

Joint Committee Highlights

Summary of recent Joint Committee Meetings

A brief summary of the most recent "2 Minute Briefings" which are produced after each Joint Committee round for each of the 7 Joint Committees. Please refer to the full "2 Minute Briefing" documents attached and available from the VFBV Website for more detailed information. Printed copies are also available from the VFBV office. You can request a copy by calling (03) 9886 1141

2 Minute Briefing Issue / Date:

Issue 16, December 2016

JOINT COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

- **Digital Scanners:** The Digital Scanner subsidisation program advocated by VFBV and run in partnership with CFA has been an overwhelming success, since it began in October 2015. Scanners still available: CFA is still accepting Tier 3 orders, from Brigades, Groups and individual members..
- **EAS Pager Observation Reports:** Members are reminded of the importance of lodging EAS Fault reports when they experience problems with their pagers. This information is critically important in identifying network performance issues as well as monitoring the health and status of the current pagers.
- **Proposed Regional Radio Dispatch Service Expansion:** For many years now VFBV and the Committee have been advocating for the Regional Mobile Radio Network to be expanded to cover the outer metropolitan districts. In principle approval for expansion has now been announced, and CFA is now working with EMV, VicPol and SES in scoping a new project to potentially deliver on this commitment.

JOINT COMMUNITY SAFETY

- **Planned Burning:** For many years now VFBV has been advocating for a more holistic approach to planned burning, and for CFA to promote the training advantages of participating in planned burns. The committee has been very pleased to observe that recent planned burns have developed into exercises, not just in fire behaviour and fuel load interactions but also extend to learnings in weather behaviour, impact on flora and fauna, bush heritage and Indigenous fire management practices.

- **CFA-SES Community Engagement Forum:** The joint CFA-SES community engagement forum was held at The Mantra in Lorne on 6th & 7th August, 2016. The Forum is Victoria's leading community safety conference for emergency service personnel and an opportunity for members to hear from both front line community safety educators but also leading community engagement specialists.
- **Fire Safety Pledge:** Building on the success of last year's campaign, CFA launched *The Fire Safety Pledge* to run between 3 November and 22 December.
- **Bushfire Hotline Number Changed:** Delegates reported to CFA they have received complaints and concerns from the community surrounding the change of the VicEmergency Hotline number from 1800 240 667 to **1800 226 226**.

JOINT EQUIPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Tanker Rear Deck POD Prototype:** For a number of years now, VFBV has been advocating for CFA to explore rear deck pods to trial as a possible replacement for rear deck ROPS, similar to those used in the mining industry. The Committee was provided a tour and inspection of a Bell Engineering Heavy Tanker Pod Prototype.
- **Burn over Vehicle Entrapment Research:** Following a presentation to the Committee earlier in the year from CFA's Research & Development team, the Committee requested that CFA use this research to create a new burn-over training video that uses historical vision and vision from field testing filmed in February this year.
- **ROP Cushion Prototype:** Arcadia Brigade members briefed the committee on a prototype cushion for use in vehicles with rear deck roll over protection.

JOINT HR, WELFARE & OH&S

- **VEOHRC Review Extension:** The Independent Equity and Diversity Review into CFA and MFB has been extended and members now have the opportunity to take part in this review until 18 December 2016, and VFBV encourages all members to consider contributing to the review.

- **Injury Claims Reporting:** The Committee discussed and provided feedback on a new proposed Injury Reporting dashboard that the Committee had requested, and a Health & Safety Consultation Escalation model process proposed by CFA.
- **Priority Sites Register:** When an industrial waste site has been identified in an Environment Protection Authority (EPA) *Environmental Order Report* as having dangerous materials dumped illegally at the site, this site is added to the (EPA) **Priority Sites Register**.
- **New Member Medical Forms:** CFA has advised VFBV that the new mandatory medical forms that were previously put on hold under Chief Officer Ferguson, have now been approved and are being distributed to Brigades

OPERATIONS

- **Role of group:** Having waited since 2012 for the most recent CFA review to strengthen the role of group, the Committee notes with disappointment the lack of progress or CFA leadership in the intervening time. Having lost confidence with CFA's lack of response or support to this review, the Committee has endorsed a proposal for a volunteer led review of the role of group, with the intent to meet and gather feedback from all Groups across the State in order to arrive at a formal position that volunteers can then lead and advocate for across the Sector.
- **40km Speed Limit:** VFBV continues to support and advocate for a 40km speed limit for vehicles passing a **stationary** emergency service vehicle displaying their red and blue flashing lights.

