

Tasmanian Volunteer Fire
Brigades Association

ANNUAL REPORT

2016 - 2017



TVFBA Annual Report 2017

Representing volunteer firefighters throughout Tasmania

www.tvfba.org.au

INTRODUCTION

The Tasmanian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association (TVFBA), represent the interests and welfare of over 4,000 operational fire service volunteers within the Tasmania Fire Service. The TVFBA provides support for Volunteer Fire Brigade members in all aspects of firefighting and volunteerism in the State of Tasmania. The association has representation on the State Fire Commission and most committees within the Tasmania Fire Service.

The governing body of the TVFBA is the State Council which is drawn from elected delegates from the three Regional Associations. Membership and general meetings of the Regional Associations is open to all members.

The objectives of the Association are:

- to promote and represent the body of members of the Association and to advance and support their interests, wellbeing and skills;
- to increase participation by the members in the core business of the Association;
- to support the passage of legislation that assists members and their brigades in aspects of operational or welfare related matters;
- to cooperate with other organisations having associated interests;
- to actively pursue the aims and goals of the Strategic Plan of the Association; and
- to provide representation on the State Fire Commission as provided for in the Fire Service Act and on other committees as appropriate.

The State Council meets five times a year with the meetings being conducted throughout the State. Additionally the branches meet as required. Some branches hold branch meetings on a regular basis whilst others meet as required by the membership of that branch.



The 2016-18 State Council



STATE COUNCIL DELEGATES 2016 - 2017

TVFBA State Executive

Robert Atkins	State President
Tony Schultz	State Vice President
Brad Menzie	State Secretary
Don Mackrill	State Treasurer
Lyndsay Suhr	TVFBA State Fire Commission Representative
Colin Cunningham	Southern Branch President
Cheryl Mathews/Fiona Tustian	North West Branch President
Don Mackrill	Northern Branch President



Branch Delegates

North West	South	North
Judith Lello	Stefan Frazik	Neesey Groves
Daniel Bramich	Trafford Harvey	Deb Smith
Mike Connell	Brad Menzie	Ian Wheeler
Robert Atkins	David Taaffe	Elaine Burns
Peter More	Lyndsay Suhr	Don Mackrill
Fiona Tustian	Colin Cunningham	Raoul Stow
Liz Hamer	Tony Schultz	
	Jocelyn Dunk	



STATE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Robert Atkins AFSM

Once again it gives me much pleasure to present my annual report of the TVFBA 2016 -2017

Another year has slipped passed, where do they go! It has been rather hectic with meetings, both State and Executive. Also thrown into the mix having meetings with members of B.E.S and the Chief Officer, Minister and phone calls and emails to deal with issues that have arisen during the year, hopefully a lot can be resolved sooner rather than later.

Together with the Retained Association we have jointly approached many issues affecting our Volunteers which is working well, I.E. Presumptive Legislation and proposed speed limits for emergency services.

As you see in committee reports they have been busy dealing with views and policy which affects Volunteers, many out-comes and others work in progress.

I would personally thank delegates of State Council for their efforts during the past year, and the delegates on the working parties and committees for their time in taking part.

Last AGM I was personally grateful to the way members grasped the new format of the weekend. With some tweaking I think this idea will be very beneficial to old and new members.

This year being non election year the idea of inviting Life Members to join us with a Dinner and accommodation to socialise and meet up with past delegates in a relaxed atmosphere.

I personally thank you as members for accepting these formats for our AGM and I hope it consolidates into the future.

In closing I would like to pass on to the Chief Officer my sincere thanks for his openness and time to discuss issues which have put meaning behind a lot of questions.

Also to my executive members for their support during the year and a special mention to Brad Menzies for his help and understanding through-out the year thank-you.

Second last to Cherie our minute taker for her time in the taking the minutes of our State Meetings which has made the work-load easier for our state secretary thank-you.

And lastly as always to my wife Veronica for her help and keeping me sane for the past year thank-you.

