



# Restructuring of Victoria's Fire Services

Submission to the Victorian Legislative Council Select Committee of Inquiry into The Firefighters Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017

Submission by

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7 July 2017

Victoria's Unpaid Professional Volunteer Firefighters – The Silent Strategic Force

#### Disclaimer

This submission has been prepared for the Parliament of Victoria Legislative Council Fire Services Bill Select Committee of Inquiry on the restructuring of Victoria's fire services as contemplated by the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017, in accordance with the Terms of Reference outlined in the Introduction of this submission. The submission should be read in the light of the time limitations and limited resources and lack of access to much of the details surround the internal operations and planning of Victorian Government, CFA, MFB and EMV and the proposed FRV (Fire Rescue Victoria) the new Victoria fire and rescue entity.

It is intended that any party other than the Inquiry Committee should not place any reliance upon the statements proposals and material or information included in the submission.

In producing this submission, I do not give any warranty as to the accuracy completeness or usefulness of the information in the submission and do not accept liability whether direct or indirect for any loss or damage a person or organization suffer because that person or organization has directly or indirectly relied on any information provided in the submission.

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7 July 2017

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## Letter of Transmittal

7 July 2017

**Hon Gordon Rich-Phillips**

Chair - Inquiry into The Restructure of Victoria's Fire Services  
C/- Assistant Clerk Committees  
Department of the Legislative Council  
Fire Services Bill Select Committee  
Parliament House, Spring Street  
**EAST MELBOURNE 3002**

Dear Hon Gordon Rich-Phillips,

### Legislative Council Inquiry into The Restructuring of Victoria's Fire Services

I am pleased to provide my private and independent Submission, which is forwarded herewith in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

The Submission sets the background and context of the current economic environment and the challenges facing Governments and public agencies and their managers, in meeting community demands with the scarce and limited resources available to them. I have calculated the cost of fire in Australia which is now over \$22 billion, and the financial value of the contributions made by the states 57,111 volunteers and 2,356 staff of the Country Fire Authority (CFA). Also, the nature of the urban and bushfire risk in Victoria has been reviewed and the issues and challenges of delivery of fire and emergency services in Victoria compared to other states.

A Strategic Direction framework has been developed which is a key first step in establishing a suitable organizational structure and a strategic option under which the CFA can operate effectively and grow its capability and capacity in a highly demanding urban and bushfire environment. In my opinion Victoria faces huge ongoing potential for major bushfires, similar to and potentially equal to or greater than those that have been experienced in the Black Saturday 2009, Ash Wednesday 1983 and Black Friday 1939 major bushfire disasters. These bushfires caused heavy losses of life and property and had major economic impact, in my opinion it is only a matter of time before the next major bushfire disaster of the same magnitude of Black Saturday, Ash Wednesday or Black Friday. To meet this challenge, it is critical that all fire and emergency agencies operate under an integrated operational framework with essentially no borders and clear unified command and control.

In addressing the terms of reference, there is no doubt in my opinion the CFA volunteer arm, over time will end up potentially the most under resourced country/rural fire service in Australia, as the proposed Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) entity will ultimately soak up all the fire service levy funds, as FRV expands to ultimately cover all of Victoria's urban communities. The CFA volunteers have not been supported as they should be for a long time, it is only due to the commitment, courage and pride of the CFA volunteers that there is the level of capability that there is. It would be a tragedy if the CFA Volunteer arm was reduced to a weak under resources, under used country/rural fire agency, similar to other states, who's capability does not at any level achieve that of the current CFA. It is critical that the Inquiry recognise the unique capability of the CFA, and acknowledge the real substance of the CFA, and the potential damage that could be done to the CFA under the proposed restructure of Victoria's Fire Services. The CFA is the most inquired into fire service in the World. The Black Saturday Bushfires Royal Commission identified that the CFA was and is the Pre-eminent fire service in Australia.

The men and women of the CFA deserve nothing less than support, funding and action to maintain and lift their capability and capacity as the Worlds' best integrated fire service.

I commend the submission to you, the Committee and Government.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

**Geoffrey Stone** MBA Melb, GradDipBusAdmin Ball, AdvDipPubS(EmergMgt), DipLeadership&Mgt, FAIM, CPMgr, MIFireE, CFO

[Redacted Contact Information]

## Dedication

*Victorian Volunteer and Career Firefighters*

*"Serving with Courage and Pride"*

*In preparing this submission I have had cause to reflect on the important people at the frontline of the Victorian Fire Services, the men and women volunteer and career firefighters who every day respond to fire and emergency incidents in the rural and urban environments of Victoria. These outstanding people put their lives on the line every time they respond to save lives and property in our communities, we should collectively as the Victorian community feel proud and honored that such people exist and are willing to show such courage, take such risks and make such a great sacrifice for our safety. The volunteer and career firefighters of Victoria do their work without being concerned about politics, Governments and reviews, they do it because it is what they do and they are proud of it. The very least the Victoria Community and Governments at all levels can do to support our firefighters, is to pay them the respect they deserve, by making sure that they have the critical resources and structure they need, in order to ensure they are all well lead, well equipped, and well trained. Failure to do anything less is to disrespect them.*

Geoffrey Stone

## Executive Summary

The Victorian Government proposal to reform the fire services by creating of state-wide fire and rescue service (Fire Rescue Victoria - FRV) and a stripped-down CFA, is a deeply flawed proposal, that fails to recognise that the CFA and MFB are already modern progressive fire services and among the best fire services in the World.

For fire and emergency services organizations such as the CFA to succeed in its task of serving the community they must have a clear Strategic Direction that is understood by all levels, and engages the people within the organization and the community. A potential framework under which the CFA's overall Strategic Direction can be achieved is outlined. The aim is to use this as the framework for providing leadership and strategic direction, in order to engage and gain commitment from Volunteers, Staff, Governments and the Community to the CFA's Vision and Mission and Direction

Should there be some structural change in Victoria's fire services delivery and the entities, it is important that there is a clear unified command structure for major level 3 incidents.

Flowing from the Bushfires Royal Commission 2009 the solution to the need for unified command and control at the highest level was achieved by appointing the Fire Service Commissioner, who was the most senior operational firefighter in the state. The Fire Services Commissioner role should be reinstated. With the Fire Services Commissioner leading a new overarching fire and emergency services agency, that supports the CFA, MFB and SES.

It is recommended that a Fire and Emergency Agency (FEA) structure be established which would bring together the primary fire and emergency services under an overarching framework for coordination, command and control and management.

The establishment of an overarching fire and emergency services (FEA) agency would create a "One Force" model operating under a no borders mandate, and not a fracture single FRV model, and an emasculated CFA.

The total value of the CFA Volunteer human resource contributions to the provision of fire services in Victoria is an important consideration when review the CFA and fire services generally. The value of the CFA volunteer annual contribution has been valued at \$1,062,014,800 (\$1.1 Billion).

## **Introduction**

This submission seeks to provide a strategic framework to assist in and provide options for the Inquiry into The Restructure of Victoria's Fire Services. This document firstly sets the nature of the bushfire and urban fire risk in Victoria and the overall cost of fire, in order to understand the context of a suitable option for the future and a clear strategic direction so that the key issues of Vision, Strategic Direction, Structure, Leadership and Funding can be realistically assessed and alternatives proposed that will improve the support to volunteers and career firefighters of the CFA and MFB and fire service delivery to the Victorian community.

Vision, Strategic Direction, Structure and Leadership are among the key elements of any organization but they are of little use and effect if there is not a clear vision, strategy and strategic direction shared by Government and the Fire Services volunteer and career personnel, their organizations and the community.

## **Background experience and qualifications**

Geoffrey Stone is a veteran fire and emergency services senior leader and commander with more than 35 years experience with the Country Fire Authority Victoria (CFA) as a career and volunteer officer, and senior volunteer commander with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Queensland Fire and Rescue and Rural Fire Service Queensland. Combined with extensive experience as a Chief Executive Officer of many large complex organizations, with turnovers from \$26 million to \$7.5 billion and 1,200 to 15,000 personnel. He is a strategic leader with extensive experience in driving vision, strategic direction and management of fire and emergency services and International enterprises, and leading major multi-agency fire and emergency operations. Having performed a wide range of fire service roles including, CFA Assistant Chief Officer, State Operations - State Fire Commander/Controller, Director agency-wide Corporate Strategic and Operational Planning, Regional Fire Officer in 10 CFA regions and Officer in Charge of volunteer training at CFA Fiskville Training College. He is a dynamic change agent with high level skills and expertise in repositioning, restructuring and implementing change and unifying all stakeholders across a wide range of complex organizations, from a state-wide urban/rural fire service to a disability services organization to large State, National and International companies.

He holds qualifications in public fire safety, firefighting operations, fire and emergency management, and postgraduate tertiary qualifications in business administration including, Master of Business Administration from The University of Melbourne Victoria, Graduate Diploma in Business Administration from University of Ballarat Victoria, Diploma in Leadership and Management and Advanced Diploma in Public Safety – Emergency Management. He has a strong passion to ensure fire and emergency services delivery is undertaken in an efficient and effective way to best serve the community.



## **Geoffrey Stone**

Chief Executive Officer

Synergy International Fire & Emergency Management Advisory



## **Qualifications**

- *Master of Business Administration - The University of Melbourne Victoria*
- *Graduate Diploma in Business Administration - The University of Ballarat Victoria*
- *Advanced Diploma of Public Safety Emergency Management*
- *Diploma of Leadership and Management*
- *Fellow of Australian Institute of Management – FAIM*
- *Certified Professional Manager – CPMgr current*
- *Member of The Institution of Fire Engineers UK - MIFireE*
- *Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Designation CPSE/Commission on Professional Credentialing USA*
- *Major Incident Controller AIIMS - Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System*
- *Certificate IV in Training and Assessment*
- *Certificate IV in Public Safety (Firefighting Supervision)*
- *Certificate III in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations)*
- *Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations)*
- *Senior Executive Fire Officer Assessment V – CFA*
- *Operations Management - CFA*
- *Operations Officer – CFA*
- *Fire Officer III Assessment - CFA*
- *Brigade Officer - QFES*
- *Crew Leader - CFA & QFES*
- *Leading Firefighter/Fire Officer I – CFA*
- *Forest Fire Management – Former DCFL - Forests Commission Victoria*

## **Areas of Expertise**

Fire and Emergency Services delivery, operations, policy, management, corporate, strategic and operational planning. Bushfire management, planning, design and operations. Large scale bushfire incident command and operations. Leadership and management of large scale complex public, private and non-profit organisations.

## **Experience**

Geoffrey Stone has more than 35 years' experience, knowledge, skills and qualifications as a Senior Fire and Emergency Services Officer with the Country Fire Authority Victoria (CFA), Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) and Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ), and recognised industry wide as one of the top experts in the field. He has previously served as CFA Director Strategic and Operational Planning, State Fire Commander, Assistant Chief Officer in various departments and locations, and in other senior state, regional command, group and brigade level positions.

## **Inquiry into The Restructuring of Victoria's Fire Services**

As contemplated by the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill

### **Terms of Reference**

Received from the Legislative Council on 21 June 2017:

That –

A Select Committee of eight Members be appointed to inquire into, consider and report, no later than 8 August 2017, on the restructuring of Victoria's fire services as contemplated by the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 and, in particular, the –

- a) Impact on fire service delivery across Victoria
- b) Effect on volunteer engagement and participation in fire service delivery
- c) Short term and long term cost impact on fire service provision
- d) underlying policy rationale

## Background to the Inquiry

Governments worldwide are struggling with very difficult and to a large extent an unprecedented economic environment in which Governments are forced to focus more closely on the use of the very limited and scarce resources available to deliver services to the community they serve. This environment has seen in past years cuts to fire service funding in CFA and MFB fire services, with cuts of \$66 million, \$43 million CFA and \$23 million to MFB, both these agencies have had significant resources increases over a long period, particularly the CFA, and at the time had some capacity to adjust to funding reductions in the short to medium term. In my opinion for a long period, some of the previous senior management and Boards of the CFA and MFB have failed to effectively negotiate with the United Firefighters Union (UFU), in regard to new EBA's. As with all EBA's the ambit of the UFU claims were wide and to some extent confronting to some of the CFA and MFB management and Boards. It is my opinion that there was a failing of leadership and negotiating skills and expertise in both the CFA and MFB with some of their management tasked with the management and negotiations of the EBA's. In the case of the CFA this inability to effectively managed and negotiate the EBA, was symptomatic of a wider malaise and lack of management skills, experience and expertise in the CFA senior management at the time. This was clearly illustrated when the CFA was confronted with the Fiskville Training College contamination issue. The CFA constantly attempted to disregard the contamination issues being raised, and did not engage in a meaningful way with past and current CFA people claiming to have been affected by contamination at Fiskville. Even after there was clear evidence that many former and current staff and volunteers had become very ill, with many dying potentially from contamination at Fiskville. It was against this background that the EBA was being negotiated, in an environment of mistrust, suspicion and essentially a lack of honest at the most senior levels. Clearly in this environment it is little wonder that the employee representatives had little interest in giving ground on the EBA's, essential there was no demonstrated ability or trust in the senior level of CFA to demonstrated a clear real interest in the Health and Safety of its career staff and volunteer workforce. Following the election of the new Victorian Labor Government, there were extensive changes in the leadership of the CFA, particularly a new Chief Executive was appointed with sound management leadership experience in Victoria Police, on the surface it appeared that some progress was being made with the CFA EBA. As with any new Government particularly a Government that is concerned with good employee relations, issues again bubbled to the surface. In a move to try and resolve the EBA log jam with the CFA EBA the Premier decided to enter the negotiations, with the aim of resolving the EBA. Subsequently the Federal Government entered into the EBA issue from the side of protecting Volunteers from a union takeover. New Federal Government legislation was established that further complicated the EBA negotiation environment. The State Government has since decided that the only way to now resolve the CFA EBA issue is to essentially merge the operational staff of CFA and MFB to create a New South Wales style Fire and Rescue Service.

