

JUMP OR BURN?

THE VICTORIAN FIRE SERVICES REVIEW

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author alone. Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the author.

“There is no more delicate matter to take in hand, more dangerous to conduct, or more doubtful in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things”

Niccolo Machiavelli 1513

“All organizations are perfectly designed to get the results they are now getting. If we want different results, we must change the way we do things.”

Tom Northup

INTRODUCTION

- *The Review of the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board and the Country Fire Authority (the Review) will inquire into and make recommendations on the resourcing, operations, management and culture of the Victorian fire services (MFB and CFA).*
- *It is understood that the Review will also consider the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning fire service which has responsibility for a very significant part of rural Victoria.*
- *Human nature being what it is means that individual readers will agree or disagree, wholly or partially, with many of the observations in this submission depending on the “spectacles” through which they see the world. Each of us constructs our own perception of reality. If this were not so and we all had a common perspective there would be little conflict in the world. As a philosopher pointed out a long time ago, “There are no*

facts, only interpretations” and on some matters individual interpretations can vary widely.

- **It is emphasised that firefighters in Victoria, be they career firefighters or volunteers, respond to fires and other emergencies with courage, commitment, compassion, community and competence. This is widely recognised by both Government and the public. Rather it is the organisational culture, organisational structure and organisational systems of the institutions of which they are part that are at issue.**
- **In an emergency members of the public who are directly affected are usually fearful if not terrified, bewildered and distressed. The timely arrival of firefighters gives them hope, reassurance and the courage to cope. Frontline firefighters have a strong and enduring sense of purpose. This Review should not be about the firefighters themselves, rather it must be about the institutions they work in.**
- There can be no doubt that unless Government and the relevant unions, employers and employees learn to work together in a much more mature way in pursuit of common goals then it is the public and an increasingly outdated emergency management sector who might suffer. **The Fire Services Review is a once in a generation opportunity to put things right.**
- **If the Review delivers adverse findings there is nothing to be gained by attempts to hide from them behind a web of political, bureaucratic, industrial relations and public relations “spin”. There is too much at stake, namely the safety of the Victorian public and its property and the firefighters themselves. Urgent but considered steps will need to be taken to fix any problems that are unearthed.**
- It is to be hoped that the needs of the Victorian community are the principal drivers of the *Review* and not the vested interests of the fire and emergency services themselves.
- The *Review* should keep an awareness that public sector organisations are usually incapable of significant reform in the absence of an external catalyst in the form of strong Government intervention. In its absence much needed reform is unlikely.

CURRENT SITUATION

- In spite of the *2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission*, the *Review of the 2010-2011 Flood Warnings and Response*, the *Bushfires Royal Commission Implementation Monitor Final Report*, the now defunct *Fire Services Reform Action Plan* and the *2012 Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper* emergency management arrangements in Victoria (especially compared to those in NSW, Queensland, WA and Tasmania) still require significant changes, in some cases fundamental changes, to meet the demands of providing for a safe and resilient community.
- Commendable progress has been made but some much needed major reforms have yet to be addressed. The obstacles to more radical and timely reform are grounded in political, industrial relations, cultural and intellectual factors. One symptom of this is an inability or reluctance to introduce and pursue the benefits of contemporary management practices in the fire and emergency services sector. Compared to other States Victoria has been a laggard in this respect.
- Professor James Brian Quinn (Tuck School of Business, Dartmouth College) famously pointed out, "*A good deal of corporate planning ... is like a ritual rain dance. It has no effect on the weather that follows, but those who engage in it think it does. ... Moreover, much of the advice related to corporate planning is directed at improving the dancing, not the weather.*" A similar observation could be made about a good deal of root and branch reviews of organisations of all stripes.
- Even if the *Review* leads to innovative and much needed recommendations for change, the acid test will be how well they are implemented. This will likely be a difficult task demanding significant leadership and managerial effort which based on experience to date is likely to be impeded by:
 - an excessive pre-occupation with bureaucratic policy and managerial abstractions and exhortations which can be largely symbolic, lacking in real meaning and thus lead to little more than "rain dancing" instead of concrete actions;

- 1970s style industrial relations characterised by mutually destructive conflict and some unnecessarily restrictive employment and work practices; and
 - a failure to develop a strong overarching *joint* culture that embraces the entire Victorian emergency management sector, especially at the executive level.
- This should serve as a warning that there is a relatively high probability that the concrete outcomes of the *Review* could be *well less than what is needed*.

THE PROBLEMS

Leadership and Management Practices

- There is ample evidence that for many years leadership and management in the fire and emergency services have been lack lustre. This can be attributed to, among other things, a lack of political will and associated public policy paralysis, weak leadership and management in the fire and emergency services themselves, poor governance and flawed management systems. Leadership, or lack of it, seems to be characterised by the apparent organisational invisibility of some people filling key appointments.
- **It needs to be emphasised that within the MFB, the current Chief Executive has driven commendable progress in uncovering and initiating action to remedy many longstanding management system shortfalls. This is not to infer that similar progress has not been made in the CFA.**

Organisational Structures

- The organisation of the MFB and CFA and their respective roles are grounded in outmoded divisions of responsibility and dated legislation and regulations that reflect the demographic and urban patterns of the 1970s. Metropolitan Melbourne has extended well beyond the 1974 boundaries that define the *Metropolitan Fire District*. No recognition has been given to the major changes that have occurred since that era. These changes continue unabated and probably at an accelerating rate. Consequently the current roles of the MFB and the CFA are inappropriate

and somewhat ambiguous even within State wide *all hazards-all agencies* arrangements.

- There are functional enclaves in the Victorian fire and emergency services and State emergency management arrangements which in some cases represent duplication which incurs unnecessary costs and suboptimal effectiveness. There is scope for the further rationalisation of organisational structures and systems and the establishment of more efficient and effective *joint* organisations through the centralisation and integration of selected functions. *A joint organisation is one which performs, oversees or coordinates a function common to two or more organisations and is staffed jointly by people from the organisations affected, in this case the MFB and CFA and possibly other agencies.*
- Informed decisions remain to be made on which fire and emergency service managerial and operational functions should be centralised, which should remain decentralised and which should be partially centralised.
- *Overall, the current organisational structures and systems do not provide the Emergency Management Commissioner with the authority necessary to optimally manage the development and sustainment of fire and emergency service capabilities and conduct emergency operations on a State wide basis. It is also questionable whether his responsibilities have been comprehensively defined. In this sense it is important to bear in mind that most of the day-to-day work in fire and emergency services is about developing and sustaining the capabilities needed to respond to emergencies rather than responding to emergencies themselves.*
- This is highlighted by comparing the fragmented organisation of the Victorian fire and emergency services with those in NSW, Queensland, WA (Annexes A, B and C) and Tasmania. *These reflect a contemporary approach, especially for fire and emergency service organisational structures and are probably a generation beyond the extant arrangements in Victoria which should have been brought in line with the approach of other States after the 2009 bushfires.* The websites for Fire and Rescue NSW, Queensland Fire & Emergency Services, NSW Rural Fire Service, the WA Department of Fire & Emergency Services and the Tasmania Fire Service contain more detail.
- It should be noted that the establishment of Emergency Management Victoria (Annex D) constitutes a sound foundation for a more integrated

State wide organisation to supersede the current loosely federated or *Balkanised* arrangements.