Robert Atkins AFSM



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STATE FIRE COMMISSION REPORT

Lyndsay Suhr AFSM

The commission has had to deal with several changes & challenges over the past twelve months, one was the formation of the greater Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, which has now had a full twelve months of operation & will allow the SFC to analyze the gains & or losses that have been achieved.

At the SFC's request the Minister approved & appointed an independent chair to the Commission to allow it to function without the restraints of the chair being a direct employee of the Government. The successful appointee is Mr. Rod Sweetman formally representing the Local Government Association, Rod is also a volunteer member of Hadspen Brigade & Group Officer of the Quamby Group.

The 2017/2018 corporate plan has been finalized, to allow the SFC to meet its financial obligations the fire service levy will need to be increased. The Government through the Minister has provided additional funding for vehicle replacement including Ariel appliances, medium tankers & other vehicles; it has also provided funds for the SFC to reduce debt & for the Fuel reduction unit up to 2022.

TFS were requested to reduce spending in the last few months of the year; savings were made across the service with very little effect to volunteers.

Several departments of the TFS have been transferred to Business & Executive Services, this should result in savings to the service & a more structured approach to their service delivery, and benefits are already being achieved in several areas.

Through the Chief Officer & the heads of departments e.g. BES a strong line of communications has been established in keeping the two associations, UFU, staff & volunteers, informed of up to date & timely information.

Lyndsay P B Suhr AFSM.



C.A.V.F.A

(Council of Australian Volunteer Firefighters Association)

Delegates: Robert Atkins AFSM & Tony Schultz

The Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA) is a collaboration of eleven volunteer fire brigade associations within Australia. The Council was established to give volunteer fire-fighters a united voice in discussions and negotiations with government and key stakeholders across the nation. In Australia, there are 14,490 operational paid firefighters and 211,216 operational volunteer firefighters.

CAVFA has had two face to face meetings over the period, one in August 2016 held in the Queensland Fire & Emergency Services complex in Brisbane QLD and one in April 2017 held at AFAC Headquarters. CAVFA also regularly hold telephone conferences and correspond via email on topical issues as they arise.

A number of areas CAVFA is currently working on include:

- Ensuring volunteer brigade operational and leadership training is at the forefront of fire services nationwide and does not get pushed out by career training;
- Building a partnership with the co-operative research centre - Bushfire CRC;
- Representation on the national Industry Reference Committee which currently excludes volunteers;
- Continuing the National CAVFA Survey which was launched last year with over 7,300 responses from volunteer firefighters nationwide;
- Maintaining a good relationship with the Australian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) to ensure the large mass of volunteers are included throughout the consultative process through individual fire agencies across Australia;
- Extensive work lobbying the Prime Minister for the introduction of the Fair Work Act amendment; and
- Research into fitness for task proposals which have been discussed in the industry.

In addition to the current topical areas CAVFA has maintained its presence on a number of AFAC working parties and represented volunteers at meetings with both the Prime Minister and opposition parties. CAVFA also attends the Firefighters Memorial in Canberra annually.



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CLOTHING AND PPE COMMITTEE

Delegate: Brad Menzie

Clothing and PPE has been a busy space for the TFS. There have been a number of roll outs of new items along with the fruition of other items that have been discussed for years. A female uniform sub-committee has been formed and is reviewing a female cut uniform to fit in with the current uniform.

The Chief Officers Operating Instruction for Uniform and PPE which are guidelines for uniform and both structural and vegetation ensemble are in their final stages.

The new epaulettes have now been rolled out and are being distributed around the districts, the new epaulettes include rank markings to demonstrate the skill level of firefighter level one and firefighter level two.

After a discussion with several brigades in the central highlands it became apparent there was a need for more appropriate PPE for the extreme cold temperatures. The Committee had discussions with other mainland agencies and found a CFA designed jacket for the Victorian alpine region. The TFS is currently budgeting toward the purchase of these jackets for central highlands brigades who only have access to vegetation PPE.

The rollout of the new structural PPC continuing based on budget and storage requirements.

