the government's Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan. This report brings together my observations and analysis on the efforts of Victoria's fire services to implement the Government's vision for a modern and interoperable fire service.

My assessment is based on the information provided to me by agencies and my observations in the governance meetings I attend. I've also had conversations with operational staff and volunteers who have contacted me to share some of the reform-related challenges they face. I am grateful to everyone who has taken the time to discuss their experiences of the reform as it influences their day-to-day professional lives.


Based on my observations, years one and two of the reform involved significant work by agencies to understand the structure of the reforms, commencing the transition to the new model and efforts to define complementary fire services. Unfortunately, the momentum for change slowed during years three and four, which should have been key periods of time when actions central to the reform were developed and implemented. I am concerned about the barriers behind the decline in pace and the lack of a clear plan or pathway for resolution.

While I have witnessed agencies working hard to progress actions in the implementation plan during and post the reporting period, I have also observed a concerning and frustratingly poor use of time and resources. Agency decision-making forums, where options to pursue actions are canvassed, have operated poorly or not at all and agencies have therefore failed to capitalise on opportunities to drive important interoperability initiatives and deliver public value.

I am cognisant that the complex industrial environment within which fire services are operating is a key impediment to delivering the reform. I believe the well-documented insights presented in the recent IBAC report on Operation Turton, where the damaging impacts of the United Firefighters Union on efforts to drive change in the former Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) are explored, continue to dominate decision-making and day-to-day operations of FRV and its ability to work with other fire agencies. The 'consult and agree' clause in FRV's enterprise agreement for operational staff, which previously applied to MFB staff, disables the ability of management to implement policies without reaching consensus with the Union. The evidence provided to IBAC by former MFB executives on this matter aligns with the information my office has received about the long delays and barriers caused by this clause. My office has also received evidence of industrial action impacting CFA activities, particularly in co-located stations. This influence is hindering the completion of key actions underpinning the implementation plan, impacting operations and damaging the culture of the agencies and morale on the ground.

The secondment arrangement between FRV and CFA is another key and obvious example of where the 'consult and agree' requirement is impeding agency interoperability and contributing to operational challenges such as the vacancy and relief issues experienced by CFA. It is very disappointing that after four years of work to progress the reforms, guidelines for the everyday working of secondees, like OHS reporting, dispute and grievance resolution and relief management are not completed. Indeed, after four years, the only clear development in relation to secondees is the unanimous view held by stakeholders that the secondment agreement, as originally envisioned, is unlikely to be fully realised in the current industrial environment.

I share this view and believe that the future success of the secondment arrangement is now out of the hands of FRV and CFA. They have done all that they can do, in good faith, to have it successfully implemented and now must wait for the UFU to decide if they will allow the remaining issues to be resolved. The industrial environment and legislative limitations will curtail any further attempts to implement the secondment model, and the effort to try and work around these impediments does not present a cost-effective return. Something must change.



Indeed, from the information that I have gathered and reported on, it is clear the implementation of the reform is at a crossroad. Agencies can continue to work within the parameters that have frustrated progress for the past four years or look for new ways to get things done. It is nonsensical to expect different and better outcomes from the same approaches to completing actions in the implementation plan that have been adopted so far. I believe that if Victorian fire agencies do not find new approaches to completing reform actions, there is a strong risk that the Year Two to Five Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan actions will not be completed by June 2025.

The reform and the drivers behind the much-needed changes are warranted and can be clearly identified in different parts of Victoria. I hope it is clear from this report that agencies must commit to founding all decision-making on joint matters on the principles of complementary fire services. Most importantly, I believe that merely completing actions will not necessarily directly translate to the desired outcomes for this reform. The end goal extends further than the implementation plan alone.

Ultimately, this is about moving towards a modern and interoperable fire service that is capable of responding to Victoria's emerging climactic conditions and changing risk profile. The forecast for the coming fire season is very concerning and could expose the reform-related issues being experienced on the ground, which go beyond the implementation plan actions alone.

Indeed, during this reporting period, the ongoing CFA vacancy and relief issues, reports of the nearest and most appropriate appliance not being dispatched to emergencies, and a broad range of secondment challenges, dominated the reports to my office and my attention as an observer in interagency meetings. Interestingly, there is little scope for these issues to be reported against the reform implementation plan actions. I can only pursue reports on these issues by stepping outside of the Year 2-5 implementation plan actions to investigate matters from the lens of complementary fire services. I will report my findings on these matters in due course.

Creating true interoperability of services requires the commitment to address the known reform challenges in a way that prioritises community outcomes, which could in turn guide the appropriate and effective use of agencies' resources. Completing actions in the implementation plan will lead to some benefits to the Victorian community, but the original and most crucial intent of complementary fire services will be lost if the focus continues to be on ticking off actions that do not go to the heart of the challenges that are reported to me regularly.

As we enter the fifth year of implementation, I trust the reflections and findings in this report will support agencies to find new solutions to address these systemic issues and barriers to achieve meaningful and long-lasting change.

Introduction

Overview

The Fire Services Implementation Monitor's (FSIM's) Year Four annual report delivers on the FSIM's functions under section 131(1) of the *Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958* (FRV Act).

The report provides an independent assessment of progress made by the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS), Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) and the Firefighters Registration Board (FRB) in implementing the [Year 2-5 Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan](#) actions.

Fire Services Reform

The [2017 Fire Services Statement](#) outlines the government's vision for a modern, sustainable and interoperable fire service that will keep Victorians safe.

On 1 July 2020, the Victorian Government commenced implementing Victoria's new fire services model by establishing FRV as a career firefighting organisation and by restoring CFA to a community-based, volunteer firefighting organisation.

The Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan provides a roadmap for how agencies will work individually and jointly to achieve the government's ten-year vision for reform.

Fire Services Implementation Monitor

FSIM was established as an independent entity in July 2020 under section 122 of the FRV Act to provide assurance to government and the community on progress towards a modern fire service for a safer Victoria.

FSIM monitors and reports on agencies' progress to deliver relevant actions in the Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan and assesses the effectiveness of agencies' actions.

FSIM publishes its findings in annual reports that are tabled in Parliament every year.

Methodology

Scope of FSIM's Year Four monitoring activities

FSIM reports on actions taken by CFA, FRV, DJCS and the FRB from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 to deliver against the revised actions and deliverables of the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan. The Year 2-5 Implementation Plan was revised as part of a DJCS-led review, which received in-principle support in early 2024 and formal Ministerial approval in July 2024.

The DJCS review of the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan (May 2023 update) followed FSIM's recommendation in its Year 3 annual report that the plan be reviewed to reflect achievable timeframes and leverage learnings from the last three years of reform activity.

The review was conducted in consultation with CFA, FRV and the FRB, with agencies proposing varying degrees of changes to the actions. Notable changes include revisions to:

- completion dates to be pragmatic and achievable
- action descriptors and / or action objectives to better align with reform objectives
- the lead agency for actions that require greater cross-agency collaboration (e.g. actions 3.8 and 5.1)

- action deliverables to better align with the intent of the revised action descriptor and objectives.

The Minister for Emergency Services approved this change request in July 2024. The July 2024 update of the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan provides the basis for FSIM's monitoring and assessment activities in this Year 4 report. Table 1 outlines the changes made to the actions in the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan as part of this change request.

FSIM notes that the updated Year 2-5 Implementation Plan provides a revised pathway for agencies to deliver joint actions (e.g. actions 3.8, 3.9 and 5.1). The review also resulted in several actions moving to business-as-usual and therefore outside FSIM's scope to monitor for the purpose of this year's report. FSIM will undertake effectiveness assessments of some of these completed actions in Year 5 to examine implementation progress and early outcomes.

Further, in Year 4, FSIM paused its function to monitor the fire services reform's impact on the financial sustainability of FRV and CFA in line with section 131(1)(a)(iii) of the FRV Act. This was following advice received from the Minister in March 2024 that DJCS has portfolio responsibility for working with CFA and FRV in respect to both agencies' financial sustainability and that the ongoing responsibility for this work falls outside the scope for this reform.

FSIM's Year 4 annual report therefore provides an update on actions 5.7 and 5.8 in the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan to formally close off reporting on financial sustainability. Financial sustainability will not be a focus in future reporting by FSIM.

FSIM's approach to monitoring and assessing progress

FSIM's assessment of agencies' progress in delivering relevant actions was informed by:

- meetings with key stakeholders in CFA, FRV, DJCS, the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV), Victoria's Emergency Management Commissioner and the United Firefighters' Union (UFU)
- observations made in governance meetings, including at weekly CFA and FRV Heads of Agency (HoA) meetings and monthly Fire Services Reform Strategic Executive Committee (FSR SEC) meetings
- a thorough and critical review of information and evidence provided by agencies demonstrating progress towards delivering a relevant action.

FSIM has triangulated evidence from these sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of agencies' progress against relevant actions and to ensure FSIM's assessment of progress is based on accurate and reliable information. FSIM also engaged with agencies to provide explanations for delays in relevant actions and mitigation strategies in place to address these delays.

Table 1: Comparison table for actions updated as part of the July 2024 change request

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Action 1.1 action descriptor	Develop and implement CFA's Engagement Framework and Volunteer Engagement Plan incorporating a monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement process.	Develop CFA's Engagement Framework.	Simplified statement from the current.
Action objective	CFA's Engagement Framework and Volunteer Engagement Plan is developed, implemented and remains fit for purpose.	To reinvigorate stakeholder engagement in the post Fire Services Reform environment.	Simplified statement from the current.
Lead agency	CFA	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework & engagement plan development is finalised • Regional volunteer engagement forums established • Regional volunteer engagement forums meeting regularly. 	Development of CFA Engagement Framework.	
Completion date	June 2025	No change	
Action 1.3 action descriptor	Complete delivery of the \$22.7m Volunteer Support Package (VSP).	Deliver the VSP	Simplified statement of the action.
Action objective	CFA volunteers are supported in their endeavours to build capability, deliver services and have access to a range of practical support programs.	No change	
Lead agency	CFA	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise Project Scope i.e. prioritise initiatives for funding • Establish project management structure for funded initiatives • Deliver Initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFA Brigade Capability Review • CFA Pocketbook • CFA Volunteer Workwear 	Ensures clarity in the deliverables.

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Information Reporting System release three Volunteer Recruitment Hub release four. 	
Completion date	March 2025	No change	
Action 1.4 action descriptor	Complete delivery of the \$3.3m crew and strike team leader project.	Develop new Crew and Strike Team Leader training courses.	Update for clarity.
Action objective	CFA's crew and strike team leader training programs remain fit for purpose, enabling crew and strike team leaders to meet their role and responsibilities.	Update key CFA training programs to support volunteer operational capability development.	Places focus on development of the training. Implementation, quality assurance and continuous improvement of this course (and all other training) are BAU activities for which CFA has robust mechanisms.
Lead agency	CFA	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the development of the Crew & Strike Team Leader Development Program Commence delivery of the Crew & Strike Team Leader Development Program The Crew & Strike Team Leader Development Program is embedded as a training opportunity for all competent crew & strike team leaders on an ongoing basis. 	Develop new Crew and Strike Team Leader training courses.	As above, places focus on course development.
Completion date	June 2024	30 November 2024	
Action 1.6 action descriptor	Complete delivery of the \$7.65m Enhancing Training Capacity for New Volunteers project.	Review and update training as part of the Develop Enhancing Training Capacity for New Volunteers.	Update for clarity.
Action objective	CFA's training program for new operational members is fit for purpose, preparing and	No change	

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
	supporting members to safely meet their role and responsibilities.		
Lead agency	CFA	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete annual review of the newly implemented GFF training program Update GFF training program (including undertaking consultation) to reflect review outcomes Rollout of PPC that forms part of the program (4000 sets) Complete yearly cycle of professional development opportunities for trainers and assessors (volunteers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the CFA General Firefighter (GFF) training program Issue PPC in line with project funding and establish process to ensure issue to new volunteers who have completed GFF training. 	To focus on development of the updated GFF program. Implementation, quality assurance and continuous improvement of this course (and all other training) are BAU activities for which CFA has robust mechanisms.
Completion date	June 2025	No change	
Action 1.7 action descriptor	Review CFA's brigade operating model to ensure brigades are appropriately structured and provided with the required capabilities to deliver contemporary services that meet community expectations and needs.	Review CFA's operating model and develop a roadmap to create a more contemporary and sustainable organisation.	Ensures this action is described appropriately.
Action objective	CFA's brigade and group operating model remains fit for purpose to enable the delivery of capabilities that meet community needs.	CFA's operating model supports the organisation to achieve its strategic objectives.	
Lead agency	CFA	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery Phase 1 Define Operating Model Program (five year); secure executive and Board endorsement Implement agreed 2023 Operating Model Program initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a review of CFA's operating model Develop a program roadmap of initiatives that will enhance service delivery and create a more contemporary and sustainable organisation. 	Ensures the deliverables are described appropriately.

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Completion date	June 2025	No change	
Action 2.4 action descriptor	Finalise relevant enterprise bargaining agreements, including the FRV Operational Staff Enterprise Agreement; FRV Professional, Technical and Administrative Staff Agreement; FRV Corporate and Technical Staff Agreement; and FRV Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement.	Merge required legacy enterprise agreements and commence negotiations on new agreements.	The change more appropriately describes the actions required to merge legacy agreements (as the amended objective), whereas the former action is considered a core BAU activity which must be undertaken in accordance with government policies (i.e., wages policies). The amended descriptor focuses on establishing clear process to underpin negotiations and enables the further establishment of FRV and harmonisation.
Action objective	Agreements are managed through appropriate channels, involving all key stakeholders, ensuring that staff are valued and supported.	To ensure appropriate steps are taken to harmonise enterprise agreements.	The updated objective better reflects harmonisation and principles of a complementary fire service by supporting appropriate channels to ensure consistent engagement with the workforce and realisation of agreed principles of a complementary fire service, including a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe, inclusive and valued workforce • strong and trusted leadership.

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Lead agency	FRV	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval to commence bargaining Commence bargaining Finalise agreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single Operational Staff Enterprise Agreement (combining the two operational agreements pre-1 July 2020) Establishment of a single set of consultative committees to support consultation processes arising from enterprise agreements Approval from government to commence negotiation on a new Operational Enterprise Agreement Approval from government to commence negotiation on a combined Corporate and Technical Staff Agreement and Professional, Technical and Administrative Staff Agreement Approval from government to commence negotiations on a new Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement The 2020 Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement was ratified in 2021. 	To align action deliverables with revised action descriptor and action objective.
Completion date	June 2023	30 November 2024	
Action 3.1 action descriptor	Develop and implement FRV's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy, ICT Roadmap and Target Future Operating Model.	Ensure FRV's ICT is consistent across all stations to support service delivery.	Noting the reform objective is about ensuring that FRV technology requirements are met in stations that have transferred and corporate systems support transferred employees, the action should focus on ensuring the technology capability is

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
			<p>consistent across all stations and corporate systems support transferred employees.</p> <p>The amended action descriptor more accurately reflects actions necessary to achieve the objective, which is that 'FRV ICT services are aligned to business priorities and outcomes which directly support community and firefighter safety.</p> <p>A consistent approach to ICT across all stations is critical to ensuring business priorities are realised and service delivery outcomes achieved. The amendment reflects activities directly linked to fire services reform, whereas the previous descriptor referenced ongoing BAU ('implement') activities with no end date for completion.</p>
Action objective	FRV's ICT services are aligned to business priorities and outcomes which directly support community and firefighter safety.	No change	
Lead agency	FRV	No change	

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the delivery of the FRV ICT Strategy, ICT Roadmap and Operating Model. Includes consultation Implementation of the ICT Strategy and Operating Model through a coherent multi-year work plan and ICT services reform Annual review of the ICT Strategy and Roadmap to ensure continuing alignment with the FRV vision and evolving business objectives and needs. Completion of the ICT Roadmap initiatives and transition into sustainment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All transitioned stations and workplaces use a consistent station turn out system Relevant corporate systems are transferred from CFA to FRV (where mutually agreed) to support transferred employees An ICT Strategy to map the future uplift requirements for FRV across operational and corporate areas. 	To align action deliverables with revised action descriptor and action objective.
Completion date	June 2025	No change	
Action 3.2 action descriptor	Complete delivery of the \$48.2 million fire station and firefighting fleet replacement program.	Deliver the fire station and firefighting fleet replacement program.	Ensures clarity.
Action objective	Priority stations and appliances are replaced to ensure they are fit for purpose and enhance operational response.	No change	
Lead agency	CFA	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Station Replacement Program Deliver Clyde Fire Station Deliver Tanker Replacement Program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed specifications for capital programs (station builds and appliances) Contracts in place for the delivery of 50 replacement appliances Contracts in place for the delivery of replacement fire stations funded through this investment. 	Ensures the deliverables are described appropriately.
Completion date	June 2025	No change	

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Action 3.3 action descriptor	Finalise the transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV.	No change	
Action objective	The successful transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV to support the delivery of reform.	The transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV to support the delivery of reform.	Ensures clarity.
Lead agency	CFA	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute Tenancy Agreement Execute Transfer and Allocation Statements (in conjunction with FRV and EMV) Develop and execute a Deed of Agreement including indemnities for those property, rights, liabilities and obligations relating to personnel and assets which cannot be transferred by Transfer Statement or Allocation Statement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocation Statement 1 – signed by Minister (1 September 2020) Transfer Statement 1B – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (24 June 2021) Transfer Statement 2A – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (24 June 2021) Transfer Statement 2B – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (24 June 2021) Transfer Statement 3A – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (24 June 2021) Allocation Statement 2 – signed by the Minister (26 February 2021) Transfer Statement 3B – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (24 June 2021) Transfer Statement 3C – signed by the Minister (31 January 2021) Allocation Statement 4A (BA sets) – signed by the Minister (22 September 2022) Transfer Statement 4B – Yet to be finalised, currently with CFA for consideration 	Ensures the deliverables are described appropriately.