Authority, Responsibility and Accountability

- The concepts of authority, responsibility and accountability are not well understood in the Victorian fire and emergency services sector because they are poorly defined and as a consequence they are poorly exercised. In particular there are no clear lines of authority, responsibility and reciprocal accountability that extend from the Emergency Management Commissioner as the highest authority down through individual fire and emergency service authorities to single authorities at each fire station and in each fire crew.
- *In the MFB, unlike, for example, Fire and Rescue NSW, there is no position at fire station level that can be held accountable for individual fire station performance. More importantly, there is nobody looking after all the people who work at each and every fire station. **This is a very serious leadership and managerial deficiency which needs to be remedied urgently.***
- It is worth expanding on these points. *Authority* has two related meanings. Firstly, it can refer to an organisational position or appointment, usually but not always within a hierarchy. Secondly, it refers to *the formal or legal power to take action*.
- Within a chain of command or line of authority, *responsibility*, which is the *explicit or implicit obligation to take action*, is delegated usually but not always sequentially from the highest to the lowest levels. Importantly, delegated responsibilities must be matched with a complementary level of delegated authority to provide the power needed to take the necessary action. Delegating responsibility but failing to also delegate the authority necessary for a person to take action is a common problem.
- Formal or legal authority, however, is only part, sometimes even a minor part of how power or influence (they amount to the same thing) is exercised. *Personal authority* is critical to success and is grounded in technical, interpersonal and where appropriate, political skills.
- *Accountability* is an *explicit or implicit obligation owed* and it cannot be delegated under any circumstances. People at all levels are accountable to their next higher authority (“their boss”) for meeting their delegated

responsibilities and for how they exercise their delegated authority in doing so. Further to this, a person at any level is accountable to the next higher authority not only for their own performance also the performance of their subordinates. In other words, “I am accountable to you for both my own performance and that of my subordinates”.

- Staffs do not have any authority of their own, they exercise the explicitly or implicitly delegated authority of the executive or manager they work for. It is very important, however, that staff at one level of authority can deal directly with other staffs at the same, higher and lower levels. The prerogative of staffs to exercise their delegated authority in making decisions must be exercised within clearly defined and mutually understood boundaries. Staffs cannot of their own volition overturn or act contrary to a decision made by the executive or manager they work for, nor a decision made by an even higher authority. Neither can they off themselves veto a request made directly by a subordinate executive or manager to the executive or manager they work for. Their creed in all matters must be, “*The staff are the servants of the troops*”. It is questionable whether staffs understand this. Frontline firefighters certainly do not see their staffs in this light.
- In a narrow operational context, the nature of *command and control* in the State emergency management sector does not appear to be well understood. In particular it is not appreciated that control is the means through which command is expressed and that in the absence of command, control is meaningless. Similarly, command in the absence of control is impotent. Control can never override command. The two have a symbiotic relationship.

Governance Arrangements

- Managerial overheads, a plethora of boards and committees and the resulting layers of bureaucracy are stultifying, can impose an unnecessary burden on management and often do little to facilitate progress. They need to be rationalised and simplified.
- The MFB and CFA each have their own Boards. The authority, responsibility and accountability of these Boards which are grounded in their respective Acts have been overridden in many respects by the contents of Enterprise Agreements made under Commonwealth law. The Boards have powers over finance and accounting, policy on prudential

matters and certain compliance issues but their power over organisational performance is well less than needed.

- *The possible establishment of a sector wide fire and emergency services Board of Reference makes their role even more questionable and the situation even more potentially confused.* Legal advice would suggest that there is considerable ambiguity about what Government could legitimately hold Boards to account for.
- Overall, the authority, responsibility and accountability relationships between the Minister, the Emergency Management Commissioner, the Chief Executives of the MFB/CFA, the Chief Officers MFB/CFA, the MFB/CFA Boards and the proposed Board of Reference are not clearly defined and often they are characterised by confusion, conflict and uncertainty.

Management Systems

- Many management systems in the fire and emergency services fall short of best practice. Whether this is due to organisational inertia or a lack of knowledge about modern management practice is not known. Some communication and information systems, for example, appear not to have been updated for many years and some fleet management practices have until recently been years behind the more effective and efficient arrangements to be found in the private sector. Due credit must be given to recent work to make transparent these problems and set about solving them.
- The rationalisation and modernisation of managerial and operational systems (processes, data, information, intelligence, knowledge and supporting communications and information systems) is always a very difficult task that requires significant resources, including knowledge that may not exist within the fire and emergency services or the wider emergency management sector. This problem becomes even more demanding when systems integration is pursued for selected functions.

Standardisation and Interoperability

- Although improvements have been made in standardisation and interoperability between the fire services much remains to be done. In many instances the term “interoperability” (different things can work together) is used where what is meant is “standardisation” (the same

things are used). The two, although related, are not the same and priority should be accorded to the latter. Where it cannot be achieved interoperability should be pursued in lieu.

Leadership

- **A major leadership challenge that could emerge from the Review is the need for leaders to face directly and honestly any unpalatable observations about their organisations. Then it is a matter of having direct and realistic conversations with their people about how problems are to be fixed. All this will be of little value unless it leads to a real and sustained sense of urgency.**
- There are many fine leaders at all levels in the fire and emergency services but the question that needs to be answered is whether the organisational culture, organisational structure and organisational systems allow them to exercise leadership in the most effective way. The paradox is that culture, structure and systems are shaped by executives who are also the most senior leaders in an organisation.
- There is a massive range of literature on the theory and practice of leadership. Notwithstanding the large variety of leadership theories, approaches and models there is still no agreement on what leadership actually is and probably there never will be.
- On the other hand the standard of leadership in any organisation can be gauged fairly reliably by an external observer by doing two things. Firstly, by keeping an awareness that people continually ask themselves, either consciously or unconsciously, four questions about their leaders. Secondly, by finding out how followers actually answer those questions. And this is best done by listening to the stories that people tell about their work place.
- The four questions people ask about their leaders are:
 - Are you *competent*?
 - What are you *really committed* to?
 - Can I *trust* you?
 - Do you *really care* about me?

- It is interesting to speculate how operational staff and corporate staff in the fire and emergency services might respond in answering such questions about their leaders at all levels. The answers might not be too encouraging.

Firefighters - A Profession?

- When one talks of a “profession” one is generally referring to people such as members of the legal profession, the medical professional and so on. To describe someone as being “professional” infers that they display high levels of skill, knowledge and commitment and that they manifest complementary attitudes. Firefighters are undeniably professional in how they go about their work but whether they constitute a profession is open to debate.
- Peter Wright, a Canadian jurist, responded to the question “What is a profession?” by suggesting that it is characterised by six hallmarks:
 - Firstly, the *holding out to the public, the offer of public service*.
 - Secondly, the *special skill* a professional is assumed to have.
 - Thirdly, professional *training and education*.
 - Fourthly, professional *privilege* and state *recognition*.
 - Fifthly, membership of a *self-disciplined group*.
 - Finally, a *significant measure of unselfishness or freedom from purely personal considerations*. This extends to the nature of the institutions of which professionals are members.
- By these standards all firefighters embody some of the characteristics of a profession. It is emphasised that this is not to be confused with the notion of firefighters performing “professionally” on the job.
- It is thus reasonable to suggest that there is a strong case for professional regulatory arrangements for the certification and recertification of career firefighters as meeting specific competencies. Arguably for some career firefighters with appropriate education, training, experience and seniority there is also a case for them to be accorded formal state

recognition as members of a profession by according them the privilege of commissioned rank.

- These considerations suggest a possible need for a *Career Firefighters Registration Board* and the exploration of options for formal state recognition of the professional status of *commissioned fire service officer*.

