STATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES
TRAINING FRAMEWORK

Victoria’s fire and emergency services work with the community, Government and business as one integrated and unified team.
**Audience:** This Framework is intended for the executive and senior leadership of Victoria's fire and emergency services (specifically, the Country Fire Authority, Department of Environment and Primary Industries, Metropolitan Fire Brigade and Victoria State Emergency Service), as well as the Department of Justice.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Framework is to lay the foundations of a unified approach to fire and emergency services training in Victoria and set out the future direction for a range of joint actions. The Framework will foster the joint development and delivery of programs and investments, and joint funding submission for training-based initiatives.

**Authorisation:** The document is owned by the Fire Services Commissioner and endorsed by the Chief Executive Officers of the Country Fire Authority, Metropolitan Fire Brigade and Victoria State Emergency Service, as well as the Deputy Secretary, Land and Fire of the Department of Environment and Primary Industries and the Executive Director, Police and Emergency Management of the Department of Justice.

**Definitions:** Words with specific meanings in the fire and emergency services context are defined in the appendix at the end of this document.

**Dependencies:** This document should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Statement: Fire and emergency services in Victoria and the Fire Services Reform Program Governance, Terms of Reference.
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FOREWORD

My primary responsibility as the Fire Services Commissioner is to oversee and work with Victoria’s fire and emergency services to ensure they work as one integrated team. I also have a legislative responsibility for developing and maintaining performance standards for specific functions across the collective.

This State Fire and Emergency Services Training Framework enables the shared vision (fire and emergency services operating as a unified force) and the seamless and efficient delivery of programs, products and services to the community.

This Framework has been developed in collaboration with, and will form a strategic intent for:

• Country Fire Authority (CFA);
• Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI), as lead partner of the Networked Emergency Organisation (NEO) that also comprises Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water Corporation and VicForests;
• Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB); and
• Victoria State Emergency Services (VICSES).

Future direction within the Emergency Management sector

This Framework provides an overarching, clear and consistent strategic direction for aligning priorities and training plans across the collective.

The community must be at the front and centre of our investment, strategy, planning and activity. Achieving greater interoperability through a unified approach to training is one way that we will ensure that our people have the training needed to safely deliver the highest level of service to the community.

Craig Lapsley PSM

Fire Services Commissioner, Victoria
INTRODUCTION

A unified approach to training

The purpose of this State Fire and Emergency Services Training Framework is to lay the foundations of a unified approach to training and exercising across Victoria’s fire and emergency services, and set out the future direction of joint actions. It is not intended to replace the individual training strategies of each fire and emergency service, which will continue to address hazards, equipment and associated training needs that are unique to a particular service.

Instead, it provides a framework for identifying common needs, undertaking joint planning and investment, developing joint funding submissions for training activities, and increasing collaboration in the delivery of training. It contains a range of objectives under three goals:

• **Maximised interoperability, capacity, capability, resilience and sustainability** through training that harnesses synergies and improves consistency of practice;

• **A hazards-specific approach to training** that capitalises on knowledge and expertise of the collective, reduces duplication of effort and keeps our personnel safe; and

• **An innovative and flexible training model** for the collective that meets evolving community needs and expectations and examines the most effective way for fire and emergency services to train, maintain skills and undertake professional development.

Anticipated benefits

The benefits offered by a unified approach to training are twofold.

**First**, training models and modes of delivery have a direct bearing on the ‘workforce value proposition’ offered by fire and emergency services. This is especially so for volunteers, who benefit most from increased flexibility, localisation or remote delivery.

Both volunteers and career staff will benefit from improved access to training through a range of modes, greater recognition of prior learning, more training and career pathways, as well as less travel time and disruption. Providing volunteers and staff with more opportunities to develop should support high levels of retention and motivation.

**Second**, given the scale of training, exercising and evaluation delivered by the collective, new approaches will also be important contributors to increased efficiency, effectiveness and performance.

Unified training is expected to contribute to the productivity dividends that will be increasingly expected of fire and emergency services by taking advantage of synergies, reducing duplication of effort and better recognising prior learning. An increased emphasis on joint exercising and evaluation will cement and further improve recent efforts around multi-agency responses to hazards.