This move could ultimately be proven to be a substantial overreach, on the part of both the State Government and the Federal Government, that has resulted in ongoing failure to finally resolve the EBA, and continues to cause further complications and dysfunction within the Fire Services environment that could lead to catastrophic failure of the overall fire and emergency services system in Victoria.

At some point, all of the players involved in the fire services reform process will need to consider at what cost will the reform process be pursued. In my opinion the whole situation is a classic case of "Escalation Theory", continuing commitment to a failing course of action.

In this submission, I will outline the wider range of issues that are and do impact on trying to reform something that is largely already reformed, and just in need of adjustment and clear strong agencies leadership.

My primary focus in this submission is the CFA and in particular the CFA volunteers, as the MFB staff are essentially not seeing any real change in the way they operate, under the proposed Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) other than a change of name from MFB to FRV.

The clear losers in the reform process would appear to be the CFA volunteers and the community at large.

The Fire Services Reform Inquiry process should provide the State Government with an opportunity to rebalance their approach to the reform agenda of the Fire Services, without impacting on frontline service delivery and performance. Governments face difficult choices every day in the allocation of their scarce and limited resources as they are faced with overwhelming need for resources across the full spectrum of Government service delivery.

It is up to agency leaders and managers to be able to adequately argue the case for appropriate structuring and levels of resources for their agency over another. Just because we put out fires doesn't mean we (The Fire services) will always get what we want without strong and effective justification of our case. But the case particularly for the CFA is strong when you consider the huge savings that are delivered to the state and the community through our unpaid professional volunteer force, it is not a big request to ask the community through Government to at least maintain the proven world class leading fire and emergency services model of the CFA, in a coherent rational reform and restructure approach. The cost of failure could result in catastrophic system failure, that could see at some point political leaders and agency heads standing in the witness box of a court room to justify their actions.

## **PART ONE - CONTEXT**

### **Economic Environment**

Governments throughout the world are struggling to deliver the level of services that communities are perceived to require. Successive Victorian Governments have faced a wide range of economic impacts effecting their ability to delivery, what would often be considered core services. With a strong need for infrastructure due to significant population growth.

Victoria's economy grew by 3.3 per cent in the 2015–16 financial year, higher than compared with the decade average, and Victoria has consistently recorded the nation's strongest annual population growth.<sup>1</sup>

Increasing productivity and employment growth are helping to expand Victoria's economy at a rate faster than population growth. The Victorian Budget Update forecast Victoria's gross state product growth to grow above trend at three per cent in 2016–17. Most recently, business and housing investment, along with international education and tourism exports – supported by low interest rates and a weaker Australian dollar – have driven growth. Gross state product per capita increased 1.4 per cent in the 2015–16 financial year, a significant improvement on the period 2012–14 when per capita growth was negative.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, population growth has underpinned Victoria's economic strength. Victoria has Australia's highest population growth and the nation's fastest-growing capital city.<sup>1</sup>

With increased population service delivery demand has increased. The fire services must maintain and grow service delivery capacity and capability at a level that the community finds acceptable, this means strong engagement by fire services with both the Government of the day and the community at large, to inform and educate on the demands and needs of the fire services.

Fire services need to gain real advantage during the current strong period of Government revenue growth, to support service delivery, operations, staffing and support to volunteers in response to the strong economic environment. Clearly periods of good economic growth are rare, so it is important to ensure that fire agencies plan to build organisational financial resilience and strength, to deal with periods of highly volatile economic environments, that inevitably see the need to manage budgets down, so as to not impact frontline service delivery.

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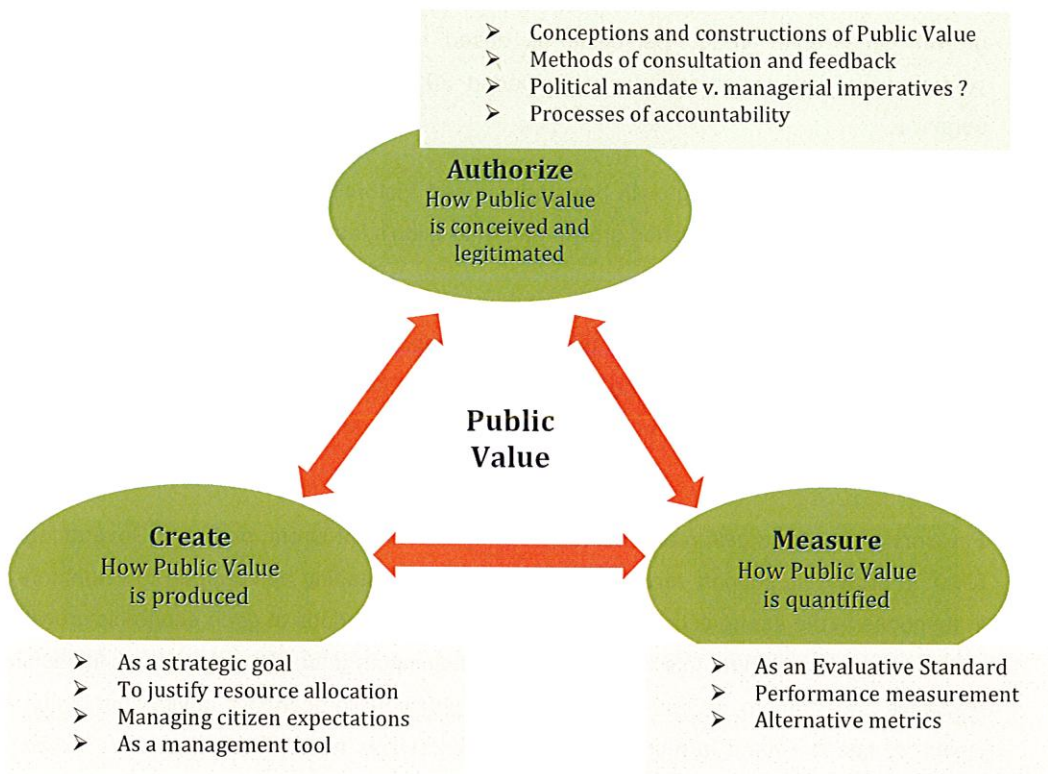
<sup>1</sup> Victorian Government Economy comment 7 February 2017

## Delivering and Creating Public Value in a Complex Environment

In order for the fire services to meet the challenges of the current and future economic environment it is critical that fire service leaders and managers at all levels including leaders at the volunteer level, to embrace a practice and understand of creating public value. Mark Moore has written extensively on this area and has proposed a valuable model for policymakers and managers.

Increasingly the community considers that managers, political leaders and policymakers are out of touch and to a large extent may be losing their democratic legitimacy, due to lack of engagement and consultation with the people that are using and delivering services, and in the case of the CFA volunteers, failure to consult and engage can result in decisions being made that have negative impacts and undermine the trust between all parties. Their needs to be greater openness between all parties, politicians, managers, community and service delivery personnel in order to achieve the best outcome with available resources. The public value framework (see Figure 1) assists managers to think about social outcomes and not just organizational output measures.

Figure 1: The Public Value Dynamic<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Moore, Mark: Benington Public Value Theory and Practice 2011 p120

**Authorization** of what is provided by the public sector traditionally results from what is seen as valuable by elected politicians, senior public managers, media, professional groups, unions, associations, public intellectuals and other informed commentators. The question posed by the public value approach is whether the views of those who receive services the public is adequately taken into account in the construction and conception of public value<sup>3</sup>.

**Public value creation** is authorized by the public but created by public service organizations in the decisions they make every day and the policies and programs provided and supported. Public value is a process of authorization, creation and measurement achieved through the process of consultation. Politicians and managers must justify their actions and policies on resources allocation through a strategic planning process.

**Measurement of public value**, the aim should be to develop measures that can be translated into financial value, all organizations use a range of measures to justify their existence generally displayed in the annual report, the question is what does the public actually value and how do they measure the performance of public organizations.

We should evaluate the efforts of the public-sector managers not in the economic marketplace of individual consumers but in the political marketplace of citizens and the collective decisions of representative democratic institutions. (Moore 1995:31)

There is much to be learnt from the disability not for profit sector in Australia, where Governments allocate consumers funds and then the consumer chooses their service provider under contracts for service arrangements.

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<sup>3</sup> Moore, Mark: Benington Public Value Theory and Practice 2011 p120

## The Risk and Cost of Fire

Before trying to change an organization with new structures, functions and funding arrangements, it is important to put the need and risk of fire into some context, to do this I have reviewed the cost of fire in Australia and its relationship to the losses that occur and the cost of mitigation of fire in both the urban and rural environment. It is also valuable to look at the bushfire history of Victoria and reflect on the likely hood of significant major bushfire events, similar to Black Friday 1939, Ash Wednesday 1983 and Black Saturday 2009.

### Total Cost of Fire in Australia

Post a significant major fire disaster or other major emergency event our political leaders and agency managers are placed under significant community pressure, with demands for change to ensure it doesn't happen again. Unlike the past today there is huge immediate pressure due to 24/7 news media and social networking systems that deliver huge levels of public communications pressure, strongly driving Governments to be seen as taking immediate steps to prevent the reoccurrence of the event, clearly this reaction is understandable as the shock and images of major events are driven directly into our homes through the media so the community at large lives the event as if they are there in some form. But the reality is that significant levels of limited Government resources are often wasted through being applied to further mitigation with little regard to the potential of those additional resources having any meaningful impact on lowering the risk of another future event. Governments and agency managers need to educate the community about the nature of the disaster risks that the community may face and the reality and limitations on Government and agencies minimizing the impact of the event and reducing the event risk reoccurrence by further use of limited public resources. Table 1 sets a sound context in which the discussion around application of resources in the fire sector.

Bushfires and structure fires are a significant hazard in Australia with a great amount of resources dedicated to mitigating the risk. Ashe et al.<sup>4</sup> in what is believed to be the first study to estimate the total cost of fire in Australia for 2005, which was estimated at AUD\$12.0 billion or 1.3% of GDP.

Further unpublished work by Ashe et al.<sup>5</sup> examined 10 years of Australia data which showed that the number of fatalities and consequences of fire are trending lower but the total cost of fire has increased from 1.0% GDP in 1997 to over 1.25% in 2007. I have applied the approach of Ashe et al. to determine the cost of fire in 2012, which I believe to be now 1.41% of GDP<sup>6</sup> in 2012. Cost of fire in USA is estimated at 2.0% of GDP Ashe et al.

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<sup>4</sup> Ashe, B.S.W. , McAneney, j., Pitman, A. (2009a) Total Cost of Fire in Australia, Journal of Risk Research, 12:2, pp.121-136

<sup>5</sup> Submission to 2009 Victoria Bushfires Royal Commission By Risk Frontiers Macquarie University p. 5

<sup>6</sup> IMF Website Washington - Australia GDP Est, January 2012



Table 1 shows that the cost of fire was \$22 billion in 2012 and the consequences of fire is 13.8% of total cost of fire and the investment in mitigation of fire in both response and cost in anticipation of fire is 86.2% of total cost of fire which is 6.25 times the cost of the consequences. Fire service response costs have significantly increased in Victoria, Western Australia and NSW since 2009, largely as a consequence of major fires and the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

**Table 1: Estimate of cost components of all fires in Australia bushfire and structure fires for 2012**

Cost Component	Total Cost Est. \$	% of Total
1. Fire safety equipment	Included in item 2	
2. Fire safety measures in buildings	2,565,006,120	11.6%
3. Fire safety measures in structures	3,207,335,384	14.5%
4. Fire safety education and training	25,865,608	0.1%
5. Insurance administration	834,165,856	3.8%
6. Fire safety of consumer items	4,106,165,260	18.5%
7. Fire safety research	25,865,608	0.1%
8. Maintenance of fire safety equipment and measures	1,282,503,060	5.8%
<b>Sub-total Cost in Anticipation</b>	<b>12,046,906,896</b>	<b>54.4%</b>
<b>Cost as a consequence</b>		
9. Property losses	1,385,965,492	6.3%
10. Lost output	174,592,854	0.8%
11. Fatalities and injuries	497,912,953	2.2%
12. Healthcare	290,988,089	1.3%
13. Loss of business	77,506,824	0.3%
14. Environmental	441,870,802	2.0%
15. Heritage and cultural losses	51,731,216	0.2%
16. Clean up	Included in item 10	
17. Wider economic distortions	129,328,040	0.6%
<b>Sub-total Cost as a Consequence</b>	<b>3,049,896,270</b>	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Cost in response</b>		
18. Fire service response <sup>7</sup>	3,139,562,000	14.2%
19. Volunteer fire service <sup>8</sup>	3,815,982,000	17.2%
20. Private fire brigade responses	18,690,476	0.1%
21. Criminal Justice and investigation of arson fires	93,452,381	0.4%
<b>Sub-total Cost in Response</b>	<b>7,067,686,857</b>	<b>31.9%</b>
<b>Total Cost of Fire In Australia 2012</b>	<b>22,164,490,023</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Stone, Geoffrey unpublished work October 2012

<sup>7</sup> Estimated cost of Australian fire services based on 2012 Annual reports

<sup>8</sup> This is based on 2012 estimates by Stone of all Australian Fire Services Volunteers which is now 211,000 and the Deloitte Report 15 August 2012 Assessment of Rural Fire Services costs and funding. Volunteer resource contribution estimated at \$18,400 per volunteer.