Industrial Relations

- The industrial relations climate within the fire and emergency services is sometimes described as being “militant” and “radical”. Whether “militant” is an appropriate descriptor is a matter of opinion. Possibly the nature of some industrial behaviour might be grounded in an unjustified but deep seated fear of change, both internally and within the wider world. Operational services of any stripe are inherently conservative.
- Certainly “radical” is not an appropriate descriptor if that word is taken to mean “*relating to or advocating fundamental or revolutionary changes to current practices, conditions or institutions*”. Indeed the industrial relations climate is often characterised by a level of conservatism, meaning “*maintaining the traditional order*”. Every human condition and every human institution are temporary. Permanence is an illusion which sometimes we all cling to.
- Why this industrial climate prevails is puzzling. One might assume that within the union movement, for example, there is to be found a wealth of fire and emergency service knowledge and experience that would make all too apparent the shortfalls in current emergency management arrangements and what needs to be done to fix them. Rather than appearing not to embrace change, the union movement should be in the vanguard of change. Undeniably, the answer to why this is not happening would likely be found in the part played by all the parties, including Government, involved directly or indirectly in industrial relations.
- Unfortunately the current industrial relations climate means a disproportionate amount of board, executive and managerial time and effort is absorbed by protracted industrial consultation and interminable disputes over issues that can go on for years. This can make for a *theatre of the absurd*. Virtually any managerial initiative, including those of an operational nature, can be impeded or blocked indefinitely by what

amounts to a union power of veto contained in the current *Operational Staff Enterprise Agreement (2010)*.

- The existence of a *de facto* “closed shop” created by onerous industrial conditions for the lateral recruitment of trained and experienced firefighters from other organisations is a major impediment to change, especially cultural change. *If, for example, the benefits of greater diversity are to be harvested, it will be necessary to recruit suitably qualified and experienced people, which may include women, from other organisations, to fill middle and higher level positions. It is not necessary to have served for long periods in either the MFB or CFA to perform well at higher levels in those organisations*
- Enterprise Agreements struck under Commonwealth industrial law can effectively override State legislation and regulations affecting the fire services. This considerably exacerbates industrial relations problems. *The industrial difficulties experienced by the fire and emergency services in Victoria are widely acknowledged within the wider Australian fire and emergency services community.* This widespread view is too strong to be overlooked.
- Nobody would challenge the benefits that trade unionism provides for the workforce, but in the case of the Victorian fire and emergency services, to put a fine edge on it, there is an unmistakable need for all parties involved in industrial relations to show some “grown-up behaviour” and exercise some “adult supervision”. This must ultimately come from within the fire services themselves, both from the higher level and the frontline. There is too much at stake to do otherwise. Organisational life involves acquiring and exercising power but what matters is how it is acquired and used. Some people possibly fail to understand this.
- More suitable and contemporary provisions for resolving grievances and disputes are essential. The provision of a test that allows informed judgments to be made on what constitutes *reasonable consultation* and *unreasonable delay* must be included in the next Enterprise Agreement. *If this is not done initiatives intended to modernise and reform the fire and emergency services will almost certainly founder or at the very least be hampered unnecessarily.*

Fitness for Duty

- Fire and emergency services operational staff members are aging significantly. The median age is in the high 40s and increasing. Fit for duty requirements in terms of job relevant psychological and physical standards are under developed and tend to focus on recruits rather than having a career long perspective. This represents a high and unacceptable risk for Government and the fire and emergency services on matters such as duty of care, financial compensation and reputation. More to the point, it places firefighters themselves at risk of death or serious injury because of temporary or permanent physical problems of which they might not be aware.
- A related problem is that the fire and emergency services do not have the prerogative to separate operational staff who are permanently unfit for duty and who cannot be found suitable alternative employment.

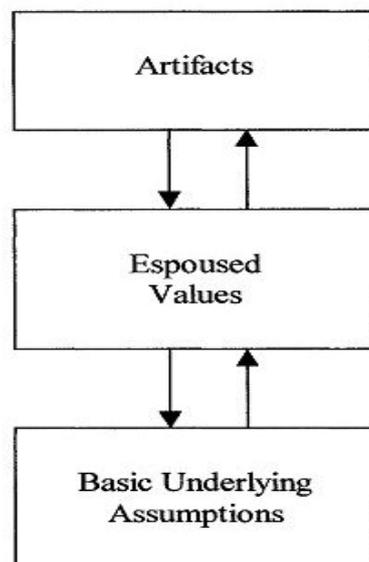
Culture Change

- Although there is much discussion about the need for culture change across the wider emergency management sector, culture change programs appear to be inadequately developed and are often described in exhortative and aspirational terms. Many advocates of culture change appear to have little understanding of what organisational culture is, how culture change is achieved and the sustained effort involved. Culture determines how an organisation interacts with its external environment and how it integrates internally, or alternatively fails to integrate. *Understanding organisational culture means understanding an organisation's history.*
- Skilled and experienced fire fighters and corporate staff in the fire and emergency services perform tasks, often dangerous and sometimes emotionally gruelling ones in the case of firefighters, that are essential for the protection of the community. They do this very well and in some instances, admirably when faced with perilous situations, something which is publicly recognised. Consequently external judgments on the performance of the fire and emergency services are very positive. On the other hand when fire and emergency service organisations are viewed as *institutions* by taking account of the totality of their espoused values, the fire services do not measure up as well, especially from an internal day-to-day perspective. *Although many aspects of the fire and emergency*

service culture should be preserved and nurtured, some aspects need urgent and radical change.

- The culture of uniformed operational services remains a deep mystery to some, principally because they have never experienced it or observed it carefully. Some of the characteristics of operational service cultures are functionally essential, others are highly symbolic (meddle with them at your peril), others are reflections of the collective behaviour of people in any deeply tribal institution and others have a strong negative influence including a marked resistance to organisational change and a tendency towards isolation from important trends in the community.
- Such cultures are deeply ingrained over generations and they are what organisational behaviour practitioners describe as *highly dependent* cultures. *Organisations with such cultures tend to experience difficulties in seeing the world in other than their traditional ways.* Cultures like this are to be found in institutions like the police, fire and emergency services, the church, the law, the armed forces and even AFL clubs. Again, it is emphasised that the key is to know what must endure and what must change - but change is difficult and requires sustained long term effort extending over several years. *The organisational socialisation of recruits in operational services of all kinds is especially powerful and it serves to sustain the existing culture. This has both beneficial and in some cases, detrimental effects.*
- Like many organisations the fire and emergency services have a number of sub-cultures which are sources of both strength and weakness. The operational sub-culture of firefighters is both strong and essential although it must be stressed that there are doubtless differences between the operational sub-cultures of career firefighters and volunteer firefighters. Undoubtedly there are also differences between the sub-cultures of training establishments, different operational districts, individual fire stations and head office. The corporate staff also have their own sub-culture which differs in significant ways from that of the operational staff.
- These different sub-cultures are functionally essential because of the different circumstances in which people train and work. To the extent necessary, however, they need to be compatible with each other and grounded in an overarching organisational culture. These in turn need to recognise a broader, State wide joint fire and emergency service culture.