JOINT TRAINING

- **New Deputy Chief Officer Training:** The CFA Training department has again been restructured, with the Committee informed that Training has now been transferred to the F&EM (Fire & Emergency Management) directorate, and is now led by a Deputy Chief Officer - Training.
- **Pumping Pit Recommissioning:** VFBV has been strongly advocating for CFA to commit to a remediation and recommissioning program for pumping pits, whose use was temporarily suspended back in February 2015. There are approximately 91 pumping pits in use across the state. Of vital importance is the need for pumping pits to be safe, and for there to be an efficient and timely program to

clean, monitor water quality and ultimately recommission them for use.

- **Chainsaw Training:** The Committee continues to advocate for much greater access and support for members to attain chainsaw qualification and training.
- **Electrical Safety Mobile Props:** Despite significant work and progress on the design of an electrical safety mobile trailer prop back in 2014/15 CFA funding for the prop lapsed and is no longer available, leaving the project completely un-funded. VFBV is advocating for these mobile props to be fully funded and reprioritized
- **First Aid Training:** Early results from CFA's new First Aid Training arrangements with St John appears to be positive.

JOINT VOLUNTEERISM

- **CFA HQ Directorate Restructure:** The CFA Volunteerism department has again been restructured, with the Committee informed that the old Learning & Volunteerism directorate has been split, with training now being transferred to the F&EM (Fire & Emergency Management) directorate, and Volunteerism now merging with Strategy to form the new directorate of Volunteers & Strategy.
- **CFA Annual Plan 2016-17:** CFA has released its Annual Plan for 2016-17 that outlines its priorities for this period. This year's plan outlines the five priority plan themes for CFA during the 2016/17 year.
- **Volunteer Travel Reimbursement:** Following reports of variances between CFA Regions and Districts in how volunteer travel reimbursements are paid and authorised, the committee has requested CFA develop a State-wide Business Rule that will standardise and clarify arrangements.
- **Award Winning Program for Kids:** A VFBV-supported project for secondary students has won the Education Award at this year's Fire Awareness Awards, thanks to local CFA volunteers and the Maryborough Education Centre. The **Emergency Services Journey** takes Year 9 students to their local brigade, Police and ambulance station to see how each service operates and learn practical skills. What began as a Brigades in Schools program run by volunteers from the Maryborough Fire Brigade in 2004, has been developed into an innovative course at the Maryborough Education Centre by teacher, VFBV Board member and CFA volunteer Samantha Rothman.

Joint Communications and Technology

2 Minute Briefing



Issue 16: December 2016

Quick snapshot of the priority issues and actions worked through at the most recent Joint Committee meeting between CFA and VFBV. (Meeting held 26/11/2016)

DIGITAL SCANNER/LISTENING SETS TIER 3 STILL OPEN

The Digital Scanner subsidisation program advocated by VFBV and run in partnership with CFA has been an overwhelming success, since it began in October 2015. So far, 10,478 digital scanners have been ordered and shipped to Brigades and Groups across the state. The subsidy budget, and the savings to members, represents over \$3 million dollars.

More than 970 Brigades and 80 Groups have placed and received their Tier 1 & 2 orders, and Tier 3 is still under way. Under the Tier 1 program, every Brigade was entitled to a minimum of eight units at the subsidised price. On average, Brigades ordered 3.5 units under Tier 1, and Groups took up one of their guaranteed minimum of two units. Under Tiers 1 and 2 members paid \$150 for a scanner, with the subsidy budget paying the other \$296.75

Scanners are still available: CFA is still accepting Tier 3 orders, from Brigades, Groups and individual members. Tier 3 units are available at cost price, which was significantly reduced due to the bulk orders placed during the subsidisation program. Members can order units for \$446.75 plus postage and handling, while stocks last. Order forms are still available from the VFBV website.

EAS PAGER OBSERVATION REPORTS MONITORING

Each quarter, the committee receives detailed reporting on the number of EAS Page observation reports submitted, including the type of issues reported, the length of time to investigate, and the results of each investigation. Encouragingly, since implementing this reporting cycle, the committee has observed a significant reduction in the time taken to resolve issues and the quality of reporting. Over the year, the 3 most common reported faults have been; not receiving messages (~38%), physical damage to the pager (~18%), and lost or stolen pagers (~10%).

