

Tasmanian Volunteer Fire
Brigades Association

ANNUAL REPORT

2019 - 2020



TVFBA Annual Report 2020

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.



STATE COUNCIL DELEGATES 2019 - 2020

TVFBA State Executive

Robert Atkins	State President
Brad Menzie	State Vice President
Brad Menzie	Acting State Secretary
Don Mackrill	State Treasurer
Lyndsay Suhr	TVFBA State Fire Commission Representative
Colin Cunningham	Southern Branch President
Fiona Tustian	North West Branch President
Raoul Stow	Northern Branch President



Branch Delegates

North West	South	North
Daniel Bramich	Stefan Frazik	Neesey Groves
Mike Connell	Trafford Harvey	Ian Wheeler
Robert Atkins	Brad Menzie	Elaine Burns
Peter Moore	Lyndsay Suhr	Don Mackrill
Fiona Tustian	Colin Cunningham	Raoul Stow
Paulette Clarke	Peter Eaton	Mike Turner
Annette Jordan	Tony Kenner	Ken Nolan
	Simon Edwards	



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STATE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Robert Atkins AFSM

Once again it gives me much pleasure to present the annual report of the TVFBA.

What a year it has been. Firstly, fires locally then many firefighters going to the mainland to help. Many thanks to all personnel who do the job they revel in.

Then came the virus Covid-19. This changed very quickly to how we as members attended their stations, training, and the way we conducted meetings and the new world of Webex.

This I believe this will be the way for quite some time we meet and discuss topics.

The last 6 months I have had many meetings via Webex with the State Fire Commission (weekly) then bimonthly with the Chief, also as restrictions have eased, the Minister and many phone calls to discuss relevant issues with other relevant parties.

The TFS Grants scheme has been well received by most brigades throughout the State to supply noncore items to brigades and to the benefit of members.

As you can see members on working parties have been active in their roles, refer to reports given by them.

In recognition of our retiring members. Dennyse (Neeseey) Groves for her last 8 years. She was a great (and interesting) delegate to have and to work alongside her. Thank you.

To our treasurer (Don Mackrill) a delegate for the past 36 years. Although Don did retire earlier 2004? but came back because he knew he still had more of himself to give to the Association.

Thank you both very much for your dedication to the TVFBA and wishing you both the best wishes for the future.

To all delegates for their input during the year and to those that I bent their ears with quick phone calls and their thoughts and a special thanks to Brad Menzie for your dual role, many thanks and appreciation to all.

A welcome to new delegates and returning delegates looking forward to the next 2 years.

To TFS management with whom I have had many consultations during the past year to review matters affecting our Volunteers.

A special mention to Andrew Taylor (State President of the Retained Volunteers Association) with whom I have a great working relationship. Lastly my wife Veronica, I really appreciate your understanding of me disappearing to meetings and standing on the back porch with my phone to my ear.

Robert Atkins AFSM



STATE FIRE COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

Lyndsay Suhr AFSM

The Commission have for some time now discussed how to communicate non sensitive decisions to staff & volunteers & agreed to disseminate key messages via the TFS. intranet.

The following items have been dealt with along with a considerable amount of confidential business that due to its nature cannot be reported on.

- The SFC is operating in direct support of social distancing requirements;
- The Commission as the PCBU received a briefing regarding COVID-19;
- The Commission received a presentation on TFS / SES training reform; and,
- The Commission is currently finalising the 2020-21 to 2023-24 Corporate Plan.
- endorsed the establishment of a Regional Operations Support Unit for each Region.
- under Section 26(8) of the Fire Service Act 1979 approved the disbandment of the Pawtella Brigade.
- approved the direct selection of a provider for new Alarm Signalling Equipment (ASE).
- noted the progress of the Fire Service Act Review and the Bushfire Mitigation Measures Bill.
- noted that the SFC Corporate Plan for 2020-21 to 2023-24 Version 1.2 has been approved by the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management.
- resolved that the Commission Tour will occur in September 2020 in the North East District, Northern Region. The purpose of the Tour is to inspect brigades, their buildings and equipment, and where possible meet with members.
- received an update from the Chief Officer and Acting Deputy Chief Officer regarding the coming bushfire season and the potential impacts from COVID-19 (i.e. running an IMT with social distancing) and noted the release of the work safe e-learning module for COVID-19.
- accepted the recommendations from the Review of the Commission's Performance and determined to create an action plan for the implementation of those recommendations.
- re-endorsed the TFS Values.
- provided feedback and recommendations on the Draft DPFEM Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding the provision of corporate services to clients by Business and Executive Services (BES). The Commission is part of the working group established to review the MoU.
- received a briefing from the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers on COVID-19.
- received a briefing from Mike Blake - Independent Chair of the Fire Service Act Review Committee. The Commission will be making a second submission to the review as part of the targeted consultation process being undertaken by Mike Blake.