## Major Bushfire/Fire Events in Victoria 1851 to 2014

There have been over 30 major bushfire/fire events in Victoria in the period from 1851 to 2016 as shown on table 2 in which there have been significant loss of life, thousands of houses and large areas of land, property and stock.

Table 2 Major Bushfires/Fire Events Victoria 1851 to 2016

Year	Date	Name/Location	Losses/Summary
2016	23 February	Mount Bolton	1,202 ha
2016	11 January	Broadmeadows	CFA support to MFB at large tyre fire
2015	20 December	Barnawartha	6,708 ha
2015	19 December	Wye River	2,520 ha, significant loss of houses
2015	19 December	Scotsburn	4,570 ha plus houses
2015	6 October	Lancefield	3,055 ha
2014		Warrandyte, Darraweit Guim, Hernes Oak	40 Houses lost 41,000 ha
2009	23 February	Muskvale / Daylesford, Upwey	3,000 ha
2009	13 February	Wilson's Promontory	5,000 ha
2009	7 February	Churchill, Kilmore and Murrundindi, Vectis (Horsham), Coleraine, Weerite, Redesdale, Harkaway, Upper Ferntree Gully, Maiden Gully / Eaglehawk, Lynbrook / Narre Warren, Beechworth	173 lives lost 2,056 houses 239,637 ha
2009	4-6 February	Bunyip State Park	31 houses 26,200 ha
2009	29 January	Branxholme	40 ha
2009	28 January	Delburn	44 houses 6,534 ha
2006	December – February 2007	Great Divide Complex	33 Houses 13 houses damaged 255 other buildings 1334 animals and livestock Fencing 1,357 km 1,154,828 ha
2006	12 October	Morwell Open Cut Mine	
2006	19 January	Grampians	2 lives lost 41 houses 9 Houses damaged 231 other buildings 65,598 animals and livestock Fencing 1,973 km 116,380 ha
2003	8 January – 19	North East and	41 Houses

	March	Gippsland fires	3 Bridges 213 other structures 10,000 livestock 1.2 million ha
2002	March	Glenaroua	1 House 6,100 ha
2001	December – January 2002	CFA deployment NSW and ACT Fires	80 fire trucks and 2,794 CFA personnel committed for 14 days
2000	18 December	Dadswells Bridge	1 House 14,500 ha 8,000 Livestock 500 km fencing
1998	25 September	Longford Gas Plant	2 Lives lost 8 Injured Gas Plant explosion due to leaking vapours Est Cost \$1.2 bn
1997	21 January	Dandenong Ranges, Creswick, Heathcote, Teddywaddy, Gough's Bay.	3 Lives lost 41 Houses 1 CFA fire truck
1990	27 December	Strathbogie	1 Life lost 17 Houses 12,000 livestock
1985	14 January	Maryborough, Avoca, Little River	3 Lives lost 182 Houses 400 farms 46,000 livestock
1983	16 February	As Wednesday Monivae, Braxholme, Cockatoo, East Trentham, Mt Macedon, Otways, Warburton, Cudjee, Upper Beaconsfield	47 Lives lost 27,000 livestock More than 2,000 houses
1978	15 January	Bairnsdale	2 Lives lost 1 house 6,500 livestock
1977	12 February	Penshurst, Tatyoon, Streatham, Creswick, Pura Pura, Werneth, Cressy, Rokewood, Beeac, Mingay, Lismore, Little River	4 Lives lost 108 houses 236,000 Livestock
1969	8 January	Lara, Daylesford, Bulgana, Yea, Darraweit, Kangaroo Flat, Korongvale	22 Lives lost 230 Houses 21 schools/church/alls 12,000 Livestock 800,000 acres
1968	21 February	The Basin, Upwey	64 Houses
1965	21 February – 13 March	Gippsland 17 days	60 Houses/shops 4,000 Livestock 750,000 acres forest

			40,000 acres grassland
1965	17 January	Longwood	7 Lives lost 6 Houses
1944	14 January – 14 February	Central & western districts, Morwell, Yallourn	32 Lives lost 700 Houses Extensive Livestock losses
1943	22 December	Wangaratta	10 Lives lost Thousands of acres of grassland
1942	3-4 March	Hamilton, South Gippsland – Yarram (burning on a 60 mile front)	1 Life lost 20 Houses 100 sheep 2 Farms
1939	13 January	Black Friday Rubicon, Woods Point, Warrandyte, Noojee, Omeo, Mansfield, Dromana, Yarra Glen, Warburton, Erica	71 Lives lost More than 650 Houses/shops
1926		Noojee, Kinglake, Warburton, Erica, Dandenong Ranges.	Losses of lives and property
1851	6 February	Black Thursday Wimmera, Portland, Gippsland, Plenty Ranges, Westernport, Dandenong districts, Heidelberg.	12 Lives lost 1,000,000 plus livestock

Source: CFA website

### **Risk of Heavy Loss of Life and Property from Bushfires in Victoria**

The potential for heavy loss of life and property from bushfires in Victoria continues to increase due to nature of the Victorian climate, vegetation and the rapid expansion of high risk rural/urban interface areas throughout Victoria and Greater Melbourne, particularly in high risk bushfire environments across the state.

## **Major Bushfires: Black Saturday - Ash Wednesday - Black Friday**

When considering major changes to the delivery of fire services in Victoria, it is critical to ensure that the nature and scale of the major bushfires that occur in Victoria are considered. No other state in Australia has the same history of major heavy loss bushfires. The mix of climate, weather, aspect, vegetation and population density in Victoria can result in large scale fast moving catastrophic bushfires. Victoria, has a long history of major bushfires going back more than 150 years. Including the Black Friday Bushfires of 13 January 1939, Ash Wednesday Bushfires of 16 February 1983. The most recent major bushfires were the Black Saturday Bushfires, that occurred on 7 February 2009. The largest bushfire on Black Saturday was the Kilmore East bushfire that occurred on Saturday 7 February 2009, the Kilmore East fire was one of 400 fires across Victoria affecting 78 communities on Black Saturday. The Kilmore East bushfire merged with the Murrindindi fires on 8 February, becoming the Kinglake Fire Complex. A forest crown fire occurred during this fire which swept through state forest and national parks with extreme flame heights, under the influence of temperatures that reached 46 degrees and wind gusts of more than 100 km per hour on 7 February. Embers from the Kilmore East fire caused spot fires up to 20 – 40 km away. The Black Saturday Bushfires caused heavy losses, with 174 lives lost, with 119 people from the Kilmore East bushfire. More than 1,242 homes were lost in the Kilmore East fire, and 2,029 homes were destroyed state-wide on Black Saturday.

The Ash Wednesday bushfires occurred on 16 February 1983, one of the major bushfires on Ash Wednesday was known as the Belgrave South, Upper Beaconsfield-Cockatoo bushfire, which started in Belgrave heights and moved towards Berwick, Pakenham and Officer on its main run. The losses from this bushfire included the death 27 people, 100 people were injured and 535 houses and buildings were destroyed. On Ash Wednesday, there were 180 bushfires state-wide fanned by winds of up to 110 km/p causing wide spread destruction. There were extensive losses on Ash Wednesday, 47 people died in Victoria including 14 CFA volunteer firefighters at the Upper Beaconsfield fire, and more than 2,000 homes were destroyed in Victoria.

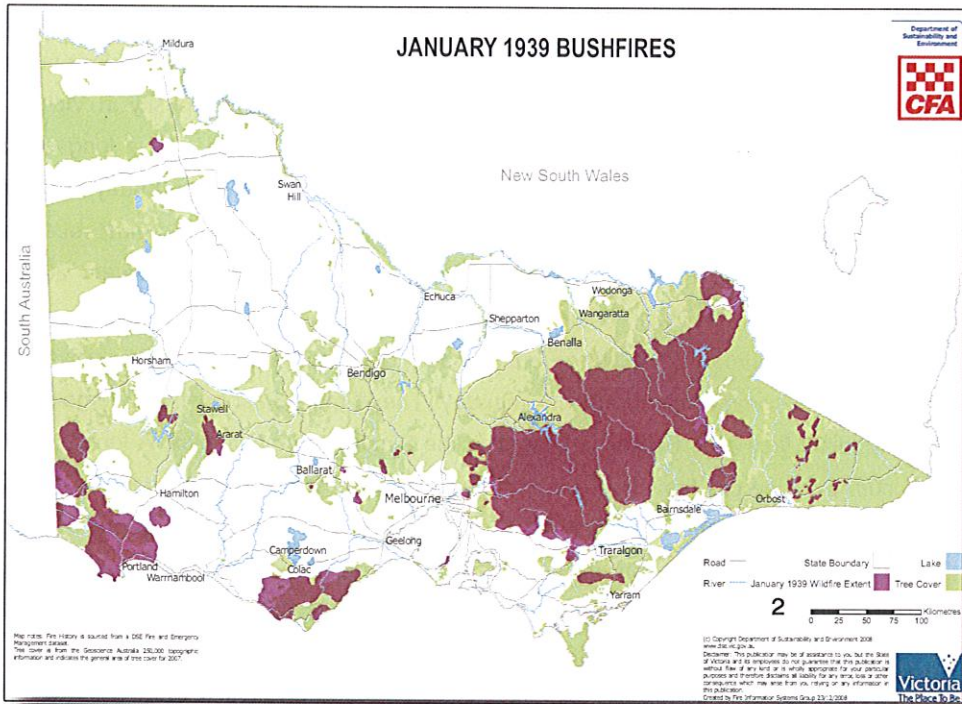
The Black Friday Bushfires of 13 January 1939, with 71 lives lost, more than 1,300 houses, 69 sawmills were destroyed. The area burnt was 2,000,000 ha. The 1939 Bushfires Royal Commission, was the genesis of the creation of a State Fire Authority (CFA). The Black Friday Royal Commission report of 16 May 1939 recommended the institution of a State Fire Authority. The Commission strongly recommended that no public department of possible combination of public departments interested in forests should be permitted to gain control of this authority. The State Fire Authority consisting of nominees of the Bush Fire Brigades, the Country Fire Brigades, the Forest Commission and the Municipalities to be affected by the recommendations.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Report of the Royal Commission 1939 Bushfires pp20

## Black Friday Bushfires January 1939

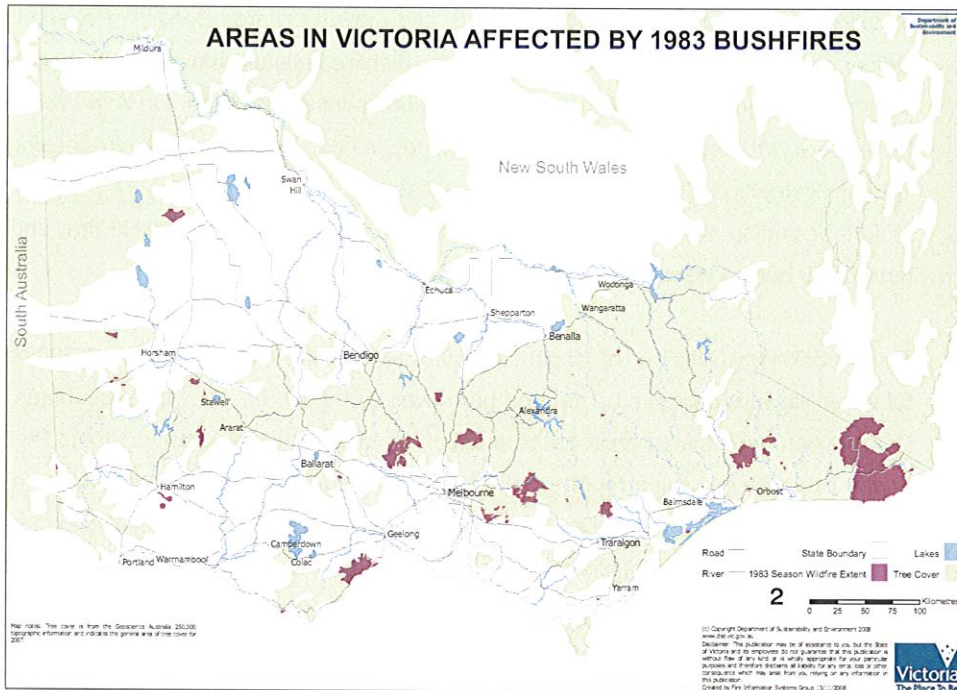
Map 1: Black Friday Bushfires January 1939



