



# **Volunteer Consultative Forum**

## **Setting the foundation:**

**Volunteer initiatives in the  
emergency management sector**

**NOVEMBER 2014**



Working in conjunction  
with Communities,  
Government, Agencies  
and Business.

## Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Project Objectives .....	3
Methodology.....	3
<b>Background .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Emergency Management Volunteer Based Agencies: Brief Descriptions .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Successful Emergency Management Volunteer Initiatives.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Initiatives By Theme .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Theme One: Encourage.....	9
Theme Two: Maintain.....	9
Theme Three: Strengthen .....	10
<b>Other Volunteer Based Research, Inquiries, Strategies, Audits &amp; Reports .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Victorian Emergency Services Framework .....	12
VAGO Report on volunteering .....	12
Volunteer Research .....	13
Jones Inquiry.....	14
Strategic Action Plan (Interim) .....	14
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix One:.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Theme one - Encourage .....	16
Theme Two – Maintain.....	21
Theme Three - Strengthen.....	27

## Introduction

Volunteers play a critical role in the delivery of emergency management across Victoria. There are over 100,000 emergency management volunteers throughout the State, supporting a wide range of agencies to fulfil operational and non-operational roles in emergencies.

The Victorian Government's Emergency Management reform program highlights a fundamental shift in the way we think about emergency management including volunteering. New legislation formally recognises the integral role of volunteers in emergency management.

The aim of this report is to address some of the actions identified in the Volunteer Consultative Forum (VCF) 2014 Work Plan by providing a reference tool / support document for emergency management volunteers and agencies to provide and share examples of successful volunteer initiatives. It also provides an overview and links to other volunteer based research, inquiries, strategies and reports that may be of assistance.

## Project Objectives

To develop a consolidated report for emergency management volunteers and agencies that will provide:

1. A brief description of the emergency management volunteer based agencies
2. Examples of successful emergency management volunteer initiatives, which can be shared between agencies
3. Examples of other volunteer based research, inquiries, strategies and reports.

## Methodology

### Data Collection

This report was compiled based on information and feedback from meetings of the VCF and individual consultation with VCF members.

VCF members provided information, including examples of successful volunteer initiatives they were happy to share with other emergency management volunteer agencies.

Contributors to the project include:

- Ambulance Victoria (AV)
- Australian Red Cross (Red Cross)
- Australian Volunteer Coast Guard (AVCG)
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- Life Saving Victoria (LSV)
- Salvation Army
- St John Ambulance (St John)
- Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES)
- Victoria Emergency Service Association (VESA)
- Victorian Council of Churches (VCC)
- Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV)

## Background

### **The Volunteer Consultative Forum**

The Volunteer Consultative Forum (VCF) was established as part of the Government's commitment to consult and engage with emergency management volunteers and their representative bodies on matters that affect them, as outlined in the Victorian Emergency Management Reform White Paper.

The VCF provides a voice for volunteers through direct feedback to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the government on issues (current and future) impacting upon Victoria's emergency management volunteers.

Members of the VCF are responsible for representing and expressing the views of emergency management volunteers, and reporting to volunteers, agencies and government on actions, initiatives and outcomes of the VCF.

The VCF is chaired by the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC), with the Risk and Resilience Directorate of Emergency Management Victoria providing support. The VCF membership comprises representatives from AV, Red Cross, AVCG, CFA, LSV, Salvation Army, St John, VICSES, VESA, VCC and VFBV.

## **Emergency Management Volunteer Based Agencies: Brief Descriptions**

### **Ambulance Victoria (AV)**

Ambulance Victoria (AV) is a statutory authority that utilises paid paramedic staff and volunteer emergency medical first responder personnel to provide pre-hospital emergency medical treatment and transport. AV plays a key role in emergency management prevention, response, relief and recovery activities. AV is a statewide organisation that provides emergency medical response to more than 5.5 million people in Victoria, in an area of more than 227,000 square kilometres. AV is supported by 1,800 volunteers, which fall into three streams:

- Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs)
- Ambulance Community Officers (ACOs)
- AV Auxiliaries

### **Australian Volunteer Coast Guard (AVCG)**

Australian Volunteer Coast Guard (AVCG) is a national organisation established in 1961 to promote small craft safety on the water. Its modus operandi includes the three E's: Education, Example & Examination, as well as Search and Rescue. AVCG Victoria comprises 21 flotillas across the state, supported by a membership of approximately 600 volunteers and an array of rescue vessels, radio bases and support vehicles. A Memorandum of Understanding exists between the AVCG Victoria Squadron and the Country Fire Authority documenting their agreement to work together to maximise common interests and goals and, where appropriate, provide a combined emergency response to the Victorian community.

### **Country Fire Authority (CFA)**

Country Fire Authority (CFA) is a volunteer and community based fire and emergency services organisation that helps to protect 3.3 million Victorians, and more than one million homes and properties across the state. From informal beginnings, the CFA has grown to be one of the largest volunteer-based emergency service organisations in the world. The CFA has over 58,000 volunteers, 1,800 career firefighters, community educators and support personnel and 1,220 brigades, 20 districts and 5 regions across Victoria.

### **Life Saving Victoria (LSV)**

Life Saving Victoria (LSV) was established in 2002, and is an initiative of the Royal Life Saving Society Australia and Surf Life Saving Victoria. LSV has over 30,000 members based across 57 clubs across Victoria, and includes almost 6,000 active and engaged volunteers providing lifesaving services to the Victorian community each year, along with over 10,500 juniors engaged in the Nippers program.

LSV is committed to its mission of preventing aquatic related death and injury in all Victorian communities and is dedicated to ensuring that visitors to patrolled coastal and inland waterways are provided with a safe and enjoyable aquatic experience.

LSV is continuously looking for innovative ways to engage and provide new opportunities for its members. This is demonstrated through the recent introduction of the Female Leadership Network, Building Leaders Scholarship Program, the LSV from Anywhere Strategy, Clubhouse of the Future document (or coastal event centres) and development of a sports diversification model to be rolled out in 2015.

### **Red Cross**

Red Cross is the largest humanitarian organisation in the world with over 100,000,000 volunteers world wide. Red Cross Emergency Services Victoria's mandate is to provide support to those most vulnerable, affected by disasters and emergencies. This is achieved through a coordinated approach supporting local government and Victoria Police to provide; Psychological First Aid,

Register Find Reunite, Food & Water, and First Aid. They also provide Single Incident Emergency Assistance to those affected by isolated incidents.

## **St John Ambulance Victoria**

St John Ambulance is a self-funded volunteer-based charity that provides first aid and event health services across the whole of Victoria. In an emergency management capacity, St John can be/are engaged by Ambulance Victoria within the scope of the State Health Emergency Response Plan (SHERP). Additionally St John is actively engaged with local councils and features in their Municipal Emergency Management Plans (MEMPs) and regularly deploys to various areas when communities are affected by floods and fires.

St John has 2,000 volunteers who provide first aid services through to advanced medical response (pre-hospital care). There is a broad range of members in St John, from Junior and Cadet members as young as 8 years old who have very basic first aid knowledge, through to its most senior doctors who run the busiest emergency wards in Victorian hospitals.

This network is resourced with a wide range of equipment including mobile first aid vehicles, first aid/first responder equipment (defibrillators, oxygen response kits, first aid consumables and analgesic medications), primary and secondary Medical Assistance Team (static hospital based out of a temporary structure), additional specialist support vehicles and a stand-alone communication network.