A considerable amount of work & time has been spent on the review to ensure it is to the benefit of all Tasmanians, stakeholders & Volunteers.

The Commission has met monthly as per the legislated requirement, five of these meetings were held utilising Webex, strategy meetings were also held the day prior to Commission meetings, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Tasmania weekly information Webex meetings were held that included the two Associations State Presidents.

I would like to thank State President Robert for the time he has given discussing matters that are in the interest of Volunteers, may I also take this opportunity to thank the Associations executive for their assistance & advice, also the Volunteers for making my time both interesting & educational at their Station or other forums.

Lyndsay P. B. Suhr AFSM.

TVFBA nominee to the State Fire Commission.



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C.A.V.F.A

(Council of Australian Volunteer Firefighters Association)

Delegates: Robert Atkins AFSM & Brad Menzie

2019-2020

CAVFA has recently been discussing the latest PFAS study being undertaken by Monash University and has been asked to provide two members on the advisory committee. Andrew Taylor and the incoming CEO of VFBV Adam Barnett have been nominated on the advisory group.

At our most recent face to face meeting Stuart Ellis provided an overview of AFAC's current working priorities which included:

- Gender equality - while volunteer agencies are well ahead with gender and diversity equality some career agencies have had cultural issues so the Chair of Victorian equal opportunities commission is working with AFAC to address these issues.
- Continuing to work in the space of spontaneous volunteers, AFAC recognise the need to engage and regulate these volunteers otherwise they will do that anyway, social media facilitates it quickly so there is a need for agencies to engage when it appears and utilise it in the best way they can.
- Volunteer membership numbers are holding steady nationally. Australia has seen an increase in volunteering but not necessarily in the area of volunteer firefighters.
- AFAC working on an App which records exposures for trauma, smoke etc and then feeds data back centrally.
- Continuing work on the PUA and focussing on a consistent mapping network across all 31 fire agencies to allow for streamlining rather than each individually doing their own, this will include centralising resources for the development of courses.

We also have a new Chair of CAVFA which is Andy Wood, president of the CFSA and a volunteer firefighter on Kangaroo Island.

Through Andy's leadership the council has identified four key areas of priority for the next 12 months:

1. The national recognition and alignment of training qualifications;
2. Adoption of a national position on presumptive legislation e.g. equal coverage/no discrimination for all volunteer and career fire fighters for the 12 cancers listed in the federal legislation;
3. The conduct of a national annual Volunteer Welfare and Efficiency Survey;
4. Adoption of a national 40 km/h speed limit for vehicles passing an emergency vehicle in attendance at an incident.



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CLOTHING AND PPE COMMITTEE

Delegate: Brad Menzie

Over the past 12 months since the last annual report the Clothing and PPE Committee has undergone significant changes in membership gained a number of new people from various areas within the TFS and the Department. Of key significance for volunteers we have finalised a standard list of gear for members from when they join right through as they progress to certain qualifications such as BA.

\$1.3M of PPC has been approved from central funding, this is in addition to the normal district funded budgets for PPC items and is aimed at completing rollouts of new equipment which is wholeheartedly welcomed by the TVFBA.

The outstanding BR9 vegetation helmet role out is almost completed. There are a number of accessories being fitted by people to these helmets which are un-approved accessories, please ensure that any accessories that you use with these helmets fit within the guidelines.

Softshell Jacket rollout is expected to be completed in the coming months with 85% of members now having received the jackets.

The store is looking at the option of allocating employee numbers and volunteer numbers to all gear ordered to allow for correct reporting processes.

436 Rosenbaur helmets will be rolled out to volunteers this year.

The vegetation PPC tender document will soon be drafted with the aim to have a new contract with a supplier prior to 21/22 fire season. This will allow for evaluation to be completed thoroughly.