Source: Forest Fire Management (DELWP) Past bushfire Maps

## Ash Wednesday Bushfires 1983

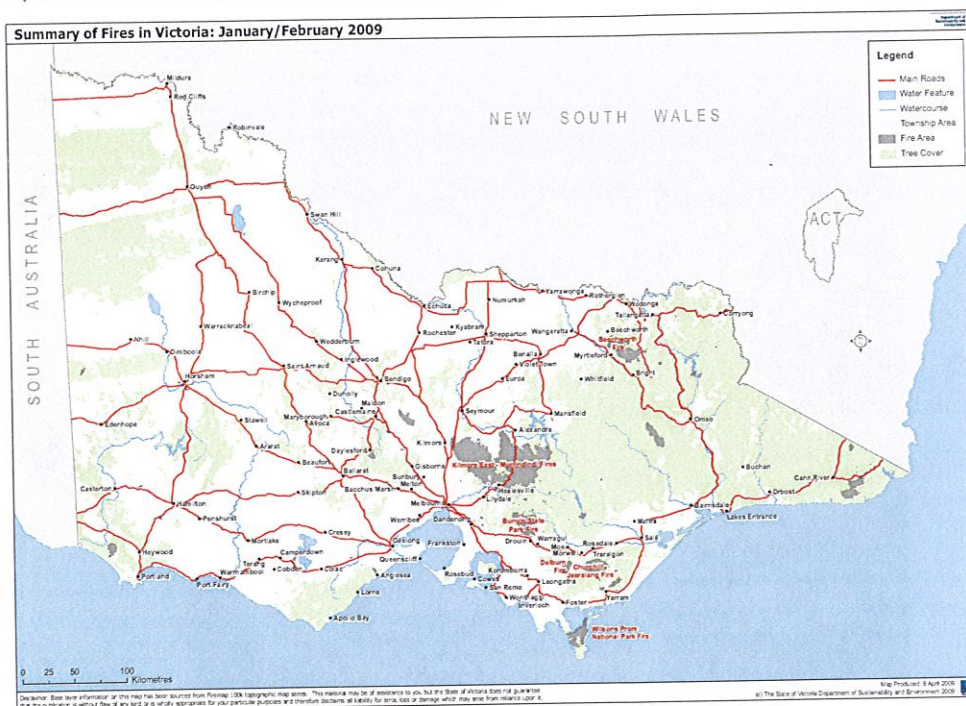
Map 2: Ash Wednesday February 1983



Source: Forest Fire Management (DELWP) Past bushfire Maps

## Black Saturday Bushfires January 2009

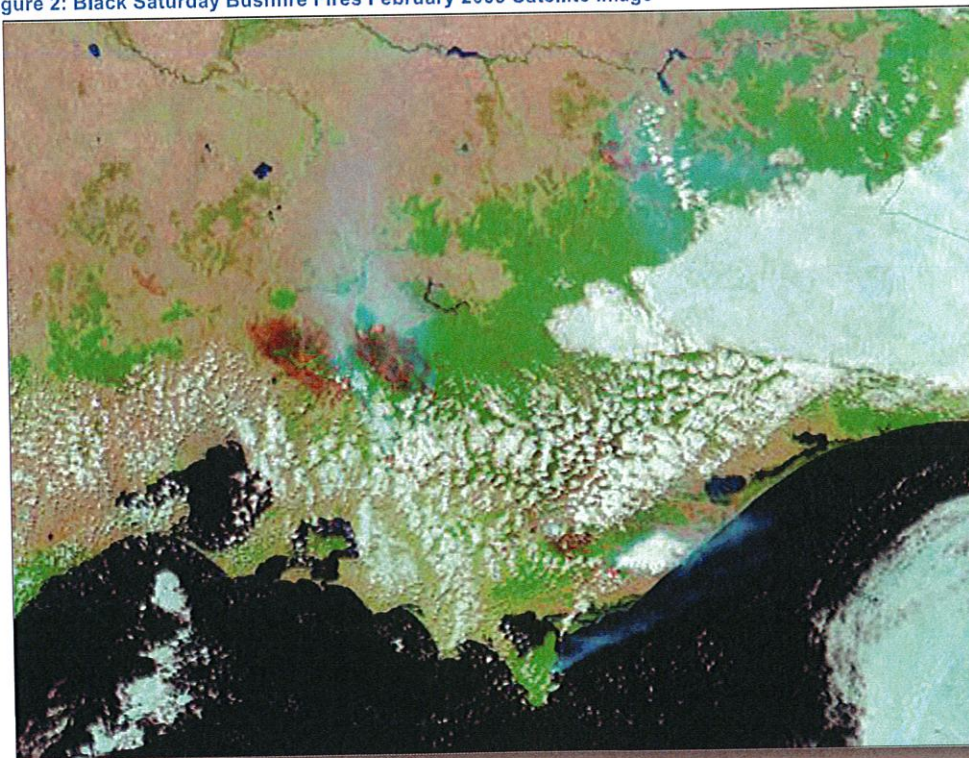
Map 3: Black Saturday Bushfires January 2009



Source: Forest Fire Management (DELWP) Past bushfire Maps

The satellite images below show the extent of bushfires across Victoria on Black Saturday, NASA images on 9 February 2009.

Figure 2: Black Saturday Bushfire Fires February 2009 Satellite image



Source: NASA

Figure 3: NASA Black Saturday Bushfire Fires February 2009 Satellite image

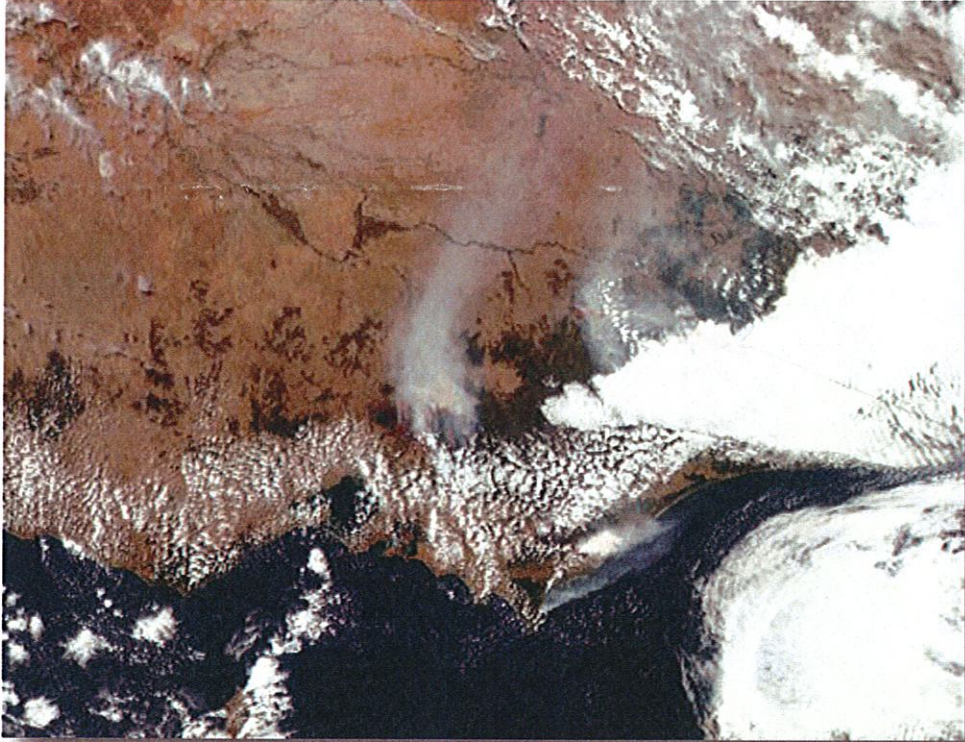
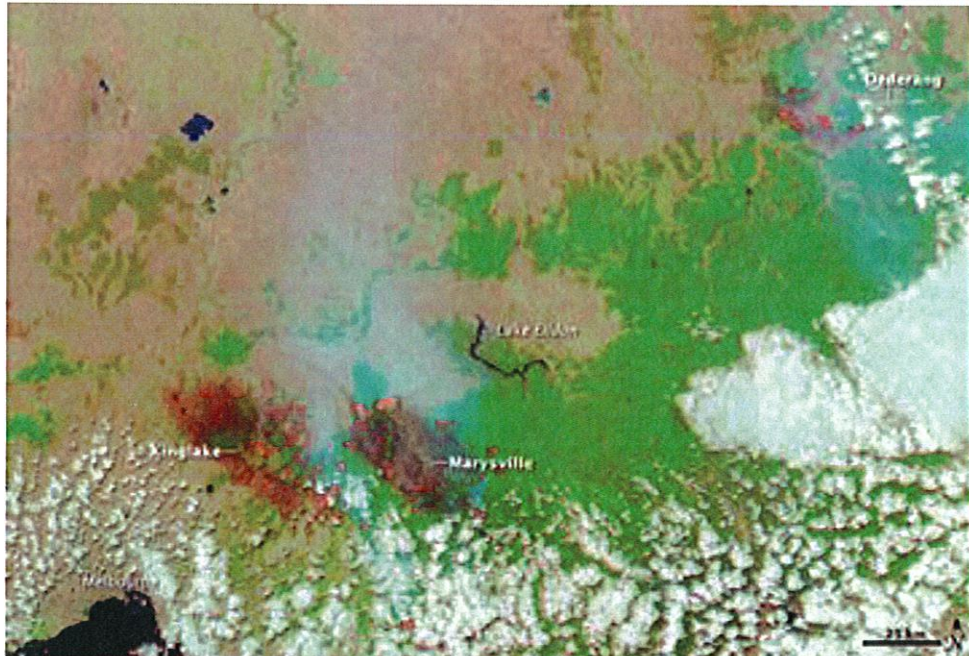


Figure 4: NASA Black Saturday Bushfire Fires 9 February 2009 Satellite image

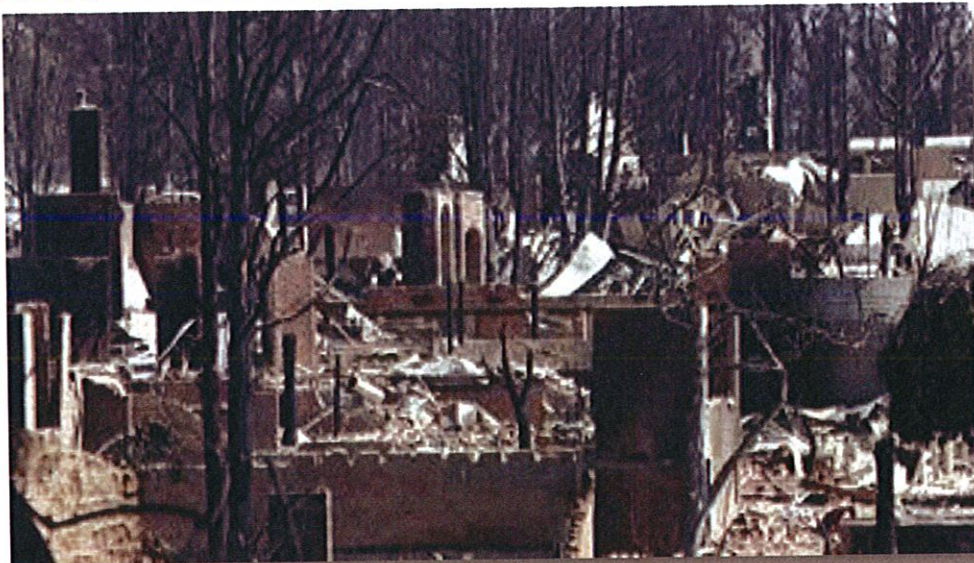




Pic 1: Arthurs Creek Black Saturday 2009



Pic 2: Kinglake West Black Saturday 2009



Pic 3: Pine plantation fire adjacent to Hume Highway at Wandong Victoria Black Saturday 7 February 2009

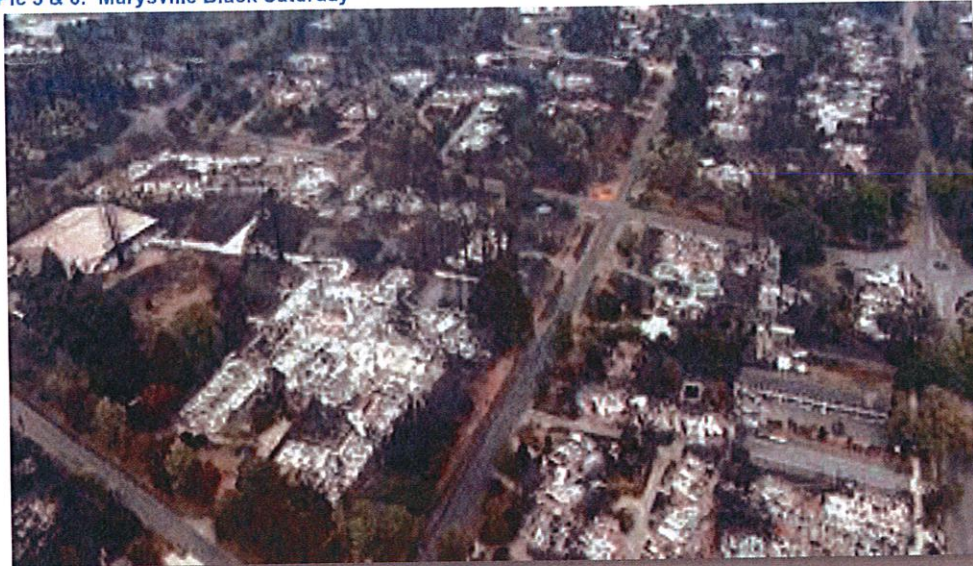


Pic 4: Black Saturday 7 February 2009



The increase of rural residential living and the development of parks and nature reserves deep in areas that provide a passage for fire deep into urban residential areas pose a special and difficult risk.

**Pic 5 & 6: Marysville Black Saturday**



**Pic 6**



## Victorian Fire Services Expenditure & Staff – Forward Estimates

Table 3 seeks to identify the broad expenditure of CFA, MFB and NSWFR for 2016. Using that data forward estimates for the proposed Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) and the stripped-down CFA model (Essentially a Rural Fire Service only model) have been developed. Table 3. below assumes that FRV evolves in 2 stages. Stage 1 the combining of MFB and CFA 35 integrated stations, with stage 2 seeing the absorption of the 204 CFA urban brigades into FRV. The application of this approach is consistent with the NSWFR model, which sees all urban communities in NSW under NSWFR. Essentially the NSW RFS is a fully rural fire services with no urban brigades and some small village brigades. It is important to note that the full evolution of FRV to stage 2 with all current CFA urban brigades as part of FRV, would see FRV responsible for most of Victoria's population of 6.1 million people, dwellings and commercial buildings. Therefore, nearly all the current fire service levy funding currently collected and used to fund CFA and MFB would be used by FRV. Post FRV stage 2 the CFA fully volunteer rural only version of the CFA would effectively have no access to suitable levels of funding. This is how historically Queensland operates, Rural Fire Service Queensland (RFSQ) rural fire brigades have no funding from the fire services levy. Some brigades gain funds from their Council and through fundraising.