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation Statement 3 – signed by Minister (29 March 2022) • Allocation Statement 6 – awaiting Ministerial Direction (new s103) • Tools of Trade Agreement – signed by Minister (8 March 2021) • Transfer Statement 6A – signed by Minister (12 May 2022) • Transfer Statement 6A1 – signed by Minister (12 May 2022). 	
Completion date	December 2024	No change	
Action 3.4 action descriptor	FRV, in consultation with CFA, deliver agreed capital works to enable and enhance service delivery by co-located brigades.	FRV, in consultation with CFA, identify capital works required across designated stations at the time of the reform and develop a framework (Tenancy Agreement) to support delivery of agreed projects.	The change removes 'deliver agreed capital works' from the action descriptor, as this is an ongoing activity, whereas 'identify capital works required across designated stations at the time of the reform' specifically focuses on required capital works to support a co-response model, as agreed at the time of the reform. A common understanding of capital works across co-located stations facilitates the implementation reform objectives.
Action objective	Capital works enable and enhance service delivery by co-located brigades.	Facilities enable agencies to deliver a complementary fire service to the Victoria community.	The change to the objective better reflects the intent of reform, in that it focuses on

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
			how facilities can contribute to a complementary fire service. This better reflects the aim of the fire services reforms to deliver modern fit for purpose complementary stations within a co-response model.
Lead agency	FRV	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute Tenancy Agreement Deliver agreed Capital Works to enable Service Delivery by co-located Brigades Establish ongoing arrangements/forums for consultation with co-located Brigades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of all outstanding capital works required across designated stations. Anticipated completion date is 30 June 2024 Agreed capital works framework (Tenancy Agreement), that provides guidance on the delivery of capital projects. 	To align action deliverables with revised action descriptor and action objective.
Completion date	30 June 2024	No change	
Action 3.8 action descriptor	CFA, in collaboration with FRV, to develop protocols to ensure all FRV seconded training staff satisfy CFA's Registered Training Organisation (RTO) obligations and requirements.	No change	
Action objective	CFA's RTO obligations and requirements are satisfied by FRV training staff secondment protocols.	No change	
Lead agency	CFA	CFA and FRV	As both agencies are key to the success of the secondment model and arrangements, including the provision of seconded trainers and instructors joint

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRV and CFA to establish a working group to document requirements and respective Registered Training Organisation (RTO) obligations CFAs responsibilities for ongoing development to ensure seconded trainers continue to meet currency and proficient requirements are clearly defined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA to confirm to FRV RTO requirements and obligations relating to seconded instructors set by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) FRV to identify any gaps between CFA RTO & VRQA requirements and FRV ability to meet these requirements. CFA and FRV to identify agreed options to address these gaps FRV to develop a roadmap of the join CFA / FRV agreed actions required to meet VFA RTO & VRQAs requirements and any identified gaps. 	<p>lead of this action recognises the accountability and responsibility of both agencies for the effective implementation of this action. Joint lead also acknowledges the mutual obligations required to deliver this action along with jointly agreed deliverables to support embedding the trainer and instructor secondment protocols into agency business as usual activities ensuring ongoing RTO obligations are maintained.</p> <p>To establish deliverables that are more likely to achieve the objectives and describe outputs/milestones.</p>
Completion date	August 2023	June 2025	The changed date provides a suitable timeframe for the agencies to work together to

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Action 3.9 action descriptor	Where practical and appropriate, finalise harmonisation of procedures, including service level procedures between CFA and FRV and any related party to ensure the agreements support effective operations.	No change	achieve the necessary reform outcomes to identify and develop protocols to ensure all FRV seconded training staff satisfy CFA's RTO obligations and requirements most appropriately. This will then enable FRV to appropriately plan to meet those capability requirements within existing resources, while recognising the practical necessities of consultation processes stipulated through industrial agreement.
Action objective	Procedures, including service level procedures between CFA, FRV and any related party, are harmonised – where practical, and fit for purpose to support effective operations.	Fire agencies work collaboratively to operationalise complementary fire services arrangements.	The proposed objective aligns with the emphasis on the key foundational reform requirement identified by the Fire Services Implementation Monitor, being the delivery of complementary fire services. The proposed objective provides a clear and transparent back to basics outcome required to achieve the action.

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Lead agency	CFA and FRV	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update interoperability procedures underpinning the CFA/FRV Joint Operational Activity MoU Harmonisation of operational doctrine via an established doctrine working group Finalise SLDAs and schedules and execute Establish appropriate governance to ensure oversight, management and review of the current service level deeds of agreement for operational functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A joint statement on complementary fire services Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework (includes foundational agreements in place – SLDA and Secondment Agreement) Service Delivery Plans. HoA agreed on 18 March 2024 to develop the following Plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Investigation – the current agreed schedules transition to a Service Delivery Plan Dangerous Goods Fire Services Communications Controllers (FSCC) Protective Equipment Services Specialist Instructors District Mechanical Officers (Fleet Services) Use of Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre Campuses Land Use Planning Communications Technical Services / Tower Overseers Structural Fire Safety / Building Environment – The Deed of Indemnity and Instruments of Delegation/Authorisation to be referenced in an overarching Service Delivery Plan 	To align action deliverables with revised action objective.

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish appropriate governance to ensure oversight, management and review of agreements (complete – via establishment of FSOC and HoA) Secondment Guidelines to be developed and approved by HoA (completed – agreed at HoA 29 April 2024) CFA and FRV to communicate within their agencies about the Fire Services Governance Framework and its constituent documents (as agreed). 	
Completion date	June 2024	June 2025	The change to the completion date provides an appropriate timeframe based on the recently developed and agreed definition and principles of complementary fire services recognising the scale of the volunteer and career workforces.
Action 3.12 action descriptor	Finalise a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to formalise ongoing support service requirements.	Develop agreements for corporate support functions between CFA and FRV that enable service delivery.	A Corporate Services MoU was never formally executed, and the agencies have agreed this is no longer required. The Corporate Services MoU outlined several services which were also captured in the Operational Service Level Deed of Agreement. This created confusion regarding governance over the services listed in two different agreements. The

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
			<p>proposed action will develop specific agreements for each corporate support service provided. This will provide a more flexible approach to any services into the future with changes being adopted without the requirement to revise an entire agreement. Any new services adopted as part of future business as usual will be able to be provided under that services specific agreement.</p>
Action objective	CFA and FRV support service requirements are met through an MOU that is fit for purpose.	CFA and FRV support service requirements are met through agreed and appropriate protocols and frameworks.	The proposed wording of the objective more accurately reflects the intent of the action with regards to finalising the corporate support function arrangements through appropriate fit for purpose agreements.
Lead agency	CFA and FRV	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and execute Corporate MoU for ongoing corporate support arrangements Establish appropriate governance to ensure oversight, management and review of MoU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and execute an Information Sharing MoU for ongoing corporate support arrangements Develop and execute a Tenancy Agreement Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework 	To align action deliverables with revised action descriptor and action objective.

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and agree to station sub-schedules and maps for outstanding co-located brigades (Melton, Dandenong and South Warrandyte). 	
Completion date	June 2025	No change	
Action 4.2 action descriptor	Establish capability standards to support the secondment arrangements, the firefighters register, application processes and transparent appeals processes.	The Firefighters Registration Board establishes criteria and processes to support registration of suitably qualified secondees from FRV to CFA.	<p>The current action descriptor no longer accurately represents the work required by the FRB now it has been established and in operation. The change to action descriptor more accurately reflects the legislative role and function of the FRB.</p> <p>The proposed action descriptor will ensure the focus of the action is on the establishment of criteria to assess competencies and standards, and processes to support the registration of secondees.</p>
Action objective	The secondment model is collaboratively supported and regulated by an independent entity.	Independent registration of secondees from FRV to CFA.	The proposed objective focusses on registration of secondees instead of the broader secondment arrangements and is aligned to the proposed action descriptor.
Lead agency	FRB	No change	

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FRB to develop measurable and transparent capability requirements / standards of CFA and FRV FRB members to develop processes including standards, application process and appeals process FRB to develop a practical and achievable evidentiary threshold to inform an assessment against agreed competencies and standards FRB to operationalise a streamlined registration process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise criteria to assess competencies and standards based on nationally endorsed training packages and products, and taking into consideration prescribed legislation, and relevant industrial instruments Develop evidentiary threshold against which applicants will be assessed Documented registration process Commence operation of the registration scheme. 	
Completion date	December 2024	No change	
Action 4.3 action descriptor	Complete delivery of the volunteer's health and safety initiatives program; specifically, the wildfire respiratory protection trial, the firefighter safety compliance initiatives and the wildfire PPC project.	No change	
Action objective	Through delivery of the volunteer's health and safety initiatives program, CFA volunteers are skilled and capable, and feel safe and supported.	No change	
Lead agency	CFA	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the Wildfire Respiratory Protection Trial Deliver the Wildfire PPC Project Deliver the Safety Compliance Program. 	No change	
Completion date	June 2024	June 2025	

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Action 4.5 action descriptor	Continue delivering the following cultural and diversity change programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFA behavioural standards program • CFA child safety compliance plan • Inclusion and diversity strategy and supporting action plans • Fire Services Statement funded Initiatives. 	Define a program of work to strengthen CFA's organisational culture, diversity and inclusion.	Reframing the action descriptor recognises the CFA has an ongoing focus on culture and diversity.
Action objective	CFA promotes cultural inclusiveness and diversity through fit for purpose plans and programs.	No change.	
Lead agency	CFA	No change.	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out of Behavioural Standards (5 streams) • Implement Child Safety Compliance Plan • Implement Inclusion & Diversity Strategy • Deliver Supporting Diversity in our Fire Services Project • Deliver Investing in Leadership Development Project • Deliver Investing in Volunteer Leadership Development Project • Deliver the Mental Health for Leaders Project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Culture and Issues Management Action Plan • Develop Child Safety Compliance Plan • Develop Diversity and Inclusion Strategy • Develop Mental Health for Leaders program • Deliver Fire Services Statement funded initiatives. 	Ensures the deliverables are described appropriately.
Completion date	June 2024	June 2025	
Action 4.6 action descriptor	Develop and continue delivering on inclusion and diversity initiatives:	Develop the following documents to support inclusion and diversity across FRV:	The change removes 'continue delivering' from the action descriptor, as this is an ongoing activity, whereas

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan Gender Equity Action Plan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan Gender Equity Action Plan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan. 	<p>'development' of foundational documents is key to supporting and embedding cultural change across FRV. This action more closely aligns with the action objective, which is to promote inclusion and diversity through fit for purpose strategies, plans and initiatives.</p>
Action objective	FRV promote inclusion and diversity through fit for purpose strategies, plans and initiatives.	No change	
Lead agency	FRV	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and commence implementation of FRV Diversity & Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan Develop and commence implementation of FRV Gender Equality Action Plan Continue implementation of FRV Reconciliation Action Plan. 	<p>Finalised frameworks and action plans as outlined in the action description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan Gender Equity Action Plan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan. 	<p>To align action deliverables with revised action descriptor.</p>
Completion date	March 2023	30 September 2024	To allow for changed deliverables
Action 4.9 action descriptor	Demonstrate progress towards reaching the government's commitment of 400 women career firefighters in FRV.	Develop a recruitment strategy and campaign to support increased gender diversity across all firefighting ranks. Review the recruitment process, training, and promotional pathways to ensure they support the retention of a gender diverse workforce.	The previous action descriptor, 'demonstrating progress towards reaching the government's commitment of 400 women career firefighters at FRV', is an ongoing activity, extending beyond the

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
			<p>timeframe set for fire services reform.</p> <p>The amended action descriptor and deliverables are clear and measurable and focus not only on increasing the number of women firefighters, but also retention strategies.</p>
Action objective	FRV values a diverse and inclusive workforce, reflecting the community they serve.	To embed a recruitment and retention strategy that supports the government's commitment of 400 women career firefighters in FRV.	<p>The intent of the reform objective is to contribute to a healthy workplace, by valuing diversity and inclusion, as this, in turn delivers better outcomes for the community.</p> <p>The amended reform objective ensures the focus is on driving cultural change through recruitment practices that increase workforce diversity more broadly, whilst remaining focussed on increasing the number of women career firefighters at FRV.</p>
Lead agency	FRV	No change	
Deliverables	Implement activities in accordance with the Diversity and Inclusion Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure recruitment activities are delivered in a way that attracts a diverse range of applicants. Anticipated completion date is 30 September 2024 	To align action deliverables with revised action descriptor and action objective.

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence a review of recruitment procedures and campaign strategies – Completed (Evidence to follow) Introduce Women Support Coordinators (Women’s Support Project) to support the identification and resolution of barriers to increasing the number of women firefighters. 	
Completion date	December 2025	No change	
Action 5.1 action descriptor	CFA in consultation with FRV develops and maintain a secondment strategy that details CFA’s capability and capacity needs for those resources sourced from FRV.	Capability and capacity requirements of the seconded workforce to deliver an effective CFA are clearly articulated by CFA and FRV establishes a roadmap to deliver on these requirements in alignment with the legislative obligations of both organisations.	The proposed action wording and the change to a joint action reflects the practical reality of FRV’s role in providing secondees that meets CFA’s defined capabilities, whilst acknowledging the legislative and industrial agreement parameters.
Action objective	The capability and capacity needs of CFA are clearly understood by FRV and the FRB. FRV’s strategic workforce planning enables the provision of secondees that meet the operational needs and capability requirements of CFA.	CFA’s seconded operational requirements are clearly communicated, inform workforce planning by FRV and CFA and FRV work collaboratively to address any gaps.	The proposed wording refines the objective to ensure the role of each agency in this action is clear. The change clearly describes what is needed to achieve the outcome of the action while ensuring joint accountability and responsibility for the action achievement.
Lead agency	CFA	CFA and FRV	As both agencies are key to the success of the secondment model and arrangements, joint lead of

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA to develop a capability & capacity framework to inform and guide FRV's strategy for CFA seconded positions CFA to evaluate provision of FRV secondees against the capability & capacity framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA Capability Statement Gaps and options to address these gaps are identified FRV to establish a roadmap to incorporate the capability and capacity requirements in line with the CFA Capability Statement of the seconded workforce into workforce planning. 	<p>this action recognises the accountability and responsibility of both agencies for the effective implementation of this action and achievement of the objective and jointly agreed deliverables to support embedding the secondment model into agency business as usual activities.</p> <p>The jointly agreed deliverables clearly articulate what each agency is required to deliver, and by when, and what is necessary to achieve the action to meet the reform intent.</p>
Completion date	June 2023	June 2025	<p>The changed date provides a suitable timeframe for the agencies to work together to achieve the necessary reform outcomes to most appropriately identify CFA 's secondee needs, enable FRV to appropriately plan to meet those needs within existing resources, while recognising the practical requirements of consultation processes stipulated through industrial agreement.</p>

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Action 5.2 action descriptor	Undertake a review of operational capability and capacity requirements to meet the future needs of fire services across Victoria to inform future funding plans.	DJCS, with input from CFA and FRV, undertake a review of current state fire and rescue capability and capacity requirements in CFA and FRV and key issues and risks.	The proposed action descriptor focuses on understanding current fire and rescue capability and capacity along with key service delivery issues and risks to aid future decisions by government.
Action objective	Ensure that current and future changes to Victoria's fire risk profile and the expectations of our communities inform service delivery strategies and future capacity needs while acting as a key input into the future funding requirements for the sector.	The fire services have awareness of current state fire and rescue capability and capacity which will inform future service delivery requirements.	The proposed objective better reflects a focus on current fire and rescue capability and capacity as a basis to support future decisions by government.
Lead agency	DJCS	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish project parameters, governance and assessment framework CFA and FRV conduct capability and capacity gap analysis, taking into consideration fire risk profile and service delivery requirements Produce report that outlines current and future state operational capability and capacity requirements across the fire services, and pathways to addressing any known gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA and FRV review current state capability and capacity for functions and services delivered, including for enabling and support corporate services CFA and FRV undertake a high-level assessment of gaps to meet current service delivery requirements DJCS prepare a final report consolidating findings from deliverable one and two. 	
Completion date	November 2024	No change	
Action 5.7 action descriptor	Conduct a financial sustainability assessment update of FRV and CFA, based on three years operation of the new fire services model.	Capture the operational costs incurred to deliver fire services in Victoria based on three years of financial reporting.	The proposed change addresses the need to focus on understanding the cost to deliver fire services in Victoria and the financial

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
			performance of CFA and FRV and recognises the existence of the single source of truth through audited financial reporting in the agencies' annual reports.
Action objective	CFA and FRV have an agreed understanding of financial sustainability, updated and evidenced by operation of the new fire services model over a continued period of time.	There is a common understanding of the costs incurred to deliver fire services in Victoria.	The proposed change to the action objective ensures the focus is a point in time understanding of the financial position of each agency.
Lead agency	DJCS	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the audited financial reports of CFA and FRV (2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23) Identify current cost drivers and cost pressures for CFA and FRV. 	A summary of the fire service agencies' financial performance for the 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years, inclusive.	
Completion date	December 2024	No change	
Action 5.8 action descriptor	Develop a long-term funding plan for CFA and FRV for Year five and beyond.	CFA and FRV to ensure internal budgets consider the funding estimates over the forward years provided by the Victorian Government.	The proposed action descriptor clarifies that funding is set by government, and agencies are required to comply with the Financial Management Act 1994, develop budgets accordingly and deliver services within their respective funding allocations.