Members are reminded of the importance of lodging EAS fault reports when they experience problems with their pagers. This information is critically important in identifying network performance issues as well as monitoring the health and status of the current pagers. The committee has requested that CFA investigate and prioritize the introduction of Electronic Observation Reports in addition to the current reporting option, which would provide more timely feedback to the member raising the concern. CFA has agreed to investigate, scope and report back.

PROPOSED REGIONAL RADIO DISPATCH SERVICE EXPANSION TO OUTER METRO DISTRICTS

For many years now VFBV and the Committee have been advocating for the Regional Mobile Radio Network to be expanded to cover the outer metropolitan districts. This network provides high quality digital P25 network capabilities and much improved radio audio quality. Under the Regional Radio Dispatch Service project announced back in 2013, the CFA network has been upgraded to the new digital network in all CFA districts excluding Districts 7, 8, 13 and 14 and has been a resounding success.

Unfortunately, these four Districts were not funded through RRDS and are still operating on the analogue dispatch network. Given these are amongst the busiest Districts in the state, the inability to access the digital dispatch network has far reaching consequences, one of them being these Districts will have no means to access improved functionality, such as the short status button functionality when it finally rolls out. Given the impact short status messaging will have on reducing radio congestion, this would provide a significant improvement to the busy outer metropolitan dispatch systems. In principle approval for expansion has now been announced, and CFA is now working with EMV, VicPol and SES in scoping a new project to potentially deliver on this commitment. VFBV welcomes this long awaited progress and will continue our advocacy to ensure the project receives adequate funding and government priority.

Joint Equipment & Infrastructure

2 Minute Briefing



Issue 16: December 2016

Quick snapshot of the priority issues and actions worked through at the most recent Joint Committee meeting between CFA and VFBV. (Meeting held 19/11/2016)

TANKER REAR DECK POD PROTOTYPE BECOMES A REALITY

For a number of years now, VFBV has been advocating for CFA to explore rear deck pods to trial as a possible replacement for rear deck ROPS, similar to those used in the mining industry. Ever since CFA's decision to no longer manufacture rear deck ROPS and move exclusively to twin cab cab-chassis', and the loss of DAH's (Deck access hatches) volunteers have been raising concerns about the difficulty in accessing the rear deck area during jobs requiring crews to frequently move between the cab and the rear deck. The committee has been advocating for CFA to investigate the European body builders, where it has become common practice to purchase a single cab chassis and then build a crew area connected to the cabin as part of the body. This has a number of advantages including; that in a burn over situation all crew on the deck can quickly and safely return to the cabin; a reduction in crew fatigue across long fire-ground shifts; and greater safety when travelling to and from the fire ground and protection from smoke and embers.

The Committee was provided a tour and inspection of a Bell Engineering Heavy Tanker Pod Prototype, by Managing Director Robert Bell. The prototype is a 'pod' type construction which can be modified to slip onto any cab chassis. The ROP or rear cabin is fully self contained, very 'roomy' and has a large window with viewing access to the cabin and full size door access to the rear deck. A front mounted monitor, crew protection sprays, digital water level indicators on the sides as well as the back, ample storage lockers and an optional hydraulic BA lifter for easy operation are some of the great features. The Committee has requested that Bell Engineering consider loaning the prototype to CFA early next year so that a roadshow can be planned for members to view and inspect the prototype. Mr Bell has generously agreed, and VFBV extends its gratitude and appreciation to Mr Bell and the Bell Engineering Team, and congratulates them on their continued innovation, collaboration and support of Victorian fire services.

BURNOVER VEHICLE ENTRAPMENT RESEARCH - VIDEO

Following a presentation to the Committee earlier in the year from CFA's Research & Development team, the Committee requested that CFA use this research to create a new burn-over training video that uses historical vision and vision from field testing filmed in February this year. The research team closely duplicated conditions similar to those experienced during the tragic Linton Fires in 1998 to test the response of CFA's crew protection systems.

Three vehicles were tested, a tanker with ROP and crew protection, an Ultra-light with Gel coating and an Ultra light with foam coating. All vehicles were relatively unscathed with the temperature in the cabin of the tanker sitting at around 40 degrees whilst the outside temperature rose well above 600 degrees. The Committee has provided feedback on the new video, and has requested that a fact sheet be attached and be released along with SOP 9.32 'Entrapment Procedure' for Brigades to use for their pre-summer training. CFA has released an online version on their facebook page. This type of research is critical to ensuring firefighter safety and educating members on how the crew protection safety systems work, build confidence in those systems and the importance of situational awareness & entrapment procedures.