- Career firefighter, especially in the MFB, have a strong to very strong union culture. There is also a long-standing and damaging schism between the firefighters and their senior officers and MFB management. The two are related in that the senior leadership has failed over a long period of time. Leadership abhors a vacuum and if senior leaders leave one due to their absence from the leadership stage, something else or someone else will fill it. The result will inevitably be an organisation burdened with institutional conflict. This can manifest itself at times in the form of a disturbing level of alienation on the part of the workforce, or in other words they do not “feel at home with themselves in their world”. **This is not a sign of a healthy institution.**
- The fire and emergency service workforce consists of highly competent and experienced *individuals* who are guided in their operational work by the values of the five “Cs”, namely, courage, commitment, compassion, community and competence. **Culture is the “leader’s shadow” and it is clear that for many years the fire and emergency services have in some cases abandoned to other institutions the role of casting this shadow.**
- Culture change programs often focus on the deeper levels of organisational culture generally described as *espoused values* and *basic underlying assumptions*, both of which are not directly observable, especially the latter. Experience indicates that culture change is best achieved by focusing initially on the *visible* level of culture referred to as *artifacts*. The relationship between the three levels of culture is shown below:



Artifacts are:

- Visible
- Physical
- Social

Values are:

- Invisible
- Manifested as behaviour

Assumptions are:

- Invisible
- Deeply ingrained
- What has worked in past

- The level of artifacts includes both physical objects and social behaviour and includes icons and symbols, rituals, customs, ceremonies, language (which is a very powerful artifact), rewards and sanctions, and organisational policies, structures and systems. Many of these can be of longstanding and they are often deeply ingrained and symbolically powerful.
- Effective and timely culture change means replacing, modifying or even deleting selected cultural artifacts (remembering the broad spectrum of things this covers) in order to cause a change in behaviour. By comparison, evangelical attempts to alter espoused values and basic underlying assumptions usually fail or take an inordinate amount of time. One of the problems with the latter approach is that as time passes or when people are under severe stress there is a likelihood that they will regress to deep seated, longstanding forms of behaviour which are probably never completely erased. New artifacts can be very effective in holding the line against such regressive behaviour.
- *If one wants, for example, a culture of accountability then the solution is to put accountability measures in place and insist on adherence to them. Initially there will be organisational resistance but given time and sometimes a surprisingly short time, these measures will be accepted as normal.*

Diversity

- Debates over *diversity*, however that is defined, can devolve into a conflict between the opinions of those who advocate it with almost religious fervour and those who are unabashedly sceptical. One could be forgiven for thinking that the case for diversity is sometimes driven more by simple social activism than a compelling argument for change. The often heard exhortation that organisations need to more closely reflect the diversity of the general community is often an unsupported assertion, it is not a compelling argument – but that is what is required.
- Thus the argument that greater diversity is needed in the fire and emergency services must be grounded in a valid argument based on true or generally agreed premises. The case for diversity in any context is probably based on three key premises:
 - Firstly, every citizen, irrespective of gender, race or ethnicity and provided they meet the required standards, should have a fair

opportunity to seek and gain employment in their vocational choice.

- Secondly, if so employed, all citizens should have a fair opportunity for career advancement.
 - Thirdly, all citizens must feel psychologically and physically safe from unacceptable behaviour and occupational hazards in the work place and provision should be made, where practical, for any defining human needs some citizens might have. Being placed in harm's way and confronting dangerous situations is an intrinsic part of some vocations but even then every practical measure should be put in place to moderate the risks involved.
- The question of whether diversity is conducive or essential to improved organisational performance of any type is a difficult one to answer. The results of research into the general correlation between diversity and high performance are both equivocal and generally weak. There is some evidence that depending on the type and nature of an organisation, an excessive emphasis on the need for diversity can actually be detrimental to performance. On the other hand there is contrary evidence which points to improved performance in some organisations because of increased diversity. This is a key question for the *Review* and it should not take second place to social activism.
 - It is well to remember that Mary Parker-Follett recognised early in the 20th Century that the social and technical systems (*socio-technical systems*) of all organisations are inextricably intertwined. Changing one affects the other. Increased diversity in the social system will undoubtedly impact to some degree on both the social and technical systems and it is always important to ensure that this is not to the detriment of overall organisational performance. Ensuring this does not happen is hardly “rocket science”.
 - It is an indisputable fact that fire services throughout the *English speaking world* are generally white and male dominated. The median percentage of career women firefighters internationally is probably around 3 per cent (in the MFB it is approximately 3.6 per cent although it is approximately 10 per cent in the London Fire Brigade). Representation from racial and ethnic minorities varies but it is generally much lower than in the general community.

- On balance firefighting is unlikely to be a preferred occupation for women and ethnic minorities and some social research indicates that this is probably the case. Recognising the differences between fire service and military employment, few women have chosen employment in infantry, armour, artillery and combat engineers in armies where this has been allowed for some time, such as in the Canadian Forces. Even though every reasonable measure has been taken to encourage the participation of women in these roles the number remains very low and the level of turnover is high. This is not to say that women have not performed well, even conspicuously in these roles in combat operations but not many choose and subsequently like this type of work. Targets and quotas for gender diversity in these roles have been dismal failures.
- Paradoxically, the trend since the 1950s from “war between peoples” to “war among the people” (insurgency and counter insurgency) and the consequential nature of operations means women in their more traditional roles such as logistics and medical services often find themselves increasingly caught in combat exchanges. The presence of women in these conflicts has, however, realised great benefits in overcoming cultural barriers that often prevent effective interaction between foreign males in security forces and indigenous females from different cultures. This undoubtedly would also apply to fire and emergency services when interacting with ethnic minorities.
- In an armed conflict characterised by harsh physical conditions, extreme danger, uncertainty, intense physical exertion and an intense focus on destroying one’s opponents while preserving one’s own life and safety, considerations of gender, race and ethnicity generally fade from conscious awareness. *What matters is that people fit into their small group, that they are committed to and competent at the task in hand and importantly, that they are tough and reliable.*
- Women firefighters are not fragile flowers. Doubtless they would wish to be seen as always meeting the demanding criteria in the last sentence in italics in the above paragraph. In the MFB women firefighters are understood to use standard equipment. To do otherwise would appear unnecessary if the required physical employment standards are met. Apparently many women firefighters resent uncalled for patronage or anything else that makes them feel like exhibits from the spectral-magic and enchanted woods of Celtic antiquity. Research has revealed that UK police officers from minority ethnic groups feel the same way.

- There are no administrative impediments to persons of any gender, race or ethnicity joining the fire and emergency services provided they meet the required job related psychological and physical standards.
- There does not appear to be any evidence that operational responses by the fire and emergency services in urban areas are hampered by a lack of diversity save those instances where the ethnicity of the community affected poses language or cultural problems. A diversity mix in fire crews that would guarantee a high probability of this problem always being alleviated should it arise would seem to be impractical. The current practice within the MFB of employing appropriately skilled liaison officers is a practical solution. Compared to operational responses, however, interaction with the community on fire prevention measures would appear to offer a more compelling argument for increased diversity in the fire services. How these judgments apply in rural areas is not known.
- These considerations aside, it is important to ensure that in the fire and emergency services that there are no biases, prejudices and administrative factors that discriminate against the employment and career progression, of women, racial and ethnic minorities. There must be zero tolerance of unacceptable work place behaviour that makes such people feel psychologically or physically unsafe.
- On the other hand measures which aim to discriminate in favour of gender, race or ethnicity, including the relaxation of job related psychological and physical standards or the unnecessary modification of equipment, with the exception of some items of personal protective equipment, should be strenuously avoided. At the very least it will cause a strong organisational backlash, be it covert or overt, which will be to the detriment of those that these measures are intended to help. In the worst case it will diminish operational effectiveness.
- Experience suggests that the roads to diversity that embrace positive discrimination and measures such as quotas are paved with failure. They can breed resentment among the majority who can feel they are being discriminated against. Quotas are usually unrealistically high and they are either not met or standards have to be reduced in order to do so.
- A successful diversity program needs to be carefully planned, convincingly explained without resorting to vacuous and fashionable slogans, and carefully implemented and monitored. If the enduring

characteristics of human nature including organisational culture are ignored in the process, failure is staring people in the face. This means, among other things, preparing the existing workforce to the extent practical for the changes they face. People recoil negatively from having matters like diversity “shoved down their throats” and in particular they deeply resent being berated because they are “not representative” of the community they serve - and apparently this has happened in the fire and emergency services resulting in a response that should have been anticipated.