Table 3: Expenses & Staff 2016 MFB, CFA & NSWFR Staff & Forward Estimates FRV & CFA

Resources Summary	FRNSW	MFB	CFA	CFA Urban	CFA Rural	FRV
Budget Estimates at full evolution of FRV	2015/16	2015/16	2015/16	2015/16	Prior to FRV stage 2	Stages 1 - 2
Staff composition (by headcount)						
Executive	10	39				
Full-time fire officers	3,530	1938	1,086	1086		3024
Retained (On-call) fire officers	3,327	0	0			
Administrative/trade staff (FTE)	446	349	967	137	830	486
Total staff	7,313	2326	2,053	1223		3510
Total staff less retained	3,986					
Volunteers Operational		0	35,796		35,796	
Volunteers support		0	21,315		21,315	
Community fire units	578	0				
Community fire units volunteers	6,318	0				
Fire stations	337	47	1,220	204	1,016	251
Vehicles in the fire engine fleet	672	96	2,853	440	2,413	536
Accredited rescue crews	186		23			
<b>Actual total expenses</b>	<b>\$702,000,000</b>	<b>\$394,000,000</b>	<b>\$575,000,000</b>	<b>\$197,534,883</b>	<b>\$377,465,117</b>	<b>\$591,534,883</b>
Employee expenses	\$554,101,000	\$282,966,000	\$265,743,000	\$155,917,772	\$62,888,531	\$427,003,723

Source: Stone estimates establishes from CFA, MFB and NSWFR Annual reports 20016

## Cost of Victorian and Australian Fire Services 2014-15

The cost of Victoria's fire services was \$1.138 billion in 2014-15, NSW fire services cost \$1.019 billion in 2014-15. Table 4 shows cost of fire service delivery in all states. Total cost of fire services nationally was \$3.637 billion in 2014-15. Victorian has a consistent history of having the highest cost fire service delivery in Australia.

Table 4: Real revenue of fire services costs (2014-15 \$ million)

FYE	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	Australia
2010-11	1017.3	1063.5	519.9	420.3	176.6	68.9	52.5	31.3	3 350.4
2011-12	997.7	1219.1	526.2	428.4	187.0	71.4	67.4	37.9	3 535.1
2012-13	1046.2	1183.3	520.1	374.2	184.0	86.0	63.1	50.4	3 507.3
2013-14	1120.9	1217.2	632.9	347.0	211.4	75.4	63.9	33.1	3 701.8
2014-15	1019.0	1138.6	622.1	365.2	212.1	73.9	68.2	38.7	3 637.7

Source: Federal Government Report on Government Services 2016 Review of Government Service Provision p9.3

## Human resources

Nationally in 2014-15 there were 18,853 full time equivalent (FTE) paid personnel were employed by fire service organisations.<sup>10</sup>

Nationally the number of volunteer firefighters was 226,052 participating in the delivery of fire services in 2014-15.<sup>10</sup>

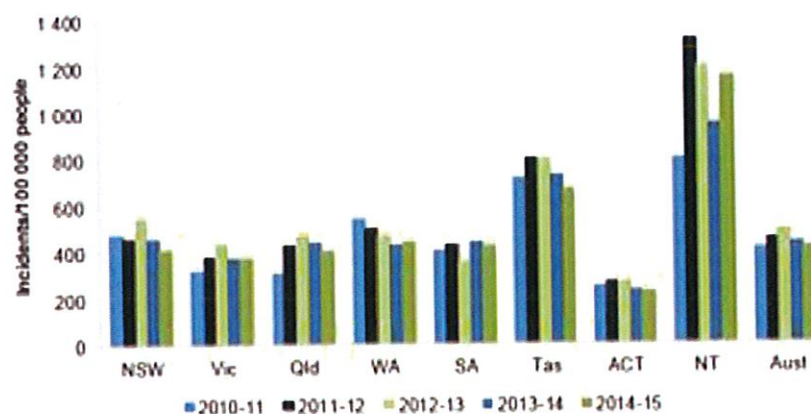
## Demand for fire service organisation services

Fire service organisations attended a total of 385,118 emergency incidents in 2014-15 of which 95,545 were fire events.

## Fire Incidents per 100,000 people

Nationally in 2014-15 fire services attended 413 fire incidents per 100,000 people, a decrease from 438 fire incidents per 100,000 people in 2013-14 refer ROGS Figure 9.2

Figure 9.2 Fire incidents that fire service organisations attended, per 100 000 people<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> See box 9.2 and table 9A.14 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished), ABS (unpublished), table 9A.14

<sup>10</sup> Federal Government Report on Government Services 2016 Review of Government Service Provision p9.3

## Value of the CFA Volunteer Contribution to Victoria

The total cost of the Volunteer resource contributions to the provision of fire services in Victoria is an important consideration when reviewing the CFA and fire services generally. There has been extensive work done on valuing volunteer contribution in the emergency services context in Australia with work done by Hourigan for the Country Fire Authority Victoria, Ganewatta Et al and more recently Deloitte<sup>11</sup> on the NSW Rural Fire Service. The total cost of providing fire services should take into account the monetary value of the services provided by the 58,000 volunteers of the CFA. The cost avoidance from the volunteer resource contributions is estimated to be \$1,062,014,800 million the value contributed by each volunteer is estimated to be \$18,400 this is based on 8% of hours contributed are on active duty which is estimated at 308<sup>12</sup> hours with standby time accounting for the remaining available time<sup>13</sup> the average hourly cost for an employee is estimated at \$33 based on the average hourly cash earnings<sup>14</sup> standby time is to maintain required service response, it has been valued and estimated to be \$2.3 per hour. The total value of the contribution made by volunteer firefighters national is estimated at \$3.8 billion.

**Table 5: Value of Volunteer Contribution CFA, RFSQ and NSWRFs**

Percentage of Active Duty Time %	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%
	NSW Rural	QLD Rural	VIC CFA
Total Volunteer Hours	273,000,000	130,900,000	223,300,000
Total Active Duty Hours	21,840,000	10,472,000	17,864,000
Total Stand by Hours	251,160,000	120,428,000	205,436,000
Stand by Time @ \$2.30 Hr rate	\$577,668,000	\$276,984,400	\$472,502,800
Active Time @ \$33.00 Hr rate	\$722,904,000	\$345,576,000	\$589,512,000
<b>Total Opportunity Cost</b>	<b>\$1,300,572,000</b>	<b>\$622,560,400</b>	<b>\$1,062,014,800</b>
Volunteer Average Hours pa	308	308	308
Volunteers Total	70,909	34,000	58,000
Agency Expenses 2016 FYE	\$361,600,000	\$45,000,000 <sup>15</sup>	\$575,000,000
<b>Enterprise Total Cost</b>	<b>\$1,662,172,000</b>	<b>\$707,560,400</b>	<b>\$1,637,014,800</b>

Source: Stone, Geoffrey unpublished work October 2012

Further explanation of table 5 framework uses work done in the CFA is 2001 by Margaret Hourigan Value of the volunteer contributions; February 2001 to value the contribution by Volunteers and more recent work done by Deloitte for the Rural Fire Service Association NSW Assessment of Rural Fire Services costs and funding; August 2012. Both Hourigan and Deloitte present the case that the total cost of providing rural fire services should take into account the monetary value of the services provided by Volunteers in both active duty time and stand by time. Key elements to assessment include; Active Duty Time: Hourigan states that the total percentage of time spent by volunteers in active duty attending fires and incidents is 4% of total hours (Active Duty Hours) Volunteer Average Active Hours per annum: Both Hourigan and Deloitte used total average hours per volunteer per annum at 308 hours, this was Hourigans number based on research in CFA. Average hourly cost: for an employee is at \$33 by Deloitte (ABS data May 2010). Standby Time hourly rate: has been valued and estimated at \$2.30 per hour by Deloitte, (based on research by Ganewatt The value of volunteers in State Emergency Services)

<sup>11</sup> Deloitte Assessment of Rural Fire Services costs and funding 15 August 2012

<sup>12</sup> Hourigan, Margaret Country Fire Authority ; Value of the volunteer contribution; February 2001

<sup>13</sup> Ganewatta, Gaminda & Handmer, John: The value of volunteers in State Emergency Services; The Australian Journal of Emergency management

<sup>14</sup> ABS 63060DO002\_201005 Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia; May 2010

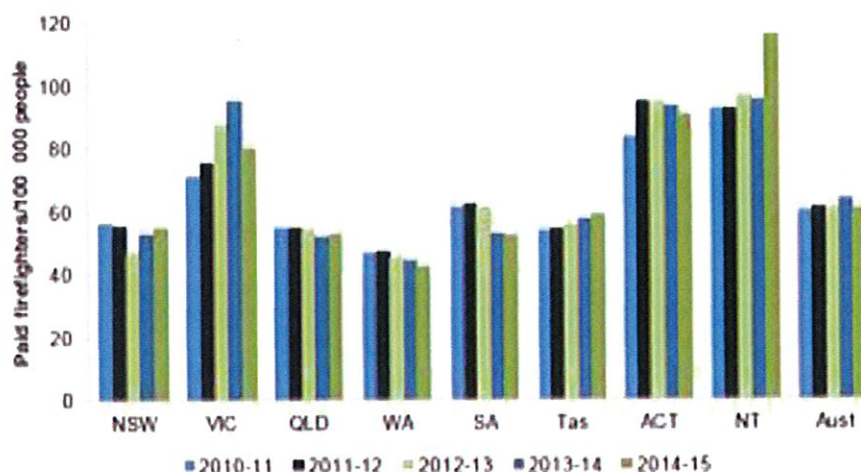
<sup>15</sup> Stone, Geoffrey Estimate of the base level of funding required for QLD RFS Estimate

## Firefighting Workforce

### Paid Professional Firefighters

The paid firefighter workforce full time equivalent paid firefighters personnel per 100,000 people nationally in 2014-15 was 60.5 FTE paid firefighters were employed by fire service organisations, as shown in ROGS 2016 Figure 9.6. There was a decrease from 63.5 FTE firefighters per 100,000 people in 2013-14. Source Rogs report 2016 Figure 9.6

**Figure 9.6 Number of full time equivalent paid firefighting personnel<sup>a</sup>**



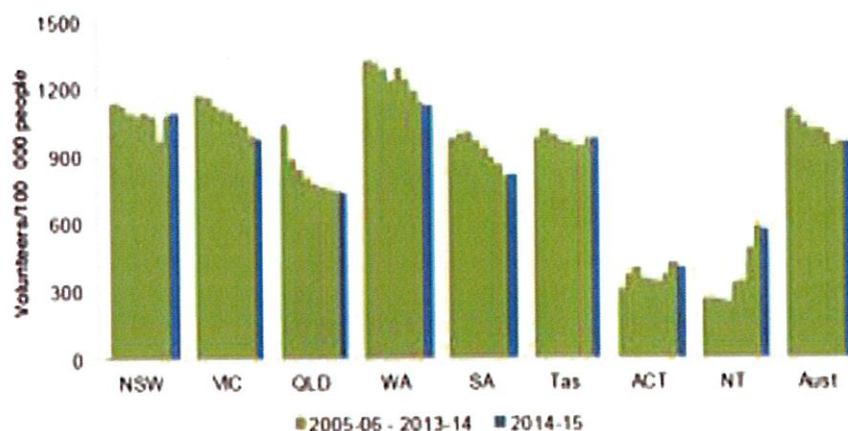
<sup>a</sup> See box 9.5 and tables 2A.2 and 9A.24 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished), table 9A.24

### Volunteer Unpaid Professional Firefighters

Nationally in 2014-15 there were 956.8 fire service organisation volunteers per 100,000 people. This shows a decrease from 959.4 volunteer firefighters per 100,000 people in 2013-14. Source Rogs report 2016 Figure 9.8

**Figure 9.8 Fire service organisation volunteers per 100 000 people<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> See box 9.5 and tables 2A.2 and 9A.24 for detailed definitions, footnotes and caveats.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished), table 9A.24

## Worldwide number of volunteer, full time and part time firefighters

The structure of firefighting workforces typically shows a mix of paid career professionals and unpaid volunteer professionals.

In Australia, there are more than 226,052 volunteer unpaid professional firefighters and 18,853 career paid firefighters.

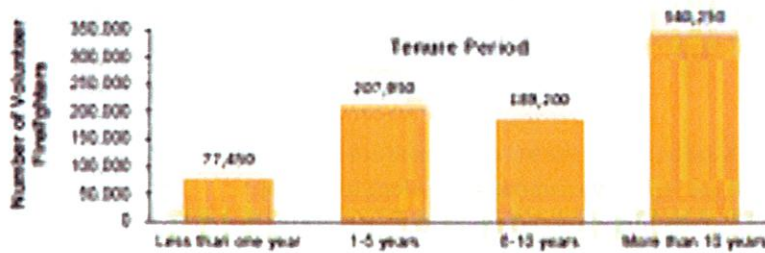
Worldwide most western countries have a mix of paid firefighters and unpaid volunteers. Although the United Kingdom only has a small number of volunteer firefighters and a large number of fully time career firefighters and part-time firefighters. In the USA, there are 818,850 volunteer firefighters 70% of the national firefighting force.

## USA number of volunteer, full time and part time firefighters

### The U.S. Fire Department Profile through 2015 Fact Sheet

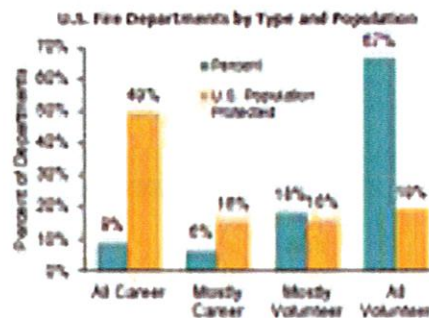
There were 1,166,450 local firefighters in the United States in 2015.