ROP CUSHION PROTOTYPE

Arcadia Brigade members briefed the committee on a prototype cushion for use in vehicles with rear deck roll over protection. As many would have experienced, the solid fibreglass ROP seat can be hard on your back and very slippery when cornering. The cushions have multiple functions in regards to firefighter safety, back injury reduction and firefighter comfort on long duration shifts amongst them. The Committee has requested they be field tested by 3 brigades in district 22 and will also be offered for testing by brigades in other Districts over the summer whilst analysis is completed. The Committee had previously authorised a VESEP grant to support the trial, and VFBV thanks the Arcadia Fire Brigade for this pro-active initiative. A proban, a nomex and a marine canvas version are being field and burn tested over the summer.

Joint HR, Welfare and OH&S

2 Minute Briefing



Issue 16: December 2016

Quick snapshot of the priority issues and actions worked through at the most recent Joint Committee meeting between CFA and VFBV. (Meeting held 27/11/2016)

VICTORIAN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (VEOHRC) REVIEW REMINDER

As a recommendation of the Fire Services Review (FSR), The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) is conducting an independent review into the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) with a view to identifying actions that can be taken to promote safety and equality in their respective organisations. The Independent Equity and Diversity Review into CFA and MFB has been extended and members now have the opportunity to take part in this review until 18 December 2016, and VFBV encourages all members to consider contributing to the review.

Current and former members can participate in the survey by going to <http://www.victorianhumanrightscommission.com/EDR/> or you may request a paper copy, by contacting 9032 3464. The research process is designed to ensure that the confidentiality and safety of volunteers who chose to participate is maintained. Volunteers will be able to participate anonymously and confidentially. No information provided will be shared without your explicit consent and VFBV have been working closely with VEOHRC to encourage our members be involved and help shape CFA into the future.

INJURY CLAIMS REPORTING & PROPOSED HEALTH & SAFETY CONSULTATION ESCALATION MODEL

The Committee discussed and provided feedback on a new proposed Injury Reporting dashboard that the Committee had requested, and a Health & Safety Consultation Escalation model process proposed by CFA. Delegates endorsed both and acknowledged the significant work and thought that had gone into the draft report and new process, and thanked CFA for its work. The new reporting will allow the Committee to assist with identifying trends and relaying important information back to the field on preventive measures and common themes across the State.

PRIORITY SITES REGISTER (INDUSTRIAL WASTE)

Delegates have raised concerns around the illegal dumping of dangerous materials at industrial waste sites and the possible exposure of volunteers attending incidents at those sites. When an industrial waste site has been identified in an Environment Protection Authority (EPA) *Environmental Order Report* as having dangerous materials dumped illegally at the site, this site is added to the (EPA) **Priority Sites Register**. The committee requested CFA forward the Priority Sites Register information and details to all Regions and Districts and for them to notify brigades of where it can be accessed. For any members who have concerns about waste sites in their response areas, the Priority Site Register is available online at; <http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/your-environment/land-and-groundwater/priority-sites-register>

NEW MEMBER MEDICAL FORMS UPDATE

CFA has advised VFBV that the new mandatory medical forms that were previously put on hold under Chief Officer Ferguson, have now been approved and are being distributed to Brigades. Whilst VFBV's request that the cost of the medical is paid for by CFA has been supported, disappointingly VFBV's request for alterations to the medical professional's section to avoid false positives has not been accepted. Nor apparently has our request for CFA to plan and have policy/procedures in place on how this information will be stored at the Region/District/Brigade level. Concerns about how the information is then disclosed to brigades; how brigade OIC's are to manage members who have medical limitations on what activities they can and cannot perform; balancing the need to inform crew leaders of members' limitations all the while balancing any privacy concerns, does not appear to have been well thought out and VFBV has communicated its disappointment to CFA.