There are three types of euro style structural helmet which have been reviewed and extensively tested and trailed by the committee. The Committee is awaiting the outcome of testing to the Australian Standards of all helmets before agreeing on which helmet to purchase. The three manufacturers that were trialed are Rosenbauer, Pacific and MSA.

In line with the Ministers announcement of new vegetation helmets at the conference, the Associations and Union are currently negotiating, through the Clothing and PPE Committee, a new helmet colour ranking to bring our helmet colours in line with the Australian standard and mainland states. This will need to be agreed to before the purchase of any new structural or vegetation style helmets.

The cotton shorts are now in stock and on the order form to complement the TFS tee-shirts. Another batch of 500 of the soft shell jackets are now on their way. These will be issued in place of the current jumper for all members of the TFS, both volunteer and career.

The laundering turnaround time for gear is still an issue that is difficult to address without major financial cost (i.e. having two sets of gear). The biggest issue seems to be the laundering turnaround time in the south with alternatives still being investigated.

Uniform and PPE has been progressing steadily and we are coming up to the benchmark with new advancements as technology progresses. The TFS has in recent times had a good standard and it is important that we keep up to date with new technology as it progresses to ensure that the safety of all volunteers on the fireground is of the utmost standard. If anyone has any issues of feedback, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Brad



CENTRAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Delegate: Don Mackrill AFSM ESM OAM

Blood Exposure Protocol Card

TFS contention with the protocol card is with privacy concerns surrounding the intention of pathology results being returned to the DPFEM WH&S Manager. To accommodate these concerns whilst still ensuring the correct tests and processes are followed, a TFS specific card will be printed with the requirement to return reports to the WH&S Manager removed. The name of any person undertaking testing must be provided to the WH&S Manager so that contact throughout the process is maintained.

Particulate separation

The capital works program needs to be State-wide so that it is easily understood. Regions are compiling prioritised lists of stations, with brigades identified as high risk at the top of the lists. The Northern Region list is complete, whilst the status of the South and North West Regions is unknown.

TFS Flood Response

This issue has been discussed at OLG, who support the delivery of an SES training package to those TFS Brigades in flood prone areas. Clarification is required between what is considered “swift water rescue” and what is “safe working around flood waters” to enable decisions to be made.

HSR Elections

Volunteer ESR's have expired. A draft strategy and timeline for the recruitment, engagement, training and internal promotion of HSR's has been tabled.

Blankets on Appliances

The message from AFAC is that they are looking at curtains and blankets on a national scale.

Acoustic Exposure protocol card

Feedback at this stage is there are no issues with the card. The card has been adopted by RFSNSW and CFA and word from AFAC is that most fire jurisdictions will look at adopting the protocol as there are no other processes in use.

Health and Hygiene Strategy

The Health & Hygiene Strategy was originally a business case and this group instigated the development of a Health & Hygiene plan. The business case estimated funding of \$40,000 to undertake a research exercise and identify what health and hygiene risks were present. The report from this research was not very clear and there is no definitive plan around Health & Hygiene at this stage.



TVFFAF

State Coordinator: Robert Atkins AFSM. Delegates: TRVFA Bruce Corbett AFSM, TVFBA Don Mackrill AFSM ESM OAM.

Report to Associations TVFFAF 2016-2017

Delegates TRVFA Bruce Corbett AFSM, TVFBA Don Mackrill AFSM ESM OAM JP

This report is basically that of the TVFFAF State Coordinator, which he supplies to the two Association Management Representatives

Report of State Coordinator.

It once again gives me much pleasure to submit my report for the TVFFAF.

This year the management committee have had two meetings to discuss changes to the committee and rules as appropriate – meetings also include discussion on any contentious nominations and staff nominations.

It was decided to share the work load with Bruce Corbett taking on the secretarial role and Don Mackrill taking on the treasures role - this reduced the “paperwork” required of the State Coordinator, who continues to administer the TVFFA - medals, presentations etc.

Dress Code

Medal and Award Presentations

- Dress will be station wear with full medals worn on outer garment
- Tie can be worn but both presenters must be dressed the same. eg: Formal Dinners/Functions.