A PPE Webpage is now live on Conexus and is a single point of call for clothing and PPE information and contact details for the PPE committee.

While the agency is progressing to new technology to improve safety of all members on the fireground, we must remember it is not feasible to have every member in the new gear straight away. All rollout plans take into account careful consideration of the priority of rollout based on factors such as incident types, call rates and training requirements of every brigade. To this end the TFS have made a significant commitment to their volunteers over the last 12 months by providing extra funding to complete the large once in 10 or 15 year changes to PPE.

Another great win for volunteers is that the State Council of the TVFBA has an increase of membership to the TFS PPE committee taking membership from one to two members.

If anyone has any issues of feedback, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Brad



CENTRAL HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Delegate: Ken Nolan

Tasmanian Volunteer fire Brigades Association

Tasmania Fire Service – Central Health & Safety Committee

September 2020 Summary

Covid-19 Update

Covid-19 has been a focal point for the TFS and Volunteer Stations have been a vital part of the compliance strategy with regards to Covid-19. Appropriate Posters, being displayed at all stations and the introduction of social tracing required by the Tasmania Department Public Health have been priorities. Social distancing and contact tracing have become the norm for most volunteer activities and many stations suspended training between April and June 2020. The easing of community restrictions in late June has allowed many stations to resume training with appropriate controls implemented.

Use of Crew Havens and Travelling in TFS Vehicles

Safety Alert – 11 Sept 2020

The Chief Officer has issues a safety alert reminding members that:-

- Adequately equipped crew-havens may still be utilised in the case of a burn-over but;
- All passengers must be inside the vehicle with seatbelts worn whenever the vehicle is in motion
- Vehicle certified seating capacity must not be exceeded
- Firefighting activities are not be undertaken from the back / top of appliances
- Access to the tops of vehicles is only permitted for access to storage when vehicles are stationary
- These instructions include social activities such as Christmas Parades

No-gear / No-go

There is a re-printing of the previous No-gear / No-go Poster campaign for the upcoming fire season.

Ken Nolan

TVFBA WHS Committee/WHS Representative



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TVFFAF

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

Report for Associations TVFFAF 2019-2020

Delegates TRVFA Bruce Corbett AFSM, TVFBA Don Mackrill AFSM

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 but the management remains the same with Bruce Corbett continuing as the Chair and secretarial role and Don Mackrill continuing on in the treasures role.

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 **36** nominations.

<u>TFS Volunteer Medal</u>	<u>TFS Volunteer Award</u>	<u>Clasps</u>
27 Volunteer Brigades	0 Volunteer Brigades	10
16 Retained Brigades	0 Retained Brigades	
43 Total	0 Total	

The TFS Youth Award has received a total of **7** nominations for the year. 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 updated which now includes a search engine for members to find their name or type in brigade name and a list of all members in your brigade will come up.

Feedback would be appreciated.

Robert Atkins AFSM



VOLUNTEER OPERATIONAL TRAINING COMMITTEE

Delegates: Colin Cunningham, Ian Gabites, Fiona Tustian and Raoul Stow

Volunteer Operational Training (VOT) - Report September 2020

COVID-19 – As of March 18th Operational Training postponed face to face training , with Delta & OT collaborating on a joint initiative to develop online content that could be delivered by the Integrated Training Learning Management System (pending the finalisation of the procurement process and implementation activities). Training recommenced several months later with compliance requirements around social distancing and sanitation.

First Aid - Medical Edge Australia have been the successful applicant to provide first aid training to TFS & SES members on a twelve month contract and will be up and running Oct/Nov with Regional group based courses initially. Training will be conducted from February to November each year

Volunteer Development Pathway (VDP)

The project has been formally closed with the Project Management Committee and ongoing program reviews has now transferred to business as usual for the training team. The project resulted in the design and development of three leadership programs for delivery in the 2020 Training Calendars:

The Volunteer Leadership Program was trialed in the last quarter of 2019 and is ready for deliver in 2020

The Volunteer Management Program and Tactical Command Program were scheduled for piloting in April 2020, but were delayed as a result of COVID-19 – Webex meetings will be used to progress these packages due to key personnel returning to Victoria.