More broadly, a unified approach to training will have the flow-on effect of helping to reinforce the links between fire and emergency services at all levels – from new recruits undertaking skills acquisition courses through to senior officers undertaking leadership training together.

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1 This Framework considers the fire and emergency services (also referred to as the collective) as including the CFA, DEPI, MFB and VICSES. It is anticipated that organisations such as Ambulance Victoria, Victoria Police and others will be included in future updates to the Framework.
Victoria’s fire and emergency services

Community needs and expectations are at the core of planning and delivering fire and emergency services in Victoria. As a collective, our fire and emergency services rely on over 70,000 people – volunteer and career – to minimise the severity and impact of emergencies across the State.

The volunteers of the SES and CFA play a vital leadership and engagement role in their local communities by increasing community capacity and resilience to emergencies.

Strong connections between these services, the community, local and, state government and the range of other organisations are critical to ensure interoperability exists not only between the fire and emergency services, but a much larger group of people and organisations that are involved before, during and after an emergency.

At present, fire and emergency services have different training models that have evolved according to their respective history, culture, and role. An overview of current delivery is captured below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CFA</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>DEPI</th>
<th>MFB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>2,250 career, 58,000 volunteers</td>
<td>Approx. 160 career, over 5,500 volunteers</td>
<td>3,172 (DEPI and NEO with recognised fire roles)</td>
<td>2,100 total (including 1,800 operational staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units/stations/ brigades/ work centres</td>
<td>1,220 Brigades</td>
<td>150 units</td>
<td>191 work centres (DEPI or NEO)</td>
<td>47 stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated training centres</td>
<td>Seven Field Training Grounds (incl. CFA Fiskville &amp; Bangholme Campus)</td>
<td>Regionally-based, with state-based training at headquarters</td>
<td>(Training undertaken at offices depots and other locations)</td>
<td>MFB Burnley Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses (skills acquisition and maintenance)</td>
<td>473 courses and approx. 3,000 skills acquisition courses per year</td>
<td>Wide range of courses for career staff and volunteers, e.g. first aid, incident management, or road rescue</td>
<td>80 different courses, approx. 280 formal training events per year (in additional to skills maintenance)</td>
<td>Approx. 100 skills acquisition courses, 10,000 skills maintenance activities and 500 combined drills per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual participants</td>
<td>Approx 30,000 for skills acquisition</td>
<td>Approx 5,500 competencies issued to staff and volunteers</td>
<td>Approx. 2,900 participants in approx. 280 formal training events (excluding online training)</td>
<td>1,850 (i.e. all operational staff) including skills acquisition and skills maintenance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Facilities and activities above focus on skills acquisition; skills maintenance is a significant additional effort.

Figure 1 – Overview of current training delivery (data applicable as of August 2012)
In addition to different training models, the collective’s workforce is diverse in its capabilities, volunteerism, areas of specialisation, geographic location, prior skills and experience. Community-based volunteer fire-fighters and career fire-fighters may bring very different frames of reference, experience, and assumptions to their respective roles.

While this diversity of experience and expertise offers definite strengths to the collective, it also poses challenges for interoperability and will test the implementation and delivery of joint initiatives. Developing training models and modes of delivery that caters for and capitalises on this diversity will need to be a key focus of training in the future.

The need for change

While each fire and emergency service offers its own strengths and specialisations, many of the challenges faced are common: workforce, infrastructure, training systems, incident management and leadership. The enablers to greater interoperability are also common: building trust across the collective, balancing state-wide and organisational demands, securing joint funding and resourcing, and managing organisational and cultural differences.

Victoria’s fire and emergency services are already sharing facilities and conducting joint operations within existing resources, however current and forecast budgetary constraints will likely require further efficiencies. The Government has set clear expectations for public service efficiency, and has repeatedly committed to containing expenditure, cutting ‘back-office’ duplication (as well as duplication between public entities), whilst protecting front-line services.²

² For example, “Victorian Budget about ‘living within our means’: Treasurer Kim Wells” (774 ABC Melbourne interview, 1 May 2012)
Unified training model for fire and emergency services

The agencies with the Fire Services Commissioner lead and promote increased operational capability, interoperability and resilience across Victoria’s fire and emergency services. A unified training model for fire and emergency services represents a key part of this effort.