Action overview	May 2023 update	July 2024 update	Rationale for change
Action objective	CFA and FRV have long term funding plans that are evidence-based and outline actions to promote financial sustainability.	Victoria's fire agencies deliver services in a financially sustainable way, and in accordance with their fiscal obligations.	The proposed objective reflects how budget processes operate, the means by which annual funding is set and the expectations on agencies to budget accordingly.
Lead agency	DJCS	No change	
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm estimated grant appropriation over forward estimates (as determined by decisions of government) Confirm pathways to seek additional funding from government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA and FRV provided with estimated grant appropriation over the forward years to enable internal budgets to be prepared CFA and FRV to embed estimated grant appropriation into forward planning and internal budgets. 	
Completion date	June 2025	No change	

Findings and recommendations

Finding one: Agencies have implemented all the recommendations made in FSIM's previous annual reports and are starting to realise the benefits at a strategic level

In response to FSIM's recommendation in the 2022/23 annual report, DJCS completed a review of all the remaining actions in the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan. This review was completed in consultation with CFA, FRV and the FRB and the revised actions were approved as a change request by the Minister in July 2024. The scope of the review was narrower than FSIM had envisaged in its recommendation, with several actions moving to business-as-usual. FSIM will continue to monitor the implementation of these completed actions through effectiveness assessments in future to examine impact (i.e. intended and unintended outcomes) and better understand implementation challenges.

FSIM is satisfied that agencies have a shared understanding of the definition and principles of complementary fire services and looks forward to its application in decision-making. This was a recommendation in FSIM's 2021/22 annual report but this was completed in 2023/24.

FSIM is also satisfied that DJCS has established relevant governance arrangements to address financial sustainability for agencies in the emergency management sector, including CFA and FRV. This was in response to a recommendation in FSIM's 2021/22 annual report.

Lastly, in response to FSIM's recommendations in its 2022/23 annual report, CFA and the Community Safety Building Authority (CSBA) jointly established operational procedures to evaluate station replacement and upgrade projects managed by CSBA as part of action 3.2. CFA also developed a fire services reform dashboard tracking tool to be used as a shared resource by CFA and FRV to monitor the progress of the agreements and guidelines being developed under action 3.9 against the consultation workflow process.

Finding two: Long-standing systemic issues are a significant barrier to progressing actions jointly led by CFA and FRV

The long-standing systemic issues outlined below have been extensively commented on by FSIM in all previous annual reports. These systemic issues continued to impact on the completion of relevant implementation plan actions in 2023/24.

FSIM continues to observe that while agencies have made progress delivering actions they are leading individually, systemic issues relating to FRV's consultation requirements and the current framework for community infrastructure service delivery continue to present barriers to delivering joint actions that underpin the reform.

FRV is required to consult with the UFU and reach consensus via the Operational Consultative Committee process before implementing any matter or change relating to FRV employees. As FSIM has noted in previous annual reports, and has continued to observe in 2023/24, this requirement presents a significant barrier to progressing important reform-related matters, with the Operational Consultative Committee's outcome falling outside the control or ability of any one agency to influence. This has often resulted in significant delays to completing an action or important matters being put on hold with no clear pathway for resolution. It has also stymied proposed workarounds by agencies to address entrenched problems, resulting in significant operational implications for career and volunteer firefighters. In addition, due to the industrial bans in this reporting period, the Corporate and Technical Employees Consultative Committee only met twice and, on neither occasion considered matters pertaining to the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan actions (e.g. the Information Sharing MoU under action 3.12). As a result, there is a backlog of items for the Committee to work through, which could further delay progress on Year 2-5 Implementation Plan actions that require consultation.

Further, the barriers for delivering end-to-end services in the Country Area of Victoria (CAoV) continue to exist in the absence of necessary amendments to the Victorian Planning Provisions. While

agencies have developed workarounds to address some of these barriers by co-delivering services in the CAoV, these workarounds have not been able to resolve issues of service duplication and inefficiencies. FSIM has commented further on this in its assessment of progress for action 3.9.

If these systemic issues are not addressed, and if agencies do not find another pathway to completing actions that require consultation and agreement with the UFU, there is a risk that actions 3.8, 3.9, 3.12 and 5.1 will not be delivered on time.

Finding three – Joint operational governance has not been effective in progressing interoperability initiatives between CFA and FRV

Establishing the Fire Services Operational Committee (FSOC) was a deliverable under action 3.7. CFA and FRV established FSOC in 2021 to identify and promote collaboration and interoperability opportunities and to strengthen working relations between the two agencies. FSOC has six sub-committees.

FSOC did not progress any work against a formalised workplan in 2023/24. FSIM has been advised that FSOC responded to ad-hoc issues instead. In this reporting period, FSOC and four of its sub-committees did not have a workplan. In addition, FSOC and one of its sub-committees cancelled up to six meetings this financial year due to key personnel not being available to meet. This presented a significant opportunity cost for CFA and FRV, who have important interoperability initiatives to progress, and contribute to, under relevant actions in the implementation plan (e.g. actions 3.8 and 3.9).

FSIM commented on these very same issues in relation to FSOC in its 2022/23 annual report and notes that these issues persisted for most of 2023/24. Towards the end of the reporting period, CFA and FRV heads of agencies (HoA) developed a draft workplan for FSOC's endorsement and communicated expectations about FSOC meeting regularly in 2024/25 and reporting back to HoA on progress against the agreed workplan every quarter. FSIM will closely monitor FSOC's quarterly progress updates to HoA and recommends that HoA take early action when FSOC is not delivering on its agreed workplan.

FSIM has also observed that there is some overlap in the responsibilities for joint operational working groups (i.e. FSOC, the Joint Child Safety Working Group and the Joint Secondment Workforce Advisory Group) in relation to ensuring FRV secondees are compliant with the Child Safe Standards (e.g. actions 3.8 and 5.1).

There is a risk that this overlap in responsibilities could result in duplication of effort, inconsistent messaging, reduced accountability and key deliverables not being completed. There is an opportunity for agencies to review these arrangements to streamline operational governance for delivering actions 3.8 and 5.1 to mitigate these risks.

Finding four – There continues to be challenges filling Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) and Commander vacancies in CFA, on both a permanent and relief basis

In 2023/24, CFA experienced a deficit of, on average, 17 senior operational leaders (i.e. Commanders and ACFOs) each week. This equates to 11 per cent of CFA's operational workforce. At its worst, CFA experienced a deficit of 33 operational positions (i.e. 20.6 per cent of its operational workforce) for one week in 2023/24.

CFA reports that the vacancies have resulted in impacted CFA districts, groups, brigades and volunteers not receiving the dedicated operational support and leadership they need to ensure operational preparedness and readiness. CFA also reported that the vacancies are impacting on CFA's ability to maintain operations against its statutory obligations and provide safe systems of work in relation to fatigue management of its seconded workforce.

The challenges filling vacancies and non-relief is a complex, multi-faceted issue that pre-dates the reform and is likely caused by a combination of factors. This includes personnel and organisational

culture issues, staff being on medical leave, FRV's ageing workforce, implementation of the secondment model, and FRV's enterprise agreement and related corporate policies. FSIM has seen evidence of correspondence from CFA to FRV in 2023/24 raising concerns about the scale of the vacancy and non-relief issues experienced by CFA and acknowledging FRV's efforts to address these issues.

Since the reform, there have been repeated instances where the interaction between FRV's enterprise agreement and the secondment agreement has constrained CFA's ability to effectively manage secondees and for FRV to address vacancy and non-relief of the seconded positions within CFA. FSIM acknowledges that CFA and FRV leadership, including FRV's secondment management department, have made repeated attempts to address the vacancy and non-relief issues but these efforts have had limited impact due to these barriers.

FSIM may further investigate the matter in 2024/25 to better understand the extent to which these barriers are contributing to the vacancy and relief issues and the effectiveness of agency actions to address the issue.

Recommendation: Strengthen governance oversight and reporting for the outstanding actions

Agencies have established governance arrangements at the strategic and operational levels to support increased joint-agency collaboration and to progress reform activities.

FSIM recommends that agencies maximise the utility of these governance groups by increasing active governance oversight for all outstanding actions. This can be achieved by:

- FSR SEC providing active oversight of all the remaining actions in the implementation plan, with a priority focus on action 3.8, 3.9, 3.12 and 5.1, as these are at high-risk of not being completed on time.
- HoA providing active oversight of all the joint governance and working groups that report to it (e.g. FSOC and its sub-committees, the Joint Secondment Workforce Advisory Group and the Joint Child Safety Working Group).
- FSR SEC and HoA taking clear and decisive action to resolve issues, where there is a risk of an action not being completed on time or in line with the action objectives.

Active governance oversight must be supported by high-level implementation timelines and regular reporting of progress against these timelines. FSIM therefore recommends that to provide increased transparency and reporting of progress, agencies must:

- document the expected completion dates and key milestones for each of the remaining deliverables in the outstanding implementation plan actions, including issues and risks that are being actively monitored.
- provide HoA and FSR SEC regular reports of progress against the expected completion dates, with increased frequency of reporting (e.g. monthly) for the actions that are at high-risk of not being completed on time.

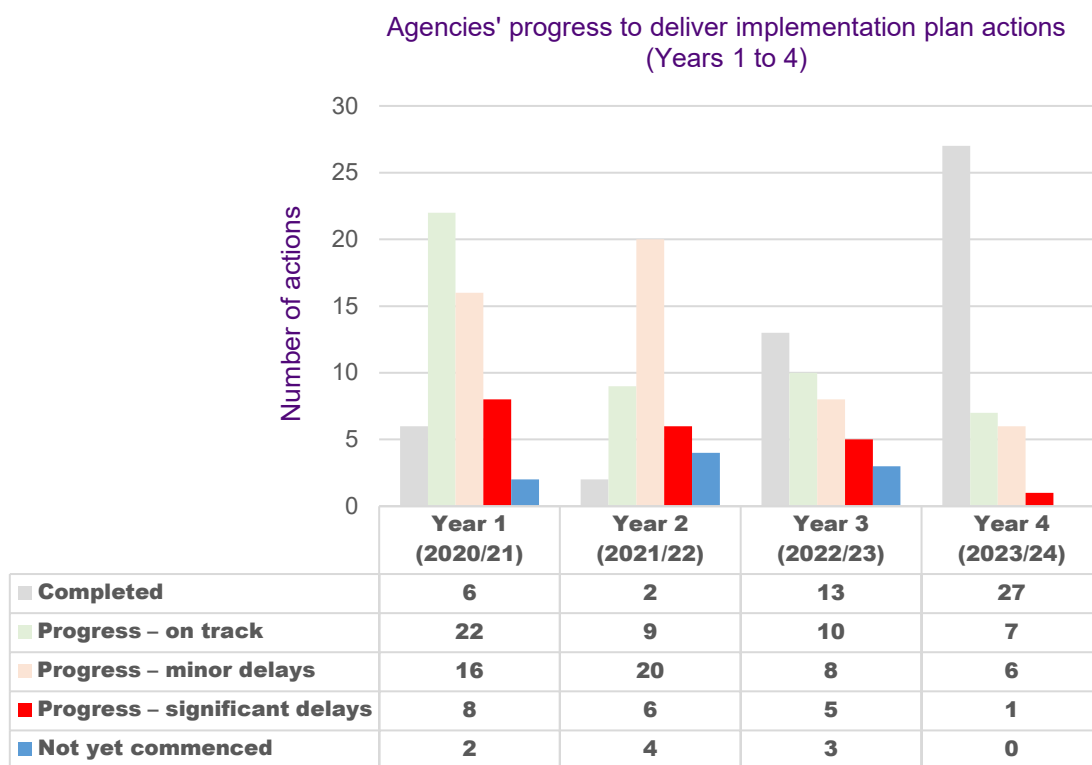
Overview of reform progress

Summary

Since the reform commenced in July 2020, CFA and FRV have each made notable progress to deliver relevant implementation plan actions for which they have sole responsibility and have achieved important milestones. Both agencies have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the reform and are working towards establishing the foundations for a complementary fire service despite the complex challenges encountered in the operational and industrial environments.

The table below provides a high-level summary of key milestones jointly achieved by agencies from Years 1 to 4 of the reform. It is not intended to be a detailed acquittal of the specific actions completed by each agency – this information can be found in Appendix B.

Table 2: Summary of key reform milestones



Key milestones for Fire Services Reform

Year 1 (2020/21)

- The *Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958* commenced on 1 July 2020.
- The FRV Act established FRV as a dedicated career firefighting agency, bringing together the former Metropolitan Fire Brigade and CFA career firefighters.
- The Act also re-established CFA as a volunteer firefighting agency.
- The Act established three independent bodies to provide oversight of the reform including the Fire District Review Panel, FSIM, and the FRB.
- The Minister for Emergency Services released the Year One Fire Services Reform Implementation Plan outlining actions agencies will complete to deliver on the intended outcomes of the reform.

- CFA and FRV signed transfer statements to transfer relevant property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV to support the delivery of reform (noting two allocation statements are outstanding – action 3.3).
- Agencies also developed their respective outcomes frameworks and began reporting on results every quarter.

**Year 2
(2021/22)**

- The Minister published the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan comprising 41 actions.
- CFA and FRV developed a governance framework to oversee and support the implementation of key reform activities at strategic and operational levels. Accordingly, agencies established HoA, FSOC and six FSOC sub-committees.
- CFA and FRV each delivered work to strengthen their respective agencies' culture and values.
- Agencies commenced developing performance measures for implementation plan actions, which will guide future effectiveness assessments by FSIM.

**Year 3
(2022/23)**

- DJCS established the Fire Services Reform Strategic Executive Committee to address strategic and whole-of-reform issues and opportunities.
- CFA and FRV developed a workflow approval process that outlines the entire consultation and approval process.
- CFA and FRV completed work to recognise the contribution made by both volunteer and career firefighters. The agencies collaborated to support nominations for national awards, and CFA expanded the CFA Service Awards to ensure seconded staff can be recognised for their service and contribution to CFA.
- CFA and FRV each developed strategies and plans to improve inclusion and diversity in their respective agencies.

**Year 4
(2023/24)**

- The Minister for Emergency Services approved a change request for all remaining actions in the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan in July 2024 (see Table 1).
 - DJCS established governance to address ongoing financial sustainability for agencies in the emergency management sector, including CFA and FRV.
 - CFA developed a fire services reform dashboard to be used as a shared tool for monitoring progress on all the agreements and guidelines being developed under action 3.9.
 - FRV's Women's Support Coordinator program was recognised at the 2024 Emergency Services Foundation's Diversity and Inclusion Awards, winning the Women's Equality Initiative award category (action 4.9)
-

Monitoring ‘in progress’ actions

Overview

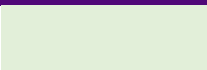



In 2023/24, agencies completed 12 actions and formally acquitted each of these actions. As at 30 June 2024, agencies reported that:

- 27 actions were completed
- 7 actions were in progress – on track
- 6 actions were in progress – minor delays
- 1 action was in progress – significant delays.

A high-level summary of the status of all the implementation plan actions is at Appendix B.

The below table provides definitions for the agency-reported status of implementation plan actions.