In 2020, DELTA and Operational Training will also undertake further reviews of the volunteer pathway through consultation and surveying members in the coming financial year to ensure the training and assessment pathway reflect the role of a volunteer firefighter within TFS.

Training Reform

The training reform program is continuing and is on track with phase 1 completed in July and phase 2 scheduled for December 30. This will see all TFS and SES training come under a single training unit with a new governance structure, single business plan and budget. This unit will have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal TFS and SES workforce capability and the building of capability and resilience within our external stakeholders.

Integrated Training Learning Management System (ITLMS) –The ITLMS is the system that captures and records information on our people, training, assessment and capability. This system will allow members to access their own training records and see their progress along their pathway. Once operational the system will be called PETRA which stands for People Education Training Reporting and Assessment so look out for more information in coming months on the system and opportunities to inform how it is operated for your work area or brigade.

Intro to AIIMS course – This is available to complete online and has had 303 registrations in the first week, of these 159 are Volunteers

Colin Cunningham AFSM



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VOLUNTEER STATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Delegates: Robert Atkins, Colin Cunningham, Fi Tustian and Raoul Stow

Volunteer State Consultative Committee (VSCC)

Report September 2020

TVFBA Reps - Robert Atkins, Fiona Tustian, Raoul Stow & Colin Cunningham

Resource to Risk

This process identified risks and what treatment can be applied to those risks, A concept of operations will be utilised to conduct an annual review

The pros and cons have been discussed with the DO's and will feed into the future TFS Service Delivery Model

Volunteers who contributed to the R2R process will be provide ongoing feedback

VRATs Update

The previous Minister committed \$500,000 over four years to the VRAT project, however the total required to achieve volunteer capability within TFS would be around \$5 million

Expressions of interest have been called with a high degree of interest shown, funding will only allow for 30 volunteers in the initial intake. Training of this group has commenced with the aim for them to be utilised this coming fire season.

Volunteer Behaviour & Conflict Management

A working group has been established to come up with a consistent state-wide approach to address volunteer behaviour and conflict management, Representatives include District Officers from each region, Coordinator People and Culture, Volunteer Sustainability & Strategy and a Regional Chief.

Both Associations have been approached to provide nominees to have input and to review the draft document prior to presentation to VSCC for finalisation.

The new Brigade Election process has been endorsed by VSCC, will be updated in the Volunteer Handbook at Stations and will also be available on Conexus

This update came into effect as of the 1st of July this year

Volunteer Fire Fighting Operations & Pregnancy

A working group is being established to provide a consistent state-wide approach to pregnancy and firefighting.

Colin Cunningham AFSM



NORTHERN BRANCH PRESIDENTS REPORT

Raoul Stow

Presidents Report – Northern Branch

State Council Annual General Meeting

September 2020

In the 12 or so months since the 2019 State Council AGM the Northern Branch has continued to seek engagement with brigades across the region as a measure of our commitment to improve the accessibility of the TVFBA to the membership.

This engagement has brought about a number of key consultative projects where the branch has worked with Brigades and their Districts through the provision of subject matter expertise on projects of significance.

This year has also brought significant challenges with the statewide restrictions in place as a result of COVID19. The TVFBA worked with the North East District in particular in assisting brigades to alter their practices as needed to comply with agency and state policies. I thank in particular the efforts of branch delegate, Ken Nolan (Dilston), in bringing his Health and Safety expertise to the levels of assistance provided to brigades.

Moving forward the branch seeks continued development of a strategic plan, a key component of which is a robust communications plan. Branch Delegate Mike Turner (Kelso) has spent considerable time on this project and we hope to see some fruits from his labour soon.

2020 also saw the retirement of long serving branch delegates, Don Mackrill, and Denyse Groves. Both Don and 'Neeseey' put many hours into the representation of fire service volunteers in the state, and we wish them all the very best into their retirement.

Finally, I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all Northern Branch members for their continued support, input and commitment towards volunteers. I look forward to the next 12 months!

Raz Stow

Northern Branch President



SOUTHERN BRANCH PRESIDENTS REPORT

Colin Cunningham AFSM

Southern Region Presidents Report

9th September 2020

An early onset of our local fire season, support to mainland fire agencies and Covid 19 would adequately summarise the last twelve months

Covid disrupted Regional and Brigade training for several months, limited initial incident response numbers and only allowed Brigades to maintain appliances for incident response. I believe social distancing and personal hygiene must remain a priority until circumstances improve.