“...The fire services have shown a commitment to deliver an integrated response to bushfire throughout the summer. The work we have undertaken in the past 12 months to build cohesion and coordination between the CFA, MFB and DEPI has, ultimately, led to better outcomes for all Victorians living, working or travelling in high-risk bushfire areas...”

Craig Lapsley, Fire Services Commissioner

Victoria’s fire and emergency services already conduct joint activities and share resources and facilities. Various programs and materials are currently co-delivered or co-attended (for example, bushfire aviation training, road rescue training, warnings and advice officer training, mapping officer training, leadership development, the Basic Wildfire Awareness National Short Course and bushfire investigator training).

The Multi Agency Capability Committee - Bushfire is responding to the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. This includes developing joint training materials for key Incident Management Team roles as well as developing an Incident Leadership Framework, an Exercise Framework and a Bushfire Staff Ride.

Victoria’s urban search and rescue (USAR) capability provides another example of interoperability amongst fire and emergency services. The MFB was the first service in Australia to recognise the need for USAR capabilities following the World Trade Centre bombing in New York City in 1993 - a development that received renewed impetus following the events of September 2001 in the USA and October 2002 in Bali. Fire and emergency services, in Victoria, together now train for and regularly deploy USAR expertise to incidents involving heavy transport, building collapses or instability.

Key areas for change

While fire and emergency services conduct many joint activities, genuine interoperability will require sustainable, lasting change. The Strategic Statement: Fire and emergency services in Victoria, sets out the path to organisational interoperability across Victoria’s fire and emergency services:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited organisational frameworks are in place, ad hoc arrangements</td>
<td>Recognised frameworks are in place to support interoperability</td>
<td>Shared value systems and goals across the collective</td>
<td>Goals, command structure/management style unified, knowledge is shared across the system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 – ‘2021 Vision’ path toward organisational interoperability

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‘Training, development and exercising’ are enablers for achieving the vision set out in the Strategic Statement: Fire and emergency services in Victoria.

Victoria’s fire and emergency services have already successfully collaborated using existing resources, without the benefit of unified structures and policies. The systemic changes to training outlined in this framework represent a significant step forward that will improve the level of service we collectively provide to the Victorian community.

A number of changes will be required to deliver a unified model – critical amongst them creating the mandate for common decisions in investment and collaboration. Determining state-wide service requirements and tailoring training accordingly (for example, developing new courses and delivery arrangements) will be important areas of focus. Developing new investment and funding models will be important enablers, as well as new strategies for human resource management, or changes to legislation.

Figure 3 – Vision, mission, principles and goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victorian fire and emergency services operate as one unified force to achieve the highest level of service for the community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common doctrine and performance standards for functions across the fire and emergency services sector</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhance fire and emergency services capability and capacity through common doctrine and a unified approach to training, ensuring that our people have the training needed to deliver the highest level of service to the community</strong></td>
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</table>

**Supporting principles for designing and delivering training**

- Maximising opportunities to increase collaboration
- Maximising the contribution of all personnel, volunteers and paid staff
- Focusing on hazards, before during and after an emergency
- Making the most of each other’s strengths and expertise

**Our goals**

- Maximised interoperability, capacity, capability, resilience and sustainability through training that harnesses synergies and improves consistency of practice
- A hazards-specific approach to training that capitalises on knowledge and expertise of the collective, reduces duplication of effort and keeps our personnel safe
- An innovative and flexible training model for the collective that meets evolving community needs and expectations and examines the most effective way for fire and emergency services to train, maintain skills and undertake professional development

Figure 3 – Vision, mission, principles and goals
DEELIVERING OUR GOALS

The State Fire and Emergency Services Training Framework has three primary goals, each containing a range of objectives to support a unified approach to fire and emergency services training in Victoria.

**Goal 1**

*Maximised interoperability, capacity, capability, resilience and sustainability* through training that harnesses synergies and improves consistency of practice.

Agency-focused approaches to training are becoming increasingly less sustainable. Achieving genuine interoperability will require significant changes to current organisational cultures and operations, including training.