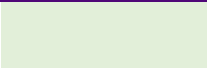

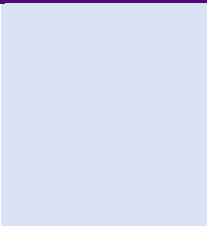
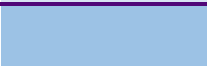
Table 3: Government implementation status definitions

Status	Legend	DJCS progress assessment definitions
In progress - on track		Action is on track to be completed by the ‘completion date’ as per the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan.
Completed		Action is finished and formally acquitted through completion and signing of the acquittal form.
In progress - minor delays		Action is experiencing minor delays that may impact delivery by the ‘completion date’ as per the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan.
In progress - significant delays		Action is experiencing significant delays and it is highly unlikely that the ‘completion date’ as per the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan will be met.

Note: The action completion date is the due date for a given action, as per the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan.

FSIM uses the below status descriptions when making an assessment of agencies’ progress to deliver an action.

Table 4: FSIM’s progress assessment definitions

Status	Legend	Description
Progressing		FSIM considers the action is in progress. FSIM will continue to monitor and report on its status.
Implemented		FSIM considers the action has been completed in accordance with the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan action scope. FSIM may undertake effectiveness assessments of actions that are implemented.
Partially implemented		FSIM considers the action has either not been delivered in accordance with the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan action deliverables or that there are outstanding matters to resolve before FSIM considers the action complete. FSIM may undertake effectiveness assessments of actions that are partially implemented.
Closed		FSIM has evaluated the effectiveness of the implemented action against its intended objectives.

Priority one: Strengthen CFA as a volunteer firefighting organisation

Action 1.1 action descriptor (revised):	Develop CFA's Engagement Framework
Action objective (revised)	To reinvigorate stakeholder engagement in the post Fire Services Reform environment.
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables (revised)	Development of CFA Engagement Framework.
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	Completed
FSIM's assessment of progress	Implemented

Progress summary

This action was updated as part of the DJCS-led Year 2-5 Implementation Plan review. As per the update, the sole deliverable for this action is the 'development of the CFA Engagement Framework', with the remaining deliverables that were previously part of this action being progressed by CFA as part of its business-as-usual activities.

CFA's Engagement Framework sets out the overarching approach for how CFA will engage with the Victorian community, its volunteers and staff, its sector partners and other key stakeholders.

The CFA Engagement Framework has been finalised and FSIM has received a copy.

CFA advises it will publish the Engagement Framework on its website when the Volunteer Engagement Plan (which was previously a deliverable under this action) is finalised.

FSIM's findings

Action 1.1 is implemented. CFA has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that CFA has completed the action deliverable.

Action 1.3 action descriptor (revised): Deliver the Volunteer Support Package (VSP)	
Action objective	To reinvigorate stakeholder engagement in the post Fire Services Reform environment.
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFA Pocketbook • Brigade Capability Review • CFA volunteer workwear • Fire Information Reporting System (FIRS) release three • Volunteer Recruitment Hub release four.
Completion date (revised)	March 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – minor delays
FSIM's assessment of progress	Progressing

Progress summary

This action was updated as part of the DJCS-led Year 2-5 Implementation Plan review. As part of the review, CFA outlined the specific deliverables for the action and extended the action completion date.

FSIM notes that there are two new projects that will be delivered as part of the updated action – the Fire Information Reporting System (release three) and the Volunteer Recruitment Hub (release four).

1. CFA Pocketbook

As previously reported by FSIM in its 2022/23 annual report, the CFA Pocketbook is a digital application that will allow CFA members to access digitised copies of CFA documentation via smart devices, such as smartphones and tablets, without internet connection. The application was initially due for completion in December 2023 but this was revised as part of the implementation plan review.

In 2023/24, CFA developed a technical proof of concept for this application to ensure a comprehensive understanding of system requirements, objectives and confirmation of technical capability to integrate existing CFA systems.


CFA also formed a test group, comprising selected CFA volunteers, to formally evaluate the proof of concept, with key learnings and recommendations compiled in a formal report.

CFA has engaged an external provider for the design, development and launch of the full product. CFA advises the development of the application is underway, with a soft launch expected in September 2024.

CFA reported to DJCS in its Q4 update that there are minor delays in completing this deliverable due to resource constraints and that this is not expected to delay the application's launch.

2. Brigade Capability Review

As noted in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report, the Baseline Capability Profiling Application (BCPA) is a key deliverable of the Brigade Capability Review.



The BCPA is a mobile and desktop-accessible application that brings together more than 60 million pieces of data from various systems and sources.

As at 30 June 2024, 1,494 CFA members had access to the BCPA tool and a further 382 were in the process of completing their training. CFA reports that authorised CFA members are actively using the tool to improve their understanding of a given brigade, including membership profile, the types and trends in incidents attended, the achievement of service delivery standards and many other elements.

The Brigade Capability Review is now complete and has transitioned to business-as-usual.

3. CFA volunteer workwear

As reported in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report, CFA has delivered 7,500 VSP-funded volunteer workwear sets as part of this project and this project is implemented.

4. Fire Information Reporting System (release three)

The FIRS system is used by CFA brigades to record information on the characteristics of the emergency incidents they attend.

In 2023/24, CFA delivered two major releases to FIRS to improve user experience and management functionality. The design and testing of these system releases was informed by feedback from selected volunteers.

CFA reports the final planned release in November 2024 will enable Brigades to report activity related to planned burns taking place across the state.

CFA reported to DJCS in its Q4 update that there are minor delays in completing this deliverable due to resource constraints, with project risks being monitored by the project steering committee.

5. Volunteer Recruitment Hub (release four)

The [Volunteer Recruitment Hub](#) is a purpose-built online platform designed to create an end-to-end onboarding process for new and transferring CFA volunteers.

CFA has developed system enhancements to improve usability and tracking for applicants, brigades and districts. CFA advises the deployment of enhancements is staged across two releases, with release 4.1.1 deployed in April 2024 and release 4.2 scheduled for deployment in late August 2024.

Digital Stores Project

Enhancements to CFA's Digital Stores, which was previously a deliverable under this action, are now being delivered as part of CFA's planned upgrade of its financial system. See FSIM's 2022/23 annual report for background on this project.

FSIM's findings and recommendations

Action 1.3 is progressing. FSIM encourages CFA to continue monitoring the delivery of the Pocketbook application and FIRS system release to ensure resource constraints do not affect the completion of this action by March 2025.

Action 1.4 action descriptor (revised)	Develop new Crew and Strike Team Leader training courses
Action objective (revised)	Update key CFA training programs to support volunteer operational capability development.
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables (revised)	Develop new Crew and Strike Team Leader training courses.
Completion date (revised)	30 November 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – on track
FSIM's assessment of progress	Progressing

Progress summary

Crew and Strike Team Leader courses are designed to increase participants' confidence and proficiency to lead in challenging environments.

CFA reviewed its Crew and Strike Team Leader courses through the CFA/VFBV Joint Training Committee and identified issues for resolution and opportunities for enhancements. CFA also explored options for suitable providers and course content for the revised courses.

Following this review, CFA identified a proprietary program it will implement in 2024/25 to equip emergency response teams and leaders from response agencies with the skills needed to respond to high-stress situations and effectively resolve conflict.

FSIM notes that as at 30 June 2024, CFA had not yet started delivering the new Crew and Strike Team Leader courses. CFA advises that the new courses will be delivered from September 2024 onwards.

FSIM's findings and recommendations

Action 1.4 is progressing. FSIM will monitor CFA's planned roll-out of the new Crew and Strike Team Leader courses in 2024/25 to assess the effectiveness of this action. FSIM will engage with volunteers in CFA and key stakeholders, including the VFBV, to inform its assessment and findings.

Action 1.6 action descriptor (revised)	Review and update training as part of the Develop Enhancing Training Capacity for New Volunteers
Action objective	CFA's training program for new operational members is fit for purpose, preparing and supporting members to safely meet their role and responsibilities.
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the CFA's General Firefighter (GFF) training program Issue personal protective clothing (PPC) in line with project funding and establish process to ensure issue to new volunteers who have completed GFF training.
Completion date (revised)	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – minor delays
FSIM's assessment of progress	Progressing

Progress summary

1. Review and update the CFA's GFF training program

CFA completed a review of the GFF training program, including the course materials, course design and course delivery. The review was informed by feedback from CFA members (staff, volunteer and paid instructors, and volunteers, including recent recruits) and the VFBV.

The findings and recommendations from this review were presented to CFA's Chief Officer for endorsement. FSIM received a copy of these findings and recommendations as evidence of progress. CFA advises that all the recommendations from this review were accepted and reflected in the updated GFF course. CFA further advises that the updated GFF course will be available to CFA districts from September 2024. CFA will continue to offer the first version of the GFF course until December 2024 during this transition period.

CFA reports minor delays to the roll out of the new GFF training program but does not anticipate that this will impact on the action being completed by June 2025. CFA is monitoring project risks and the transition to the new GFF training program through the project steering committee.

Figure 1: GFF training and professional development for volunteer instructors (2023/24)

GFF training is mandatory for all new operational CFA volunteers. In 2023/24, 1,530 CFA members had completed GFF training.

Professional development for Volunteer Instructors (previously referred to as volunteer trainers and assessors):

- two Volunteer Instructors were deployed to the Northern Territory to deliver firefighter training
- seven regionally-based volunteer instructor conferences delivered (over 130 volunteers attended) and one paid instructor conference
- 292 individual Volunteer Instructors used to deliver formal training and assessments against Vocational Education Training Public Safety Training Packages.



2. Issue PPC to new volunteers who have completed GFF training

As reported in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report, CFA issued wildfire PPC to over 3,600 members as at 30 June 2023.

The project funding has been expended and the project phase is now complete. PPC funding and delivery for those who have completed GFF training is now being managed as part of business-as-usual processes at district and state levels.

FSIM's findings

Action 1.6 is progressing. FSIM will monitor CFA's planned roll-out of the updated GFF training program in 2024/25 to assess the effectiveness of this action. FSIM will engage with volunteers in CFA and key stakeholders, including the VFBV, to inform its assessment and findings.

Action 1.7 action descriptor (revised)	Review CFA's operating model and develop a roadmap to create a more contemporary and sustainable organisation
Action objective (revised)	CFA's operating model supports the organisation to achieve its strategic objectives.
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a review of CFA's operating model • Develop a program roadmap of initiatives that will enhance service delivery and create a more contemporary and sustainable organisation.
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	Completed
FSIM's assessment of progress	Implemented

Progress summary

1. Complete a review of CFA's operating model

As noted in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report, CFA initiated a review of its operating model in 2022. The review culminated in the development of the Operating Model Program, which was endorsed by CFA's Board in March 2023.

The Operating Model Program comprises a roadmap of 29 initiatives that will be progressed over the next five to six years. The CFA Executive will determine which of the 29 initiatives will be prioritised for delivery each year.

2. Develop a program roadmap of initiatives

CFA's Executive Committee (operating as the Program Control Board for the Operating Model Program) endorsed ten initiatives to be progressed across six workstreams in 2023/24.

CFA established the Operating Model Program office in August 2023 to provide project management support for the delivery of these initiatives. CFA also established a Members Online page to communicate with members (volunteers and staff) about the work being progressed.

As at 30 June 2024, CFA reports that work is progressing on all of the ten initiatives and it is on track. FSIM has seen evidence of CFA's briefing to its Board to confirm the implementation status of these initiatives.

FSIM's findings and recommendations

Action 1.7 is implemented. CFA has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that CFA has completed the action deliverables.

FSIM may conduct an effectiveness assessment of this action in 2024/25, given CFA's operating model and related program of work is important to achieving the reform's vision for a modern fire service. CFA's data on the implementation of the operating model review, and related initiatives, will be a crucial input to this assessment.

Priority two: Strengthen FRV as a career firefighting agency

Action 2.3 action descriptor	Develop and implement a contemporary Health Model, which establishes state-wide comprehensive organisational health standards, policies and support mechanisms that are designed to proactively manage and mitigate health risks whilst improving the effectiveness and quality of care provided to our firefighters and corporate staff
Action objective	FRV employees are supported by a coherent fit-for-purpose Health Model designed, endorsed by Executive Leadership Team and implemented organisation-wide.
Lead agency	FRV
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical and psychological services • Health, Safety and Wellbeing transition.
Completion date	June 2023
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	Completed
FSIM's assessment of progress	Implemented

Progress summary

FRV executed its medical services provider transition plan on 12 July 2023 and transitioned the Health Model to business-as-usual. Medical and psychological services under this model are now live and accessible to all FRV staff across the state.

FRV has established a clinical governance framework to support external health services to deliver high quality care to FRV staff and to ensure consistent clinical quality and safety for firefighters. It includes metrics for measuring the effectiveness and benefits of the Health Model to support a continuous improvement approach.

FSIM's findings and recommendations

Action 2.3 is implemented. FRV has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that FRV has completed the action deliverables.

FSIM may conduct an effectiveness assessment of this action in 2024/25. Implementation data gathered from the clinical governance framework and relevant results from FRV's outcomes framework will be a crucial input to this work.

Action 2.4 action descriptor (revised)	Merge required legacy enterprise agreements and commence negotiations on new agreements
Action objective (revised)	To ensure appropriate steps are taken to harmonise enterprise agreements.
Lead agency	FRV
Deliverables (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Operational Staff Enterprise Agreement (combining the two operational agreements pre-1 July 2020) • Establishment of a single set of consultative committees to support consultation processes arising from enterprise agreements • Approval from government to commence negotiation on a new Operational Enterprise Agreement • Approval from government to commence negotiation on a combined Corporate and Technical Staff Agreement and Professional, Technical and Administrative Staff Agreement • Approval from government to commence negotiations on a new Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement.
Completion date (revised)	30 November 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	Completed
FSIM's assessment of progress	Implemented

Progress summary

The scope of this action was revised considerably as part of the DJCS-led Year 2-5 Implementation Plan review. The action deliverables now focus on obtaining approvals to merge legacy requirements. The development and finalisation of relevant agreements will be progressed by FRV as part of business-as-usual.

1. Single Operational Staff Enterprise Agreement

This deliverable is complete. As reported in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report, FRV's Operational Employees Interim Enterprise Agreement 2020 combines the two operational agreements pre-1 July 2020 into one single interim agreement.

2. Establish a single set of consultative committees

A single set of Operational Consultative Committees was established in July 2020 to support consultation processes arising from the Operational enterprise agreements. The three Consultative Committees are the Operational Consultative Committee, the Corporate and Technical Consultative Committee and the Mechanical Engineering Workshops Consultative Committee.

3. Approval from government to commence negotiation on a new Operational Enterprise Agreement

FRV received government approval in December 2021 to begin negotiation on a new Operational Enterprise Agreement. The negotiations formally commenced on 26 April 2022.

As at 30 June 2024, bargaining for a new Operations Agreement was subject to an intractable bargaining process in the Fair Work Commission (FWC). The FWC made the intractable bargaining declaration on 5 October 2023. The matter has been subject to one hearing and the decision from that hearing has been the subject of a UFU application for a Judicial Review. As such, the matter is now before the FWC and the Federal Court, and the associated timeframes, including an eventual Intractable Bargaining Workplace Determination (which would form the new industrial instrument in lieu of an Enterprise Agreement) are outside of FRV's control.

As reported in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report, once the FRV Operational industrial instrument is resolved, FRV advises it will work towards harmonising Division A and Division B entitlements.

4. Approval from government to commence negotiation on a combined Corporate and Technical Staff Agreement and Professional, Technical and Administrative Staff Agreement

FRV received government approval to commence negotiation on a combined Corporate and Technical Staff Agreement and Professional, Technical and Administrative Staff Agreement in November 2021.

On 28 February 2024, FRV commenced bargaining for in-principle agreement on the FRV Corporate and Technical and Administrative Agreement with the assistance of the FWC under section 240 of the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

To date, FRV has held 55 bargaining meetings with the UFU and their workplace delegates, including 14 meetings in this reporting period. FRV has also participated in 12 section 240 conferences before the FWC since 5 April 2023.

As at 30 June 2024, 14 items remain outstanding. FRV is working towards finalising the agreement before the end of the calendar year, however this is dependent on reaching agreement with the UFU.

FRV also continues to have regular discussions with government about formulating an offer to settle the agreement under the 2023 Wages Policy, following UFU's rejection of a government approved offer in February 2024.

5. Approval from government to commence negotiations on a new Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement

As previously reported by FSIM, the FWC approved the Fire Rescue Victoria Mechanical Engineering Workshops Agreement 2020 in February 2021.

FSIM's findings

Action 2.4 is implemented. FRV has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that FRV has completed the action deliverables.

It must be noted that the action deliverables only set up the process and approvals to commence negotiations. The timelines for finalising the outstanding agreements in this action are subject to negotiations being finalised with the UFU or the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, and FWC's timelines for reviewing and approving the agreements. This negotiation process, in the context of FRV's complex industrial environment, risks prolonging the timelines for finalising the agreements.

FSIM recognises that these negotiations and the outcome of these negotiations are complex and sensitive. The fact that the outcome cannot be controlled by one single entity means that identifying a completion date for finalising these agreements is problematic.