- 38% (345,600) were career firefighters.
- 70% (818,850) were volunteer firefighters.
- Firefighters in smaller (less than 25,000 population) communities are more likely to be volunteers.
- Departments protecting larger communities tend to have a higher proportion of firefighters in the age groups 30-39 and 40-49 than smaller communities.
- 42% of volunteer firefighters have served at least 10 years.

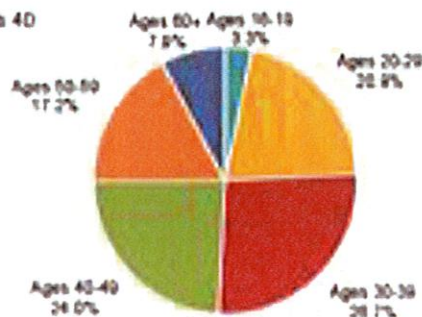


29,727 fire departments protected the United States in 2015.

- All Career 2,651
- Mostly career 1,893
- Mostly Volunteer 5,421
- All Volunteer 19,762



Half the fire service is 40 or more years old



U.S. Fire Department Profile- 2013 417

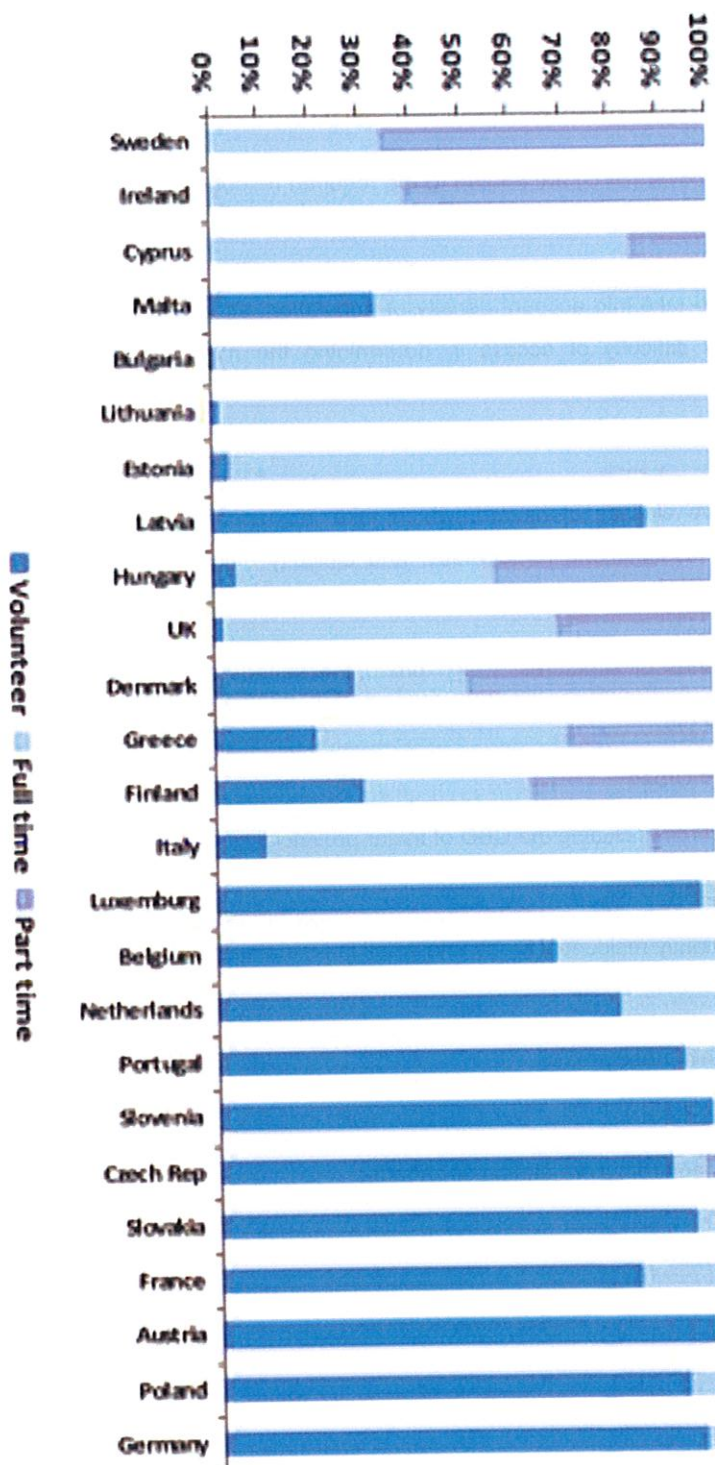
NFPA Research, Quincy, MA

Source: NFPA USA



### Europe number of volunteer, full time and part time firefighters

The table below shows the mix of volunteer, full time and part time firefighters across European countries. It is interesting to note that Germany has around 98% of all firefighters are volunteers.



Source: Facing the future Sir Ken Knight May 2013 Finding from the review of efficiencies and operations of fire and rescue authorities in England.

## **Standards of Fire Cover**

The principles of fire service delivery.

The community has an expectation that fire services will be delivered in a cost effective, efficient and equitable manner. Part of the process of ensuring equity, efficiency and cost effectiveness in fire service delivery is the application of a standard measure of fire service response through the use of standards of fire cover approach.

Standards of fire cover (SFC) are related to the required response time for a fire appliance to attend a particular class of hazard. It includes both turnout and travel time.

Classes of hazard take into account density of population, structural hazard assessment, remoteness, and difficulty of access in determining the most effective and practical response.

### **Classes of Hazard CFA**

The CFA has five classes of hazard, which take into account density of population, structural hazard assessment, remoteness, and difficulty of access, in determining the most effective and practical response.

#### **Class 1 – High Urban**

A structure or series of structures, which present a serious life hazard from, fire, e.g. central CBD of a metropolitan city area such as Brisbane and risks such as a major petroleum refinery etc.

#### **Class 2 – Medium Urban**

Significant urban areas involving commercial centers, clusters of industrial development and industrial hazards, including the CBD of major provincial cities.

#### **Class 3 – Low Urban**

Encompasses all structural hazards in urban areas not falling into Classes 1 and 2 and includes predominantly residential areas and small industrial areas.

#### **Class 4 – Rural**

Primarily involves natural surroundings in terms of fuel, but also involves isolated dwellings and structures within those areas.

#### **Class 5 – Remote Rural**

Structural and rural hazards similar to Class 4, and for which the location of the hazard is geographically distant from a fire station or brigade.

### National Response Standards UK

The UK national response standards (Table 6) recommend that a predetermined number of fire appliances attend an incident within a predetermined time according to the category assigned to it. The greater the density of buildings in an area, as Table 6 shows. For a lot of the time, fire brigade resources are targeted on protecting unoccupied buildings and not protecting people.

According to Bain<sup>16</sup> the fire cover standards pose a particular problem with automatic fire alarms in central town, most commercial, locations, which require full A or B attendance at all times of the day or night. Nearly all, 98%, turn out to be false alarms.

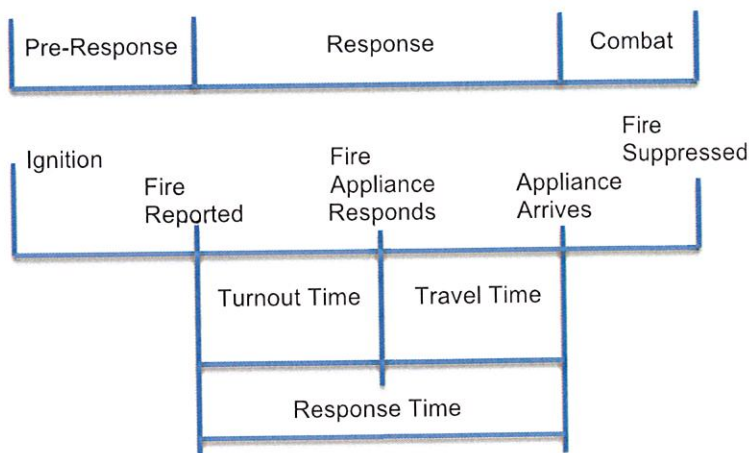
**Table 6: Fire Cover Categories UK**

Category of cover	Characteristics
A	Largest cities and towns, including shopping centres, entertainment complexes and high risk industrial property
B	Larger cities and towns
C	Suburbs of large towns and smaller towns with substantial built up areas
D	All other categories excluding Remote Rural
Remote Rural	Areas isolated from centres of population with few buildings
Special Risks	Hospitals, prisons, airports tower blocks and major petro-chemical plants

### Response and turnout time

Fire services recognize that there are three phases to the life of a fire (Figure 3) Pre-response, response and combat. The response phase is broken into two sub-components. Firstly, turnout time that is the time from receipt of a fire call until the fire appliance leaves the fire station. Secondly, travel time, which is from the time the fire appliance, leaves the station until it arrives at the fire scene.

**Figure 3: Phases of Fire**



<sup>16</sup> Bain, Sir George. Prof., (Chairman) The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives, The Independent Review of the Fire Service December 2002 p17. 3.22

**Table 7: National Response Standards UK<sup>17</sup> Example**  
 Number of appliances response time limits for attendance by appliances

Risk category	Appliances	1 <sup>st</sup>	2nd	3rd
A	3	5 minutes	5 minutes	8 minutes
B	2	5 minutes	8 minutes	-
C	1	8 -10 minutes	-	-
D	1	20 minutes	-	-
Remote Rural	No standard set	No set time		
Special Risks	No standard set	No set time		

#### UK Turnout Times

- 1.5 minutes Station with career fulltime staff on duty
- 4 minutes Auxiliary brigade
- 6 minutes Fully volunteer brigade
- 10 minutes all other brigades

**Table 8: CFA Response Standards**  
 Number of appliances response time limits for attendance by appliances

Risk category	Appliances	1 <sup>st</sup>	2nd	3rd
1	3	6 minutes	8 minutes	10 minutes
2	2	8 minutes	10 minutes	-
3	2	10 - 20 minutes	8 minutes	-
4	2	20 minutes	30 minutes	-
5	X	No set time		

#### CFA Turnout Times

- 1.5 minutes Station with career fulltime staff on duty
- 4 minutes Brigade fully volunteer with one career officer on duty
- 6 minutes Brigade fully volunteer brigade
- 10 minutes All other brigades

To ensure that crews are available on the fireground in appropriate numbers, with suitable equipment to enable an effective firefight to be undertaken, SFC specifies the minimum requirements that a brigade will maintain; including sufficient personnel, volunteer and career staff where necessary, appropriately trained and PPE and suitably equipped appliances.

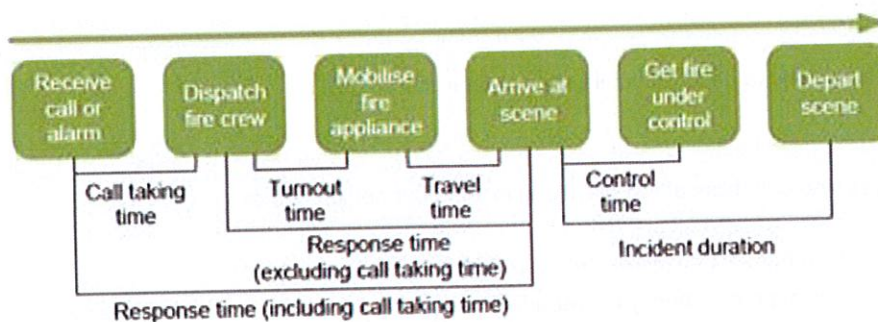
#### MFB Response Times

The generally accepted global standard for response time is 8 minutes (7.7) based on decades of research that the greatest chance of saving lives and limiting damage of the fire spreading beyond the room of fire origin. The MFB has maintained a strong response time over many decades in achieving 7.7 minutes response time.

<sup>17</sup> Bain, Sir George. Prof., (Chairman) The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives, The Independent Review of the Fire Service December 2002

### Response times to structure fires – state-wide

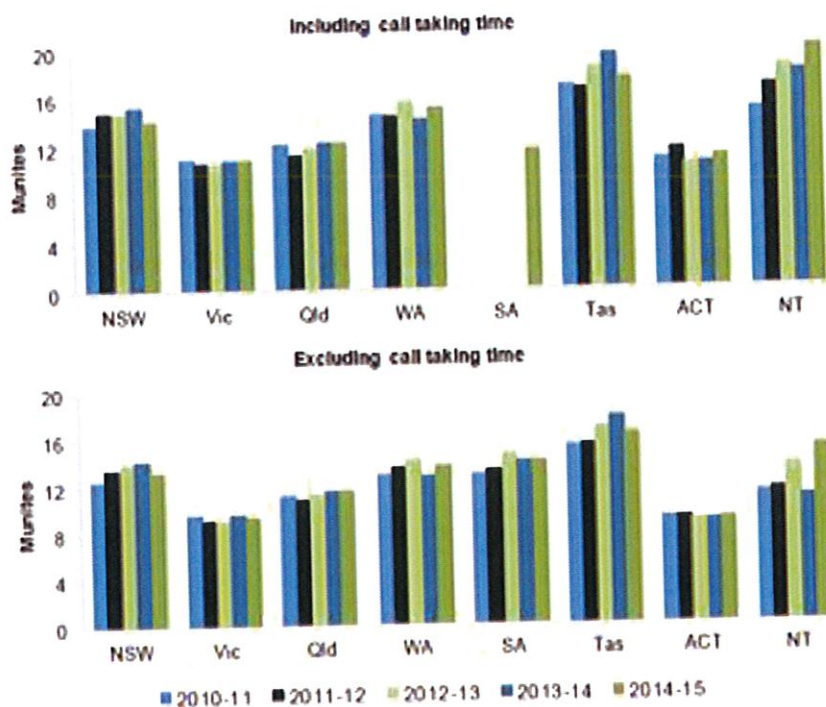
Response times to structure fires is defined as the time taken between the arrival of the first fire appliance at the scene of a structure fire. Response times are calculated at the 50<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. The time taken for 50 per cent of all responses to arrive at a structure fire is equal to or below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. The time taken for 90 per cent of all responses to arrive at a structure fire is equal to or below the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. Source Rogs 2016 pp 9.18



Nationally in 2014-15 the time within which 90 per cent of the first responding fire appliance arrived at the scene of a structure fire (including call taking time) varied from 10.9 minutes to 23.2 minutes across jurisdictions (See Rogs 2016 figure 9.9)

Statewide response times are affected by the geographic and demographic characteristics of each jurisdiction. In particular, data calculated on a state-wide basis represent responses to urban, rural and remote areas, which can differ substantially.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 9.9 Response times to structure fires, state-wide, 90th percentile<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>18</sup> Rogs 2016 pp9.19

## **PART TWO – STRATEGIC DIRECTION & ALTERNATIVES**

### **Strategic Direction**

In order to protect lives and property, the Strategic Direction for state-wide fire services must be to become a fully integrated fire and emergency service “One Force” agency, with a capability to respond to and plan for the full range of fire and emergency incidents and situations likely to occur within its area of operation.