AN OPTION FOR CHANGE

“It is the lot of the prophet to be stoned”
Anonymous

- *Change usually represents a compromise but it should be a compromise from what is generally accepted as the ideal or best solution.* Thus it is first necessary to determine what constitutes the optimum solution. This outline option should therefore be seen in that context.

Fire Services Structure

- A comparison of the current structure of the Victorian fire and emergency services with those of NSW, Queensland, WA (Annexes A, B and C) and Tasmania point to the inescapable conclusion that Victoria is a *generation* behind.
- There are three broad options for restructuring the Victorian fire and emergency services as follows:
 - Firstly, retain the *status quo* while making changes that aim to improve the functional relationships between Emergency Management Victoria, MFB/CFA and their Boards, and a possible Board of Reference. Politically and in terms of the demands placed on leadership and management this is the easiest and probably the most appealing option. It, however, does little to modernise the overall structure of the fire and emergency services.
 - Secondly, amalgamate MFB and CFA and structure the fire and emergency services on a *regional* basis with varying mixes of urban

and rural capabilities depending on the nature of each region. Victoria accounts for three per cent of the Australian land mass and 25 per cent of its population. This suggests that at first blush Victoria would be best served by having only one fire and emergency service but this option faces a formidable array of political, cultural and other obstacles that are probably insurmountable. Major obstacles likely include an industrial relations regime which does not appeal to CFA volunteers, the understandable political power of the CFA volunteers themselves and the survival instincts of Government and individual politicians in regional and rural seats. None of these individually or collectively are insurmountable obstacles given political leadership and political will but it is a very “courageous” option that sits uneasily in the *Age of Timidity*.

- Thirdly, replicate the NSW model and restructure MFB and CFA into complementary state-wide urban and rural fire and emergency services and adopt some of the higher level arrangements extant in Queensland, WA and Tasmania. On balance it is suggested that this is the best option but even its acceptance will place heavy demands on political leadership and political will.
- In the context of the third option, it is instructive to compare the Victorian and NSW fire services:
 - *Fire and Rescue NSW* has 337 fire stations and 182 accredited rescue crews. It has 6,800 career firefighters, 7,000 community firefighters, 455 corporate staff and 667 firefighting vehicles.
 - *MFB* (Annual Report 2014) has 47 fire stations, 5 accredited rescue units, 1,859 career firefighters and 338 corporate staff. Measured against *Fire and Rescue NSW*, the MFB is somewhat *boutique*.
 - *NSW Rural Fire Service* has 2,053 brigades, 822 permanent staff and nearly 74,000 volunteers although it is assumed that not all of these are operational volunteers.
 - The *CFA* (Annual Report 2014) has 1,218 brigades, 32 integrated fire stations (career and volunteer firefighters), 204 urban fire stations and 951 rural fire stations. It has 900 career firefighters, 924 corporate staff and 59,700 volunteers of which 38,335 are operational volunteers and 21,365 are support volunteers.

- Notwithstanding any other considerations these numbers suggest that there is a functional and geographic (urban and rural) argument for organising the Victorian fire and emergency services as follows:
 - An *urban fire and emergency service* responsible for the greater Melbourne metropolitan area, possibly including selected peri-urban areas and regional urban areas including cities like Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton and others that meet appropriate criteria. This parallels the organisation of *Fire and Rescue NSW*. The boundaries defining this organisation's areas of responsibility should be reviewed every five years as happens in NSW and not *once in 41 years* as appears to have happened in Victoria.
 - A *rural fire and emergency service* responsible for other areas within Victoria recognising the need to take account of the current role of the *Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning* fire service. Local agreements should be established for emergency responses close to or astride the boundaries of responsibility of the *urban fire and emergency service* and the *rural fire and emergency service*. This also parallels arrangements in NSW.
- The *urban fire and emergency service* should include in regional urban areas part-time retained staff who are paid a retainer in return for meeting an obligation to turn out at short notice in an emergency. This arrangement exists in NSW. Alternatively volunteers in the style of CFA volunteers could become part of the urban service outside of Melbourne.
- Each fire and emergency service should have its own uniformed *Commissioner* who would subsume the roles of the current Chief Executives. These Commissioners need not necessarily have prior fire service experience but they should have had prior emergency, ambulance or police service experience. *They would be accountable for providing routine fire and emergency responses, other services and routine community engagement within their own areas of responsibility.* Major incidents or those requiring a level of coordination that cannot be provided by an individual fire and emergency service would come under the direction of the Emergency Management Commissioner who would be better titled as the *Chief Commissioner Fire and Emergency Services*.

Emergency Management Victoria

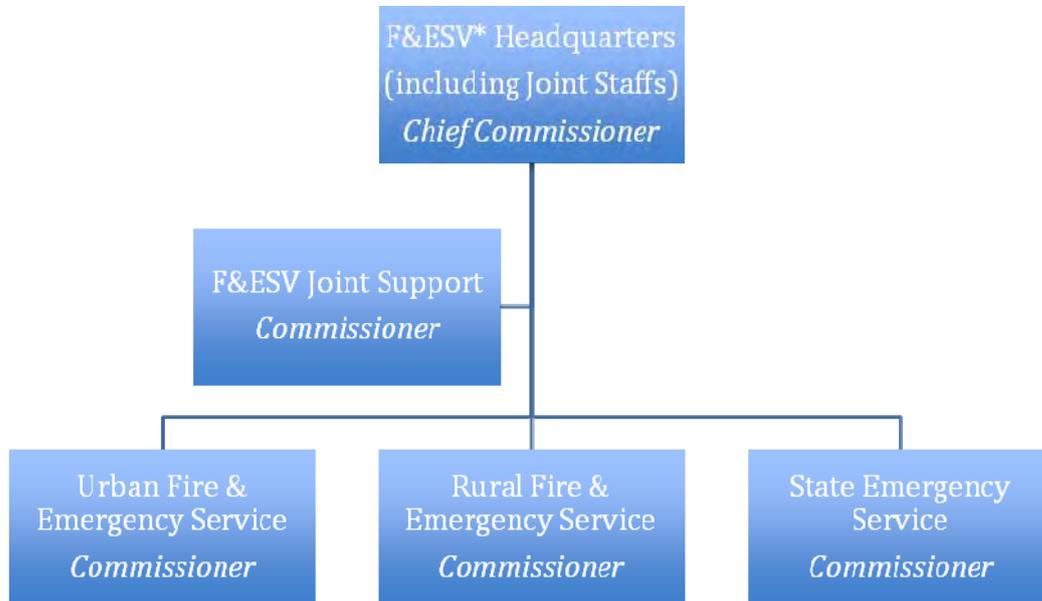
- Of themselves the proposed fire and emergency service restructuring arrangements will not meet the needs of a State wide all hazards-all agencies approach. To do this optimally there should be a highly integrated, State wide fire and emergency services organisation. This can be achieved by adopting some of the higher level features of the Queensland and WA organisations (Annexes B and C). Emergency Management Victoria(EMV) might be better titled *Fire and Emergency Services Victoria*.
- The Emergency Management Commissioner (or Chief Commissioner Fire and Emergency Services) should be directly accountable to the relevant Minister, where necessary through the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Regulation.
- *The fire and emergency services should be placed under the direct authority (command) of the Emergency Management Commissioner thereby making the individual fire and emergency services Commissioners directly accountable to the Emergency Management Commissioner. The position of Chief Executive in EMV should be abolished.*
- *There would be no compelling argument for the continued existence of individual fire and emergency service boards in this arrangement, especially in light of the possible establishment of a Board of Reference at EMV level and the former boards should be abolished. This would reflect the more modern and streamlined arrangements that already prevail in both NSW and Queensland.*
- Conceivably the existing boards could be retained to exercise an advisory rather than an executive role but to what end and to what benefit is not clear but it is worth consideration. Certainly many of the powers of the MFB Board under the MFB Act have been largely rendered impotent due to the overriding power of Commonwealth industrial law manifested in Enterprise Agreements.
- The chain of command (or line of authority) from the Emergency Management Commissioner down through the fire and emergency service commissioners to fire station and fire crew level needs to be concisely defined in terms of authority, responsibility and reciprocal accountability and where necessary enshrined in legislation.