Priority three: Plan and build for the future

Action 3.1 action descriptor (revised)	Ensure FRV's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is consistent across all stations to support service delivery
Action objective	FRV's ICT services are aligned to business priorities and outcomes which directly support community and firefighter safety.
Lead agency	FRV
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All transitioned stations and workplaces use a consistent station turn out system Relevant corporate systems are transferred from CFA to FRV (where mutually agreed) to support transferred employees An ICT Strategy to map the future uplift requirements for FRV across operational and corporate areas.
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	Completed
FSIM's assessment of progress	Implemented

Progress summary

1. All transitioned stations and workplaces use a consistent station turn out system

As reported in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report under action 2.1, FRV completed ICT upgrades to harmonise operational communications across all FRV stations, including in 37 former CFA integrated stations transferred to FRV. This included the installation of a consistent station turnout system and related equipment.

The station turnout system became operational in all fire stations on 1 August 2023, with additional system enhancements being rolled out as part of business-as-usual activities.

2. Relevant corporate systems are transferred from CFA to FRV (where mutually agreed) to support transferred employees

FRV consulted with CFA to mutually agree on the transfer of two corporate systems to FRV. This transfer was completed in May 2022.

3. FRV ICT Strategy mapping future requirements for operational and corporate areas

As reported in last year's annual report, FRV developed its ICT Strategy in September 2021 and has commenced delivering some foundational elements of the strategy.



FSIM's findings and recommendations

Action 3.1 is implemented. FRV has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that FRV has completed the action deliverables.

As FSIM has reported in consecutive outcomes reports, FRV's systems were impacted by the December 2022 cyber-attack. This includes systems that FRV uses for quarterly outcomes reporting to FSIM.

FSIM has been advised that FRV is undertaking work to restore its systems and looks forward to FRV fulsomely reporting outcomes data in 2024/25.

Action 3.2 action descriptor (revised)	Deliver the fire station and firefighting fleet replacement program
Action objective	Priority stations and appliances are replaced to ensure they are fit for purpose and enhance operational response.
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed specifications for capital programs (station builds and appliances) • Contracts in place for the delivery of 50 replacement appliances • Contracts in place for the delivery of replacement fire stations funded through this investment.
Completion date	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – significant delays
FSIM's assessment of progress	Progressing – refer to FSIM's findings below

Progress summary

1. Agreed specifications for capital programs (station builds and appliances)

This deliverable is complete. The specifications for heavy tankers, light tankers and station builds are outlined in relevant specification documents and contracts.

2. Contracts in place for the delivery of 50 replacement appliances

CFA has engaged a provider to manufacture 48 heavy tankers and 2 crew cab light tankers as part of the Tanker Replacement project.

CFA has experienced significant delays due to external factors, including resourcing constraints in the manufacturing industry and increases in global material prices.

In 2023/24, CFA received 19 heavy tankers and 2 light tankers. This is out of a total of 37 tankers that have been delivered to CFA to date. CFA advises the remaining 13 heavy tankers are expected to be delivered in the first quarter of 2024/25.


3. Contracts in place for the delivery of replacement fire stations funded through this investment

CSBA is managing the delivery of replacement fire stations on CFA's behalf. CSBA Fire Services – Country Fire Authority Program Steering Committee, comprising senior staff from CFA, DJCS, EMV and CSBA, oversees the delivery of this program of work.

As at 30 June 2024, work was completed on St Leonards, Coldstream, Modewarre, Dimboola, Warracknabeal and Molka stations. Work was also progressing on all the remaining stations within the Stations Replacement Program, which are at various contractual stages (design or construction contracts).

The status of the remaining fire stations that are part of the Stations Replacement Program was as follows:

- The Basin, Morrisons, Dartmoor, Winnindoo, Hoddles Creek and Leitchville - under design

- 
- Pylong - construction contract has been awarded
 - Golden Square and Natte Yallock - under construction.

CFA is working with CSBA to mitigate further delays and control budget overruns and program funding impacts within the Station Replacement Program.

FSIM's findings

Action 3.2 is progressing, noting CFA has reported significant delays in two of the three deliverables in this action.

Based on CFA's advice that contracts are in place for the delivery of all 50 replacement appliances, FSIM considers this deliverable is complete.

It is unclear, however, at what contractual stage (i.e. design or construction) the deliverable for replacement fire stations can be considered complete. FSIM acknowledges that having contracts for all the replacement fire stations is an important step but ultimately it is having the physical stations that is the most important outcome for these brigades.

Action 3.3 action descriptor **Finalise the transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV**

Action objective (revised) The transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV to support the delivery of reform.

Lead agency CFA

Deliverables (revised)

Separated into 5 tranches for implementation through 6 allocation statements, 8 transfer statements, and 1 agreement.

- Allocation Statement 1 – signed by Minister (1 September 2020)
- Allocation Statement 2 – signed by the Minister (26 February 2021)
- Allocation Statement 3 – signed by Minister (29 March 2022)
- Allocation Statement 4A (BA sets) – signed by the Minister (22 September 2022)
- Allocation Statement 4B – Yet to be finalised, currently with CFA for consideration
- Allocation Statement 6 – awaiting Ministerial Direction (new s103)
- Transfer Statement 1B – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (24 June 2021)
- Transfer Statement 2A – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (24 June 2021)
- Transfer Statement 2B – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (24 June 2021)
- Transfer Statement 3A – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (24 June 2021)
- Transfer Statement 3B – signed by CFA and FRV CFOs (24 June 2021)
- Transfer Statement 3C – signed by the Minister (31 January 2021)
- Transfer Statement 6A – signed by Minister (12 May 2022)
- Transfer Statement 6A1 – signed by Minister (12 May 2022)
- Tools of Trade Agreement – signed by Minister (8 March 2021).

Completion date December 2024

Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024 In progress – minor delays

FSIM's assessment of progress Progressing

Context

This action requires CFA, working with DJCS and FRV, to execute the Fire Services Reform Transfer Strategy (the Transfer Strategy) to transfer certain property, rights, liabilities, and obligations from CFA to FRV.

The Transfer Strategy was separated into five tranches for implementation through allocation statements, transfer statements, and agreements. As reported in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report:

- tranches One, Two and Three were completed in June 2021, and
- the transfer of personal protective clothing and equipment assets from CFA to FRV (as part of Tranche Four) was completed in September 2022.

Progress on the outstanding deliverables for this action, as at 30 June 2024, is outlined below.



Progress summary

1. Allocation Statement 4B

Allocation Statement 4B is intended to facilitate the transfer of remaining assets in co-located stations from CFA to FRV. This includes office equipment and furnishings, plant and equipment, training equipment, furniture, fixtures, small appliances and white goods.

A draft allocation statement has been prepared, with CFA working with DJCS to finalise the statement. FRV will also be engaged as part of the work to finalise the allocation statement.

2. Allocation Statement 6

Allocation Statement 6 is intended to facilitate the transfer of contingent rights, liabilities and obligations for employees transferred from CFA to FRV under section 103 of the FRV Act.

Section 105A was introduced into the FRV Act in February 2024 to facilitate the transfer through a Ministerial direction. As at 30 June 2024, the Minister was yet to issue a direction to CFA to prepare an allocation statement.

FSIM's findings

Action 3.3 is progressing.

Action 3.4 action descriptor (revised) **FRV, in consultation with CFA, identify capital works required across designated stations at the time of the reform and develop a framework (Tenancy Agreement) to support delivery of agreed projects**

Action objective (revised) Facilities enable agencies to deliver a complementary fire service to the Victorian community.

Lead agency FRV

Deliverables (revised)

- Understanding of all outstanding capital works required across designated stations
- Agreed capital works framework (Tenancy Agreement), that provides guidance on the delivery of capital projects.

Completion date 30 June 2024

Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024 Completed

FSIM's assessment of progress Implemented

Progress summary

The Tenancy Agreement, signed by CFA and FRV in May 2022, provides a framework to guide the delivery of capital projects in all 33 co-located stations.

FSIM has seen evidence of collaboration between FRV and CFA to agree on proposed maintenance works at co-located stations in Portland, Rowville, South Morang and Wangaratta. These proposals need to be agreed at station level before proceeding to FRV's formal consultation process with the UFU. Only after these steps can they be formalised in the Tenancy Agreement.

As FSIM has reported in previous annual reports, the Minister requested FRV to transition 17 station build and modification projects to CSBA in August 2022. Of these 17 projects, 9 station build and modification projects are to be delivered under this action. However, FRV advises that the transfer of delivery responsibilities to CSBA for the agreed capital projects has paused, with no progress made due to industrial issues. As a result, FRV remains responsible for progressing delivery on co-located station builds two years after the government directive for an integrated fire services infrastructure delivery arrangement.

FSIM's findings

Action 3.4 is implemented. FRV has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that FRV has completed the action deliverables.

However, FSIM is concerned that the ongoing industrial action may be preventing the delivery of necessary capital projects for career firefighters and volunteers at co-located stations and encourages all parties to resolve this issue as a matter of priority.

FSIM does not have a view on who should be responsible for the delivery of these projects, as this is a matter for government. The needs of frontline career firefighters and volunteers must be put first and these projects must be completed as planned. FSIM will examine the effectiveness of this action in 2024/25, including the progress and outcomes of capital works projects in co-located stations.

Action 3.6 action descriptor **Rollout of the FRV Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) ensembles as part of the PPC project**

Action objective New structural ensemble delivered in accordance with FRV specifications and delivery timelines. All FRV firefighters are to be supplied with the new generation PPC structural ensemble.

Lead agency FRV

- Deliverables**
- Identify and mitigate organisational or other risk factors that could potentially impact the rollout of the PPC ensembles
 - Develop and implement a rollout process
 - Manage and measure contractual service level agreements and key performance indicators
 - Contract management reporting and monitoring over the life of the agreement.

Completion date 30 June 2023

Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024 Completed

FSIM's assessment of progress Implemented

Progress summary

FRV reported this action as complete as at 31 December 2023 and formally acquitted this action in January 2024.

In 2023/24, FRV issued 8,469 Structural PPC garments and 10,993 Wildfire PPC garments.

This action has now moved to business-as-usual.

FSIM's findings

Action 3.6 is implemented. FRV has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that FRV has completed the action deliverables.

Action 3.8 action descriptor	CFA, in collaboration with FRV, to develop protocols to ensure all FRV seconded training staff satisfy CFA's Registered Training Organisation (RTO) obligations and requirements
Action objective	CFA's RTO obligations and requirements are satisfied by FRV training staff secondment protocols.
Lead agency (revised)	CFA and FRV
Deliverables (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFA to confirm to FRV RTO requirements and obligations relating to seconded instructors set by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) • FRV to identify any gaps between CFA RTO & VRQA requirements and FRV ability to meet these requirements. CFA and FRV to identify agreed options to address these gaps • FRV to develop a roadmap of the joint CFA / FRV agreed actions required to meet VFA RTO & VRQAs requirements and any identified gaps.
Completion date (revised)	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – on track
FSIM's assessment of progress	Progressing

Context

CFA is a Registered Training Provider. It is regulated by the VRQA and is required to comply with the Guidelines for Vocational Education and Training providers (the Guidelines) issued under section 4.3.18A of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. The Guidelines require all RTOs that deliver training to anyone under the age of 18 to comply with the Child Safe Standards made by the Minister for Child Protection and Family Services under section 17 of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

On 1 January 2023, in addition to the requirements under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act, it became a requirement of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* that RTOs comply with the Child Safe Standards as a condition of registration.

This action requires CFA to advise FRV of the RTO requirements and obligations (set by the VRQA) relating to seconded instructors and for FRV to develop a roadmap to meet these requirements.

CFA risks non-compliance with the VRQA standards if FRV secondees do not comply with the Child Safe Standards (i.e. FRV secondees must have a valid Working with Children Check to deliver training on CFA's behalf to people aged under 18 years). As at 30 June 2024, of the 62 FRV instructors seconded to CFA, 82.3 per cent (i.e. 51 of 62 seconded FRV instructors) have a valid Working with Children Check.

FSIM notes that this action has key linkages with action 4.5, which requires CFA to develop a Child Safety Compliance Plan, and action 5.1, which requires CFA to develop a capability statement outlining the skills and capabilities of secondees. CFA has completed both these actions.

Progress summary

FSIM understands that CFA must provide FRV advice on the RTO requirements and obligations relating to seconded instructors, including as it relates to the Child Safe Standards, as an important

first step for FRV to conduct a gap analysis. However, this was not completed during the reporting period.

CFA and FRV advised FSIM that this action will be jointly progressed by both agencies through FSOC's training sub-committee in 2024/25. FSIM was provided a copy of the training sub-committee's draft workplan and has verified that the action's deliverables are captured in the draft workplan.

FSIM's findings and recommendations

Action 3.8 is progressing. Although CFA and FRV have reported that this action is on track, FSIM notes that little progress has been made to date.

FSIM has concerns about the existing governance arrangements to deliver this action, differences in organisational policies requiring relevant staff and / or volunteers to have a valid Working with Children Check (within the context of the secondment arrangement), and the requirement to consult and seek agreement with the UFU to complete the action deliverables.

There are overlaps in responsibilities between FSOC's training sub-committee, the Joint Child Safety Working Group and the Joint Secondment Workforce Advisory Group in relation to implementing Child Safe Standards for FRV secondees. The work of these groups is further discussed in action 5.1. This overlap presents confusion about which group is ultimately responsible for progressing this action. Agencies must therefore review and streamline the governance needed to ensure compliance with the Child Safe Standards within the secondment arrangement.

CFA and FRV have an in-principle commitment to comply with the Child Safe Standards. The CFA Board's position is that all staff and volunteers must have a valid Working with Children Check. However, not all FRV staff are required to hold a valid Working with Children Check. This is only a requirement for FRV staff (including firefighters) who participate in child and youth focused community education programs. This is akin to the (former) Metropolitan Fire Brigade policy that required MFB staff to have a valid Working with Children Check if it was required for their work (e.g. community education). While this difference in internal organisational policies is not an issue in itself, it can explain how the differences in organisational requirements for compliance with the Child Safe Standards can have an impact in the context of the secondment arrangement.

To date, CFA has had to rely on FRV secondees to self-elect to get a valid Working with Children Check and complete relevant training to comply with these standards. CFA cannot require FRV secondees to comply with its workplace policy setting if it is different to FRV's policy, and if FRV was to change its policy to align with CFA's requirement then such a change would be subject to consult and agree provisions with the UFU under FRV's enterprise agreement. At the end of the reporting period, there had been limited engagement with the UFU's Operational Consultative Committee to formalise agreement on this matter. This creates significant risks for CFA from non-compliance with the Child Safe Standards and the VRQA requirements.

FSIM notes that, on face value, the requirement for FRV secondees to comply with CFA's Child Safe Action Plan and the VRQA requirements should be relatively straightforward. However, at the end of the reporting period, there was little demonstrable progress and the risks from non-compliance repeatedly raised by FSIM in previous years' reports remain. This demonstrates the complexities arising from both agencies working together under different policies and procedures and in a complex industrial environment that does not always provide the flexibility or efficiency for action on important matters.

FSIM will closely monitor the progress of this action in 2024/25, including actions taken individually and jointly by CFA and FRV to meet the VRQA's requirements.

Action 3.9 action descriptor **Where practical and appropriate, finalise harmonisation of procedures, including service level procedures between CFA and FRV and any related party to ensure the agreements support effective operations**

Action objective (revised) Fire agencies work collaboratively to operationalise complementary fire services arrangements.

Lead agency CFA and FRV

- Deliverables (revised)**
- A joint statement on complementary fire services
 - Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework (includes foundational agreements in place – Service Level Deed of Agreement (SLDA) and Secondment Agreement)
 - Service Delivery Plans. HoA agreed on 18 March 2024 to develop the following Plans:
 - Fire Investigation – the current agreed schedules transition to a Service Delivery Plan
 - Dangerous Goods
 - Fire Services Communications Controllers (FSCC)
 - Protective Equipment Services
 - Specialist Instructors
 - District Mechanical Officers (Fleet Services)
 - Use of Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre Campuses
 - Land Use Planning
 - Communications Technical Services / Tower Overseers
 - Structural Fire Safety / Building Environment – The Deed of Indemnity and Instruments of Delegation/Authorisation to be referenced in an overarching Service Delivery Plan
 - Establish appropriate governance to ensure oversight, management and review of agreements (via establishment of FSOC and HoA)
 - Secondment Guidelines to be developed and approved by HoA (agreed at HoA 29 April 2024)
 - CFA and FRV to communicate within their agencies about the Fire Services Governance Framework and its constituent documents (as agreed).

Completion date (revised) June 2025

Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024 In progress – on track

FSIM’s assessment of progress Progressing – high risk that the action will not be completed on time

Progress summary

1. Governance oversight for the delivery of this action

Agencies have established governance to ensure oversight, management and review of the agreements and guidelines being developed under this action. HoA has overall accountability for

delivering this action and FSOC provides subject matter expertise (as required) to inform the development of several deliverables in this action.