This year there has been a total of **45** nominations.

TFS Volunteer Medal

20 Volunteer Brigades

25 Retained Brigades

45 Total

TFS Volunteer Award

0 Volunteer Brigades

0 Retained Brigades

0 Total

Clasps

9

The TFS Youth Award has received a nil nominations for the year. In the past, this Award has not appealed to brigades as much as we would like. Feedback from the two associations and members it has been decided to change the design of the award which should make it more pleasing for recipients to wear. The new badge has been approved and has been delivered to previous recipients to replace the old style.

The TVFFAF web page has been upgraded and the latest info uploaded. More info will be put on as it becomes available. Please take a look and pass on any comments to your Association delegate.

Funding for the Framework will remain at \$2,500.00 per association for this year and will be reviewed as required. An investment account has been established with an initial \$7500. This account will be increased by \$1000 annual (commencing August 2017) – the funds are scheduled for our next run of TFS Volunteer Medals which is estimated to cost approx. \$14,000.

The Management Committee is Don Mackrill AFSM, Bruce Corbett AFSM and State Co-ordinator Robert Atkins AFSM, who have met twice during the year to discuss issues that have arisen. Don Mackrill was again appointed as the TVFFAF Chairman at the suggestion of the Bruce Corbett.

Don Mackrill AFSM ESM OAM JP

TVFBA Management Representative TVFFAF



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VOLUNTEER OPERATIONAL TRAINING COMMITTEE

Delegates: Colin Cunningham, Don Mackrill, Ian Gabites, Cheryl Mathews, Robert Atkins (Proxy)

New National First Aid Course

Implementation - An external first aid training provider Australian First Aid (APL) has been engaged to integrate training materials, admin processes, certification processes, reaccreditation processes, and assessment requirements.

A workshop was held in Hobart with Instructors. Instructors will go back to regions and conduct training for those that missed out. The implementation plan and process will be supported by Operational Training and Organisational Learning. A pilot program was held in April at Eaglehawk Neck and then progressively rolled out state wide. Career and Volunteers will all be receiving the same training standards statewide.

Volunteers will still hold their current qualification for the old course for three years
When this expires they will do the new Course

Minimum skills for Volunteer Firefighters -

Volunteers will be encouraged to attain L1 Firefighter as a minimum skill level

Flood Assistance Awareness Training -

Training being developed and will be delivered to effected Brigades initially then will flow on to other Brigades

Rank Markings –

New epaulettes have been designed and order forms for the appropriate Brigade requirements are currently being collated by District Staff

Compartment Fire Behaviour Training

The Chief Officer has requested that CFBT training be implemented for career and volunteers. A paper is being written on how best to roll out the training to Volunteer brigades across the State. Logistically a large amount of infrastructure is also being identified to facilitate training e.g. containers, props, PPE
Initially the roll out if this training to volunteers will be urban BA Brigades with a substantial structural risk

Volunteer Pathway Update

- All courses up to Firefighter Level 1 have been developed – Basics DVD has been implemented, Bush is currently being workshopped with Instructors.
- Inclusion of a WH&S Pre Course Assessment to the Bush Firefighter course – pre course workbook rather than the original proposed course
- Work is progressing with Urban Firefighter, Advanced Bush Firefighter and Crew Leader due for completion in 2017
- Updated First Aid and Advanced Resuscitation resources and procedures (as a result of outsourcing training resources) – Statements of Attainment will now be issued by APL Group (certificates are on their paper) – full enrolment forms will need to be completed by participants due to the providers legislative requirements (TFS are currently exempt)

Brigade Administration & Management – Andrew McGuinness will ask at DO meeting what issues Volunteers commonly have that can be addressed in these courses. Once a course outline has been developed options for development, including a curriculum developer will be investigated to develop a training package

Driver Training

Low risk driving training is to be completed during Brigade Induction. It will be included in the Volunteer Pathway once it has been ratified. An implementation plan will need to be developed.