## **Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry (VCC EM)**

The Victorian Council of Churches Emergency Ministry (VCC EM) is identified as a provider of personal support, psychological first aid and emotional spiritual care in the Emergency Relief Handbook and State Health Emergency Response Plan (SHERP). It is also identified in the Emergency Management Manual of Victoria (EMMV).

The VCC EM is a multi-faith, multicultural organisation, with approximately 1,780 Personal Support Workers (volunteers). Its volunteers assist affected people by providing psychosocial support, specifically as described in the international Sphere Project. In conducting its work, it is also a major source of timely, topical information of value to the local Shires and the Department of Human Services (DHS) in identifying generic needs and issues, and in planning their own functions. While conducting outreach activities, it is also used as a service for the provision of information to affected individuals and communities regarding such issues as: the source of basic needs, and linkage to social networks and referral services. DHS has contracted the VCC to provide outreach, psychological first aid, personal support and emotional spiritual care. The VCC EM has responded to most state disasters and many local emergency events since 1977.

## **Victorian Emergency Service Association (VESA)**

Victorian Emergency Service Association (VESA) works to advocate for VICSES volunteers, actively supporting Unit leadership teams and engaging cooperatively with VICSES management and government. VESA is a non-profit organisation, which exists to further the interests of VICSES volunteer members. It uses its dedicated focus on volunteers to select and drive the resolution of issues that impact on skills, safety and how VICSES volunteers undertake their duties.

VESA does not engage in adversarial campaigns but it does seek to further the interests of VICSES volunteers and the public they serve, by promoting appropriate standards in training, equipment and ethics in VICSES.

Elected delegates from Units from within a region form their Regional Council. When Units have been unsuccessful in raising issues themselves with their Regional Manager, that Regional Council is charged with addressing those local issues with their respective VICSES Regional Manager, and reporting issues and the outcomes to the respective Units and the VESA State Board. The Regional Councils raise issues relevant to VICSES volunteers to be presented to the VESA State Board for the formulation of policy on the issues they perceive need to be addressed, and to further advocate an outcome with the VICSES Chief Executive Officer or VICSES Board for action.

## **Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES)**

Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) is the control agency for flood, storm, tsunami and earthquake in Victoria, managing responses to these emergencies and helping communities to prepare through planning and education. As well as operating the largest road rescue network in Australia, they also assist Victoria Police in search and rescue operations and play an important support role during major bushfire responses. There are more than 5,000 volunteers across 142 Units, with an additional eight support Units who provide operational co-ordination assistance to VICSES at regional and state level during incidents. Members of VICSES are from all ages, professions and backgrounds who serve in both operational and administrative roles across the state.

## **Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV)**

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) is the voice of CFA Volunteers. It is established under Victorian law, in the Country Fire Authority Act, to represent the volunteers on all matters that affect their welfare and efficiency.

VFBV is made up of CFA volunteers – from individual members of Brigades, through their elected District Councils and State Councilors, to the VFBV Board. VFBV employs a small staff, most of whose members are also CFA volunteers.

The VFBV Board meets with the CFA Board as the peak forum on matters affecting volunteers, including policy development, volunteer welfare, volunteer support, equipment and infrastructure, volunteer development and planning for the CFA's future.

Recognising that the CFA is essentially a volunteer based emergency service, VFBV has a legislated role to nominate four of the nine CFA Board members as a guarantee to ensure the CFA Board has familiarity, knowledge and understanding of CFA volunteerism.

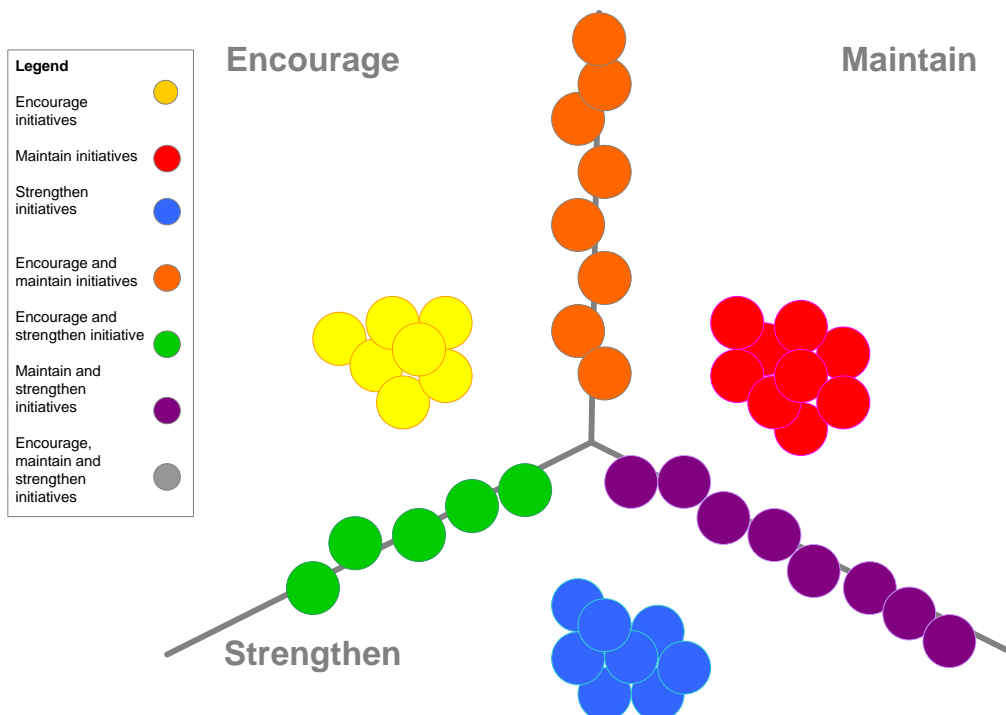
VFBV shares with the CFA a commitment to a community based volunteer and integrated fire and emergency service which delivers a safer Victoria.

## Successful Emergency Management Volunteer Initiatives

VCF members provided a number of examples of successful emergency management volunteer initiatives. These are described under three thematic headings.<sup>1</sup>

- **Encourage:** Encourage and value the contribution of volunteers, includes:
  - Championing volunteerism
  - Respecting volunteer time and expertise
  - Recognising volunteer commitment and contribution
- **Maintain:** Maintain and enhance the role of volunteers in service delivery:
  - Developing volunteer capacity
  - Expanding opportunities for volunteers and build capability
  - Equipping and protecting volunteers
- **Strengthen:** Strengthen connections between volunteers and our communities:
  - Shaping the future
  - Diversifying volunteer membership
  - Empowering volunteers to support their community.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of initiatives across each of these themes. It suggests that there is an even distribution of single themed initiatives. In some instances, initiatives will fit under more than one theme.



**Figure 1 Successful emergency management volunteer initiatives**

<sup>1</sup> Themes taken from the CFA Volunteerism Strategy



## Initiatives By Theme

Below are the initiatives submitted by the VCF under an allocated theme, and in alphabetical order. In some instances, these initiatives will fit under more than one theme. Details for these initiatives (including agency, methodology, success and extra comments) are captured in **Appendix One**.