- A more capable EMV operational command and control system including associated stipulative definitions should be established and where applicable included in documents such as EMV Joint Standard Operating Procedures. Of importance are definitions of terms, should they or similar terms be adopted, like *full command, operational command, administrative command, operational control and technical control*. *Such terms must be universally and unequivocally understood.*
- There should be one fire and emergency services budget supported by a sector budget process which allows for consolidated sector operating and capital investment budgets. There is a complementary need for a sector *Capability and Capital Investment Plan*. The Emergency Services Commissioner should have the prerogative to re-allocate funds between agencies if necessary during a given financial year.
- Of importance is the need to establish as part of EMV's headquarters, *joint staffs* that would include members from the two fire and emergency services and other agencies as necessary to deal with some but not necessarily all the following functions:
 - fire and emergency service joint operations,
 - special operations,
 - communications and IT,
 - preparedness & performance evaluation,
 - joint capability development,
 - fire science and technology,
 - fire investigations and compliance,
 - community safety and resilience,
 - community partnerships,
 - joint doctrine, education and training,
 - finance and budgets,
 - legal services,
 - media and public communications, and
 - work health and safety,
 - industrial relations, and
 - joint HRM policy.
- These joint staffs should all be collocated for both functional and joint culture building reasons. Nominated members of these staffs would have the right to consult with their parent fire and emergency service. Such joint arrangements should markedly reduce the effort and time absorbed in co-ordinating the activities of individual fire and emergency services

where a joint outcome is required. A limited number of new committees such as an *EMV Capability and Investment Committee* would need to be established.

- The current organisation of EMV (Annex D) suggests that the foundation for such joint arrangements exists but at present the functional relationships between EMV and the fire and emergency services are poorly defined and at times, appear to be dysfunctional.
- To the maximum extent practical support functions (some of which could be referred to as “corporate” or “technical functions”) should be rationalised into joint organisations to remove unnecessary management overheads, duplication of activities, obstacles to standardisation and interoperability, and the realisation of the knowledge, functional and cultural benefits that accrue from joint interaction. Examples of support functions that could be organised in this way are:
 - an integrated logistic support organisation which would include supply chain management as well as engineering, maintenance, repair, technical regulation (of design, modification, configuration management, maintenance and repair) and fleet management;
 - a capital procurement organisation - although there are benefits in integrating this function with integrated logistic support to ensure through-life-support arrangements are considered early in the capability development process;
 - a property (facilities) investment and management organisation; and
 - training establishments.
- Longer term consideration should be given to the establishment of a comprehensive, integrated and modern *operations centre* with common operating pictures and extensive CIT capabilities for the greater Melbourne metropolitan area if not the whole of Victoria. This would include fire and emergency services, ambulance and police services, utilities and essential services, State and local government representatives as necessary and the media. This arrangement already exists in some international cities including, for example, Rio de Janeiro.

- The proposed organisation including the proposed new titles is illustrated below:



* Fire & Emergency Services Victoria

Legislation and Regulation

- Legislation and regulation affecting Emergency Management Victoria and the fire and emergency services should be modernised, simplified and made more practical in its application. The language in the current acts is “quaint” to put it mildly.
- Disciplinary provisions in legislation and regulation should be modernised, made more particular in the style but not necessarily paralleling the substance of the *Victoria Police Act 2013* and quarantined from dilution by enterprise agreements under Commonwealth law.

Industrial Relations

- There must be a major resetting of industrial relationships between the UFU in particular and the fire and emergency services. Steps must be taken to move the relationship beyond a 1970s industrial conflict culture.
- As has happened in other States there needs to be a more sensible and mature relationship between the union and the fire and emergency

services. In addition, senior fire and emergency service officers have to reclaim the workforce as their followers, remembering that leadership is a mutual influence relationship between leaders and followers.

- It is critical that future enterprise agreements do not include provisions that allow the union to indefinitely block managerial initiatives of any sort, especially those that are of an operational nature. Provision for an objective test of what constitutes *reasonable consultation and unreasonable delay* is essential.
- At its foundations the current difficulties are not primarily about wages and conditions of employment but rather about an impression, be it true or otherwise, that there is a continual and damaging competition for acquiring power and then exercising it to psychologically dominate the other party. As mentioned earlier, this behaviour could be more about an irrational fear of change. If the distribution and exercise of industrial power cannot be modified to reflect a more contemporary and productive approach then the long term implications for the fire and emergency services and the community could be quite detrimental

Fitness for Duty

- As a matter of urgency the job related psychological and physical standards required of firefighters should be defined and procedures for ensuring that individuals meet these must be enforced, if necessary through legislation or regulation. This cannot be compromised by provisions contained in Enterprise Agreements made under Commonwealth industrial legislation.
- The fire and emergency services must be given the prerogative to separate firefighters who are permanently unfit for operational duties and cannot be found permanent alternative employment within the fire and emergency services. **This must be done with compassion and a suitable package of benefits for those who are separated must be provided.**

Culture Change

- A leadership and joint culture building program should be implemented for staff in selected organisations, especially joint organisations. This should be a permanent arrangement in order to provide for staff turnover. If necessary, the program should initially be developed and

facilitated by an external organisation which focuses on organisational behaviour and not a large general management consulting company.

Diversity

- A carefully planned diversity program with a compelling functional argument for change and achievable goals should be developed. This program should be notable because of the absence of “rain dancing” and resort to vacuous platitudes and cliches. Due attention should be given to preparing and engendering support from the existing workforce. This might not always be easy.

Professional Recognition

- A *Career Firefighters Registration Board* should be established and appropriate measures taken to formalise the profession of *fire and emergency service officer* for selected senior ranks.

IMPLEMENTATION

“A familiar failing...of people who live in the realm of ideas and issues is that they are not inclined to soil their hands with the nuts and bolts of organisational functioning.”

John Gardner

Former US Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare

“In Frank Miller’s [member US National Security Staff 2003] view too many senior and mid-level people in Defense [US spelling] were big ideas people who loved concepts, paper and talk, but they were not experienced managers. “They don’t do implementation’ he reported...”

*Bob Woodward
in Plan of Attack*

Leading and Managing Change

- All change programs like all strategies fail to varying degrees in their implementation. Some fail miserably. The ability of people to conceive far exceeds their ability to execute. As Hilaire Belloc observed, "*The test does not lie so much in the general conception as in the execution of a plan*". Change programs are fraught with difficulty but there are some steps which will often alleviate the common problems encountered. There are five things that should happen if major changes to the fire and emergency services are contemplated.
- Firstly, the temptation to do too much simultaneously must be assiduously avoided. **It is absolutely essential to initially concentrate on the 20 per cent of things that will make 80 per cent of the difference.**
- Secondly, the overall day-to-day management and oversight of change implementation cannot be left exclusively to busy executives, line managers and operational commanders. *A temporary fire and emergency services organisational change staff* should be established under the Emergency Services Commissioner to implement in detail the recommendations of the *Review*. Senior executives are always too distracted by day-to-day demands and other pressures to give major organisational change the constant attention which it requires.
- *One of the most important tasks of this staff would be to ensure that cross-organisational and cross-functional collaboration is intense and continuous.* The head of this staff should have a wide ranging charter with the authority to visit the fire and emergency services and review progress in consultation with appropriate fire and emergency service executives, managers and commanders. A failure to establish such an organisation would militate significantly against a successful reform outcome.
- Thirdly, there needs to be a highly symbolic transition between the *Old World* and the *New World*. Organisations get their work done through systems the foundations of which are processes which consist of linked activities. For each activity there is a procedure. In functional terms organisations are best understood as core, enabling and supporting processes, not as organisational structures. In theory, if systems are designed or redesigned first, the organisational structure should then fall out with ease and elegance. In practice this idea confronts too many obstacles not the least of which is the time needed to redesign systems

and put them in place, especially if the communications and information implications are significant.