Nationally the license requirements for heavy vehicle licenses will change including cost and the assessment process becoming more onerous. TFS (Ian Cawthorn) is working with State Growth to reach a workable consensus to reduce the impact on Volunteer Training.



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VOLUNTEER STATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Delegates: Robert Atkins, Colin Cunningham, Fi Tustian, Don Mackrill

Over the past year in VSCC there has been a lot of discussion on many issues. It does seem to take a deal of time to resolve issues but must accept that what we agree on affects the volunteers for the future.

These include:

- ❖ Minimum skills for Volunteers Firefighters.
- ❖ Pager issues.
- ❖ Driver training. Administration instructions
- ❖ Updates from Department Police Fire Emergency Management (D.P.F.E.M.)
- ❖ Issues with T.F.S budget.
- ❖ Issues with working groups. (representation on these groups).
- ❖ Alcohol and other drugs. (policy)
- ❖ Review of National Fire danger rating system.
- ❖ Review of Epaulettes and roll out and soft shell Jackets.
- ❖ Update on Tasmania Government Radio Network. (G.R.N.)
- ❖ T.F.S Strategic Direction Document.
- ❖ State Fire Commission updates.
- ❖ Brigade Election.
- ❖ Children and Child minding on Stations during Training and Operations.



NORTHERN BRANCH PRESIDENTS REPORT

Don Mackrill AFSM ESM OAM

2016-2017 has seen the Northern Branch working along with the State Branch in a variety of matters that has assisted us working towards a complete coverage for “volunteers” that report to the Chief Officer of the TFS.

The Branch whilst down 1 State Council delegate, has been both involved and progressive in all aspects of the association’s objectives.

We are representative on a number of State Committees and as such keep State Council informed via progressive reporting of those situations.

2016-2017 saw us visit Flinders Island which provided opportunity to meet with the Flinders Island Group of Brigades to discuss ongoing matters that are pertinent to our members, moving forward.

Our previous “Road Shows” which provided us with a very open and frank opportunity to discuss matters with our members unfortunately did not occur as planned during the latter part of this period.

Deb Smith one of our delegates has been on Leave of absence since February 2017 and will continue till the end of 2017. Hopefully at that stage we will be able to get her back into the fold.

2018 will hopefully see us move forward achieving clarification of VFF Level II and Level III in the TFS Volunteer Firefighter Training Matrix and an acceptance of volunteers being covered as are career firefighters at the present time via “presumptive cancer”.

The Northern Branch again reiterates its support for the mode of elections we held in 2015-16 year which provided an equal opportunity for any volunteer members from within the Northern Region to stand for the Northern Branch TVFBA – we echo our continued support for this mode of election.

D G Mackrill AFSM ESM OAM JP
Northern Branch President
TVFBA



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SOUTHERN BRANCH PRESIDENTS REPORT

Colin Cunningham AFSM

Responses during the last fire season were below normal due to the wet winter period experienced in the South , but unfortunately this year following lack of good winter rains there is the potential for an early start to a busy summer period , I have no doubt Brigades will up to the task to deal with any emergency.

At our last AGM Chris Ryan stood down as a delegate due to work commitments and his replacement was Jocelyn Dunk, all other delegates were re-elected, all have attended quarterly State Council meetings, southern delegate meetings & a forum held at Runnymede Station. Unfortunately a visit by delegates to Bruny Island had to be cancelled, but we intend to visit the island on another occasion.

The 2017 AGM will be held on the 11th September at Cambridge complex, this is a month later than normal partly due to communication issues created by the loss of messaging facility for volunteers on the pager system. Feedback from TFS suggests the system is antiquated and over loaded due added traffic of SES and Ambulance services. The Association has had many queries from volunteers who utilised this system and are concerned at loosing the ability to message their Brigade members

The TVFBA web paged has been updated and is managed by Southern Region & state secretary Brad Menzie, several web enquiries have been addressed and I encourage all members with internet access to utilise this facility.