Additionally, maximising state capacity and capability is a key theme and strategic intent of the reform program, reflecting the Bushfires Royal Commission’s recommendations that the Fire Services Commissioner be responsible for increasing operational capability, interoperability and resilience. The reform program includes an action to develop state capability and capacity – such as through innovative approaches to the best use of resources – with the outcome that state capability and capacity meets Victorian fire and emergency risks.

Interoperability should allow each fire and emergency service to take better advantage of the knowledge and expertise held across the collective. Through training together we build connections and develop shared understanding of the challenges that others face, as well as the challenges that each hazard presents.

Common leadership training (for both formal leadership roles as well as the informal leadership that happens every day across the services) will be one of the key ways to maximise interoperability. Joint, structured leadership development opportunities, common frameworks for leadership development across the services, and new approaches to identifying and supporting emerging leaders will be part of this.

Together, we will:

- Align each service’s current strategies and plans with the wider reform program (i.e. White Paper, Strategic Statement: Fire and emergency services Victoria, Fire Services Reform Program);
- Determine state-wide training needs based on capability and capacity;
- Develop common frameworks for training and developing leaders to complement each agency’s work in identifying and supporting its emerging leaders;
- Deliver joint training for services that have common needs (e.g. career fire-fighter recruit course);
- Enable the workforce to work together by addressing the barriers to lateral training and career pathways between fire and emergency services; and
- Extend opportunities for secondments between services that share expertise.
All the parties committed to this framework acknowledge and respect the individual expertise, capability and priorities of each organisation. By recognising the strengths of each fire and emergency service we can access the best training expertise for a given hazard: allocating responsibility for specific training delivery to a particular service and creating ‘areas of excellence’.

All emergencies share some similarities and many of the measures required to manage emergencies are generic, hence the importance of an “all-hazards, all agencies” approach to training. At the same time, this approach acknowledges that many emergencies will require specific prevention, response and recovery measures.

**Together, we will:**

- Take advantage of the strengths and areas of expertise each fire and emergency service offers, with development and delivery assigned to the service best-equipped to meet the collective’s needs;
- Ensure that training for particular roles and specific hazards to cover the knowledge and skills required for that particular hazard where appropriate, acknowledging that having properly trained and accredited fire-fighters is the most critical element in achieving fire-fighter safety;
- Train, exercise and evaluate our people for multi-agency responses to hazards, before, during and after emergencies;
- Review role pathways to ensure they meet joint standards;
- Design training pathways that take maximum advantage of the skills and knowledge across the collective, so that officers from one organisation are able to undertake training offered by others;
- Coordinate community engagement between fire and emergency services on particular hazards: developing a shared understanding of community needs and avoiding duplication by coordinating communication and services; and
- Promote more flexible, localised training that meets the needs and specific requirements of the workforce.

**Goal 2**

*A hazards-specific approach to training* that capitalises on knowledge and expertise of the collective, reduces duplication of effort and keeps our personnel safe.
The training model will draw upon the successful federation-based approach adopted by the Australian Defence Force, whilst recognising that ‘localised’ training will still be required for a number of specific elements to ensure organisations meet their regulatory and legislative responsibilities.

The federation-based model will enable a state-wide approach to developing and maintaining facilities, as well as ensuring a uniformed approach to incident management, leadership and recruitment, volunteerism and community education.

Local-level training will incorporate specific equipment-based and technical training, along with localised exercising and drills. Innovative training models and modes of delivery (such as online delivery or e-Learning) will be developed to increase accessibility and deliver as much training as possible.

Another focus of innovation will be the recognition of prior learning/current competency. This includes streamlining processes, making applications as straightforward as possible, speeding up assessments, and ensuring that training delivered by one service is recognised by others. Another focus will include ensuring that volunteers have unimpeded access to training and development that benefits their brigades and communities.