### Theme One: Encourage

1. Awards of Excellence  
*Recognise and reward the contribution, expertise and commitment of life saving volunteers*
2. Community Hero Awards  
*Publicly recognise community members that have voluntarily intervened to save the life of a fellow Victorian in cardiac arrest*
3. Implementation of VFBV field based support officers  
*Work with volunteers to ensure that issues of concern are identified, understood and resolved*
4. National Emergency Medal – presentation events  
*Recognise the contribution of members that provided service during the 2009 fires*
5. Online primary training via AV learning management system  
*Reduce the amount of face-to-face time required for new volunteers to complete the mandatory training to become a first responder*
6. Recognition and social activities program  
*Provide recognition for volunteers and a social activities program*
7. Stay in Touch program  
*Offer a support role and engage with members exiting the organisation*
8. Summer Surge  
*Train individuals to become an essential part of the Incident Management Teams*
9. Volunteer audit (recruitment)  
*Understand and track volunteer formal and informal education and experience*
10. Volunteer inclusion  
*Encourage and value the contribution of volunteers and closely include them in the life and function of the organisation*
11. Volunteer leadership scholarship program between VFBV, VESA and VICSES  
*Recognise the contribution of female volunteers*
12. Volunteer service awards  
*Recognise volunteers for their long service to their organisation and local community*

### Theme Two: Maintain

1. Annual volunteer and welfare efficiency survey  
*Improve volunteer satisfaction, motivation and efficiency*
2. Asset Maintenance Coordinators (AMCs)  
*Ensure that volunteer fire stations are maintained in a fit for purpose state*
3. Chief Officer's Leadership Development Program

- Create a unique development opportunity for a select group of volunteers to learn about leadership*
4. Customised CERT IV training package for unit controllers and deputies  
*Assist to build skills in Unit Management Teams and support succession planning*
  5. First responder conferences  
*Provide volunteers with networking opportunities and provide access to training and speakers to increase their clinical knowledge*
  6. Member and leadership development initiatives  
*Continue to develop leaders of the future through a range of leadership programs*
  7. Mobile training infrastructure  
*Provide volunteers with approved access to realistic, safe and effective operational training*
  8. One United Volunteer Voice for CFA volunteers – Urban and Rural  
*Amalgamate two previously separate volunteer Associations into the unified volunteer voice Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV)*
  9. Online brigade leadership hub  
*Create a one-stop-shop for management and leadership related tools, resources and initiatives*
  10. Online first responder induction program  
*Reduce the face-to-face time required to induct volunteers into AV*
  11. Training and personal development program  
*Provide volunteer training and professional leadership development*
  12. VCC EM targeted volunteer selection  
*Maximise the effectiveness of the volunteer pool*
  13. VCC volunteer progression  
*Provide pathways for volunteers to engage at numerous levels in the organisation based on interest, skill and availability*
  14. Vegetation Management Program  
*Support brigade vegetation management and hazard reduction activities in the community*
  15. Volunteerism tools and resources  
*Develop a suite of tools for volunteers and field based staff to support volunteer attraction and recruitment, development and recognition activities*
  16. Volunteer website  
*Develop and establish the VFBV volunteer website*
  17. Volunteer well-being and organisational effectiveness  
*Ensure operationally that we are doing what we aim to do and productively manage the welfare of volunteers*

### Theme Three: Strengthen

1. Building community resilience  
*Build safer communities by attracting a more diverse range of volunteers*
2. Building resilient communities  
*Develop a statewide personal support program that is reflective of the broader community demographic and that is inclusive of both faith and culture*

3. Celebrating CFA women  
*Recognise the contribution of female members*
4. Community engagement and partnerships initiatives  
*Provide a range of programs that promote diversity in lifesaving*
5. Community Information Guides  
*Engage the community to educate them about bushfires*
6. Continuing vocational education qualification pathways  
*Further strengthen knowledge and skills to enable volunteers to contribute to their communities as well as value-add to their own career pathways*
7. Expansion of the VFBV welfare fund  
*Provide important assistance to volunteers and their families in times of need*
8. Formal legislative recognition of Volunteer Charter  
*Ensure that the Volunteer Charter, including the fundamental importance of volunteers to Victoria's emergency capability and shared responsibility model for community safety, is formally recognised*
9. Formalise volunteer consultative mechanisms  
*Formalise mechanisms for volunteer consultation*
10. Member Communication Pilot  
*Build stronger channels for engagement between CFA leaders and volunteers*
11. Online First Responder Induction Program  
*Enhance, observe and share ideas and best practice innovation between States*
12. Smoke Alarm Campaign  
*Promote a campaign by partnering with a business*
13. Volunteers delivering information and education to the community  
*Support volunteer preparedness and prevention activities in communities*
14. Volunteer driven community awareness campaigns  
*Provide local messaging via volunteers to the community: 'Think Like A Volunteer' and 'Fire Safety Starts With You'*
15. Volunteer Fire Brigade Championships  
*Foster engagement and skill development in brigades by holding the VFBV Volunteer Fire Brigade Championships*
16. Volunteer Trends Document  
*To provide valuable information and statistics on the current and future trends of volunteering*

## Other Volunteer Based Research, Inquiries, Strategies, Audits & Reports

There has been a large amount of emergency management volunteer based research, inquiries, strategies, audits and reports completed, including the:

- Victorian Emergency Services Framework
- Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) Report on managing volunteers
- Academic volunteer research
- Jones Inquiry
- Interim Strategic Action Plan (2014/15)

This information, including the relevant website links, may be of use to emergency management volunteers and VCF representatives.

### Victorian Emergency Services Framework

In 2011, the Victorian Emergency Services Framework (the Framework) was developed to encourage collaborative thinking, generate ideas and contribute to a sustainable emergency services volunteer workforce, through sharing knowledge, skills and information amongst agencies.

Two key themes emerged from the original consultation process for the Framework:

- the need to continue and build on an inter-agency approach to encourage, strengthen and maintain the capacity of volunteers to deliver emergency services
- the need to identify flexible volunteering opportunities for people to become volunteers at all stages of their life.

The Framework presented the following sector-wide goals:

- a robust volunteering culture is created within Victorian emergency services and the community
- more Victorians become 'life-long' emergency services volunteers
- volunteers are proactively supported, valued, recognised and respected for their professionalism, dedication and quality of service
- volunteers are empowered to play an active leadership role in their local communities.

The Framework was not a blueprint for action nor did it comprehensively address the range of activities required to better support volunteers. It was based on the idea that agencies were responsible for the design and development of their own policies and programs assisted by the guidance of the Framework.

### VAGO Report on volunteering

In February 2014, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) released its Report - *Managing Emergency Service Volunteers*. The objective was to assess whether the CFA and VICSES effectively and efficiently manage emergency services volunteers and to examine whether the strategic and operational planning within these agencies was adequate to identify and address volunteer workforce capacity and requirements, including recruitment, retention and support.

The report explored volunteering under the following topics; workforce planning and need, recruitment, training and deployment, and support and retention. The report found that a decentralised approach to volunteering and the recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers can be complicated and difficult for agencies to assure themselves that they are addressing workforce needs.

The report recommends a number of improvements to agencies' recruitment, retention and administration practices for volunteers. The CFA and VICSES continue to address issues raised by the VAGO report by:

- working on a joint volunteer strategy
- developing a leadership framework
- identifying improvements in ERAS-e system
- developing an exit survey for volunteers
- adopting a recruitment and retention pilot
- upgrading training facilities and programs
- adopting a recruitment and retention pilot and a data integrity pilot.

Victorian Auditor-General's Office: [www.audit.vic.gov.au](http://www.audit.vic.gov.au)

## Volunteer Research

Since 2004, the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), and the newly formed Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC, have published a number of research papers, discussing a range of topics in relation to volunteers and the emergency management sector.