Two editions of our newsletter Southern Embers was distributed to members during the year and feedback suggests they are informative and well received , time permitting we will endeavour to have at least three over the next 12 months
Special mention to Brad Menzie for his contribution to the newsletter

Finally thanks to Southern Delegates for their effort over the past 12 months and to Southern Region staff for their support to volunteers

Colin Cunningham
Southern President
TVFBA
9/08/17



NORTH WEST BRANCH PRESIDENTS REPORT

Fiona Tustian AFSM

I would like to present this annual report for the North West Branch of the Tasmanian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association for the year 2016-2017. I have only been Acting President for part of that time but I will attempt to give a brief summary of the past twelve months.

We had a reasonably quiet fire season this time round which made for a less busy summer incident wise.

The matter of “acting positions” amongst the North West Regional staff appears to now be resolved with all North West Region positions being filled with Shane Batt as Regional Chief, Ty Clark Arthur District Officer and Mark Brownrigg Mersey District Officer.

The North West branch has undergone a difficult twelve months with only one meeting being held in the latter part of 2016 and the resignation of the branch president Cheryl Matthews at the beginning of 2017.

I was honoured to step up as Acting President and again begin the steep learning curve associated with this role. We have attempted to get back on track with more regular meetings, holding one in April and another in May. At the April meeting Peter Moore was elected and accepted the position of Vice President.

Progress was delayed somewhat by my absence in July/August as I needed to take that time out for family. I would like to thank Peter Moore for stepping up and keeping the ball rolling in my absence. Normally the branch AGM would have been held before the state AGM but this was unable to be scheduled in time therefore it will be held as soon as possible after the next state meeting.

We had hoped to send delegates to some of the more remote areas like King Island to hold information sessions with our members there so that they can be better informed of who we are and how we represent them. Unfortunately delegates were unable to fix dates at this time and this will be looked at again in the next few months.

The North West Branch current positions are:

Acting President – Fiona Tustian

Vice President – Peter Moore

Treasurer – Mike Connell

Secretary – Daniel Bramich

State Delegate – Robert Atkins

Reserve Delegate – Liz Hamer

Reserve Delegate – Judith Lello

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the executive and the delegates for their work and time on behalf of the association and its members. I would also like to thank the people who support them including their partners and families.



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MEDIUM TANKER WORKING GROUP REPORT

Raz Stow

This report is to serve as an addendum to the already circulated briefing papers (2) distributed to TVFBA State Council Members.

To summarise the MTWG consultative process experience, it is fair to say that the group progressed significantly over the 3 meetings that were held during the first half of 2017, from a position of questioning organisational direction with regards to the future role and function of the medium tanker type appliance, to one where a draft functional specification has been produced.

Significantly, the draft specification incorporates not only key aspects of the future requirements of the TFS, but also the results from a significant increase in end user buy in, through consultation and engagement with a cohort of both volunteer and career firefighters, outside of the working party. It is safe to say that this is the first time also that the volunteer associations have influenced the development to this level, of a new appliance from a blank sheet.

However, it should also be noted that the working party process is still in need of significant improvement in terms of lead times, end user engagement, and the assurity that key stack holders and subject matter experts are utilised in future working groups.

In the recent meeting between representatives of both volunteer associations, and department managers of Business and Executive Services (BES), it was noted that Alex Lee, Manager Engineering and Fleet Services (EFS), that the concerns raised by the associations were also that which were shared by him. Happily, Alex is committed to work directly with both associations, and has sought input on both how the next stage of the medium tanker build is implemented, and further into the future in reviewing the heavy tanker fleet ahead of the next heavy tanker build. Furthermore, he will act to improve the engagement of key personnel in the effort to provide the best possible solutions for the organisation, and recognising the level of expertise available in the volunteer cohort.

Whilst there is still some months between now and the completion of the first of the new medium tanker appliance, I look forward to State Council being presented with the completed product, hopefully towards the end of 2017.

Raz Stow

TVFBA Northern Branch Secretary

Brigade Chief Dilston Fire Brigade.

08/08/2017