FSIM is satisfied that agencies have a shared understanding of the definition and principles of complementary fire services and are using it to guide joint decision-making at HoA and FSOC.

FSIM notes that CFA has developed a fire services reform dashboard that acts as the agreed source of truth for the HoA for progress updates on all the agreements being developed under this action. The dashboard is the reference point for the weekly HoA meetings, which has standing agenda items to discuss key areas of activity such as vacancy and non-relief, secondment guidelines and service delivery plans.

2. Service Delivery Plans (SDPs) – formerly SLDAs

The Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework

In 2023/24, CFA and FRV developed a Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework to support the operationalisation of the agreements being developed under this action. This framework was endorsed by HoA on 18 March 2024. Under this framework, the schedules that underpinned SLDAs have transitioned to SDPs.

HoA agreed to communicate the Fire Services Governance Framework and its constituent documents within CFA and FRV. CFA briefed its Executive on the framework in April 2024 for communication to relevant teams within the agency, and FRV advises that it has shared the framework with all FRV staff involved in the development and drafting of the SDPs.

Service Delivery Plans

HoA agreed to develop ten SDPs and a consistent template for these plans. HoA also agreed that the Fire Investigation SLDA, which was previously agreed to and executed, will transition to the new SDP template. HoA deemed the Alarm Assessment SLDA as no longer required, with each agency agreeing to provide these services within their own jurisdiction.

The intent of the SDPs is to outline the services provided from one agency to the other, as per the SLDAs. The SDPs will be developed in line with the agreed consultation workflow process.

These SDPs are due to be completed by 30 June 2025. As at 30 June 2024, the fire services reform dashboard shows that:

- three SDPs (District Mechanical Services, Fire Services Communication Controllers, and Communications Technicians / Tower Overseers) are 25 per cent complete
- six SDPs (Dangerous Goods, Land Use Planning, Protective Equipment, Structural Fire Safety/Building Environment, Specialist Response Instructors, and Use of Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre Campuses) are five per cent complete
- the Fire Investigation SLDA has been agreed to and executed and is pending transfer to the new SDP template.

Transition of end-to-end service delivery for community infrastructure services in the CAoV

To address the barriers in the regulatory framework governing the delivery of end-to-end services in the CAoV, FSR SEC considered a proposal by CFA to transition the end-to-end delivery of Dangerous Goods, Caravan Parks and Moveable Dwellings and Land Use Planning services in the CAoV back to CFA, and for CFA and FRV to propose changes to the Victorian Planning Provisions to allow FRV to deliver some components of end-to-end (sub-divisions and street hydrants) Land Use Planning services in the CAoV on behalf of CFA.

FSR SEC noted the proposal and CFA and FRV committed to undertaking further work. DJCS committed to progressing a request to the Minister for Planning seeking relevant amendments to the

Victorian Planning Provisions. Until the amendment occurs, the current arrangements will remain in place.

FSIM notes that as at 30 June 2024, DJCS was still progressing the request to seek the necessary amendments to the Victorian Planning Provisions and CFA and FRV were continuing to operate under existing arrangements.

Backlog of Dangerous Goods applications in the CAoV

The Victorian Planning Provisions prevent CFA from delegating functions and powers to FRV to process Dangerous Good applications. This, along with vacancies in Fire Safety Officer roles in the CAoV, has led to a backlog of these applications.

This issue was raised at HoA throughout 2023/24. Subsequently, CFA committed internal resourcing to assist FRV with addressing the issue until the backlog was reduced to a manageable level. As at 30 June 2024, FRV advises the majority of the backlog has been reduced. HoA continues to actively monitor this issue.

Finalising the Dangerous Goods SDP will clarify the roles and responsibilities for CFA and FRV in delivering these services and could contribute to more efficient processes and a decrease in backlogs. This SDP must therefore be completed as a matter of priority to enable greater interoperability between the agencies. This will facilitate coordinated and efficient service delivery until amendments are made to allow CFA to delegate relevant functions and powers to FRV for delivering this service in the CAoV.

3. Secondment guidelines

On 29 April 2024, HoA also agreed to develop six secondment guidelines (previously referred to as supplementary instruments) to support the operationalisation of the secondment agreement. Accordingly, HoA agreed to:

- develop four secondment guidelines (Relief Management, Dispute and Grievance Resolution, OHS Reporting and WorkSafe, and Professional Development)
- amend two previously agreed supplementary instruments to secondment guidelines (Additional Seconded Positions and Authorisation of Expense Claims)
- acquit five supplementary instruments that are no longer required as they are expected to be addressed through other channels (Rostered Leave Management, Performance and Misconduct, Vacancy Management, Consultation Process and Tools of Trade).


As at 30 June 2024, reporting in the fire services reform dashboard shows that the OHS Reporting and WorkSafe guideline is 80 per cent complete, the Relief Management guideline is 25 per cent complete, and the remaining two guidelines are 5 per cent complete.

FSIM's findings and recommendations

Action 3.9 is progressing. However, given the significant amount of work that needs to occur to deliver this action by the completion date, and the limited progress made to date, FSIM considers that there is a high risk this action will not be completed on time.

This action is a crucial enabler for the reform. The successful completion of this action will support greater interoperability between CFA and FRV and enable CFA to meet its legislative obligations and timelines under the Victorian Planning Provisions. This will ultimately result in better outcomes for the Victorian community.

FSIM is satisfied that agencies now have a clear framework to deliver this action. FSIM is also satisfied that agencies are using a shared reporting tool to track progress against the agreed consultation workflow process. To maximise the utility of this dashboard reporting tool and to increase transparency and accountability, FSIM recommends agencies enhance the dashboard to indicate for what duration SDPs have remained at their respective workflow process stage. This will also support



increased identification of risks and barriers to completing these agreements on time, including any bottlenecks in the consultation workflow process.

While FSIM understands that HoA is ultimately accountable for the outstanding deliverables in this action, FSOC will need to provide subject matter expertise to support the development of some of these deliverables. Given FSOC did not meet in 2023/24, FSIM is concerned about FSOC's capacity to contribute towards the development of relevant agreements. FSIM recommends HoA should actively monitor FSOC and plan for mitigating risks and barriers to completing this action, including delays from consulting with the Consultative Committee on relevant deliverables.

FSIM notes that, when finalised, secondment guidelines and agencies' internal organisational policies (e.g. FRV's processes for Leave Management and Vacancy Management, which are yet to be developed) will provide a practical framework for the day-to-day management of FRV secondees in CFA. It could also help address the ongoing vacancy and non-relief issues experienced by CFA (e.g. the relief management guideline will assist in ensuring a fair, equitable and transparent process for sourcing relief). Without these guidelines and policies, there is potential for confusion about how FRV staff seconded to CFA are to be managed and supported. This may not incentivise FRV staff to actively seek secondment opportunities in CFA. This is especially important in the context of the vacancy and non-relief issues CFA experienced in the CAoV in 2023/24, with CFA reporting a deficit of, on average, 17 Commanders and ACFOs each week, equating to 11 per cent of CFA's operational workforce. However, on its own, FSIM recognises that these guidelines and policies will not resolve the ongoing vacancy and non-relief issues experienced by CFA given it is a complex issue with many contributing factors.

FSIM will closely monitor the delivery of this action in 2024/25 but remains concerned that its ultimate success is subject to the willingness of key stakeholders to facilitate these matters through the Consultative Committee process and the outcome of this process.

The challenges experienced by agencies to finalise the deliverables in this action is yet another illustration of the systemic issues that pose a challenge to completing this action and the realisation of a complementary fire service in Victoria.

Action 3.12 action descriptor (revised)	Develop agreements for corporate support functions between CFA and FRV that enable service delivery
Action objective (revised)	CFA and FRV support service requirements are met through agreed and appropriate protocols and frameworks.
Lead agency	CFA and FRV
Deliverables (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and execute an Information Sharing MoU for ongoing corporate support arrangements • Develop and execute a Tenancy Agreement • Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework • Prepare and agree to station sub-schedules and maps for outstanding co-located brigades (Melton, Dandenong and South Warrandyte).
Completion date (revised)	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – minor delays
FSIM's assessment of progress	Progressing

Progress summary

1. Develop and execute an Information Sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for ongoing corporate support arrangements

CFA and FRV has drafted an Information Sharing MoU outlining the process for both agencies to share information for relevant corporate functions.

This MoU replaces the Corporate Services MoU that was a deliverable under this action, which CFA and FRV agreed in August 2022 was not required.

The draft Information Sharing MoU was endorsed to proceed to HoA by a number of CFA's Executive on 28 June 2023 and by FRV's Executive Leadership Team on 6 July 2023. It was subsequently endorsed by HoA on 17 July 2023 to proceed for consultation through FRV's Consultative Committee process.

The Operations Consultative Committee agreed to the draft Information Sharing MoU at its meeting on 9 November 2023. FRV advises the draft MoU will be considered by the Corporate and Technical Employees Consultative Committee for noting in August 2024.

There is a risk that due to the Corporate and Technical Employees Consultative Committee meeting only two times in 2023/24, there could be further delays before the Committee can consider and provide feedback on the proposed MoU in 2024/25. However, FRV anticipates that any consequential delays in this process is unlikely to affect the MoU's planned execution by June 2025.

2. Develop and execute a Tenancy Agreement

CFA and FRV signed the Tenancy Agreement in May 2022. The Agreement contains 30 (out of 33) co-located station schedules.

FSIM notes that the Tenancy Agreement is complete.

3. Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework

The Fire Services Reform Doctrine Framework is intended to support the operationalisation of the agreements being developed under action 3.9 and provide practical guidance on CFA and FRV's services and functions. This framework was endorsed by HoA on 18 March 2024.

4. Prepare and agree to station sub-schedules and maps for outstanding co-located brigades

The Geelong station sub-schedule and map, and amendments to the Corio sub-schedule and map, were agreed-in-principle by CFA and FRV in April 2024 for consideration by the Consultative Committee. The station sub-schedules and maps for Dandenong, Melton and South Warrandyte remain outstanding due to a number of unresolved issues.

FRV reports that since April 2024, CFA and FRV have been meeting monthly to work through issues and to confirm timelines for the outstanding station sub-schedules and maps. FRV also reported that these meetings have improved joint understanding of the barriers to finalising the outstanding station sub-schedules and maps and that this work is on track.

Across the three locations, FSIM has been advised that there are different reasons why the station sub-schedules have not been finalised. In some sites, it relates to industrial action taken by some FRV personnel. In others, it has been suggested to FSIM that there appears to be an unwillingness to act in a cooperative and mutually respectful manner.

FSIM notes that agencies are yet to reach in-principle agreement on these three outstanding agreements and FRV's consultation requirements risks further delaying the finalisation of these agreements.

FSIM therefore remains concerned that agencies have been unable to demonstrate tangible progress to finalise the outstanding station sub-schedules four years into the reform. FSIM notes that while HoA provides regular updates on the status of these sub-schedules, these concerns remain.

FSIM's observations

"To provide some context on how this issue is impacting some co-located stations: in early 2022 I attended the Melton fire station to meet with CFA volunteers. I, along with some of my staff members, entered the station during normal business hours through the fire station front door and was taken to the room where I was to have my meetings.

My meeting finished at roughly 9pm. When I tried to leave through the main entrance where I had entered, I was informed that due to the ongoing disagreement on the station schedule, CFA did not have access to the main hallway and front door and that we would have to leave via the back car park and walk around the block to get to my vehicle. This is a minor issue but the safest and most appropriate way for me and my staff to get back to our car at that time of night was through the main doorway.

At the end of the reporting period, and more than 2 years after this visit, this issue has still not been resolved".

Although FSIM has been advised that the plans for the Melton co-located station were mutually agreed, this is now a contested space.

Regardless of whether it is industrial action, personal grievances, inconvenience or lack of an acceptance of change, career firefighters, volunteers (and their visitors) deserve and require a workplace that is functional, inclusive, supports their safety and wellbeing and meets the needs of the communities they serve.

While this action remains unresolved, these needs are at risk.



FSIM's findings and recommendations

Action 3.12 is progressing. FSIM notes that there is a risk this action will not be completed by June 2025 given the station sub-schedules and maps for the remaining three co-located brigades have been outstanding since the start of the reform. While the resumption of monthly meetings between CFA and FRV in April 2024 is a positive step for completing this action, there is still no clear pathway for resolving the issues and barriers to finalising the outstanding station sub-schedules and maps.

FSIM is aware of the contextual and systemic issues that have contributed towards the delays in completing the station sub-schedules and recommends CFA and FRV clearly document the actions taken by each agency to manage these barriers and the outcomes of these actions. Agencies should also document the expected completion dates for each sub-schedule and track progress against a clear implementation plan and the consultation workflow process.

Priority four: Valuing our people

Action 4.1 action descriptor	Appoint the Firefighters Registration Board
Action objective	The secondment model is collaboratively supported and regulated by an independent entity.
Lead agency	DJCS
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and establishment of the Fire Rescue Victoria (Firefighters Registration Board) Regulations 2022 Implementation of Regulations, including the appointment of members and establishment of the supporting office.
Completion date	August 2023
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	Completed
FSIM's assessment of progress	Implemented

Progress summary

1. Development and establishment of the Regulations

The *Fire Rescue Victoria (Firefighters Registration Board) Regulations 2022* were made on 20 September 2022 and commenced on 1 December 2022.

2. Implementation of Regulations, including the appointment of members and establishment of the supporting office

On 17 October 2023, the following people were appointed by the Governor in Council to the FRB:

- Ms Lynn Glover PSM (Minister's nominee) for a period of five years
- Mr James Kefalas (UFU nominee) for a period of three years
- Mr Mark Lyons (former senior firefighter) for a period of three years
- Professor Mark Patrick Taylor (academic) for a period of three years.

Ms Glover was appointed by the Minister as the inaugural Chair to the FRB, in line with section 149(4) of the FRV Act. DJCS provides secretariat support to the FRB.

FSIM considers that the establishment of the FRB will support the commencement of work to develop and administer the Firefighters Registration Scheme, maintain the Firefighters Register and establish competencies that will satisfy the requirements for inclusion in the Firefighters Register.

FSIM's findings

Action 4.1 is implemented. DJCS has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that DJCS has completed the action deliverables.

Action 4.2 action descriptor (revised) **The Firefighters Registration Board establishes criteria and processes to support registration of suitably qualified secondees from FRV to CFA**

Action objective (revised) Independent registration of secondees from FRV to CFA.

Lead agency FRB

- Deliverables (revised)**
- Formalise criteria to assess competencies and standards based on nationally endorsed training packages and products, and taking into consideration prescribed legislation, and relevant industrial instruments
 - Develop evidentiary threshold against which applicants will be assessed
 - Documented registration process
 - Commence operation of the registration scheme.

Completion date December 2024

Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024 In progress – on track

FSIM's assessment of progress Progressing

Progress summary

The FRB held its inaugural meeting on 21 December 2023. It has since developed key foundational documents to guide its program of work and engagement with stakeholders.

The FRB is progressing work on the deliverables in this action, informed by input from key stakeholders. As at 30 June 2024, the FRB had engaged with FRV and CFA to support its initial understanding of secondment requirements, standards, competencies, training and qualifications for ACFOs and Commanders. Following this, the FRB developed a consultation document on the 'proposed professional capabilities and standards' and the 'evidentiary threshold to support an assessment against the proposed professional capabilities and standards' for consultation with CFA, EMV and FRV. The formal consultation period commenced on 4 June and is due to conclude on 3 July 2024. FRB advises that feedback from agencies will inform its development of registration requirements for ACFOs and Commanders and the development of competencies and standards.

At the end of this reporting period, the FRB was progressing work on: the criteria to assess competencies and standards, developing an evidentiary threshold to assess applicants, and documenting the registration process. FRB advises that these deliverables are due to be completed by November 2024, with the registration scheme expected to commence in December 2024.

FSIM's findings

Action 4.2 is progressing. FSIM may undertake an effectiveness assessment of this action in 2024/25, given the significance of this action to the overall reform.

Action 4.3 action descriptor	Complete delivery of the volunteer’s health and safety initiatives program; specifically, the wildfire respiratory protection trial, the firefighter safety compliance initiatives and the wildfire PPC project
Action objective	Through delivery of the volunteer’s health and safety initiatives program, CFA volunteers are skilled and capable, and feel safe and supported.
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Wildfire Respiratory Protection Trial • Deliver the Wildfire PPC Project • Deliver the Safety Compliance Program.
Completion date (revised)	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – minor delays
FSIM’s assessment of progress	Progressing

Progress summary

As at 30 June 2024, CFA reports minor delays for all the deliverables in this action.

The completion date for this action was extended by 12 months (to June 2025) due to delays caused by COVID-19 supply chain disruptions, staffing constraints and industrial action by some CFA staff. CFA is managing these delays (in part through issues and risks management) for each of the deliverables under this action.