These research papers can be accessed through:

Bushfire CRC: <http://www.bushfirecrc.com/projects/d3/enhancing-volunteerism>

Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC: <http://www.bnhcrc.com.au/research/topics/volunteering>

### **Bushfire CRC and Bushfire & Natural Hazards CRC Volunteer Research**

- *Enhancing Volunteering*
- *Out of uniform: building community resilience through non-traditional emergency volunteering*
- *Improving the retention and engagement of volunteers in emergency service agencies*
- *Volunteer database collection and management for strategic planning and policy development - a comparison across fire services*
- *Recruitment and retention of volunteers: rural fire services issues and initiatives*
- *Literature review on Volunteering for the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner*
- *Recruiting new rural fire service volunteers: direct expenditure estimates*
- *Profiles of Australia's firefighters*
- *Volunteer recruitment and retention issues: a review of the literature*
- *Estimates of the likely impact on TFS Operational Volunteer firefighter numbers of introducing mandatory fitness standards*
- *Recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters in Australasia - an integrative summary of research*
- *Occasional Report Number 2004: Exit Interviews and Surveys for volunteers.*

### **Additional Volunteer Research**

Further volunteer information and research can be accessed through the:

- Australian Emergency Management Volunteer Forum: [www.aemvf.org.au](http://www.aemvf.org.au)
- Emergency Management Knowledge Hub: <http://www.emknowledge.gov.au/>

## Jones Inquiry

In April 2011, the government requested the Honourable David Jones AM to conduct an Inquiry (the Jones Inquiry) into the effect of arrangements made by the CFA on their volunteers.

The government released its response to the 41 recommendations of the Jones Inquiry in February 2012, and an Implementation Action Plan was developed in consultation with the CFA and VFBV on the basis of the following six themes:

- culture and leadership to empower and support volunteerism
- recruitment, retention, recognition and utilisation of volunteers
- strengthening the volunteer-based and integrated service delivery model
- support for brigades and communities
- training development
- training delivery and assessment.

Further information on the Jones Inquiry can be accessed at:

<http://www.vfbv.com.au/index.php/library/reference/jones>

<http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/volunteer-careers/jones-inquiry/>

## Strategic Action Plan (Interim)

The Victorian Government's Interim Strategic Action Plan (2014/15) articulates an action to identify the current and future skills and capability needs of the CFA, MFB, VICSES and LSV to inform planning and set priorities.

The VCF and volunteer based emergency management agencies in general, will play a key role in developing and implementing strategies to address identified gaps over the short, medium and long term.

This publication is available at [www.emv.vic.gov.au](http://www.emv.vic.gov.au).

## Conclusion

This report provides VCF members with a reference tool / support document for emergency management volunteers and agencies to provide and share examples of successful volunteer initiatives.

It also provides an overview and links to other volunteer based research, inquiries, strategies and reports that may be of assistance.

It demonstrates the depth and breadth of work being undertaken in the emergency management sector to encourage, maintain and strengthen their volunteers.

## Appendix One:

### Theme one - Encourage

<b>LSV: Awards of Excellence</b>	
Aim	To recognise and reward the contribution, expertise and commitment of lifesaving volunteers, at a function designed to reflect the professionalism and dedication of the service, and individuals are acknowledged.
How did you do it?	In its 11th year, the Awards of Excellence has evolved to recognise the entire Aquatic Safety industry by celebrating the contribution of volunteerism in every aspect of lifesaving.
Success	Attended by over 280 members and community leaders from every aspect of lifesaving and government, the events have continued to grow in popularity and esteem to such an extent that LSV now has to consider how it will be able to cater for its growth and evolution.
Extra Comments	The event incorporates a celebration of all levels and elements of lifesaving and club culture through a combination of volunteer, employee and industry awards that celebrate what is positive and successful about LSV's community and industry focused programs.

<b>AV: Community Hero Awards</b>	
Aim	To publicly recognise community members (not necessarily connected with AV) that have voluntarily intervened to save the life of a fellow Victorian in cardiac arrest.
How did you do it?	AV members can nominate, from a case they have attended, a community member that they believe has done something extraordinary in saving the life of someone in cardiac arrest. AV hosts a ceremony at Parliament House each year to recognise and thank these selfless Victorians.
Success	The 'Community Hero' award ceremonies are conducted each year and are supported by the Minister for Health and the Victorian media.
Extra Comments	The ceremony also helps to promote the '4 steps for life' message on the importance of early intervention and CPR for someone in cardiac arrest.

<b>VFBV: Implementation of VFBV field based support officers</b>	
Aim	Working with volunteers to ensure that issues of concern are identified, understood and resolved.
How did you do it?	Worked directly with volunteers at the local level to focus on ensuring issues of concern to volunteers are identified, understood and resolved. Building volunteer capacity to engage and provide input to agency consultation and decision making; facilitating implementation of legislated obligations to engage/consult with volunteers in accordance with the Volunteer Charter; and supporting volunteer leaders at the local level.
Success	Extremely positive feedback from volunteer brigades, increased and more timely resolution of volunteer issues at local level before they escalate.
Extra Comments	Concern that four VFBV resources find it difficult to support across eight CFA Regions, requests have been made to increase funding to enable full state coverage.



<b>CFA: National Emergency Medal – Presentation Events</b>	
Aim	Recognise the contribution of members that provided service during the 2009 fires.
How did you do it?	Established an NEM Working Party, involving volunteer and staff delegates, to scope out & deliver a quality, personalised and consistent state-wide recognition program rollout. There were multiple presentations around the state that involved representation from MP's, CFA Board Members and the CFA Chief Officer or delegate to present each individual medal to members that had successfully met the award criteria.
Success	This initiative was hugely successful, with 42 events in total and 4,800+ members receiving medals. Public recognition for these members in front of their families and local communities was the key outcome.
Extra Comments	Collaboration with volunteers, and state-wide support throughout the duration of the implementation. Local involvement & recognition of members was very well regarded.

<b>AV: Online Primary Training via AV Learning Management System</b>	
Aim	The aim was to reduce the amount of face-to-face time required for new AV volunteers to complete the mandatory training to become an AV First Responder. The online primary training modules have reduced ten (10) days of face-to-face training down to four (4) days of face-to-face training and allows the AV volunteer to complete the online training modules at their own pace and in the comfort of their own home.
How did you do it?	AV staff from Quality & Education Services, RTO, IT and Volunteers Department collaborated to develop and build the primary training modules and upload them onto the AV LMS and administer the system.
Success	Recent experience has shown that new volunteers are completing the on-line modules within 4-6 weeks, speeding up the training process.
Extra Comments	The remaining face-to-face training days can now be held more frequently and at locations closer to the home location of many volunteers.