Together, we will:

• Maximise the use and effectiveness of the State’s training facilities and infrastructure;
• Investigate opportunities for partnering with tertiary, TAFE, interstate and international providers for both ‘core’, ‘common’ and/or specialist training;
• Continually indentify opportunities to improve consistency (e.g. recruits sharing the same qualifications at the end, maximise potential for ‘lateral’ movement between services);
• Recognise the separate and shared development needs of volunteers and career personnel;
• Encourage innovation and excellence in training design and delivery (getting the right training to the right person at the right time), with an appropriate focus on skills maintenance;
• Simplify and streamline recognition of prior learning so that it supports interoperability, reduces unnecessary training time, and takes advantage of skills acquisition through employment or private training;
• Identify joint procurement and joint investment to enhance buying power, supported by agreed standards and requirements; and
• Continue to identify opportunities for innovation into the future.
GOVERNANCE

Dedicated governance will be required to provide program and portfolio-level oversight over the State Fire and Emergency Services Training Framework, and champion its vision, aims and priorities at an executive level within the collective and across Government.

The implementation of the State Fire and Emergency Services Training Framework will be overseen by the State Fire & Emergency Management Executive Leadership Group (ELG), which comprises:

- Fire Services Commissioner (Chair)
- Deputy Secretary, Land and Fire, DEPI
- Chief Executive Officer, CFA
- Chief Executive Officer, MFB
- Chief Executive Officer, VICSES
- Executive Director, Police and Emergency Management, DOJ

Support for the implementation and service delivery aspects of the Framework will be provided by the Service Delivery Group (SDG) and the Strategy Planning and Implementation Group (SPIG) in line with the Fire Services Reform Program Governance – Terms of Reference.

Figure 4 – Reform Program governance structure
**APPENDIX: DEFINITIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glossary</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All-agencies</td>
<td>All fire and emergency services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-hazard</td>
<td>All sources of potential harm or situations with potential to cause loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>A skill, attribute or underpinning knowledge of a person which is formally recognised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>In relation to community engagement, it is to partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Skills and knowledge and their application within an occupation to the standard of performance required in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>The bringing together of fire and emergency services to ensure effective response to an incident or emergency. It is primarily concerned with the systematic acquisition and application of resources in accordance with the requirements imposed by the emergency or emergencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire-fighter</td>
<td>Any employee, volunteer or agent of any fire service who occupies, or is designated, to undertake a role for the purpose of fire suppression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire services</td>
<td>Fire services includes the CFA, MFB and DEPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire and emergency services</td>
<td>Fire and emergency services includes the CFA, MFB, DEPI and VicSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>The action or manner of governing a state, organization, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard</td>
<td>A source of potential harm or a situation with potential to cause loss. A fuel that has the potential to cause damage. In the context of fire, is a fuel that has the potential to cause damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard-focused</td>
<td>A focus on a particular source of potential harm or a situation with potential to cause loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident</td>
<td>An event, accidentally or deliberately caused, which requires a response from one or more of the fire and emergency services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident management</td>
<td>The process of controlling the incident and coordinating resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>The basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads, power supplies) need to operate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interoperability</td>
<td>To work seamlessly together across the fire and emergency services irrespective of boundaries, borders or jurisdictional constraints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>The action of leading a group of people or an organization, or the ability to do this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multi-agency response</strong></td>
<td>The response to an incident where one or more fire and emergency services assist the jurisdictional control agency or agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operations</strong></td>
<td>An active process; a discharge of a function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The direction, supervision and implementation of tactics in accordance within the Incident Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resilience</strong></td>
<td>The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>All personnel and equipment available, or potentially available, for incident tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
<td>Actions taken in anticipation of, during, and immediately after an incident to ensure that its effects are minimised, and that people affected are given immediate relief and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk</strong></td>
<td>The exposure to the possibility of such things as economic or financial loss or gain, physical damage, injury or delay, as a consequence of pursuing a particular course of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing</strong></td>
<td>To use, occupy, or enjoy (something) jointly with another or others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>Able to be maintained at a certain rate or level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td>The action of teaching a person a particular skill or type of behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training models</strong></td>
<td>A proposed structure, a system, or procedure, to enable the action of teaching a particular skill or type of behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training systems</strong></td>
<td>A system designed to manage the training, assessment and accreditation of skills, knowledge, application and experience of personnel including incident management staff, to organisational and national standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce</strong></td>
<td>Is made up of all employees, volunteer or agent of the fire and emergency services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This definition table has been informed by the Oxford English Dictionary, the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council’s Glossary and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries Fire Management Glossary of Terminology*
Leadership
Integration
Accountability

firecommissioner.vic.gov.au