- The only solution is to move quickly by putting the new organisational structure in place complete with bums on new seats, even if this is a somewhat messy process. Nothing signals better the end of the *Old World*, the birth of the *New World* and the realisation that there will be no turning back. Importantly it also gets the culture change process rolling.
- This process needs to be carefully planned and explained but to the extent practical it should be an “apocalyptic” event that heralds the birth of the new. Suitable beginning and ending ceremonies can support this change. Moses’ parting of the Red Sea and its subsequent closing after he had led the Israelites to safety remains best practice for a beginning and ending ceremony.
- Fourthly, all organisations contain social and technical systems that are inextricably intertwined. Change one and it impacts on the other. Thus it is important to work simultaneously on both if change is to be successfully implemented.
- Finally, all organisations contain a wealth of energy, latent knowledge, creativity and a flare for innovation among their younger staff, irrespective of where they are located in the organisation. Forming them into *diverse* groups of “young Turks” and giving each group specific problems to examine and a free rein to propose radical solutions can deliver the most extraordinary results. United States Government departments and agencies, including the armed forces, are remarkably successful at doing this, even at the highest national level. The diversity of some of these groups is striking. These groups are often the catalyst for major changes because senior executives often cannot see beyond traditional solutions to unique or even common problems. It is a very un-Australian way of doing things but it has worked handsomely in places.

Survivor Syndrome, Psychological Contract and Grieving

- Major change usually leads to a temporary reduction in morale, motivation, commitment and job satisfaction. There may also be concerns for job security and career opportunities. This is referred to as the *survivor syndrome*.

- The *psychological contract* which complements the legal contract is usually also ruptured. The former consists of unwritten commitments to recognition, status, security and personal development. A likely outcome is a significant but hopefully not irreparable reduction in the level of trust accorded to leaders, especially senior executives. This and the survivor syndrome are intertwined.
- The grieving process of denial, anger and resistance, bargaining and adaptation, and finally acceptance and active involvement is certain to be experienced by many people.
- Dealing successfully with these requires energetic and skilled leadership of a very high order which cannot be exercised from behind a desk or through email and other forms of electronic communication. It requires face-to-face communication and if people feel they have insufficient time to do this they should step aside (or be moved aside) in favour of someone who does.

Tricks of the Trade

- There are a handful of *tricks*, most of which should be well known, that can help greatly in successfully leading and managing change. Of particular importance is the need for leaders to be authentic and open, to avoid language that is bureaucratic, managerial, patronising or obscure and to display genuine empathy.
- Research has revealed some key characteristics of the Australian workforce and people ignore them at their peril. They can be summarised as follows:
 - Australians like strong but not hard leaders.
 - They never forgive a *bastard*.
 - They like change to be carefully explained, planned in detail and implemented cautiously (*these can represent obstacles to change*).
 - Unlike Americans, they are not motivated by organisational crises.

- Again, unlike Americans, personal development is less important than workplace relationships, especially with co-workers and their immediate supervisor (*this reinforces the importance of small group cohesion*).
- The most trusted leader is the immediate supervisor (*this reinforces the importance of developing frontline leaders*)
- Leaders are reluctant to constructively confront poor performance.
- Australians have very finely tuned *bullshit* detectors and they spot humbug, cant, dissembling and hypocrisy very quickly. In particular they are turned off by the language of *officialese* (public policy and bureaucracy) and managerialism.
- With the preceding points in mind, the following tricks can be very helpful:
 - Put a sustained effort into firstly creating dissatisfaction with the *status quo* – otherwise why change?
 - Openly discuss organisational performance and why it needs to improve.
 - **Engender and maintain a sense of urgency** (“jump or burn”) - this presents quite a challenge in public sector organisations
 - Develop a clear, simple narrative about the direction in which the organisation is heading and which everybody can understand. This *big idea* must be reinforced repeatedly but even then it will fail to be acknowledged by many people.
 - Never trash the past, put it in a positive light otherwise those associated with the past will become resentful - explain that the organisation has been endowed with the legacy of a sound foundation on which to build.
 - Senior executives must point out who loses what and what everybody gains, they must discomfort the complacent and comfort the distressed, and display empathy.

- To the extent possible, get the wrong people out and the right people in.
- Get the senior executive group on board first.
- Work on changing groups and not individuals.
- Implement an ongoing culture change (culture *building* might be a better term) program in which senior executives are active participants at all levels.
- Facilitate small group cohesion by quickly putting in place a development program for frontline leaders.
- **Middle managers can be an impediment to change and senior executives must therefore reach down to frontline leaders.**
- **Senior executives must see and be seen consistently**, they must communicate face-to-face authentically and openly, and engage the workforce in dialogue. Senior executives should spend about **30 per cent** of their time doing this - permanently. Good oral communication skills are critical
- Acquire the necessary resources, including the necessary intellectual capital if it is not available within the organisation.
- Invest substantially in training and development - this can make the difference between success and failure.
- Establish networks, alliances and *communities of interest* (people who perform similar work and are keen to learn from each other and exchange knowledge).
- Hold everyone accountable for meeting their responsibilities.
- Constructively confront poor performance.
- To the extent practical involve everyone in improving how work is done.
- Design jobs that are “right sized” and which provide people with sufficient “elbow room” – most people like the freedom to

exercise control over their work and dislike continuous and close supervision.

- Empower people to act - there are alternative ways of doing this which tend to be circumstantial. Importantly make sure there is an organisation wide understanding of what *delegation* means.
- **Get small wins on the board quickly** - it signifies progress and lends credibility to the change program.
- Provide quick feedback and timely praise.
- Pause occasionally to consolidate change and then forge ahead.
- Watch for genuine change fatigue, stress and other psychological problems and take action quickly to remedy them.
- Anchor change in the culture by ensuring new artifacts are embraced strongly.
- Publicly celebrate successes and heroic failures.

Change Failure

- The reasons why change programs fail is usually because of the absence of some of the factors mentioned above.
- In particular it includes:
 - the lack of a compelling change narrative,
 - no sense of urgency,
 - mediocre leadership and change management,
 - failure to deal effectively with disturbances including political and cultural conflict,
 - no dedicated organisational change management staff,
 - lack of resources,

- failure to invest in training and development in order to ensure people have the required competencies,
- “fire-and-forget” implementation,
- failure to get beyond “rain dancing”,
- not putting the new organisation in place quickly,
- not planning for quick wins, and
- declaring victory too soon.

CONCLUSIONS

- Public sector reform is often incremental and timid. This is unavoidable in the absence of strong political leadership and energetic and effective leadership and management within public sector organisations. Finding reasons for opposing change tends to uncover latent genius in many people. People with the emotional and physical drive, the ability to inspire and the managerial skills necessary to bring about major change are often conspicuous by their absence.
- The Victorian fire and emergency services need major change. Of the three options canvassed earlier for the restructuring of the fire and emergency services, the first (retention of the *status quo* with some governance changes) is far and away the most likely, the second (merging MFB/CFA, restructuring on a regional basis and changing governance arrangements) is probably too heroic to be entertained, and the third (restructuring into complementary urban and rural organisations and changing governance arrangements) is less heroic but it is still likely to cause a frisson of fear to run down the spines of many stakeholders; but one can be hopeful.
- The Victorian community deserves nothing less than much improved arrangements as do the thousands of career and volunteer firefighters and corporate staff who perform so well, in some case bravely, in crises and strive tirelessly to protect the community and its property. One should be optimistic but compared to NSW, Queensland, WA and Tasmania, Victoria’s track record to date is less than impressive or

encouraging. One hopes it will not be necessary to await another major natural disaster to bring forth the courage to act.