<b>St John Ambulance: Recognition and social activities program</b>	
Aim	<p>To provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regular social activities run by divisions/regions 2-3 times per year and funded by the organisation</li> <li>recognition of the contribution of volunteers through the celebration of National Volunteer Week</li> <li>formal recognition of years of service</li> <li>recognition of contribution to emergency management situations</li> <li>internal &amp; external promotion of volunteer member achievements.</li> </ul>
How did you do it?	<p>Activities are normally BBQ's, movie nights or a dinner at a restaurant, and a reward and recognition method at a local level.</p> <p>Certificates are generated to recognise members during this period, promoted through internal communications, including formal presentations with the CEO.</p> <p>There is an annual formal presentation at Government House to members for their years of service as well as special commendations. Members are presented their medals and bars by the Governor of Victoria, and the event is well attended by the members receiving an award and their families.</p> <p>Special presentations and media events coordinated as required to recognise the members that respond to emergencies in their communities.</p> <p>Intranet, regular internal communications and in the media. Building the profile of the member and the organisation.</p>

Success	Feedback from these types of sessions is positive, and usually attended by 50-75% of the division depending on the time of year and the activity. Attendance at these events is always high and members have a great deal of pride in being recognised in this way.
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<b>VICSES: Stay in Touch program</b>	
Aim	Volunteerism needs to align with an individual's life cycle, including the different demands at different times of their life. SES' experience is volunteer participation rate declines when members reach their late 20s and doesn't pick up until they reach mid-forties. VICSES surveys indicate it is the time commitment required by SES that forces them to step down at this busy time in their lives. Volunteerism still continues for these people but it is often for their children's activities. VICSES is continuing to work on the <i>Stay in Touch program</i> where members who leave are asked if they would like to be kept in touch with. They are also offered a support role rather than an operational role e.g. finance, reporting, data entry, etc as all these tasks can be done from home.
How did you do it?	Regional staff play a critical role in supporting this program, supporting the volunteer unit controllers to participate in the program, and what they can do to apply the program at the local level and using community engagement activities effectively.
Success	This is a long term program and it is too early to measure the program's success. It also depends on how committed the Unit is to staying in touch with former members.
Extra Comments	Hopefully the program will support maintaining a wealth of knowledge and skills within the service.

<b>Red Cross: Summer Surge</b>	
Aim	The Summer Surge campaign trains up individuals to become an essential part of the Red Cross's Incident Management Teams. Volunteers will be required to work in the Emergency Operations Centre to help coordinate the logistics and planning of emergency responses. These volunteers are needed in times of disaster and emergency – the Red Cross would not be able to respond without their amazing work.
How did you do it?	Through internal and external advertising, training and recruitment.
Success	This campaign was very successful. It has been a way to boost volunteer numbers through the emergency season.

<b>VCC: Volunteer Audit (recruitment)</b>	
Aim	To understand and track volunteer formal and informal education and experience.
How did you do it?	At registration for training, volunteers are asked to provide details of previous training and experience in pre-identified courses or skill relevant to psychosocial support and emergency management. These include, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Personal Support (DHS)</li> <li>• Introduction to Emergency Management</li> <li>• AIIMS</li> <li>• Introduction to Relief Centres</li> <li>• Psychology</li> <li>• Social Work / Youth Work / Nursing / Teaching</li> <li>• Grief &amp; Loss</li> <li>• Other Mental Health training</li> </ul>

Success	This project has meant that we are able to determine what the skill set is of our volunteer base at any given time. We now know that 33% of our volunteers come with formal qualifications in a relevant field, and we know that all volunteers come with experience in Pastoral Care.
Extra Comments	The project means that where necessary we can strategically target a skill set or experience to a specific job making for a positive outcome for affected communities. We know where our skills gaps might be, our training is about 'value adding' to existing skills, therefore NOT needing to target knowledge and skills that already exist in the trainee.

**VCC: Volunteer Inclusion**

Aim	a) To encourage and value the contribution of volunteers. b) To closely include volunteers in the life and function of VCC EM – as full and important members.
How did you do it?	VCC EM have an active policy to include and inform all volunteers regarding its activities, directions, as well as some of the latest thinking regarding psychosocial support of affected personnel. This is accomplished in a number of ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VCC EM publish to all volunteers a newsletter on a monthly basis covering all these topics</li> <li>• Short, information emails are provided to all volunteers when they are called out. This is especially important and when the call-out is for some of the more public emergencies and Single Incident Events</li> <li>• The CEO sends a personal 'thank you' to all our volunteers following significant periods of effort, or significant events. At these times, all volunteers are often acknowledged – even if they were not specifically used at the time</li> <li>• Regional conferences are held, with the agenda covering these topics</li> <li>• Informal Area functions are held – often barbecues – to both gather and inform our volunteers – especially in preparation for the ensuing fire season.</li> </ul>
Success	Anecdotal evidence encourages us to continue with these practices and processes. Even during dormant periods, or periods when an individual may not be able to participate. There is good feedback that this on-going communication helps provide a sense of belonging to a service of importance and one which is valued.
Extra Comments	The results confirm the veracity of the aim.

**VFBV: Volunteer leadership scholarship program**

Aim	To recognise the contribution of female volunteers via a volunteer leadership scholarship program.
How did you do it?	Provided scholarships to develop current and future fire and emergency sector volunteer leaders via formal and TAFE recognised (Certificate IV level) training in Front line Leadership. The program was developed and implemented by VFBV and is formally recognised and supported by Chisholm Institute. With support from the Victorian Government Valuing Volunteers Program, VFBV has expanded the scholarship offering to VICSES, VESA, AVCG, Rural Ambulance Victoria, Red Cross and LSV.
Success	VFBV has delivered five annual scholarship programs with 207 volunteer participants to date (including 131 graduates and 76 current participants). Extremely well received by volunteers.

Extra Comments	<p>There is potential to expand the scholarship concept to short course and higher qualifications benefiting individuals, community leadership, agencies and employers.</p> <p>There is also potential to expand the scholarship offering to other emergency management volunteers (VCC), although this would require additional funding.</p>
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#### AV: Volunteer Service Awards

Aim	AV has a Volunteer Reward & Recognition Strategy and one of the activities is to ensure that AV volunteers are recognised for their long service to AV and their local community.
How did you do it?	AV conducts staff and volunteer service award ceremonies in each Region on an annual basis. Volunteer members and their families are invited to attend to celebrate their service to AV and their local community.
Success	The Volunteer Service Award Ceremonies are eagerly anticipated by AV volunteers and are well attended in each Region. The Volunteers are very appreciative of the recognition of their service.

## Theme Two – Maintain

### VFBV: Annual Volunteer and Welfare Efficiency Survey

Aim	To improve understanding and data around volunteer satisfaction, motivation and efficiency via an annual volunteer survey.
How did you do it?	Developed based on direct input from volunteers on issues that have biggest impact on their satisfaction, motivation and efficiency. Operating for three years now (third annual survey conducted in June/July 2014) the VFBV Welfare and Efficiency survey and formal report provides an ongoing trend analysis capability of volunteer views and satisfaction relating to 31 items perceived by volunteers to have most impact on their welfare and efficiency.
Success	Highly successful, well regarded by volunteers, 1650 survey respondents to 2014 survey, tangible volunteer recommendations for agency action.
Extra Comments	Survey results provide structured and evidence based foundation for volunteers, agencies, EM sector and Government to address issues identified by volunteers as barriers/enablers to volunteering.

### CFA: Asset Maintenance Co-ordinators (AMCs)

Aim	To ensure that volunteer fire stations are maintained in a fit-for-purpose state.
How did you do it?	Deployed nine roles to assess condition of volunteer fire stations, and put in place a maintenance regime so that brigade facilities are maintained in a fit-for-purpose state.

### CFA: Chief Officer's Leadership Development Program

Aim	To create a unique development opportunity for a select group of 20 volunteers to learn about leadership from Chief Officer (CO) Euan Ferguson.
How did you do it?	Funded through the Volunteer Support Program and incorporated into the 'Development' project focusing on increasing development opportunities for volunteers. The program also included a combination of inspirational advice from the CO and targeted development activities such as each participant drafting a personal development plan and seeking structured feedback from various people about their leadership styles.