Joint Community Safety

2 Minute Briefing



Issue 16: December 2016

Quick snapshot of the priority issues and actions worked through at the most recent Joint Committee meeting between CFA and VFBV. (Meeting held 26/11/2016)

PLANNED BURNING AND BUILDING BRIGADE CAPABILITIES

For many years now VFBV has been advocating for a more holistic approach to planned burning, and for CFA to promote the training advantages of participating in planned burns. The committee has been very pleased to observe that recent planned burns have developed into exercises, not just in fire behaviour and fuel load interactions but also extend to learnings in weather behaviour, impact on flora and fauna, bush heritage and Indigenous fire management practices. The camps are very practical 'hands on' for all involved, each participant is specifically tasked with both coaching and mentoring roles, allowing involvement by volunteers across all aspects of the planned burning. Recent burn camps also saw attendances from Traditional Owners, Trust for Nature (landowners) bird scientists, along with DWELP, plantation owners and CFA paid staff. The attendees worked well together and contributed experience and expertise, building valuable relationships and creating an atmosphere of co-operation in complex burn scenarios. These camps offer a great opportunity for volunteers to train in realistic settings and gain extensive fire firefighting experience. The committee has requested CFA produce a brochure which clearly explains and illustrates upcoming Burn Camps to Brigades.

CFA-SES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND HAZARD AWARENESS FORUM

The joint CFA-SES community engagement forum was held at The Mantra in Lorne on 6th & 7th August, 2016. The Forum is Victoria's leading community safety conference for emergency service personnel and an opportunity for members to hear from both front line community safety educators but also leading community engagement specialists. As well as the usual guest speakers, sessions and presentations, there were also outdoor displays by Coast Guard, CFA and SES, which were a resounding success. This year there were 481 attendees, 70% of those were CFA, 20% SES, this is a dramatic rise from 140 at the first forum in 2011. Volunteers from the North East and South East were very well represented with 65% of attendees coming from these two regions. The forum is growing in popularity and size.

The Committee will be reviewing the feedback provided by this year's attendee's and supports the continuation of this important forum. VFBV would like to recognize and congratulate the hard working members of the Volunteer Reference Group whose tireless energy and work helped to make this year's event another resounding success.

THE FIRE SAFETY PLEDGE

Building on the success of last year's campaign, CFA launched *The Fire Safety Pledge* to run between 3 November and 22 December. Brigades are offered the chance to win one of three \$1,000 cash prizes by encouraging members of their community to take the online "Fire Safety Pledge" at www.thefiresafetypledge.com.au. When members of the public make their pledge, they are asked to enter a local CFA brigade they wish to support. At the end of the competition, the brigade with the most number of pledges across the three different categories, will receive a cash prize of \$1,000. The categories are **1. Overall winner** (brigade with the most votes) **2. Per-Capita** – CFA brigade with the most votes relative to their population and **3. Tiny Town** – for brigades serving a population of less than 100 people. As at 23 November (just three weeks into the initiative) 6,793 people have taken the pledge. Any member of the public that takes the pledge will go into a draw to win one of four Samsung Galaxy Tablets or one of four \$100 Bunning Gift Vouchers. The friendly competition within Districts has begun with steep competition amongst seven of the top ten positions. Good Luck.....

BUSHFIRE HOTLINE NUMBER CHANGED

Delegates reported to CFA they have received complaints and concerns from the community surrounding the change of the VicEmergency Hotline number from 1800 240 667 to **1800 226 226**. The committee has requested that both numbers continue to work until people get used to the change. CFA advice is both numbers will continue for some time.

Joint Operations

2 Minute Briefing



Issue 16: December 2016

Quick snapshot of the priority issues and actions worked through at the most recent Joint Committee meeting. (Meeting held 27/11/2016). Unfortunately, delegates were advised a few days before the meeting that the Chief Officer was not available to meet, so the Committee decided instead of cancelling the meeting, they would simply meet without CFA.

ROLE OF GROUP

Having waited since 2012 for the most recent CFA review to strengthen the role of group, the Committee notes with disappointment the lack of progress or CFA leadership in the intervening time. Having lost confidence with CFA's lack of response or support to this review, the Committee has endorsed a proposal for a volunteer led review of the role of group, with the intent to meet and gather feedback from all Groups across the State in order to arrive at a formal position that volunteers can then lead and advocate for across the Sector. This work will commence after the FDP and we will be seeking representatives from all Districts to help lead and coordinate a ground up discussion and review during 2017, with a view of driving this important reform. We will be using all the feedback received from CFA's previous review as well as discussing the countless ideas and suggestions that arose from discussion during the last review but may have been rejected by CFA at the time for one reason or another.