The strategic direction for the CFA/Fire Services should seek to widen the range of services and capability of the service to include but not limited to:

- Community education, training and awareness
- Assisting community in preparing for bushfires/wildfires and other hazards
- Landscape fires, including Wildfire/Bushfire and grass fires
- Structural fires in the villages, towns and communities they protect
- Vehicle and mobile fires
- Hazardous materials incidents
- Road accident rescue and other specialist rescues
- Community first responder emergency medical assistance
- Counter terrorist preparedness in conjunction with police
- Providing rural land management advice on use of and reduction of fires
- Providing urban/metro structural/dwelling advice on use of and reduction of fires
- Integrated fire management planning, fire prevention
- Fire management burns to reduce fuel
- Floods and other major emergency assistance

It is important to note that the wider range of services suggested does not have to be undertaken by every brigade, it is likely that need and risk in brigade areas would see brigades choosing, for example to take up and build a capability for road accident rescue, or a brigade that has residential and other structural risk may choose to become equipped and trained in breathing apparatus. Progressively brigades would become more specialized in other services in addition to the primary structural and bushfire role.

## Current and Future Growth and Fire Service Demand

Victoria is leading the nation in population growth, with the Victorian population reaching 6.1 million on 30 September 2016. Last year Victoria added 127,500 people in the year to September 2016. NSW added 109,600 in the same period. Victoria's population is projected to grow by 1.8 million to 7.7 million by 2031, and another 2.4 million people to reach a population of 10.1 million by 2051.<sup>19</sup>

Table 9: Actual and projected population, Victoria 2016, 2031 and 2051

	2016	2031	2051
Population	6.1 million	7.7 million	10.1 million

Source: 15 below

Population growth brings with it substantial levels of increased demand for fire and emergency services, as service delivery demand is primarily linked to population. A major challenge for fire services will be the major increase in population in the Greater Melbourne area and regional centres of the state. Largely population growth will cause increases in the likelihood of major fires in the rural/urban interface.

### Projections for Victoria 2011 to 2051

	2011	2021	2031	2041	2051
Total population	5,537,800	6,609,700	7,733,300	8,876,000	10,086,500
Total households	2,154,400	2,609,900	3,082,700	3,579,600	4,094,200
Average household size	2.53	2.49	2.46	2.43	2.41
Change in population	2011-51	2011-21	2021-31	2031-41	2041-51
Net (persons)	4,548,700	1,067,800	1,27,600	1,142,700	1,270,500
Average annual rate	1.5%	1.9%	1.6%	1.4%	1.3%
Change in households	2011-51	2011-21	2021-31	2031-41	2041-51
Net (Households)	1,939,700	455,000	472,800	497,000	514,500
Average annual rate	1.6%	1.9%	1.7%	1.5%	1.4%

Source: Footnote 19 below pp13

### Projections for Greater Melbourne and Victoria's regions, 2011 to 2051

Total population	2011	2021	2031	2041	2051	Average annual percentage change			
						2011-2021	2021-2031	2031-2041	2041-2051
Greater Melbourne Capital City Area	4,169,400	5,106,700	6,058,800	7,016,000	8,024,100	2.0%	1.7%	1.5%	1.4%
Bellarat	148,700	170,300	197,600	225,500	253,400	1.4%	1.5%	1.3%	1.3%
Bendigo	142,700	164,700	190,700	217,300	243,400	1.4%	1.5%	1.3%	1.2%
Geslong	256,600	303,400	358,300	418,300	485,600	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%
Hume	181,300	172,500	188,100	206,700	227,500	0.7%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%
Latrobe - Gippsland	260,000	284,800	321,800	359,300	399,600	0.9%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%
North West	169,600	147,700	150,100	153,400	157,400	-0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Shepparton	127,000	134,200	144,500	154,800	165,800	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
Warrnambool and South West	122,600	121,400	123,400	125,200	126,400	-0.7%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
All Regional SAAs	1,368,500	1,499,000	1,674,500	1,859,800	2,062,400	0.9%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%
Victoria	5,537,800	6,609,700	7,733,300	8,876,000	10,086,500	1.8%	1.6%	1.4%	1.3%

Source: Footnote 19 below pp13

<sup>19</sup> Victoria in Future 2016 Population and household projections to 2051 Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2016

## Strategic Alternatives

The following provides a framework under which the current situation with fire services can be considered. There has been a lack of forward planning by Governments and agencies in the past that has led to a lack of effective allocated to the fire services, in particular to the CFA. There has been a fragmented development approach to the establishment of brigades/stations and lack of strategic planning to consider the longer term needs of brigades and their communities. There needs to be a consistent approach to the delivery of fire services particularly the CFA. A number of issues impact on the development of an effective fire service delivery strategy for the CFA and Victoria as a whole, they include:

- Equitable fire service delivery
- Financial constraints
- Cost effective service delivery
- Greater Melbourne and regional growth areas
- Efficient resource utilization
- Government development policies
- Standards of fire cover
- Rural/Urban interface
- Rural wildfires/bushfires
- Volunteer and career staff balance
- Flexible manning mix and use of career fully time, part time and casual firefighters
- CFA/MFB boundary issues / consideration of a borders approach
- All hazards / all agencies approach to resources utilization by emergency services
- Potential issues with funding CFA and FRV
- Community participation, support and engagement
- Community resilience and;
- Community awareness of fire and emergency risks and hazards

The strategy must ensure that a coherent, integrated, essentially operationally borderless country/rural and urban firefighting force is maintained and capable of ensuring an effective and efficient rural/urban interface and wildfire/bushfire fire service delivery.

***Three alternative strategies for fire service delivery have been developed.***



## **1. Maintain Existing Approach**

This strategy is a "Do Nothing" strategy and therefore aims to essentially maintain the current status quo and historical approach to fire service delivery as it exists today. Operations, planning, development and funding would continue as it is now with future demand for service based on the current deployment and model of delivery. Given that there have been a number of reports, reviews and investigations in to the CFA and MFB over recent years with little in the way of subsequent real action to address problems and issues that have been raised or actions recommended, this option has been the preferred approach by Governments and agencies and is therefore a clear viable potential option. The "Do Nothing" Strategy.

## **2. Separate CFA and create new FRV and Volunteer only CFA**

This strategy is the preferred strategy proposed by Government and the UFU, that would see the current CFA and CFA integrated Brigades separated from the current CFA, to form a new entity made up of the MFB and the 35 CFA integrated stations, to form Fire Rescue Victoria. This strategy would see the CFA become a volunteer only entity and a career staff only entity FRV, both services would largely operate as independent entities with their own structure, funding and operations. It would see the need to develop inter-agency mutual aid agreements for supporting into each other's area, a practice that is common in most other states of Australia and a standard practice in the United States for many decades. Each service would be able to build their capability and capacity to do their specialization of rural fire fighting or urban/metropolitan firefighting. This strategy whilst starting out as an entity of current MFB stations and the CFA 35 integrated stations, there would be inevitable expansion of boundaries and services. It is clear that the FRV entity would quickly evolve to include the 204 urban volunteer fire brigades of the CFA. This is a viable strategy and one supported by Government and UFU, this strategy could potentially led to a reduction in the CFA number of volunteers, size, capability, surge capacity, funding and service delivery product mix.

## **3. Optimize Country/Rural/Urban Fire & Emergency Services Deployment**

This strategy would seek to maximize the existing specialization of both the CFA and MFB as largely separate organizations, but taking into consideration the wide community good that can come from a coherent strategy focused on delivering a range of fire and emergency services essentially on an all agency all hazards approach, through the maximization of current resources and deployment to widen the scope of service delivery products. This strategy would also see the State Emergency Service integrated into the overall operational response and planning framework of CFA and MFB and a closer working relationship. Under this strategy each service maintains their independence and builds their specialization and capabilities to perform a wide fire and emergency services role without destroying their special characteristics and cultures, that largely bind them

together. The key to making this strategy operate is the formation of an overarching structure that is responsible for coordination and support of the services and ultimately takes responsibility for a unified command and control of major incidents at level 3 under the AIMS incident management structure. There would be one overall fire and emergency services commissioner and Deputy Commissioners/Chief Officers of each agency, thus ensuring unified command and control for major incidents.

## **PART THREE – KEY ISSUES AND PROPOSALS**

### **Background History CFA and Victoria's Fire Services**

The CFA was born out of a Royal Commission into Black Friday fires of 1939, its formation involved the bringing together of the Country Fire Brigades Board (CFBB) and the Bush Fire Brigades Board (BFBB) the CFBB serviced all provincial and country towns outside of the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire District area, which was serviced by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board (MFBB). Even today the CFA has many challenges in making their organization work. CFA now protects a population of more than 3.6 million people and a major part of Greater Metropolitan Melbourne, the MFB protects approximately 2.5 million people today and is essentially a central city fire service, and in my view probably one of the best central city fire services in the world, historically the MFB stick to their core expertise and don't get distracted from it. The facts are that to a large extent the success and growth of the CFA to its current stage of having a budget of more than \$500 million, has occurred over the last twenty plus years, is largely due to the sound long term forward corporate, strategic and operational planning undertaken in the late eighties, which continued into the 1990's, that planning set a strong platform and foundation of forward planning, which continues today in the CFA. Strong corporate and operational leadership was and has been a key element of the CFA's success, by strongly driving the strategic direction of the agency throughout every level and down to every person in the agency and making people accountable and responsible for making it happened.

## Vision Mission and Strategy

For fire and emergency services organizations such as the CFA and fire services to succeed in their task of serving the community, they must have a clear Strategic Direction that is understood by all levels and engages the people within the organization and the community. The following is a potential framework under which the CFA's and fire services overall Strategic Direction can be achieved. The aim is to use this as the framework for providing leadership and strategic direction in order to engaging and gain commitment from Volunteers, Staff, Governments and the Community to the CFA's fire services Vision, Mission and Strategic Direction.

## Vision for Country Fire Authority / Fire Services

To develop the CFA / Fire Services as the Best Fire Service in Australia, by:

- Clearly articulate the Vision
- Strongly driving core Strategic Direction and strategies
- Providing Best support to volunteer and career frontline service delivery personnel
  - Frontline will be well trained
  - Well equipped
  - Well supported
  - Well led
  - And Proud of the CFA / Fire Service and their part in it
- Ensure high quality and timely information and warnings to community
- Engaging Volunteers and career staff
- Apply mission command principles across all levels
- Encouraging decision making and empowerment at lowest level
- Provide sound incident management
- Creating strong networks across all partners and stakeholder groups
- Re-engaging the Group structure as operational leaders
- Encourage fresh ideas and approaches
- Delivering superior value
- Delivering dynamic, creative, innovative and entrepreneurial business Solutions and services
- Being customer focused
- Growing Volunteer member force
- Ensuring sound human and financial resources management
- Having satisfied customers

***The guiding philosophy underlying this strategy must be to provide high standards, professional service, superior value and quality to our Volunteers, Staff and our customers. To achieve our future Vision, we must embrace new concepts including:***

- A strong dynamic and aggressive Volunteer recruitment strategy
- A back to basics approach aimed at minimizing bureaucracy and delay
- Embracing leading edge technology and systems
- Recognition of the potential for a wider range of service/products
- Recognition of each CFA Brigade/Stations as a platform for providing a wider range of fire and emergency services
- Value-added services and support to Volunteers & Staff
- Promote active volunteer & staff involvement

- Increasing profile through marketing
- Staff and service/business units to be measured in terms of commercial/business performance

### **Function of Country Fire Authority / Fire Services**

To protect lives property and the environment by preventing and suppressing fires and responding to emergencies through a community based network of fire brigades.