### VICSES: Customised Cert IV training package for Unit Controllers and Deputies

Aim	Some of the VICSES Units in the metro and regional cities are equivalent to a medium sized business. Units have the same complexity as a business particularly in resourcing and managing the workforce. Managing a unit is no longer just about being competent in the operations. This course assists in building the skills of the unit management team as well as supporting a succession plan for unit management. VICSES is also undertaking a project to develop volunteer role pathways for members which are linked to a training pathway. This online system assists the members in identify what training they need if they wish to aspire to a particular role. The Deputy Controller Training will assist the member to develop their 12-month training plan linking to the gaps in the unit's competency.
How did you do it?	The project has just kicked off and VICSES is looking at an online system that other agencies could share or utilise.

Success	Volunteer members identified this program as a need when VICSES introduced the different functional roles within the units. The skills needed for the various roles were not covered in the operational training. The courses need to be scoped and mapped against the role requirements.
Extra Comments	It will assist in the retention of volunteers who no longer can or want to be out on the frontline.

**AV: First Responder Conferences**

Aim	The aim was to provide volunteers with networking opportunities and provide access to extra training and speakers to increase their clinical knowledge. The First Responder conferences are also a part of our Reward and Recognition strategy.
How did you do it?	AV staff from the Volunteers Department and Quality and Education Services collaborate to provide quality, interactive workshops and networking opportunities.
Success	The First Responder conferences are attended by approximately 320 – 350 volunteers per year, and feedback is sought after each event to ensure relevance and quality. The conferences are very successful, and are seen as an important way to recognise volunteers by the participants themselves.

**LSV: Member and leadership development initiatives.**

Aim	To continue to develop leaders of the future through a range of programs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Leaders Scholars program</li> <li>• Under 13 / Under 15 Leadership Development Program</li> <li>• Youth Involvement Program</li> <li>• Champion Junior Lifesaver</li> <li>• Professional Development &amp; Leadership Program</li> <li>• SLSA National Leadership College / SLSA Master class</li> <li>• Aquatic Sports program (inc. Nippers program and championship events)</li> <li>• State/Representative Teams</li> <li>• Officials/Coaching Pathways</li> <li>• Trainer / Assessor TAE upgrade Workshops.</li> </ul>
How did you do it?	These programs have been in development for a number of years. Most recently LSV have undertaken further development enabled by additional investment in resources. This will see the programs progress to a stage that volunteers have multiple avenues to further develop their skills and create career pathways.
Success	Many of the participants, particularly juniors, have gone from foundations programs such as the under 13 and 15 Leadership Development Programs, to successfully complete the Building Leaders Scholarship and take up leadership roles within their clubs.
Extra Comments	This program, like all others within the LSV network, is a jointly managed and guided volunteer/staff initiative.

**CFA: Mobile training infrastructure**

Aim	In response to a recommendation from the Jones Inquiry Report, the CFA designed and developed three prototype Mobile Training Props with the view for the CFA to evaluate and trial prior to progressing the Mobile Training Infrastructure Project.
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How did you do it?	The purpose of the mobile training props is to provide volunteers with greatly improved access to realistic, safe and effective operational training opportunities through the acquisition of several different types of Mobile Training Assets. The focus of the project is to provide Mobile Training Assets that can be moved between locations to facilitate a range of operational training requirements in locations and at times that meet the needs of CFA volunteers.
Success	All Regions have now been visited with the Mobile Training Props pilot trial.

<b>VFBV: One United Volunteer Voice for CFA volunteers – Urban and Rural</b>	
Aim	To amalgamate two previously separate volunteer associations into the unified volunteer voice Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFVB).
How did you do it?	Driven by volunteers who were empowered, resourced and encouraged to establish a cohesive and stronger united representative voice for urban and rural CFA brigades. Required commitment from the CFA and recognition from Government that an effective volunteer association and voice is a key ingredient to engaging volunteers, empowering volunteer leadership and accessing knowledge and experience of volunteers, so that they can contribute to a partnership approach to leading and managing a volunteer based CFA.
Success	Improved resourcing of VFBV enabled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved volunteer engagement from the local level through to State level</li> <li>• better ability to connect with volunteers</li> <li>• input into issues that affect them</li> <li>• active encouragement of volunteer leadership.</li> </ul>
Extra Comments	93% of all CFA Brigades chose to become financial members of VFBV for 2013/14, membership rates have increased every year for the last 5 years. Considering this is an optional cost to volunteer brigades with limited discretionary finances, this result suggests very strong recognition of the need for and value provided by VFBV.

<b>CFA: Online Brigade Leadership Hub</b>	
Aim	To create an online one-stop-shop for management and leadership related tools, resources, and initiatives.
How did you do it?	Funded through the Volunteer Support Program and incorporated into the 'Development' project focusing on increasing development opportunities for volunteers. The online hub includes information provided by volunteers to share with others and materials sourced externally from leadership peak bodies and other organisations.
Success	The Hub is yet to be evaluated as it has launched recently (August 2014), however early feedback is positive. The intended outcomes include a greater understanding of the organisation's leadership framework, more self-paced learning for volunteers and a platform to share information between members.

<b>AV: Online First Responder Induction Program</b>	
Aim	The aim was to reduce the face-to-face time required to induct Volunteers into AV, and to increase the level of information available to them and provide the information in a manner that can be easily accessed, as an ongoing information source.

How did you do it?	AV staff from Quality and Education Services, RTO, IT and Volunteers Department collaborated to develop and build the online induction training module and upload it onto the AV LMS and administer the system.
Success	The online induction module on the AV LMS has reduced the induction training for new AV Volunteers down from a full day to 2-3 hours, allowing the Volunteers to undertake the induction program from the comfort of their home computer and at a time that suits them.
Extra Comments	AV provides support through ensuring the new Volunteer has access to the AV LMS and can assist with 'trouble-shooting' for Volunteers experiencing IT difficulties.

### St John Ambulance: Training and personal development program

Aims	To provide volunteer training and professional and leadership development. To support communities through investment in facilities and resources. To provide a supportive and flexible environment for volunteers. To promote volunteering and health and welling being in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.
How did you do it?	The provision of a divisional training/meeting location, vehicles and equipment enables members to provide best practise health services at events in local communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accredited and non-accredited training</li> <li>• sponsored volunteer leadership position</li> <li>• using experience as a professional development tool.</li> </ul> Recognising the changing shift in volunteering to people that need a more flexible option to fit into increasingly busy lives. The virtual division enables members to interact with the organisation online and over the phone and provides flexibility for members to meet their training and event attendance requirements. St John has a number of divisions in CALD communities. These divisions attract members through word of mouth and local media promotion.
Success	These opportunities enable member's skills and confidence to grow, benefiting the community and the individuals. This model has been shared with our colleagues interstate and adopted with equal success. These divisions traditionally have a very high level of membership and we find that the training opportunities they offer are very well attended.
Extra Comments	St John fosters strong relationships with local councils to ensure that we are providing first aid to their events, these include events which the organisation provides to the community free to charge. We believe this more flexible method of volunteering is revolutionary and required to engage and retain a different type of volunteer.

### VCC: VCC EM targeted volunteer selection

Aim	To maximise the effectiveness of our volunteer pool.
How did you do it?	By including strategies of pre-qualification in the recruitment of volunteers. This includes a mandatory recommendation by the person's own faith leader; and also by requiring applicants to already have some experience in what can justifiably described as 'pastoral care' or skills relevant to the field of psychosocial support. By making our training competency based.
Success	More than 99.9% of volunteers have subsequently proven to be valuable in the field.