Thankfully Covid occurred after the fire season but this year may be a different story

Our Volunteers continue to conduct Covid quarantine checks on an as needed basis and must be acknowledged for their over and above contribution

The early season fire incidents included -
Todds Corner 23rd Oct 19 – 284 hectares
Dennistoun Road 29th Oct 19 – 870 hectares
Bluff Road 29th Oct 19 – 135 hectares
Glenfern Road 31st Oct 19 – 270 hectares
Jefferys Track 20th Dec 19 – 21 hectares
Pelham Road 30th Dec 19 – 2100 hectares

The ability to continually provide crews to campaign fires and cover interstate requests for assistance highlights the dedication and professionalism of TFS volunteers

Thanks to Regional delegates for their contribution the last two years and welcome to new and returning delegates.

Unfortunately Peter Eaton has decided to not re nominate for a delegate position due to personal and covid reasons (stuck in WA) Thanks to Peter for his input and working party involvement.

To Volunteers , it seems whatever emergencies arise , whether it be the normal type of incident or any extraordinary situation there is always members available to commit short and long term to assist and alleviate any situation , all that from normal people with some special Values – Thanks TFS volunteers.

Finally I welcome the announcement that Medical Edge Australia are the successful tenderers to provide first aid training to TFS & SES members , as an observer at the tender presentations I wholeheartedly agree with the selection committee decision

Colin Cunningham AFSM
Southern Region President



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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 2019-2020. This is a summary of the past twelve months. We had another busy fire season seeing many personnel and vehicles being deployed both across the state and to other states across Australia. Before we had even finished the fire season, we were providing personnel to support with the fight against covid-19 including carrying out welfare and compliance checks in our local communities.

We have had another year disrupted by District Officer positions being filled by officers acting up into the roles. Hopefully this can be resolved before the coming fire season.

From early this year our regular meetings were disrupted by the arrival of covid-19 and the need to meet remotely instead of face to face. We successfully explored meetings online trying a few different platforms. Whilst there were some hiccups due to poor internet connectivity it did mean we could still hold meetings. Tonight, will be our first "face to face" for a long time.

We still hope to send delegates to our more remote areas such as West Coast and King Island, but this has had to be put on hold to covid-19. We had also planned a post fire season BBQ/Forum, but this also had to be cancelled for the same reason.

We have been trying to address the poor communication lines back to our members and have been working on ways to get information out. Many thanks to our Secretary Daniel Bramich for putting in many hours to collate a list of Brigade Chiefs/First Officers so hopefully this will open better lines of communication.

The North West Branch current positions are:

President – Fiona Tustian AFSM	Vice President – Peter Moore
Treasurer – Mike Connell	Secretary – Daniel Bramich
State Delegate – Robert Atkins AFSM	Reserve Delegate – Paulette Clarke
Reserve Delegate – Annette Jordan	

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all 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.

I would also like to announce that I will be regrettably stepping down from the position of President due to current health concerns which prevent me from carrying out this role effectively. I have enjoyed the role and will find it hard to step away from it. Thanks again to all those who have supported me, and I wish all the best to the next NW Branch President.

Fiona Tustian AFSM
President NW Branch



TFS VOLUNTEER BRIGADE GRANTS PROGRAM REPORT

Robert Atkins, Brad Menzie, Colin Cunningham

Program was started some 2 years ago following on from a commitment from the then Minister Rene Hidding.

2 million dollars was allocated to spend over 4 years.

This equated to \$7,700 for each Volunteer and Retained Brigades in the State.

Round five has just been completed with almost half the funding allocated to some 185 brigades.

There are 36 brigades yet to be funded through the Grant program.

Most popular items range from handheld UHF radios, personal gear bags, portable lighting, computers, TIC, minor upgrades to meeting rooms, tablets for vehicles, TVs, Microwave and tools.

Round 6 will open in December 2020.

This grant program has been a great success so far in providing non care items for stations and members for their benefit and safety.

A sincere thanks to Kylie and Alicia for their commitment to the fund and support to members of the committee.

Robert Atkins AFSM
Chair