- *It is worth a go now.* There will be stumbles by the actors and critics galore will emerge when they do, but in the words of President Theodore Roosevelt from a speech titled *Citizenship in a Republic* which he gave at the Sorbonne in 1910:

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming...”

One can but wish that we had people as inspiring in public life today. The language is florid but it understands the rhythm of public utterance, something which Australia’s public leaders have lost.

Annexes:

A. Fire and Rescue NSW

B. Queensland Fire & Emergency Services

C. WA Department of Fire & Emergency Services

D. Emergency Management Victoria – Organisational Chart

FIRE & RESCUE NSW

(In NSW this is complemented by the Rural Fire Service)

- **Commissioner**
 - Office of the Commissioner
 - Media & Communications Unit
 - **Emergency Management Division (EM)**
 - *Operational Capability Directorate*
 - Capability Management
 - Specialised Operations
 - Community Fire Unit
 - Operational Communications
 - *Metropolitan Operations Directorate*
 - Metropolitan North
 - Metropolitan South
 - Metropolitan East
 - Metropolitan West
 - *Regional Operations Directorate*
 - Regional North
 - Regional South
 - Regional West
 - **Corporate Services and Governance Division**
 - *Finance Directorate*
 - Financial Strategy
 - Finance Operations
 - *Human Resources Directorate*

- Workplace Standards
- Recruitment & Staffing
- Employee Relations
- Health and Safety
- *Information Technology Directorate*
 - Infrastructure & Support
 - Communications
 - Information Systems
 - Operational Systems
 - Emergency Services
 - Information Security
 - Business Planning
- *Logistics Support*
 - Fleet Management
 - Supply Services
 - Operational Logistics
 - Property Services
- *Governance & Legal Office*
 - Governance
 - Legal
 - Government Relations
- *Community Safety Directorate*
 - Built Environment
 - ComSafe
 - Community Safety & Research
- *Education & Training*
 - Training
 - Education
- *Program Management Office*

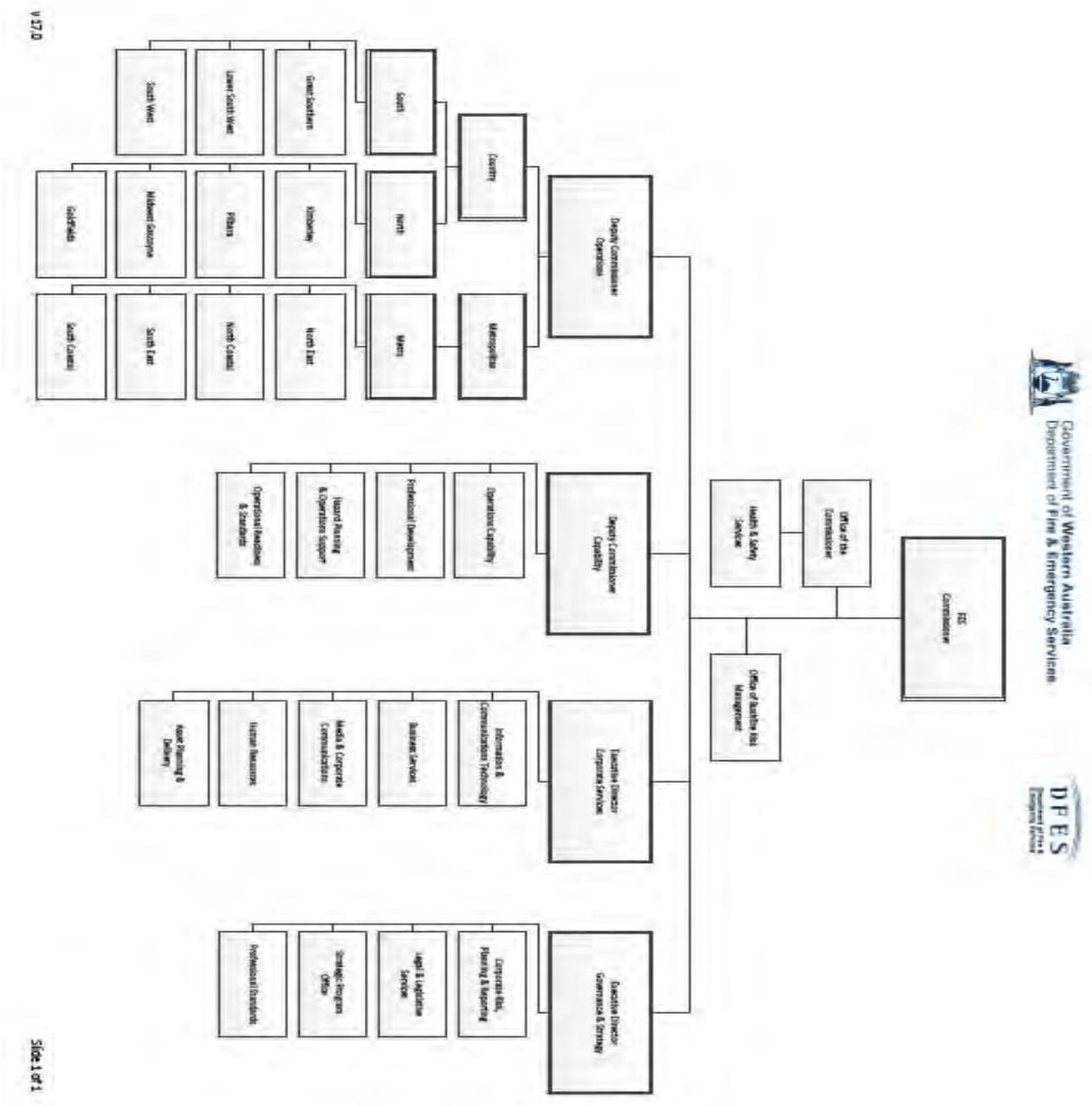
- Business Intelligence
- Planning & Performance Evaluation
- Program Policy & Change Management

WA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

- The Department of Fire & Emergency services (DFES) is overseen by a *Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner* who is responsible for the organisation's strategic direction, operations and management functions. There are *four commands* that deliver and co-ordinate DFES's services to the community as follows:
- **Operations**
 - Metropolitan
 - Country
 - Operations are conducted by one or more of the following:
 - Fire and Rescue Service
 - Volunteer Fire and Rescue service
 - Bush Fire Service
 - Volunteer Fire Service
 - State Emergency service
 - Volunteer Emergency Service
 - Volunteer Marine Rescue service
- **Operations Support and Capability**
 - Hazard planning and operations support
 - Operations
 - Capability
 - Operational readiness and standards
 - Professional development
- **Governance and Strategy**
 - Corporate risk planning and reporting
 - Legal and legislative services
 - Professional standards
 - Strategic program office
- **Corporate Services**
 - Asset planning and delivery
 - Business services
 - Human resources
 - Communications and IT
 - Media and corporate communication

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

(http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/aboutus/corporateinformation/Documents/DFES-Organisational_Structure.pdf)



Government of Western Australia
Department of Fire & Emergency Services



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Emergency Management Victoria - Organisational chart