<b>VCC: VCC volunteer progression</b>	
Aim	To provide pathways for volunteers to engage at numerous levels in the organisation based on interest, skill and availability.
How did you do it?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and strategically target functional needs of the program</li> <li>2. Develop volunteer positions to support the identified need</li> <li>3. Develop training specific to functional needs</li> <li>4. Recruit existing members based in interest, skill and availability</li> <li>5. Train members according to role.</li> </ol>
Success	The operational information gleaned from this process has been acknowledged by external recipient agencies for its value and timeliness. In addition, to date we have had no incidents of our own volunteers requiring further personal support for themselves.

<b>CFA: Vegetation Management Program</b>	
Aim	To support brigade vegetation management.
How did you do it?	Changes to legislation relating to rail, road and environment introduced requirements for permits, burn plans, traffic management plans, etc. Immediately following these changes the CFA had 80 brigades active in vegetation management.
Success	Through the Vegetation Management Program the number of participating brigades have risen to 300. The brigades have been supported by a dedicated skilled team, sound business processes that removes the burden of administration from volunteers, training and experienced based burns camps.
Extra Comments	The program has seen a significant increase in volunteers and brigades participating in hazard reduction activity in their communities. It is valued by brigades.

<b>CFA: Volunteerism Tools &amp; Resources</b>	
Aim	To develop a suite of tools for volunteers and field-based staff to support volunteer attraction and recruitment, development and recognition activities.
How did you do it?	<p>Funded through the Volunteer Support Program. The tools were developed in consultation with volunteers about the information and format that would be most beneficial. Tools include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information guides on topics such as recruitment in small communities, partnering with employers, and mentoring</li> <li>• Supporting templates for advertisements, brochures and posters</li> <li>• Online Volunteer Resource Catalogue including promotional items to use at public recruitment drives</li> <li>• Skills Pathway Map highlighting each job roles and pathways available to volunteers in brigades and in incident management teams.</li> </ul>
Success	The tools and resources have just been released (August 2014) and will be continuously updated as feedback is received. The key outcome is for field-based staff to have access to standardised resources that improve their work with volunteers.
Extra Comments	Input from volunteers around the state about what was important and relevant for their local recruitment and retention needs.

<b>VFBV: Volunteer Website</b>	
Aim	To develop and establish the VFBV volunteer website.
How did you do it?	Establish and upkeep the VFBV volunteer focussed website providing improved information flow to/from volunteers; opportunity for direct volunteer input to key volunteer issues and 'pilot' hosting of web based communication, coordination and information sharing capacity for volunteers at local CFA District level.
Success	Well received by volunteers, significantly improved information flow to/from volunteers, common monthly 'hit rate' to site is 21,000 unique visits per month.
Extra Comments	Direct feedback capability is an important feature for local volunteer input. A grant for seed funding from the Victorian Government's Valuing Volunteers Program was key to modernising and improving the website and the broader two way communication within VFBV.

<b>VCC: Volunteer well-being and organisational effectiveness</b>	
Aim	To ensure operationally that we are doing what we aim to do, and to proactively manage the welfare of our volunteers.
How did you do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A structured, team and individual debriefing is a mandatory requirement at the end of each shift, and for each volunteer. These debriefs cover both operational and personal aspects.</li> <li>• Within 24hrs (usually 1 to 2 hrs), those conducting the debriefing are themselves debriefed by each subsequent level of VCC EM management.</li> <li>• State and Regional leaders visit regions and local government areas on a regular basis to support local teams.</li> </ul>
Success	The operational information gleaned from this process has been acknowledged by external recipient agencies for its value and timeliness. In addition, to date we have had no incidents of our own volunteers requiring further personal support for themselves.

## Theme Three - Strengthen

<b>VICSES: Building community resilience</b>	
Aim	Safer communities
How did you do it?	VICSES had developed a competency based training course for volunteers to deliver / facilitate FloodSafe and StormSafe programs in their communities. Units have targeted recruitment specifically for these roles in communities with the highest risks.
Success	This has been extremely successful in building the brand of VICSES but also educating communities in what they need to do to be more resilient.
Extra Comments	This program attracts a more diverse range of volunteers to the units and provides a different avenue into communities to enable a better understanding of what volunteers do at VICSES.

<b>VCC: Building resilient communities</b>	
Aim	To develop a statewide personal support program that is reflective of the broader community demographic and that is inclusive of both faith and culture.
How did you do it?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appointed a project officer for 12 months.</li> <li>2. Engaged with the four main faith groups outside of the Christian community, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh.</li> <li>3. Trained members of these faith communities in psychological first aid.</li> <li>4. Approved members of these faith communities to respond under the coordination arrangements with the VCC.</li> </ol>
Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A third of all trained personnel in 2012 were from faith and cultural backgrounds other than Christian</li> <li>• An understanding of the State emergency arrangements for Victoria and the responsibility of faith and cultural groups to work within those arrangements</li> <li>• An awareness of the role that faith and cultural groups can play in emergencies</li> <li>• Building of community resilience through knowledge and education</li> <li>• Building of community resilience through local capacity and capability.</li> </ul>
Extra Comments	Establishment of formal partnership arrangements with each of the main faith and cultural groups in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding.

<b>CFA: Celebrating CFA Women</b>	
Aim	Recognise the contribution of female members.
How did you do it?	Funded through the Volunteer Support Program. Launch of the 'Celebrating CFA Women' booklet showcasing various female members and their stories to coincide with International Women's Day.
Success	The luncheon was evaluated with overwhelming positive feedback from all that attended and the booklet is still actively used to promote CFA women.
Extra Comments	The initiative welcomed public statements about female participation in the CFA and was considered the beginning of more targeted activity in the recruitment of women.

<b>LSV: Community engagement and partnerships initiatives</b>	
Aim	To provide a range of programs that promote diversity in lifesaving and provide opportunities for a broad range of community groups and segments to be active and positive contributors in aquatic safety and community service.
How did you do it?	<p>LSV's strategic initiatives specifically target programs critical to the organisation's overall success in reaching and encouraging the broader community to be educated and participate in aquatic safety program. A range of programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSV Multicultural Water Safety Program</li> <li>• Community Education programs</li> <li>• LSV Clubhouse of the Future document (incorporating shared community use initiatives)</li> <li>• Female Leadership Network.</li> </ul>
Success	On average, LSV's 100+ Education Instructors directly deliver Community Education programs to 48,000 participants each year from 600 schools and community groups. Additionally LSV's 200+ Swim and Survive Licensees deliver swimming and water safety lessons to a further 145,000 children across Victoria. Additionally, over 10,000 members of the multicultural community engaged in CALD Education Programs ensuring critical aquatic and lifesaving techniques are shared and learnt.
Extra Comments	Through these programs LSV has been able to harness the capacity of diverse community groups to contribute to the broader community. These have typically been through lifesaving services. In addition, this has provided an opportunity to engage with CALD groups.

<b>CFA: Community Information Guides (CIG)</b>	
Aim	To engage the community to educate them about bushfires.
How did you do it?	Many volunteers were involved in the CIG engagement project; this was under the 2012-13 summer campaign with localised engagement, facilitated mostly through Regions via Community Education Coordinator's (CECs).