In the previous review, VFBV advocated for;

- Greater support and recognition from CFA to Groups and the Group structures in local command and control
- Greater flexibility in how Groups can structure themselves to accommodate and respect local and regional differences and flexibility to match operating models to local risks. A 'one size fits all' model is not supported.
- Strengthening the chain of command to empower and enhance the capability and capacity for local command and control being exercised by CFA members at the local level ensuring that local participation continues as incidents grow in size and complexity
- Systems of work that recognize and enhance how Brigades, Groups, OO's and RDO's interact and support each other in Operational Readiness & Response, Training & Mentoring and Community Education
- Strengthening the role of Groups in assisting Brigades building local capability for Incident Management and volunteer upskilling and mentoring for Level 2 and 3 incident management roles
- Greater support and recognition of the important role of Group Comms including role, systems and processes in supporting local incidents and deployments and recognition in CAD processes and procedures of this vital role
- Greater support and recognition of the important role Groups play in readiness, pre-incident planning & coordination, strike team resourcing & deployment, maintaining situational awareness and training delivery

All members will be provided an opportunity to share their ideas and thoughts, and VFBV will provide leadership, logistical and administrative support to allow local groups and districts to participate in structured discussions and share the information coming from neighbouring groups and districts across the State. If you would like to be involved in the early stages of the project, please contact VFBV at vfbv@vfbv.com.au or (03) 9886 1141 and we will record your details.

40km SPEED LIMITS

VFBV continues to support and advocate for a 40km speed limit for vehicles passing a **stationary** emergency service vehicle displaying their red and blue flashing lights. VFBV's long stated position has been that firefighters working alongside roads and highways when attending to incidents, are put at a significant health & safety risk by passing motorists, and 40km speed limits similar to those for road side workers should be pursued, along with strong public education campaigns to educate motorists of the dangers. The Committee continues to advocate for the establishment of new road rules that will protect all emergency service personnel when working on the side of roads and highways.

Joint Training

2 Minute Briefing



Issue 16: December 2016

Quick snapshot of the priority issues and actions worked through at the most recent Joint Committee meeting between CFA and VFBV. (Meeting held 20/11/2016)

NEW DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER - TRAINING

The CFA Training department has again been restructured, with the Committee informed that Training has now been transferred to the F&EM (Fire & Emergency Management) directorate, and is now led by a Deputy Chief Officer - Training. VFBV welcomes Acting DCO Gregg Paterson AFSM to the new position. Gregg brings energy and enthusiasm to the role and the Committee looks forward to working with him.

PUMPING PIT RECOMMISSIONING

VFBV has been strongly advocating for CFA to commit to a remediation and recommissioning program for pumping pits, whose use was temporarily suspended back in February 2015. There are approximately 91 pumping pits in use across the state. Of vital importance is the need for pumping pits to be safe, and for there to be an efficient and timely program to clean, monitor water quality and ultimately recommission them for use. For many brigades, pumping pits form the only safe, controlled and viable option for brigades to train in drafting and other related pump operations and skills maintenance. CFA have now issued a Work Instruction on the Management of Pumping Pits, and have implemented an approved recommissioning process. CFA have advised that the ultimate decision to recommission and fund the cost of these works rests with the Region. Water testing costs between \$300/\$400, with the cost of cleaning and refilling to be approximately \$1,000. Delegates have raised concern that due to Regional budget limitations, these costs will be pushed back to Brigades. CFA's advice to these concerns is that Brigades should go through the Chain of Command and ultimately to Assistant Chief Officers who hold oversight of the Regions.

AVAILABILITY OF CHAINSAW TRAINING

The Committee continues to advocate for much greater access and support for members to attain chainsaw qualification and training. Despite two Mobile Chainsaw Training trailers developed through the Mobile Prop Project back in 2015 to add additional capability for members to access chainsaw training, a UFU grievance over the training package, equipment and trailer use and design has resulted in a yearlong ban on paid instructors using these trailers to deliver any chainsaw training, resulting in the widespread cancellation of CFA planned courses for volunteers. CFA advises that the IR issues are now close to being resolved, and has confirmed that there are no IR restrictions that relate to volunteer trainer and assessors accessing, towing and using the trailers. Whilst disappointed that brigades are currently unable to access paid support and delivery of chainsaw courses through CFA's training pool, the Committee has requested that CFA increase the number of endorsed volunteer trainer and assessors to deliver this training, so that brigades can access this vital training for the upcoming fire season. CFA has agreed to streamline and prioritize volunteer access to the new trailers, equipment and training package, as well as investigate an EOI process for subject matter experts to be identified and endorsed for volunteer training and delivery.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY MOBILE PROPS

