

**Response to Fire Services Review 2015
District Analysis / Feedback**

Term of Reference	Potential Implications	Opportunities for Improvement or Change	Show Stoppers	Desired VFBV Position on Key Issues	Action Required
<p>(a) An assessment of the resourcing requirements necessary to ensure Victoria is appropriately equipped and fire ready</p>	<p>Volunteers are adequately resourced / trained on a similar basis to career staff (Increased costs).</p> <p>2 tier service with different standards of cover throughout the state.</p> <p>Surge capacity in major events.</p> <p>Major events could have a larger impact on Victoria's economy than most urban fires.</p>	<p>Better attitude of career and admin staff to volunteers. Where they are helpful to volunteers rather than deliberately placing "road blocks" and being deliberately unhelpful.</p> <p>Recognition of the potential costs of adequate coverage by career rather than volunteer F/F's.</p> <p>Adequate resourcing would ensure that all F/F's and locations have appropriate equipment and PPC regardless of employment status.</p> <p>Volunteer F/F's are not out of pocket in providing basic needs (T-Shirts, station wear and travel costs).</p> <p>Consideration of some form of "retained F/F" model in Victoria as suggested by Jones</p>	<p>Attempts to move career staff into more volunteer stations when not required.</p> <p>Provision of weekday daytime staff without mandatory requirement for full time transition</p> <p>Continuation of mandatory shift to full staffing once day staffing introduced.</p> <p>Volunteer F/F's can be held accountable more readily for training and availability.</p> <p>Union or VFBV veto.</p> <p>Must provide the same for both Volunteers & Permanents.</p> <p>Public reaction to 2nd class Rural Fire Service.</p> <p>Costs / benefits. analysis needs to be</p>		

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		<p>Review.</p> <p>Look at Australia-wide truck instead of low number high cost units.</p> <p>Same small gear and PPE Australia- wide with large volume having better buying power.</p> <p>All trained to the same standard for risk profile of area.</p> <p>Same issues / risks State wide.</p>	<p>completed, before any changes are made.</p>		

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<p>(b) How CFA and MFB staff can be best supported in protecting communities, taking into consideration operational needs, as well as Occupational Health and Safety best practice and best training methods</p>	<p>Improvements in inter-operability of equipment and staff.</p> <p>Better approach to lateral entry to relevant parts of the service.</p> <p>Cross-recognition of skills.</p> <p>There should be no difference between Permanent & Volunteers in to OH&S.</p> <p>Training and welfare.</p> <p>Under the WorkCover Act all people required to carry out a task should be trained and given the appropriate tools for the job.</p>	<p>Improved skills maintenance regime and formal recertification at prescribed intervals for certain skills/knowledge Agencies & unions / associations work together, focussing on quality and industrial hygiene and safety in culture & training.</p> <p>Resource allocation (in particular staffing) on a needs basis by the Chief Officer – removal of artificial barriers to flexibility in service provision.</p> <p>Standardised training and expectations of career and volunteer personnel Resourcing and training is by need, role and capability not employment status.</p> <p>One Standard for all and all treated as equals.</p>	<p>Failure to make all training available to volunteer FFs – restriction of training to career staff</p> <p>Persistence of different training packages for career and volunteer F/F's</p> <p>Union or VFBV veto.</p> <p>Must provide the same for both Volunteers & Permanents.</p>	<p>Management must be blind to employment status in allocating opportunities, resources and support.</p> <p>The careers staff are there to support the operational needs of volunteers, not vice versa.</p> <p>Cross recognitions of skills – same assessment = same skills.</p>	<p>What is meant by 'staff' in this question? Is this generic or specifically referring to career staff? It should read 'members'.</p> <p>The alternative to this question is an anathema to volunteers.</p>

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<p>(c) The interoperability between the CFA and MFB</p>	<p>More standardisation of equipment and training.</p> <p>Requirement for common terminology across all agencies.</p> <p>The CABA example and First Aid training is a good example currently in practice.</p> <p>Improvement is required in the areas of training packages & equipment design and evaluation.</p> <p>MFB & Integrated Brigades would require a large input of staff to meet Volunteers capability and would not have surge capacity for large event.</p> <p>MFB won't accept Volunteers have a role to play or work side by side volunteers.</p>	<p>Convergence of communications systems.</p> <p>Standardised equipment typologies with enough options to meet varying operational needs.</p> <p>Agencies look to inter-agency, interstate and international training packages and equipment so that standardised specifications, equipment and training packages are used except where a specific need dictates otherwise.</p> <p>Same training. Same equipment. Same skills.</p>	<p>Union or VFBV veto.</p> <p>Must provide the same for both Volunteers & Permanents.</p>		

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<p>(d) the interoperability across fire agencies responsible for preventing and suppressing all types of fire in Victoria, whether on public or private land</p>	<p>Standardised communication systems</p> <p>More explicit and complete adoption of AIIMS in day to day work.</p> <p>One call centre and dispatch utilising same rules.</p> <p>Two tier service for Paid & Volunteers.</p> <p>Surge capacity.</p>	<p>More inter-agency exercises at strategic and tactical levels.</p> <p>Support for inter-agency prevention and strategic work.</p> <p>Career staff & volunteers train together intra- & inter-agency.</p> <p>Cost reimbursement / honoraria for volunteers involved in longer training and operations.</p> <p>Cost saving on infrastructure - no need for replication of supporting departments.</p>	<p>Union or VFBV veto</p> <p>Must provide the same for both Volunteers & Permanents.</p>	<p>Need for more inter-agency exercises and operations.</p>	