The CFA / Fire Services provide a wider range of services and capabilities, including:

- Community education, training and awareness
- Assisting community in preparing for structure/bushfires/wildfires
- Landscape fires, including Wildfire/Bushfire and grass fires
- Large scale urban/metro fire and rescue services
- Structural fires in the villages, towns, cities and communities they protect
- Vehicle and mobile fires
- Hazardous materials incidents
- Road accident rescue and other specialist rescues
- Community first responder emergency medical assistance
- Counter terrorist preparedness in conjunction with police
- Providing rural land management advice on use of fire
- Integrated fire management planning, urban and rural fire prevention
- Fire management burns to reduce fuel
- Floods and other major emergency assistance

## **Command and Control of Fire and Emergencies**

Should there be some structural change in Victoria's fire services delivery and the entities, it is important that there is a clear unified command structure for major level 3 incidents. As was clearly demonstrated in the Black Saturday 2009 major fires failure to have in place a clear unified command structure for level 3 incidents can lead to major problems. The Bushfires Royal Commission made strong recommendations in this regard which resulted in the establishment of the Victorian Fire Services Commissioner (VFSC) as an overarching structure above the main fire agencies in Victoria CFA, MFB and DELWP. The VFSC was clearly the most senior operational fire officer in the state of Victoria and led all major level 3 incidents in the state. The loss of the role of Fire Services Commissioner in the formation of Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) is in my opinion a significant reason as to why the fire services collectively have to some extent lost their way. There are strong operational and cultural reasons why it makes good policy to maintain each fire service as separate organisations under a Fire Commissioner.

## **Operational Role of CFA Groups of Brigades**

Groups have historically played a major role in the chain of command of most country/rural fire authorities in Australia. Over the last more than ten years there has been an effort in CFA to sideline the group role and remove the Group Officers from operational command. Groups can play a critical role in both operational command and coordination of brigades and major incidents, and also in training for major incidents. Groups should be reinstated as part of the chain of command with a clear mandate and structure to ensure they are focused on supporting and leading the brigades within the group. The CFA in a recent review was considering the reinstating of the group in the chain of command and a change in the role of the Group Officer to a more direct command role with the title of Group Commander being considered.

Overall capacity and capability in the fire service system must be built to deal with multiple major incidents be they fire or other emergency, to deliver capacity to control incidents. Groups must be part of the command and control structure, relying on a senior officer from a district or regional command level to respond and take charge of major incidents removes the capability of the district or regional command to coordinate all activities across the district or region.

The focus of a revitalized group structure should be on operational planning and practicing through group, area and regional exercises for major incidents with the aim of stretching capability and capacity in order to ensure a seamless operation during real events. Where ever possible Group Officers and their Deputy Group Officers should not hold brigade officer positions so that they may focus on their important role. Group Officers should be drawn from experience brigade officers or officers with proven command experience and skill.

## **Fire and Emergency Management All Hazards - All Agencies Approach**

As a young fire officer in a county/metro fringe brigade the volunteer fire brigade was the cornerstone to community safety and response to any significant incident that required forces to move quickly and combat emergency situations, these situations ranged from bushfires, structure fires, motor vehicle incidents to floods and other local incidents even to the extent of backing up the local police sergeant. All of this work was done without any great fanfare; brigades and groups just got in and did what was necessary. Today that approach is called all hazards and all agencies approach to emergency management, taking what has been done locally and applying it to the large scale of a regional, state and the country level incidents of all types. The nature of the risks and threats has increased to include terrorist threats, chemical and biological agent risks, pandemics, major floods and fires. The objective is to marshal the full force of the emergency agencies, Governments and their employees and the community as a single force to deal with a major emergency

situation in a fully integrated, coordinated and controlled way, with a clear operational structure and a single point coordinator responsible for dealing with the emergency.

The Black Saturday major fires in Victoria 7 February 2009 and the Royal Commission that followed placed a strong focus on the need for clear command and control arrangements with a single person ultimately responsible for dealing with the situation at the highest level.

### **Structure - Overarching Strategic Framework**

When one considers the roles and functions of fire and emergency services, each agency has its own unique skills and expertise, cultures and needs for personnel, if you try to merge the combined skills and expertise and cultures of all emergency agencies into a single organization you potentially dilute a culture and or a level of expertise. I would suggest that a pure urban or metropolitan fire service has a strong hierarchical structure and culture with very high levels of skill and expertise in structure, industrial, commercial and high-rise firefighting. On the other hand, a fire service that it is primarily a country/outer metro fire service has a different culture built around the whole notion of being a volunteer and the comradery that is an intrinsic part of the culture, volunteer brigades have skills and expertise built around dealing with dynamic often fast moving bushfire and wildfire events that require large numbers of resources and strong command and control. If you bring the paid urban/metro and country/rural volunteer cultures together it is inevitable that one culture will win over the other, even without setting out to achieve that end, which in turn will reduce the motivation, drive and enthusiasm of volunteers. The same would potentially occur if you tried to blend the SES with an urban/metro fire service, it is less likely but I believe it would also happen if they were merged with rural fire service. Each emergency service delivers a unique range of products and service with unique personnel suited to that service products. Therefore, as was discovered by the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission 2009, merging all agencies into a single service is both unviable and counterproductive, as it does not optimize the skills and expertise of each agency to their best ability and outcome. But again, given the problems highlighted in the Black Saturday fires some form of ultimate coordination and control is required in an overarching sense. In Victoria, the solution to the need for unified command and control at the highest level was achieved by appointing the Fire Service Commissioner who is the most senior operational firefighter in the state. **The Fire Services Commissioner role should be reinstated.**

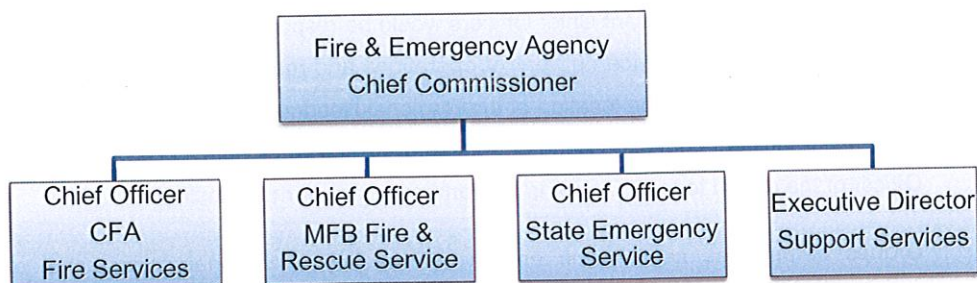
### **Fire and Emergency Agency Structure**

The proposed Fire and Emergency Agency (FEA) Structure is set out in Chart 1. The structure aims to bring together the primary fire and emergency response services under an overarching framework for coordination, control and management. Each service would have a separate budget under the FEA structure and Chief Officers would be accountable and responsible for the proper management and control of all aspects of their part of the FEA business. This would ensure a transparent approach to inter-service operations, budget management and corporate and strategic planning so that expenditure on



supporting the work of each services and their volunteers would be clearly identifiable within the budget and planning framework of FEA.

Org Chart 1: Proposed Structure of Fire & Emergency Agency



### CFA Field Operations Structure

The Government fire service reform agenda, seeks to have the CFA post the formation of FRV, have CFA districts lead and managed by contracted FRV staff. This is counterproductive approach, as essential FRV would have effective operational control, management and command of the CFA via their FRV staff placed in the CFA.

The CFA post FRV formation must have full autonomy for its operations and staff recruitment and placement. This approach provides an opportunity for CFA volunteers to become CFA operational staff leading Regions and Districts. This approach is highly successful in NSW RFS and CFS SA. The field operations of the CFA operational services should be led by a Deputy Chief Officer with clear accountability and responsibility for field operations. The current Regional and District structures could be changed under the FEA structure with a greater emphasis on directly supporting frontline services delivery of volunteer and career personnel. The exiting District level should be retained and renamed Areas, and the rank of Area Director should be created, and elevated to that of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent ranks, subject to the size and complexity of the Area, would determine the level of seniority and rank required. Area's should also have substantial levels of local decision making power devolved, so as to reduce administrative time and improve the service level to brigades. Area Directors would report to a Regional Director. Area Directors should be responsible and accountable for all management and operations of the area and CFA personnel. Including:

- Coordination and command of major incidents in area
- Support and strengthen the Group structure as part of the command and control structure
- Intergraded Fire Management Planning including Local, Municipal and Area levels
- Regular Training for all brigades and personnel in the area
- Annual full brigade inspections reviewing all aspects of each brigade
- Strategic and Operational Planning across the Area

- Administrative tasks should be reduced to a minimum by extensive use of IT
- Power and decision making should be devolved to the Brigade level

Regional Directors would hold the rank of Assistant Chief Officer and report to the Deputy Chief Officer Operations.

Regional Directors - Assistant Chief Officers would be responsible and accountable for the efficient and effective service delivery of operations and management of their region and areas within the region. The location of the Regional Headquarters would require access to a full major incident command and control center for the Regional Director/Assistant Chief Officer of the region to exercise command and control over major incidents.

Groups of brigades need to be empowered as key operational components of the command and control structure. Groups must be structured to support brigades in operations and planning. The Group Officer should be retitled Group Commander or Group Captain, in order to emphasize the important operational role that can be undertaken at this level.

## **Management of Risk, Fire Prevention and Land Management**

There needs to be a new approach to the way that fire prevention and land management are planned and undertaken in the state in order to assist and support brigades in their management of fire risk, prevention and land management. There is a need to ensure that overall coordination and effective coordination of fire management planning and fire prevention an integrated fire management planning approach is undertaken. Planning should be developed and linking to state level, regional, municipal and local levels in a cohesive planning framework to create an Integrated Fire Management Planning system.

### **Integrated Fire Management Planning - Fire Prevention & Land Management**

Victoria's rural and urban landscape is highly diverse and is impacted increasingly by climate change, population expansion particularly into once rural environments to create high risk bushfire areas at the rural/urban interface.

In order to reduce duplication and ensure a state-wide approach to fire management planning and land management, an Integrated Fire Management Planning framework should be adopted. The framework would not replace existing agency responsibilities but would enhance and support existing work by ensuring agencies working together.

IFMP would aim to achieve a consistent and effective means for fire management planning within Victoria through cooperation and information sharing between agencies. A key part to the success of IFMP would be the building and maintenance of relationships across agencies.

The framework would have a number of levels including;

- State level Fire Management Planning committee
- Regional level Strategic Fire Management Planning committees

➤ Municipal Fire Management Planning committees

The municipal FMP committees would involve all fire brigades in the municipality all fire prevention officers, other agencies involved in FMP. As part of this approach municipalities should ensure they have a dedicated municipal fire prevention officer. Also, CFA Area officers should attend and be involved with the development of IFMP at the local, municipal and area and regional levels.

- At the state level all regional and municipal FMP's should come together to form a state level IFMP.
- At the Regional level a Strategic Fire Management Planning should be produced
- At the Area level a Strategic Fire Management Planning should be produced
- At the municipal level a Municipal Fire Management Planning should be produced and adopted by each municipal council

An integrated approach to fire management planning in Victoria would lead to a cohesive and coordinated approach to all fire prevention activities from the local brigade level through to state level.

## **Funding of CFA should FRV Stage 2 be Achieved**

Should the FRV model be implemented and ultimately achieve a stage 2 outcome, with all urban fire brigades of the current CFA as part of FRV, the potential is for the remaining CFA to have no direct access to the fire services levy funding. As FRV would be protecting most of the Victorian population.

## **Empowerment of Volunteer Fire Brigades**

CFA Brigade leaders should be empowered to manage their brigade with delegated powers from the Chief Officer/Commissioner to undertake specific functions that allow the brigade to be better managed and limited need to seek authority.

Examples of responsibilities that could be devolved to Brigade Captain level include for example:

- New member approval
- Police check, direct from brigade officer to central headquarters department and not through Area Office
- Training, brigade officer should be able to approve a Firefighter Minimum Skills candidate without a long slow process through the District/Area office and other levels
- Advanced Firefighter Skills should also be handled by the Brigade Captain rank

## **PART FOUR – CONCLUSIONS**

### **Conclusions**

The Victorian Government proposal to reform the fire services through the creation of a state-wide fire and rescue service (Fire Rescue Victoria - FRV), and a stripped-down CFA, is a deeply flawed proposal, that fails to recognise that the CFA and MFB are already modern progressive fire services and among the best fire services in the world.

When one considers the roles and functions of fire and emergency services, each agency, CFA and MFB, has its own unique skills and expertise, cultures and needs for personnel. If you try to merge the combined skills and expertise and cultures of all emergency agencies into a single organization you potentially dilute the cultures and or the level of expertise.

Should the FRV model be implemented and ultimately achieve what I call a stage 2 outcome, with all urban fire brigades of the current CFA becoming part of FRV, the potential is for the remaining CFA to have no direct access to the fire services levy funding. As FRV would be protecting most of the Victorian population and therefore most of the fire service levy would go to FRV.

Flowing from the Bushfires Royal Commission 2009 the solution to the need for unified command and control at the highest level was achieved by appointing the Fire Service Commissioner, who was the most senior operational firefighter in the state. The Fire Services Commissioner role should be reinstated, with the Fire Services Commissioner leading a new overarching fire and emergency services agency, that supports the CFA, MFB, DELWP and SES.

The proposed Fire and Emergency Agency (FEA) structure aims to bring together the primary fire and emergency services under an overarching framework for coordination, command and control and management. Each service, CFA, MFB and SES would have a separate budget under the FEA structure, Chief Officers of each agency would be accountable and responsible for the proper management and control of all aspects of their part of the FEA business. This would ensure a transparent approach to inter-service operations, budget management and corporate and strategic planning, so that expenditure on supporting the work of each services and their volunteers would be clearly identifiable and enhanced within the budget and planning framework of FEA. Note: The Fire Services Commissioner would also have the operational oversight and command of Forest Fire Management division of DELWP, as per the previous Fire Services Commissioner Act.

The establishment of an overarching fire and emergency services (FEA) agency would create a "One Force" model operating under a no borders mandate, and not a fractured single FRV model, and an emasculated CFA.