1. Wildfire Respiratory Protection Trial Project

CFA continued this trial throughout 2023/24. CFA collected and analysed volunteer feedback gathered through a survey and focus group discussions. CFA reports low participation rates in this trial and extended the timeline for member feedback to the end of the 2023/24 fire danger period to support increased participation.

CFA has commenced analysing volunteer feedback to inform potential procurement of wildfire respiratory protection devices.

2. Wildfire Personal Protective Clothing Project

As at 30 June 2024, CFA had contracted arrangements for the manufacture of New Generation Wildfire PPC and delivered 11,301 sets to its members across the state. This is out of a total of 24,000 sets of PPC funded as part of this project.

The manufacture and delivery of PPC will continue in 2024/25, with CFA expecting to have received the remaining sets of PPC funded through this project by June 2025.

3. Safety Compliance Program

In 30 June 2024:

- Low Voltage Fuse Removal training and equipment was delivered to 570 volunteers, with an additional 79 kits issued and fitted to appliances

- Safe Working At Heights (SWAH) training and equipment was provided to 270 volunteers, with an additional SWAH 54 kits issued and fitted to appliances.

CFA provided evidence about the significant time taken for FRV and the UFU to inspect and approve training props for use by training PAD staff and instructors, which led to SWAH training cancellations and delays.

CFA advised FSIM that it is working to transition the SWAH program to business-as-usual by December 2024. FSIM will monitor this planned transition for reporting in its 2024/25 annual report.

As part of the Alternative Power Systems project, CFA:

- produced seven awareness videos on the dangers and issues with electric vehicles and made it available to all members on the Members Online platform
- developed a community of practice to enable information sharing across all CFA districts, with the group convening information sessions to volunteers upon request
- is trialling a product for making residential solar panels safe.

FSIM's findings and recommendations

Action 4.3 is progressing. FSIM notes that CFA has reported minor delays for all the deliverables in this action due to external factors outside CFA's control.

CFA reported that it is actively monitoring this action. FSIM will seek updates on progress throughout 2024/2025.

Action 4.5 action descriptor (revised)	Define a program of work to strengthen CFA's organisational culture, diversity and inclusion
Action objective	CFA promotes cultural inclusiveness and diversity through fit for purpose plans and programs.
Lead agency	CFA
Deliverables (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Culture and Issues Management Action Plan • Develop Child Safety Compliance Plan • Develop Diversity and Inclusion Strategy • Develop Mental Health for Leaders program • Deliver Fire Services Statement funded initiatives.
Completion date (revised)	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	Completed
FSIM's assessment of progress	Implemented

Progress summary

1. Develop Culture and Issues Management Action Plan

In 2021, CFA commissioned an external review of Culture and Issues Management to support the CFA to foster a diverse and inclusive culture where members feel safe and supported. CFA members across the state were consulted as part of this review, which provided insights on areas where CFA was performing well and where there were challenges.

In response to the review's findings, CFA developed an action plan to implement each of the review's recommendations.

CFA's Executive and Board are provided regular updates on progress in implementing these recommendations.

2. Develop Child Safety Compliance Plan

As reported in FSIM's 2021/22 annual report, CFA developed a Child Safety Compliance Plan 2021-24 in April 2021.

CFA subsequently developed a Child Safe Organisation CFA Action Plan to replace the Child Safety Compliance Plan 2021-2024 when the new Child Safe Standards came into effect. The action plan outlines actions required for CFA to achieve full compliance with the Standards. CFA is reviewing the Action Plan, pending feedback from the Victorian Government's Commission for Children and Young People, and delivering the action plan as part of business-as-usual.

CFA (this includes all CFA staff and members and FRV staff seconded to CFA) is legally required to comply with the Child Safe Standards to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. As noted in action 3.8, CFA risks being non-compliant with the standards where FRV secondees come to work within CFA without holding a valid Working with Children Check. To date, CFA has had to rely on FRV secondees to self-elect to get a valid Working with Children Check and complete relevant training to comply with these standards, while also continuing to work with FRV to have them resolve this issue with its secondee staff. CFA has been working with FRV through the Joint Child Safety Working Group to progress this work.

The implementation of the Child Safe Organisation CFA Action Plan is a key dependency for actions 3.8 and 5.1. Given the significant risks to CFA of not being compliant with the standards, FSIM will examine the effectiveness of actions taken by CFA and FRV in 2024/25 to address feedback from the Commission for Children and Young People on CFA's Action Plan to ensure full compliance with the Standards.

3. Develop Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

As reported in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report, CFA's inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2025 was launched on 21 March 2023 and is published on CFA's website.

CFA is implementing the strategy through its Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee, chaired by the Chief Executive Officer. The Steering Committee receives regular reports of progress.

4. Develop Mental Health for Leaders program

CFA's Mental Health Literacy program is an online resource developed for all members, with a separate module for leaders. The modules seek to provide the knowledge and skills needed to identify and manage risk to psychological health, increase awareness of available supports and encourage early help-seeking. The modules include e-learns for members and leaders, which will be complemented by facilitated sessions covering trauma, resilience and recovery delivered internally by Peers and Member Wellbeing Advisors.

The program was completed and launched in August 2023.

5. Deliver Fire Services Statement funded initiatives

CFA delivered Fire Services Statement funded initiatives from June 2018 to June 2021 in the areas of diversity, leadership, health, and safety.

CFA developed a project closure report documenting progress, project expenditure and lessons learned. FSIM has seen a copy of this project closure report.

FSIM's findings

Action 4.5 is implemented. CFA has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that CFA has completed the action deliverables.

However, FSIM remains concerned about FRV secondees' low rates of compliance with CFA's Child Safe Organisation CFA Action Plan and the risks this presents to CFA of not being compliant with the Child Safe Standards.

FSIM recommends that FRV, as a priority, seek to remedy the Working with Children Check issue with the secondee cohort in the first instance. FSIM may examine the effectiveness of actions taken by CFA and FRV (individually and jointly) in 2024/25 to address feedback from the Commission for Children and Young People on CFA's Action Plan to become fully compliant with the standards.

Action 4.6 action descriptor (revised)	Develop the following documents to support inclusion and diversity across FRV: 1. Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan 2. Gender Equity Action Plan 3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan
Action objective	FRV promotes inclusion and diversity through fit for purpose strategies, plans and initiatives.
Lead agency	FRV
Deliverables (revised)	Finalised frameworks and action plans as outlined in the action description.
Completion date (revised)	30 September 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – on track
FSIM's assessment of progress	Progressing

Progress summary

1. Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan

FRV drafted its inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan, which was endorsed by its Executive Leadership Team in April 2024 for progressing through the consultative process.

FRV advises the draft Framework will be presented to the Operations Consultative Committee for consideration in July 2024 for finalisation by September 2024.

2. Gender Equity Action Plan

As reported in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report, FRV's Gender Equity Action Plan was completed and submitted to the Gender Equality Commission in August 2022. FRV is implementing the plan as part of its business-as-usual activities.

3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan

As reported in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report, FRV's Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024 was launched in November 2022. FRV is implementing the plan as part of its business-as-usual activities.

FRV intends to develop the next iteration of the Reconciliation Action Plan following the conclusion of the current plan in December 2024.

FSIM's findings

Action 4.6 is progressing.

Action 4.7 action descriptor **Develop a scope for leadership roles that reflect contemporary brigade and group models**

Action objective CFA's brigade leadership structure is fit for purpose, reflecting modernised brigade and group models.

Lead agency CFA

Completion date February 2025

Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024 Completed

FSIM's assessment of progress Implemented

Progress summary

As part of the DJCS-led review of the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan, CFA advised that this action will be delivered under CFA's operating model program of work, which is a key deliverable in action 1.7. This includes initiatives to enhance the role of the volunteer, strengthen brigades, and improve business operations and performance (as per action 4.7).

FSIM has seen a copy of CFA's operating model program of work to confirm that this action is reflected in the pipeline of initiatives for implementation, pending endorsement by the CFA Executive (which operates as the Program Control Board).

FSIM's findings

Action 4.7 is implemented. CFA has formally acquitted this action as it will be delivered under action 1.7. FSIM has seen the action acquittal report and is satisfied that this action is captured in CFA's operating model program of work being delivered under action 1.7.

Action 4.9 action descriptor (revised)	Develop a recruitment strategy and campaign to support increased gender diversity across all firefighting ranks. Review the recruitment process, training, and promotional pathways to ensure they support the retention of a gender diverse workforce
Action objective (revised)	To embed a recruitment and retention strategy that supports the government's commitment of 400 women career firefighters in FRV.
Lead agency	FRV
Deliverables (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure recruitment activities are delivered in a way that attracts a diverse range of applicants • Commence a review of recruitment procedures and campaign strategies • Introduce Women Support Coordinators (Women's Support Project) to support the identification and resolution of barriers to increasing the number of women firefighters.
Completion date	December 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – on track
FSIM's assessment of progress	Progressing

Progress summary

1. Ensure recruitment activities are delivered in a way that attracts a diverse range of applicants

In 2023/24, FRV designed its 'No Ordinary Job' campaign for launch on 17 May 2024. This campaign includes specific activities to target recruitment of firefighters from various diversity groups, including women and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. For instance, FRV is using Women Support Coordinators (a key deliverable for this action) to run sessions to engage with and support women throughout the application process.

FRV advises firefighter applications will open on 1 July 2024.

2. Commence a review of recruitment procedures and campaign strategies

FRV has commenced a review of recruitment procedures and campaign strategies. FRV advises this review will assess the impact of targeted campaign initiatives and inform future campaigns strategies. This review is expected to be completed by March 2025.

FSIM has seen a copy of FRV's 2024 Recruitment Campaign Communications and Engagement Plan and FRV's strategies for attracting diverse candidates. FSIM looks forward to seeing the outcome of this review.

3. Introduce Women Support Coordinators (Women's Support Project) to support the identification and resolution of barriers to increasing the number of women firefighters

As reported in FSIM's 2022/23 annual report, FRV established its Women's Support Coordinator (WSC) program in 2020. The WSC role was established to increase gender diversity and support the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in FRV.

The WSC role supports pregnant firefighters, and their managers, in their return to work. The WSC also supports the recruitment and retention of women firefighters by developing, reviewing and providing feedback on policies to support FRV's gender diverse workforce.

This program was recognised at the 2024 Emergency Services Foundation's Diversity and Inclusion Awards, winning the Women's Equality Initiative award category.

FSIM's findings

Action 4.9 is progressing, with FRV delivering initiatives to improve the retention and recruitment of women firefighters.

As at 30 June 2024, FRV is halfway towards achieving the government's commitment of 400 women career firefighters, recording a total of 205 women firefighters. FRV has also consistently maintained a retention rate of 100 per cent of women firefighters recruited over the last three years. While FSIM recognises that this action goes beyond the achievement of a target, FSIM commends FRV's continued efforts to recruit and retain women firefighters to reach this halfway point.

FSIM will closely monitor the outcome of FRV's latest recruitment campaign and FRV's review of its recruitment procedures and campaign strategies in 2024/25. FSIM may also assess FRV's recruitment and retention activities delivered as part of this action to develop a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of FRV's actions in this space.

Priority five: Ensure the future sustainability of fire services

Action 5.1 action descriptor (revised)	Capability and capacity requirements of the seconded workforce to deliver an effective CFA are clearly articulated by CFA, and FRV establishes a roadmap to deliver on these requirements in alignment with the legislative obligations of both organisations
Action objective (revised)	CFA's seconded operational requirements are clearly communicated, inform workforce planning by FRV and CFA and FRV work collaboratively to address any gaps.
Lead agency (revised)	CFA and FRV
Deliverables (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFA Capability Statement • Gaps and options to address these gaps are identified • FRV to establish a roadmap to incorporate the capability and capacity requirements in line with the CFA Capability Statement of the seconded workforce into workforce planning.
Completion date (revised)	June 2025
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – minor delays
FSIM's assessment of progress	Progressing

Progress summary

Overall progress on action deliverables

CFA provided FRV an updated version of the CFA capability statement for feedback in March 2024. The updated version included two success profile for ACFOs and Commanders. CFA also provided FRV a success profile for instructors in April 2024. These success profiles will assist FRV to conduct a gap analysis.

As at 30 June 2024, CFA was developing additional success profiles for ACFO Manager Community Safety and ACFO Regional Commander roles. When complete, these success profiles will assist FRV to conduct a gap analysis.

The agencies advise they intend to use the Joint Secondment Workforce Advisory Group, which was established under the auspice of HoA on 24 June 2024, to jointly progress all the deliverables in this action.

This action is a crucial enabler of the secondment model and a key determinant for the overall success of the reform. A capability statement provides CFA the opportunity to outline its ongoing operational and leadership requirements across the state. The action provides for FRV to clearly outline a strategy for how it will address CFA's operational and leadership requirements. A finalised capability statement and FRV strategies to address capability gaps can therefore provide a pathway for addressing some of the vacancy and non-relief issues experienced by CFA.

Given the significance of this action, FSIM has concerns that very little progress was made in this reporting period. There is a risk that the requirement to consult with the Operations Consultative Committee and seek agreement on key deliverables within this action is likely to further perpetuate the vacancy and non-relief issues within CFA, fundamentally impacting the operations of the agency.

FSIM will closely monitor the work of the Joint Secondment Workforce Advisory Group to deliver this action in 2024/25.

Overall progress towards FRV secondees' compliance with CFA's child safety requirements

Separately, FSIM notes that CFA and FRV are working together, through the joint Child Safety Working Group, to ensure FRV staff seconded to CFA meet CFA's child safety requirements. This is in line with CFA's Child Safe Organisation CFA Action Plan, which is a deliverable under action 4.5.

As at 30 June 2024, the working group met 26 times and has:

- undertaken a role assessment of all CFA secondment positions to determine Working with Children's Check requirements and child safety training needs
- completed a child safety risk assessment of the secondment arrangement to consider how FRV employees seconded to CFA engage with children and young people from a situational, vulnerability, propensity, and institutional risk perspective, and identified the controls required to manage the risk of child abuse and harm
- agreed on a child safety statement for inclusion in Expression of Interest memoranda outlining the requirement for secondees to comply with CFA's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- developed a draft child safety induction and training proposal, which includes a Child Safety Induction Pack containing CFA's child safety policy and child safety behaviour statement for distribution to all secondees upon commencement and the requirement for secondees to complete the CFA Playing Your Part child safety online module.

The Working Group advises the child safety statement will proceed for consultation through the Consultative Committee, following approval by FRV's Executive Leadership Team.

As at 30 June 2024, of the FRV employees seconded to CFA:

- 160 of 242 (66 per cent) have self-elected to get a valid Working with Children Check
- 72 of 242 (30 per cent) have completed the Playing Your Part child safety training module.

Further, 51 of 62 (82.3 per cent) FRV instructors seconded to CFA have a valid Working with Children Check.

FSIM has highlighted the risks of non-compliance with CFA's child safety policy in previous annual reports and notes the continued low rates of compliance four years on from the start of the reform. FSIM notes that FRV secondees who do not have a valid Working with Children Check cannot deliver training on CFA's behalf to people aged under 18 years. Anything less than 100 per cent compliance presents a significant risk to CFA's status as a child safe organisation, particularly when firefighters (who do not have a valid Working with Children Check) engage with volunteers aged 18 years and under.

In 2023/24, FRV advised it undertook a role assessment with representation from the UFU and recommended that all CFA secondment positions have a valid Working with Children's Check. FRV further advised it will progress these recommendations as part of a whole-of-organisation child safety role and program assessment. The outcome of this assessment will inform FRV's policy position on the requirement for Working with Children Check screening for all roles and programs, including for FRV personnel seconded to CFA.

FSIM notes that the outcome of the initial role assessment is a step in the right direction. It is imperative FRV take immediate and decisive action to ensure all FRV secondees have a valid Working with Children Check.

FSIM will closely monitor the outcome of the planned Consultative Committee meeting in September 2024 and seek FRV's advice about how it will ensure all current and future FRV secondees have valid Working with Children Checks.

FSIM's findings and recommendations

Action 5.1 is progressing. However, FSIM considers that this is a high-risk action that is dependent on several variables (including some that are not within the agencies' control) to ensure it is delivered on time and in line with the action objective.

FSIM remains concerned that the ultimate success of this action is subject to the willingness of key stakeholders to facilitate these matters through the consultative committee process and the outcome of this process. Given the significance of this action to the reform, any delays in completing this action will risk CFA and FRV not realising the benefits of this action for workforce planning.

FSIM has extensively commented on the fundamental incompatibility between CFA and FRV operating environments and policies that have contributed to the low rates of compliance by FRV secondees with CFA's Child Safe Action Plan and VRQA requirements (see action 3.8).