<b>AV: Continuing Vocational Education Qualification Pathways</b>	
Aim	The aim is to further strengthen knowledge and skills to enable volunteers to contribute to their communities as well as value-add to their own career pathways.
How did you do it?	As a Registered Training Organisation, AV added specific qualifications to their scope of registration i.e. Certificate III in Basic Health Care, Certificate III in Non-Emergency Client Transport, Certificate IV in Health Care (Ambulance), etc. The AV Organisational Transformation and Development department have also developed the Rural Sponsored Degree Program (RSDP) which is a sponsored volunteer to paramedic pathway program for remote rural communities. The RSDP is a joint initiative of AV and Flinders University South Australia.
Success	The further qualifications offered have produced some very successful outcomes. A number of volunteers have acquired qualifications and become nurses, patient transport officers, aged care workers, paramedics etc.
Extra Comments	The RSDP has allowed AV to place paramedic students in remote rural communities of particular need and where recruitment has previously been difficult.

<b>VFVB: Expansion of the VFVB Welfare Fund</b>	
Aim	To provide important assistance to volunteers and their families in times of need.

How did you do it?	The fund, operated by VFBV relies on a capital base and annual volunteer subscriptions to provide small financial grant support to volunteers and their families who find themselves in financial crisis. Providing important assistance to volunteers in times of need and also supporting volunteers and their families to get back on their feet and able to continue serving their communities.
Success	Highly successful with 86% of all CFA brigades choosing to be financial members of the VFBV Welfare Fund (cost to volunteer brigades is ~\$90/year). The fund has directly assisted 234 volunteer families and allocated \$730,000 in grants since 2008.
Extra Comments	Feedback from volunteers is extremely positive and appreciative.

#### **VFBV: Formal legislative recognition of Volunteer Charter**

Aim	To ensure that the Volunteer Charter including the fundamental importance of volunteers to Victoria's emergency capability and shared responsibility model for community safety is formally recognised.
How did you do it?	VFBV worked with government and the CFA to establish an understanding of the need to back the volunteer charter in law. Established sound processes, forums and consultative framework, via VFBV to demonstrate the vital role performed by VFBV – building support that this role backed by meaningful legislation is a key ingredient to encourage maintaining and strengthening the capacity of volunteers.
Success	Well received by volunteers, seen as appropriate recognition and protection of essential volunteer rights; provides guidance and clarity for the agency/sector volunteer focus.
Extra Comments	93% of all CFA Brigades chose to become financial members of VFBV for 2013/14, membership rates have increased every year for the last 5 years. Considering this is an optional cost to volunteer brigades with limited discretionary finances, this result suggests very strong recognition of the need for and value provided by VFBV.

#### **VFBV: Formalise volunteer consultative mechanisms**

Aim	To formalise volunteer consultative mechanisms.
How did you do it?	To formalise volunteer consultative mechanisms such as VFBV/CFA joint consultative framework, VFBV District and VFBV State council volunteer consultation forums/processes. This has enabled local through to state level formal volunteer input into decision making on matters affecting volunteers.
Success	Structures are well established and actively embraced by volunteers, providing a 'brigade up', state-wide network for volunteer consultation and engagement.
Extra Comments	There is an opportunity for the CFA, EM Sector and Government to further develop acceptance, encouragement and collaboration with this significant volunteer engagement asset.

#### **CFA: Member Communication Pilot**

Aim	Building stronger channels for engagement between CFA leaders and volunteers.
How did you do it?	This pilot is led by a working group with representatives from CFA Communities and Communication, Operational Training and Volunteerism, ICT Services, CFA Regions, VFBV and the office of the Chief Officer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validate a single database for volunteer contact details</li> <li>• Address "information overload" and "information vacuums" in the field</li> <li>• Introduce an "opt in/opt out" model for volunteer communication.</li> </ul>

Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of volunteer leaders who took part in a trial of “news updates” in late 2013 said they would like to receive the email updates regularly</li> <li>• 23,000 emails are sent to members who we have valid email addresses for.</li> <li>• Based on our email system reports we can estimate around between 12,000 and 15,000 are opening the email (a very good result based on industry email marketing research)</li> <li>• Less than half a dozen members requested to be removed from the mailing list.</li> </ul>
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#### AV: Online First Responder Induction Program

Aim	The aim is to give AV's volunteers an opportunity to observe other ambulance services in other states (currently South Australia and Tasmania) and to promote the sharing of ideas and best-practice innovation.
How did you do it?	There is a Memorandum of Understanding between the three participating States. The Volunteer Support units of the three ambulance services work together to organise an interactive program that will enhance the knowledge level of the participants.
Success	The program has been deemed successful by past participants. AV has successfully implemented a number of suggestions that participants have brought back with them (i.e. uniforms, training, equipment and reward strategies).
Extra Comments	The interaction between the three services strengthens important partnerships.

#### CFA: Smoke Alarm Campaign

Aim	To promote the importance of smoke alarms in saving lives by partnering with a business.
How did you do it?	In 2013, volunteers from 18 brigades participated in Smoke Alarm Campaign community engagement activities at Bunnings Stores in major centres around the state. Other brigades across the state initiated their own campaign related activities including engaging with community at shopping centres and community events.
Success	Every year volunteers participate in smoke alarm campaign launch activities and engage independently with local media in support of the campaign.

#### CFA: Volunteers delivering information and education to community

Aim	To support volunteers preparedness and prevention activities in communities.
How did you do it?	The CFA will conduct the 4th annual community engagement conference for volunteers. Each year there has been an increase in numbers attending and number of brigades represented. A volunteer reference group ensures the conference is volunteer developed, led and delivered. Over the past 2 years it has been supplemented by significant regional events in some parts of the state.
Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position descriptions for all roles</li> <li>• Developed training and RPL processes for those who wish to pursue competencies</li> <li>• Information and resource kit</li> <li>• Induction process for elected persons.</li> </ul>
Extra Comments	Changes to Brigade Membership and Classification has seen the requirement for brigades to have a community engagement coordinator on the Brigade Management Team and make provision for a number of optional community facing roles.

<b>VFBV: Volunteer driven community awareness campaigns – ‘Think Like a Volunteer’ and ‘Fire Safety Starts with You’</b>	
Aim	To provide local fire safety messaging to the community.
How did you do it?	The campaigns were cost effective, utilising local people and local messaging to leverage volunteer/volunteer leader networks and community respect to achieve better ‘cut through’.
Success	Reports have demonstrated that the community retention rates for messaging, along with the volunteer networks achieved, have assisted in building the profile of volunteers, with increased community respect. This has supported the connection between volunteers and their communities.
Extra Comments	There was also substantial media coverage at no cost.

<b>VFBV: Volunteer Fire Brigade Championships</b>	
Aim	To foster engagement and skill development in brigades by holding the VFBV volunteer Fire Brigade Championships.
How did you do it?	The volunteer championship existed prior to the formation of the CFA, driven by early community based fire brigades, as a core social and operational network and practical skills practice opportunity. Run at local CFA District and State level, supported by funding from the CFA and administered/coordinated by VFBV.
Success	Provided fun, friendly opportunity for practical firefighter skill development, opportunity for whole family, youth and junior involvement in fire brigade. Approximately 200 brigades participate in these championships today, historically this number has been higher.
Extra Comments	Funding required for the running costs of the championships and to support brigade attendants should be seen as an investment in maintaining and building volunteer capacity, building volunteer networks and encouraging community engagement. Cost pressures and reluctance to expand this investment are a deep frustration to volunteers.

<b>Red Cross: Volunteer Trends Document</b>	
Aim	The Red Cross Volunteer Trends document provides valuable information and statistics on the current and future trends of volunteering.