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<p>(e) CFA and MFB management structures and management work practices</p>	<p>Management held accountable for efficiency and decision-making.</p> <p>All service under one management structure.</p> <p>Same rules and practices for all paid & Volunteers</p> <p>Volunteers become forgotten part of management due to full time employees having greater access and needs HR wise.</p>	<p>Recognition of AIIMS structures rather than emphasis on rank in operational management.</p> <p>Recognition of current ranks as management positions for everyday work and preparedness.</p> <p>Provision of a recognised (non-management) 'rank' or skill level pathway for volunteers that matches their training and competencies/skills rather than their position in the organisation.</p> <p>As per (D).</p>	<p>Union or VFBV veto.</p> <p>Must provide the same for both Volunteers & Permanents.</p>	<p>Appears to be a reluctance to utilise outside resources, such as training packages etc.</p> <p>Need for transparency.</p>	

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<p>(f) Enhancing workplace culture, including fostering greater respect and cooperation between management and its workforce, as well as enhancing workplace innovation and diversity</p>	<p>All members are treated with respect, resourced alike for doing similar work / roles. Volunteers don't interfere with the remuneration and conditions of career staff and career staff do not seek conditions that restrict or control the service of volunteers other than by reason of skills, experience and training competencies and proficiencies.</p> <p>Employee organisations do not seek to limit the operational prerogatives of the operational leaders (Chief Officer).</p> <p>Volunteer Charter out the door and UFU calling the shots.</p>	<p>All agencies and UFU work as one for the betterment of all Victorians.</p>	<p>Union or VFBV veto</p> <p>Must provide the same for both Volunteers & Permanents.</p>	<p>Commonality of training – e.g. First Aid / BA / IMT's..</p>	

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<p>(g) Options for the establishment of a Career Firefighters Registration Board</p>	<p>Should also be for volunteers Entry to registration should be by qualification/training and certification rather than employment only Have an external registration body for assessing suitability and competency rather than the agencies doing their own assessment at registration level.</p> <p>If Registration Board set up all those with the qualification should be registered to that grade of competence of all fire-fighters and ITAB's.</p>	<p>Professional standards for training, advancement, operational rank and continuing professional development are set objectively. End of the sheltered workshop. If implemented would need to have grades of registration to accommodate needs from small rural FFs to busy urban stations with complex risks. It would be important that registration for basic firefighter level to be simple and without cost or bureaucratic impost to the volunteer in a small community rural brigade with simple risk and low response numbers.</p> <p>We can be all professionals and have the confidence that we can all carry out the some work to the same standards safely.</p>	<p>Union or VFBV veto</p> <p>Must provide the same for both Volunteers & Permanents.</p>		

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<p>(h) The best mechanism to provide support for volunteer fire brigades and to ensure their viability in providing emergency services</p>	<p>Equitable distribution of Fire Services Levy based on operational need regardless of who provides the service.</p> <p>There should be no question of viability as it is one Fire Service and one set of standards.</p> <p>We cannot go down the NSW model.</p> <p>Volunteers are part of this review and should be at the front of the line in having a say on the future of Fire Fighting in all of Victoria.</p>	<p>Flexibility in providing paid support for volunteer fire brigades not requiring full-time staffing.</p> <p>Development of financial support mechanisms to overcome costs to volunteers associated with service.</p> <p>Proper recognition of the professionalism of volunteers, professionalism being unrelated to a pay cheque, but being as referred to by Bruce Esplin, an approach to the work involving commitment and acceptance of responsibility to do the best job possible.</p> <p>Recognition of costs to volunteers as either reimbursable or at least tax-deductible and GST exempt.</p> <p>Agreement for suitably competent and proficient volunteers to be eligible for paid instructor positions relevant to their competencies where</p>	<p>Union or VFBV veto.</p> <p>Must provide the same for both Volunteers & Permanents.</p>	<p>Flexibility in providing support for volunteers is urgently needed to counter on-going negativity from paid staff and UFU.</p>	

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		<p>needed. Recognition of non-office-bearing members in respect of their training and competencies for operational and incident management skills in opportunities and suitable uniform and fire-ground insignia.</p> <p>We are all the same as one another.</p>			
<p>OTHER COMMENTS</p>					

1. That the **Chief Officer's position not to be undermined** by any group / Agency, particularly when negotiating EBA's.
2. The **Volunteer Charter**, legislated by a previous Labor government, **remains at the fore-front of any negotiations** / discussions. This charter is paramount.
3. If the result of drawing outer metro area into MFB, how will agencies handle requirements for **surge capability** without compromising other CFA areas.
4. It is well noted the word "**volunteer**" is only **once mentioned in the "Terms of Reference"** and that being in the last paragraph, suggesting **little recognition or respect** to all volunteers in the fire services.
5. Volunteers can never **compete on a level playing field** given their requirement to support their families.
6. Volunteers need to have some degree of input into **EBA's as volunteers are the key stake-holder** for fire services in Victoria.

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