FSIM also considers that the completion of this action will provide a clear pathway for CFA to fill vacancy and relief positions over time. However, this is also dependent on FRV's Strategic Workforce Plan (a deliverable completed under action 5.4), and related activities, incorporating CFA's capability requirements to ensure FRV can provide CFA a pipeline of secondees with the required skills and capabilities. Given the interdependence between the two actions, FSIM may complete an effectiveness assessment on action 5.4 to examine the extent to which FRV's workforce planning activities incorporate CFA's capability requirements and the outcome of these efforts.

FSIM recommends close and transparent collaboration between agencies and strengthened governance and oversight arrangements to support the delivery of this action and all future workforce planning activities for seconded roles.

Action 5.2 action descriptor (revised)	DJCS, with input from CFA and FRV, undertake a review of current state fire and rescue capability and capacity requirements in CFA and FRV and key issues and risks
Action objective (revised)	The fire services have awareness of current state fire and rescue capability and capacity which will inform future service delivery requirements.
Lead agency	DJCS
Deliverables (revised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFA and FRV review current state capability and capacity for functions and services delivered (due April 2024) • CFA and FRV undertake a high-level assessment of gaps to meet current service delivery requirements (due July 2024) • DJCS prepare a final report consolidating findings from deliverable one and two (due November 2024).
Completion date	November 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	In progress – on track
FSIM's assessment of progress	Progressing

Progress summary

In collaboration with CFA and FRV, DJCS is leading a review of the Fire Services' capability and capacity requirements. The review focuses on the current state only and aims to:

- improve understanding of forecasted demand and changes to Victoria's risk landscape to inform future capability and capacity requirements of fire services
- improve understanding of CFA and FRV's current capacity and service requirements
- identify clear service delivery and capability pathways to ensure CFA and FRV can meet future need and expectations.

The review is overseen by FSR SEC, as the senior responsible entity for delivering this action. A Project Steering Committee, established in July 2022, comprising members from CFA, FRV and DJCS, and its Working Group, supports the delivery of this action.

In 2023/24, DJCS, together with CFA and FRV, developed a framework to guide the review and assessment of CFA and FRV's current service delivery capability and capacity and gaps. This framework was informed by the service delivery and enabling functions, roles, and responsibilities outlined in relevant legislation and in the State Emergency Management Plan. CFA and FRV both retain primary responsibility to ensure effective capability frameworks are in place and responsibilities are delivered in line with legislation and the State Emergency Management Plan. CFA and FRV completed the reviews for their respective agencies and provided this advice to DJCS to inform the drafting of a final report.

As at 30 June 2024, DJCS had drafted a report and provided it to CFA and FRV for review and further input, as required. DJCS advises the finalised report will be tabled at FSR SEC for endorsement.

FSIM's findings

Action 5.2 is progressing.

Action 5.7 action descriptor (revised)	Capture the operational costs incurred to deliver fire services in Victoria based on three years of financial reporting
Action objective (revised)	There is a common understanding of the costs incurred to deliver fire services in Victoria.
Lead agency	DJCS
Deliverables (revised)	A summary of the fire service agencies' financial performance for the 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years, inclusive.
Completion date	December 2024
Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024	Completed
FSIM's assessment of progress	Implemented

Progress summary

In the context of this reform, financial sustainability is defined as the ability of each agency to deliver their required services in the medium and longer term, and within their regulatory, governance, funding and operating environments.

DJCS has worked with CFA and FRV to develop a common understanding of the agencies' expenditure and cost pressures and to inform decisions on funding requirements.

Key activities completed by DJCS to implement the action include:

- reviewing CFA and FRV's organisational finances, which are published in their annual reports and document the financial position of the agency, including revenue, expenditure and cash balances
- assessing CFA and FRV's financial sustainability, based on these reports, for the last three financial years since the commencement of fire services reform (2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23).

DJCS advises it will continue to engage with CFA and FRV on their financial position, expenditure, cost pressures and future requirements through existing avenues, including yearly audited annual reports and the State Budget process. DJCS will also continue to monitor and assess other non-financial data sets, such as response times, to inform advice on the financial sustainability of an agency.

FSIM's findings

Action 5.7 is implemented. DJCS has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that DJCS has completed the action deliverables.

Action 5.8 action descriptor (revised) **CFA and FRV to ensure internal budgets consider the funding estimates over the forward years provided by the Victorian Government**

Action objective (revised) Victoria's fire agencies deliver services in a financially sustainable way, and in accordance with their fiscal obligations.

Lead agency DJCS

- Deliverables (revised)**
- CFA and FRV provided with estimated grant appropriation over the forward years to enable internal budgets to be prepared
 - CFA and FRV to embed estimated grant appropriation into forward planning and internal budgets.

Completion date June 2025

Agency reported status as at 30 June 2024 Completed

FSIM's assessment of progress Implemented

Progress summary

Each year, CFA and FRV are provided with grant appropriation letters confirming funding for that financial year along with estimates over the forward years. These letters enable the fire agencies to set their internal budgets and forecast any shortfalls at the beginning of the year. The letters also support the planning of expenditure over the forward estimates (acknowledging the annual budget is always confirmed through the State Budget process).

CFA and FRV are required to have their internal budgets confirmed via their respective governance models (i.e. the Board for CFA and the executive leadership team for FRV). The respective governance bodies are accountable for the ongoing management of the entities' budgets in accordance with the *Financial Management Act 1994* and the Standing Directions. DJCS advises it will continue to engage with CFA and FRV on their financial position, expenditure, cost pressures and future requirements through existing avenues, including yearly audited annual reports and the State Budget process.

DJCS also advises that it will continue to monitor and assess other non-financial data sets, such as response times, to inform advice on the financial sustainability of an agency.

FSIM's findings

Action 5.8 is implemented. DJCS has formally acquitted this action. FSIM has seen the acquittal report for this action and is satisfied that DJCS has completed the action deliverables.

Looking forward

Year 5 (2024/25) marks the final year of the current Year 2-5 Implementation Plan.

Agencies are expected to have completed all the actions in the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan by June 2025. FSIM notes that while agencies have delivered most of the actions, of the 14 actions that remain, agencies report that 7 are on track and 7 are experiencing delays. FSIM has concerns about the limited progress made on some of these actions and the risk that these actions will not be delivered on time and in line with the action objectives.

In Year 5, FSIM will track agency progress against key milestones for the outstanding actions. FSIM will also monitor actions taken by existing governance and oversight mechanisms to address implementation barriers for the outstanding actions using complementary fire services principles. There will be a focus on actions that carry a high risk of not being completed on time (**actions 3.8, 3.9, 3.12 and 5.1**). FSIM will do this by reviewing agencies' quarterly progress updates provided to DJCS, making formal information requests to agencies to enquire about a particular action, and discussing outstanding actions and issues in regular monthly meetings with the agencies.

FSIM will also monitor actions taken by agencies to address the strategic, operational and child safety risks from non-compliance with the Child Safety Standards. FSIM will enquire about the outcome of the planned Consultative Committee meeting in September 2024 and pending the outcome of this meeting, seek FRV's advice on the steps it will take to ensure all current and future FRV secondees meet CFA's child safe requirements. This has relevance to **actions 3.8, 4.5 and 5.1**. FSIM will also examine the effectiveness of actions taken by CFA in 2024/25 to address feedback from the Commission for Children and Young People on CFA's Action Plan to become fully compliant with the standards.

To support FSIM's understanding of the effectiveness of agency actions to achieve government's vision for a modern, interoperable fire service, FSIM may assess:

- the planned roll-out of the new Crew and Strike Team Leader courses (**action 1.4**) and the updated GFF training program (**action 1.6**)
- CFA's actions to move towards a new operating model (**actions 1.7 and 4.7**)
- the effectiveness and impacts of FRV's Health Model (**action 2.3**)
- collaborative efforts by CFA and FRV to deliver agreed capital works in co-located stations (**action 3.4**)
- the implementation of the firefighter registration scheme (**action 4.2**)
- the effectiveness of FRV's actions to demonstrate progress towards supporting the government's commitment of 400 women career firefighters in FRV (**action 4.9**)
- the extent to which FRV's workforce plan, and related activities, incorporate CFA's capability requirements (**action 5.4**).

FSIM looks forward to working with agencies in 2024/25 to support its monitoring and effectiveness assessment activities and thanks them for their ongoing cooperation.

FSIM also looks forward to further advice and direction from government about its fire services reform priorities for Year 6 and beyond.

Appendix A: Glossary of key terms

Abbreviated term	Title
ACFO	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
BCPA	Baseline Capability Profiling Application
CAoV	Country Area of Victoria
CFA	Country Fire Authority
CSBA	Community Safety Building Authority
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community Safety
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
FIRS	Fire Information Reporting System
FRB	Firefighters Registration Board
FRV	Fire Rescue Victoria
FRV Act	<i>Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958</i>
FSIM	Fire Services Implementation Monitor
FSOC	Fire Services Operational Committee
FSR SEC	Fire Services Reform Strategic Executive Committee
FWC	Fair Work Commission
GFF	General Firefighter
HoA	CFA/FRV Heads of Agency Steering Committee
IBAC	Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission
ICT	Information and communications technology
Minister	Minister for Emergency Services
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MFB	Metropolitan Fire Brigade
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
PAD	Practical Areas for Drills
PPC	Personal protective clothing
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SLDA	Service Level Deed of Agreement
SWAH	Safe Working at Heights
UFU	United Firefighters Union of Australia – Victoria Branch
VFBV	Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria
VRQA	Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
VSP	Volunteer Support Package
WSC	Women's Support Coordinator

Appendix B: Summary of action status at 30 June 2024

Agencies reported that 27 actions were completed and of the remaining 14 actions:

- 7 are in progress - on track
- 6 are in progress - minor delays
- 1 is in progress - significant delays.

Government implementation status definitions

Status	Legend	DJCS progress assessment definitions
Completed		Action is finished and formally acquitted through completion and signing of the acquittal form.
In progress - On track		Action is on track to be completed by the 'completion date' as per the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan.
In progress - Minor delays		Action is experiencing minor delays that may impact delivery by the 'completion date' as per the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan.
In progress - Significant delays		Action is experiencing significant delays and it is highly unlikely that the 'completion date' as per the Year 2-5 Implementation Plan will be met.

Status of Year Two to Five Implementation Plan actions as at 30 June 2024

Ref	Lead agency and action description	Agency reported status	Completion date
Priority one: Strengthen CFA as a volunteer firefighting agency			
1.1	CFA – Develop CFA's Engagement Framework.	Completed	June 2025
1.2	CFA – Complete delivery of the Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Program.	Completed	June 2025
1.3	CFA – Deliver the Volunteer Support Package.	In progress – minor delays	March 2025
1.4	CFA – Develop new Crew and Strike Team Leader training courses.	In progress – on track	December 2024
1.5	CFA – Complete delivery of the connected brigades project (part of \$3.6 million program to enhance critical volunteer facing ICT systems).	Completed	June 2023
1.6	CFA – Review and update training as part of the develop Enhancing Training Capacity for New Volunteers.	In progress – minor delays	June 2025
1.7	CFA – Review CFA's operating model and develop a roadmap to create a more contemporary and sustainable organisation.	Completed	June 2025
Priority two: Strengthen FRV as a career firefighting agency			
2.1	FRV – Commence Phase Two of the operational communications rollout, including upgrades to station turn out equipment in FRV stations.	Completed	June 2023

Ref	Lead agency and action description	Agency reported status	Completion date
2.2	FRV – Explore the operational and service delivery benefits of accreditation for FRV within the Victorian emergency management response model and provide options to government on the accreditation process.	Completed	June 2023
2.3	FRV – Develop and implement a contemporary Health Model, which establishes state-wide comprehensive organisational health standards, policies and support mechanisms that are designed to proactively manage and mitigate health risks whilst improving the effectiveness and quality of care provided to our firefighters and corporate staff.	Completed	June 2023
2.4	FRV – Merge required legacy enterprise agreements and commence negotiations on new agreements.	Completed	November 2024
Priority three: Plan and build for the future			
3.1	FRV – Ensure FRV's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is consistent across all stations to support service delivery.	Completed	June 2025
3.2	CFA – Deliver the fire station and firefighting fleet replacement program.	In progress – significant delays	June 2025
3.3	CFA – Finalise the transfer of property, assets, liabilities, rights and obligations from CFA to FRV.	In progress – minor delays	December 2024
3.4	FRV – FRV, in consultation with CFA, identify capital works required across designated stations at the time of the reform and develop a framework (Tenancy Agreement) to support delivery of agreed projects.	Completed	June 2025
3.5	CFA – CFA to complete delivery of agreed capital works projects on behalf of FRV.	Completed	June 2023
3.6	FRV – Rollout of the FRV Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) ensembles as part of the PPC project.	Completed	June 2023
3.7	CFA and FRV – Agencies mature existing joint governance arrangements that support the implementation of the program and ongoing development of interoperability procedures and arrangements.	Completed	June 2023
3.8	CFA and FRV – CFA, in collaboration with FRV, to develop protocols to ensure all FRV seconded training staff satisfy CFA's Registered Training Organisation (RTO) obligations and requirements.	In progress – on track	June 2025
3.9	CFA and FRV – Where practical and appropriate, finalise harmonisation of procedures, including service level procedures between CFA and FRV and any related party to ensure the agreements support effective operations.	In progress – on track	June 2025
3.10	CFA – Where practical and appropriate, finalise any delegation authorisations between CFA and FRV to support the operationalisation of the Service Level Deeds of Agreement (SLDA) and schedules.	Completed	June 2023
3.11	CFA – CFA to ensure internal policies and procedures support the arrangements outlined in the SLDA and schedules.	Completed	June 2024

Ref	Lead agency and action description	Agency reported status	Completion date
3.12	CFA and FRV – Develop agreements for corporate support functions between CFA and FRV that enable service delivery.	In progress – minor delays	June 2025
Priority four: Valuing our people			
4.1	DJCS – Appoint the Firefighters Registration Board (FRB).	Completed	August 2023
4.2	FRB – The Firefighters Registration Board establishes criteria and processes to support registration of suitably qualified secondees from FRV to CFA.	In progress - on track	December 2024
4.3	CFA – Complete delivery of the volunteer’s health and safety initiatives program; specifically, the wildfire respiratory protection trial, the firefighter safety compliance initiatives and the wildfire PPC project.	In progress – minor delays	June 2025
4.4	FRV – Define FRV values and culture and deliver supporting programs of work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop FRV values • Strategy to embed FRV values • Leadership development and capability. 	Completed	June 2023
4.5	CFA – Define a program of work to strengthen CFA’s organisational culture, diversity and inclusion.	Completed	June 2025
4.6	FRV – Develop the following documents to support inclusion and diversity across FRV: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Strategy and Action Plan. • Gender Equity Action Plan. • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan. 	In progress – on track	September 2024
4.7	CFA – Develop a scope for leadership roles that reflect contemporary brigade and group models.	Completed	February 2025
4.8	CFA and FRV – Identify new opportunities to recognise and value the contribution made by both volunteer and career firefighters to delivering fire services (e.g. communications and collaboration).	Completed	June 2023
4.9	FRV – Develop a recruitment strategy and campaign to support increased gender diversity across all firefighting ranks. Review the recruitment process, training and promotional pathways to ensure they support the retention of a gender diverse workforce.	In progress - on track	December 2025
4.10	CFA – Support diversity and inclusion in CFA and make progress towards delivering on the commitment to increasing the number of women in brigade leadership roles to 15 per cent.	Completed	June 2025
Priority five: Ensure the future sustainability of fire services			
5.1	CFA and FRV – Capability and capacity requirements of the seconded workforce to deliver an effective CFA are clearly articulated by CFA, and FRV establishes a roadmap to deliver on these requirements in alignment with the legislative obligations of both organisations.	In progress – minor delays	June 2025
5.2	DJCS – DJCS, with input from CFA and FRV, undertake a review of current state service delivery capability and capacity requirements in CFA and FRV and key issues and risks.	In progress - on track	November 2024
5.3	FRV – Develop an FRV Strategy.	Completed	September 2022

Ref	Lead agency and action description	Agency reported status	Completion date
5.4	FRV – Develop a Strategic Workforce Plan for operations with a strong focus on regional and remote delivery of services.	Completed	March 2023
5.5	DJCS – Conduct an initial financial sustainability assessment of FRV and CFA.	Completed	December 2021
5.6	DJCS – Develop an initial funding plan that addresses high priority funding requirements for CFA and FRV in years three and four of the Fire Services Reform and addresses the impact of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transfers of functions, resources and assets between CFA and FRV • the change to the FRV fire district upon the fire services property levy revenue base after the commencing day • any changes to the differential rates of the fire services property levy after the commencing day. 	Completed	December 2021
5.7	DJCS – Capture the operational costs incurred to deliver fire services in Victoria based on three years of financial reporting.	Completed	December 2024
5.8	DJCS – CFA and FRV to ensure internal budgets consider the funding estimates over the forward years provided by the Victorian Government.	Completed	June 2025



**Fire Services
Implementation Monitor**