Despite significant work and progress on the design of an electrical safety mobile trailer prop back in 2014/15 CFA funding for the prop lapsed and is no longer available, leaving the project completely un-funded. VFBV is advocating for these mobile props to be fully funded and reprioritized. Electrical Safety and specifically skills maintenance for Low Voltage Fuse Removal has been identified as a state-wide gap for quite some time, and the Committee believes the electrical safety mobile props would significantly improve capability and member access to this vital training and knowledge.

FIRST AID TRAINING

Early results from CFA's new First Aid Training arrangements with St John appears to be positive, with great acceptance of the out-of-session course work that cuts down the course duration and allows students to do some of the course work at home and in their own time. Adjustments for postal delays is now being factored into future courses.

Joint Volunteerism

2 Minute Briefing



Issue 16: December 2016

Quick snapshot of the priority issues and actions worked through at the most recent Joint Committee meeting between CFA and VFBV. (Meeting held 20/11/2016)

CFA HQ DIRECTORATE RESTRUCTURE – VOLUNTEERS & STRATEGY

The CFA Volunteerism department has again been restructured, with the Committee informed that the old Learning & Volunteerism directorate has been split, with training now being transferred to the F&EM (Fire & Emergency Management) directorate, and Volunteerism now merging with Strategy to form the new directorate of Volunteers & Strategy. The Brigade Support Team has now been amalgamated with the Volunteerism team, with this team looking to focus on more field based staff connecting with brigades at the local level. They will explore recruitment and re-engagement, brigade sustainability, decline and growth patterns across the state, hub and cooperative models, and community connectedness. The overall vision of the Volunteers and Strategy Team is to facilitate the growth of volunteerism and strengthen brigade sustainability. VFBV welcomes Executive Director John Haynes to the new position. John brings energy and enthusiasm to the role and the Committee looks forward to working with him. John's vision is to look at more outcome based measurements, such as what we measure before, during and after fires – not just measuring performance based on time out the door.

CFA ANNUAL PLAN 2016-17 RELEASED

CFA has released its Annual Plan for 2016-17 that outlines its priorities for this period. This year's plan outlines the five priority plan themes for CFA during the 2016/17 year. The five themes are; Capability; Culture; Stakeholder Engagement; Strategy, Plan and Direction; and Systems and Processes.

You can download a copy at; <http://news.cfa.vic.gov.au/news/cfa-plan-a-must-read-for-all.html>

VOLUNTEER TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT & ARRANGEMENTS

Following reports of variances between CFA Regions and Districts in how volunteer travel reimbursements are paid and authorised, the committee has requested CFA develop a State-wide Business Rule that will standardise and clarify arrangements. VFBV's long held policy is that no volunteer should be out of pocket due to their volunteering. The Committee continues to advocate for improved access to CFA vehicles – including corporate pool vehicles when required to travel for training or other CFA related activities that would otherwise create an impost or cost upon volunteers. Should an appropriate vehicle not be available, then volunteers should have access to travel reimbursement, which is currently set at \$0.72 per km. CFA has agreed to progress a policy review.

AWARD WINNING PROGRAM FOR KIDS

A VFBV-supported project for secondary students has won the Education Award at this year's Fire Awareness Awards, thanks to local CFA volunteers and the Maryborough Education Centre. The **Emergency Services Journey** takes Year 9 students to their local brigade, Police and ambulance station to see how each service operates and learn practical skills. What began as a Brigades in Schools program run by volunteers from the Maryborough Fire Brigade in 2004, has been developed into an innovative course at the Maryborough Education Centre by teacher, VFBV Board member and CFA volunteer Samantha Rothman.

The course also includes a camp in the Mallee and sessions at a surf life saving club, and the students achieve certificates in Life Saving skills and First Aid. The program includes team and confidence building, with activities like open water swimming and fire brigade competition events. The **Emergency Services Journey** program is funded by VFBV and the Maryborough Education Centre Principal David Sutton says the school is proud of the students for doing so well, and Samantha Rothman for her work in developing the program. Well done David, Samantha and the Maryborough Brigade!